



conejo valley BONSAI society

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A member of the Golden State Bonsai Federation 

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Conejo Valley Bonsai Society Meetings

Westlake Village City Hall
Community Room
31200 Oakcrest Drive
Westlake Village, CA 91361
3rd Thursday of the Month
7:30 PM – 9:00 PM

Visit Our Website
www.cvbs-bonsai.org

President's Message

Exhibition Dates Set for November

By Damon DuBois

The Conejo Valley Bonsai Society's 20th Annual Exhibition at Gardens of the World will be held on Friday and Saturday, November 3rd and 4th of this year. Planning for the exhibition is already underway.

Traditionally, we have devoted the meeting a month before the annual exhibition to peer critiques and prepping trees for the show. This year, we want to give members an early start on prepping for the annual exhibition, so we are encouraging members to bring in some of the trees they want to exhibit to the September meeting, as well as the October meeting.

This month's meeting will also be a workshop, so bring your trees even if you aren't planning to exhibit a tree!

Officer News

I would also like to announce that Antonio Viscarra has been appointed to the position of Vice President of the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society. Please welcome him to his new role!

In November, we will elect officers for 2024. If you are interested in any of the four officer positions (president, vice president, treasurer, or secretary), please let me know. Once new officers are elected at our November meeting, they will appoint



Damon DuBois

committee chairs, so if you would like to serve CVBS in that capacity, please notify any of the current officers. A list of the standing committees is on page 2.

For our August meeting we had a demonstration and workshop led by Debra Mauz-Melitz on the creation of kusamono in hypertufa pots. It was a fun and informative demonstration that gave a glimpse into the very deep and interesting craft of creating kusamono. (See photos below and

on page 8.)

See you at the meeting on September 21st! 🌳

CVBS member Min Xue created this lovely kusamono (below) during our August 2023 workshop/demonstration meeting. Here she has displayed it in a wood trunk. Very eye-catching!



Photo by Min Xue

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(Click on Email Address)

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CVBS Programs 2023

If you are interested in the CVBS Mentoring Program, please contact Damon DuBois for more information & applications to participate.

January 19	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop— BRING YOUR TREES
February 16	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting & Presentation: Trimming junipers led by Marj Branson followed by Workshop— BRING YOUR TREES
SATURDAY March 4	1:00 – 4:00 PM: Workshop on Potting Ventura County Nursery, 4595 Balcom Canyon Road, Somis BRING YOUR TREES (CLUB WILL SPONSOR SOIL)
March 16	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting & Presentation: Wiring a tree into the pot led by Ken Martin followed by Workshop— BRING YOUR TREES
April 20	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting & Presentation: Bugs & Fungi led by Ken Fuentes followed by Workshop— BRING YOUR TREES
SATURDAY APRIL 22	10:00 AM – Noon Behind-the-scenes tour of the Huntington's bonsai nursery led by Ted Matson, bonsai curator The Huntington Library, Art Museum & Botanical Gardens San Marino, California
SATURDAY May 6	1:00 – 4:00 PM: Workshop: Bring Your Own Trees Ventura County Nursery, 4595 Balcom Canyon Road, Somis BRING YOUR TREES
May 18	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting & Presentation: Fertilizers led by Ken Martin followed by Workshop— BRING YOUR TREES
June 15	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by DEMONSTRATION —PETER MACASIEB
July 20	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop and Swap Meet — BRING YOUR TREES AND OTHER ITEMS
August 17	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by DEMONSTRATION —DEBRA MAUZ-MELITZ
September 21	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by PEER CRITIQUES I — BRING YOUR EXHIBITION TREES
October 19	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by PEER CRITIQUES II — BRING YOUR EXHIBITION TREES
November 3–4	NOTE: FRIDAY – SATURDAY 20TH ANNUAL CVBS EXHIBITION GARDENS OF THE WORLD
November 16	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting with Club Elections followed by Workshop— BRING YOUR TREES
December 21	7:30 PM HOLIDAY POTLUCK, RAFFLE & AUCTION

Lots of Cleanup and Pruning To Do This Fall

By Jim Barrett

Although fall is approaching, hot, dry days are still a good possibility. Watering properly should be a top priority. If a plant begins to show stress because of lack of water, you may want to place the tree in full shade for two or three weeks. Return it to partial sun when new growth looks strong and healthy.

September and October are clean-up and pruning months. Fall pruning of quince or crabapples can wait until leaves fall or you can prune for shape now, removing all long summer growth.

Black pines should also be pruned, leaving one, two, or three of the new candles that have grown from the terminals left when they were pruned in June or July. What candles you choose to keep will be determined by your design goal for each tree. If you have an instruc-



Jim Barrett

tor, have them explain the procedure. Remove old needles, especially those hanging down.

Junipers may be trimmed to maintain their shape. Within reason, they may be trimmed rather drastically this month so that the new growth fills in to take the old growth's place—a good practice once or twice a year to keep the bonsai shape we strive for.

Pruning hard will also give you an opportunity to wire the secondary and tertiary branches, a tedious but important task. However, try not to prune shimpaku too hard. They do not respond well to drastic foliage removal.

The next two months are important ones. What you do to your trees now will

reflect favorably or unfavorably on your design next spring. Watch for heavy top growth on elms, zelkova, and trident maples. Remove thick vertical and horizontal branches now so they have time to start healing before the trees go into dormancy. Remember to watch for signs of disease and pests.

Refreshments	
Sept.	Rick Boyer
Oct.	Ken Fuentes
Nov.	Arbi Baghdanian

Bonsai Show at Ventura Botanical Gardens Update

Diana Boydston, Bonsai Club of Santa Barbara treasurer/membership chair and Ventura Botanical Gardens volunteer, reports that the bonsai show at the Gardens will repeat in 2024. We will announce the event in this newsletter next year. Meanwhile, Diana welcomes inquiries about the show. Please contact her at DianaBoydston.BCSB@gmail.com.

CVBS Niche Displays

Niche Display Program

In the Niche Display Program, club members set up a mini exhibition display. Such a display consists of: the tree in a nice bonsai pot; a display stand; and an accent plant.

All these items are important to create the balance for a good display. We aspire to present the best display possible for everyone's pleasure and edification.

However, it is also our desire to give everyone an opportunity to learn by doing. So if any less experienced member feels their trees are not ready for a finished display, it is worthwhile creating a display that is a work-in-progress. It will be up to the club member to determine which category their display falls into, and then the work-in-progress display can become the talking point of work done, work intended, and suggestions from the floor.

We encourage all members to sign up for the niche display! Please have a look at your calendar (see the list of 2023 display volunteers at right) and let us know when you would like to present your display.

—Editor

Niche Displays	
Sept.	Damon DuBois
Oct.	Volunteer Needed
Nov.	Volunteer Needed
Dec.	No Niche Holiday Potluck

CVBS Membership

Interested in CVBS?

The Conejo Valley Bonsai Society is open to anyone interested in the horticultural art of bonsai. If you are not a member, consider joining now. We meet at 7:30 PM on the third Thursday of every month in the Westlake Village City Hall Community Room (31200 Oakcrest Drive, Westlake Village, CA 91361). Membership includes presentations by bonsai experts, workshops, critiques, member swap meets, field trips, a custom-made name badge, and this award-winning newsletter.

It's easy to join. Annual dues are \$25 for one, or \$30 for couples. Simply write a check (made payable to the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society) and mail it to: CVBS Membership, c/o Nancy Smeets, 837 Rim Crest Circle, Westlake Village, CA 91361, or bring it to our next meeting.

—Nancy Smeets

Bonsai Innovation at the 'Avant Garden' Show

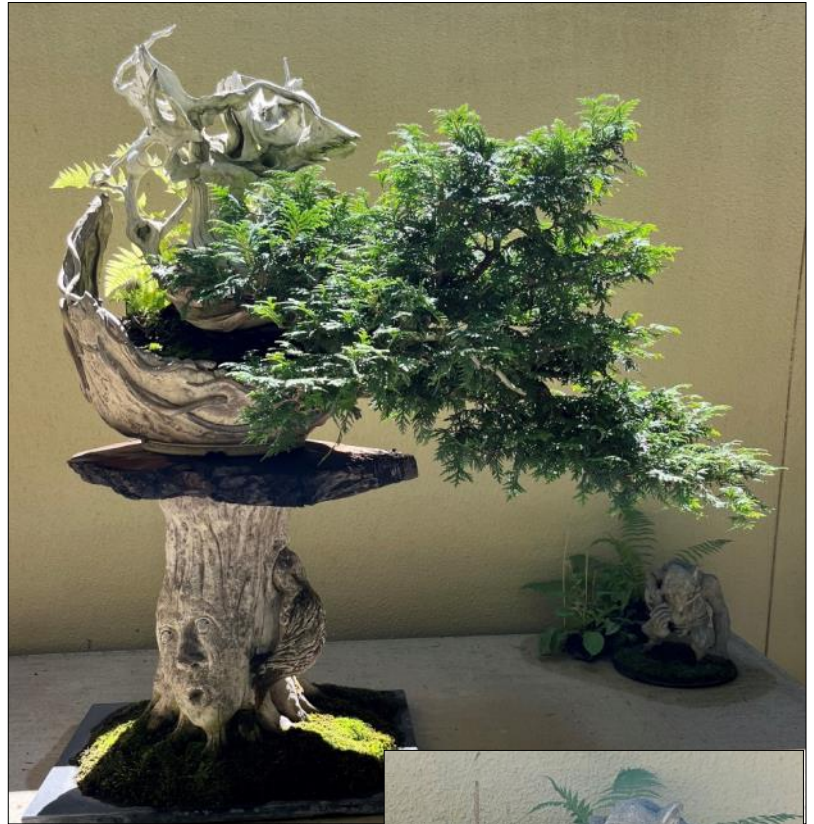
By Mike Blumenberg

I had the opportunity in August to visit the Pacific Bonsai Museum near Seattle and see their special exhibition titled "Avant Garden." The brochure that accompanied the exhibition explains that its title plays off the French word "Avant Garde," which describes artists who are "inventive, unorthodox, and ahead of their time." The exhibition displays works from bonsai artists who were trained in the "traditions of bonsai" but also explored radical designs that are an "expression of themselves, their culture, and their time."

As with most modern art, I liked some, didn't like some, and simply didn't understand others.

One of my favorites was Michael Hagedorn's work titled "Toppling Tradition," which combines a shore pine with an Itoigawa juniper on an elevated metal frame. Another was Greg Brendon's work titled "Cascade Grill." It also features a stone pine, but this tree is planted in a discarded grill lid. But my real favorite was the "Demon Cedar" by Nick Lenz, which shows an eastern white cedar displayed on a weathered trunk with a demon face and accompanied by a grumpy troll.

I added a copy of the exhibition's brochure to the CVBS library so you can see more pictures of art and each artist's intent. 🌲



Nick Lenz's 'Demon Cedar' (top right) and its companion troll (inset).

Michael Hagedorn's 'Toppling Tradition' shore pine (above) and juniper (inset).

'Cascade Grill' by Greg Brendon (right).

Photos by Mike Blumenberg

Restoration and Refinement in Videos

By Ken Martin

Online Video Review: one video reviewed this month shows the restoration of a California juniper to its creator's original design, the other demonstrates how to refine a literati bonsai's shape.

Bob Hilvers, narrator
GSBF-Clark Bonsai Collection
Fresno, California

YouTube: Yamadori and the Contribution of Japanese Americans to the Art of Bonsai
4 Minutes

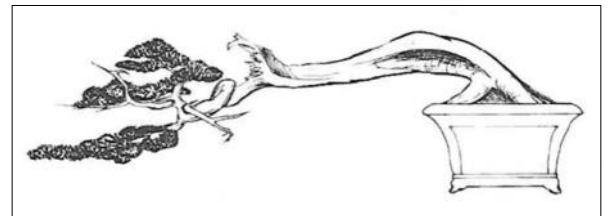
This is a California Juniper John Naka and another fellow collected in the Sand Canyon area fifty years ago. The object of this video is to show what was done to bring this tree back into the shape shown in John Naka's sketch after his original styling many years ago.

The artists were not mentioned in this video. But I recognized Bob Hilvers as the narrator, and I got a glimpse of Ryan Neal of Bonsai Mirai in the video.

The California juniper (top right) before current styling.

You can see the restored styling close to what John Naka envisioned some fifty years ago (right).

John Naka's sketch of his original vision (bottom right).



Bjorn BJORHOLM
Eisei En Bonsai Nursery
Nashville, Tennessee
YouTube: Styling a Virginia Pine Literati Bonsai
14:21 minutes

Bjorn BJORHOLM, owner of Eisei En Bonsai Nursery, said a shogun got tired of being a shogun and retired to Kyoto to be a literati or bunjin (translation: scholar) around 1400 CE. At that time any bonsai, no matter the style, was called a literati or bunjin as a tribute to the former shogun's efforts. It wasn't until the 1800s that those names were used only for trees with long thin trunks and some foliage near the top. It wasn't until the last century or so that Japanese bonsai artists started putting curves in the trunk.

The tree Bjorn worked on here has a very straight trunk. He thinned some needles from the top branch to be more equal to the one below. He then wired and moved the bottom branch closer to the trunk. He plans to move it even closer in several increments over the next several months. He said the needle buds on literati bonsai are turned closer to vertical than other styles to emphasize their delicacy. He expects to see 25 percent more foliage in the next couple of years prior to putting this tree in a show.

Bjorn has just announced he will be selling off his nursery, trees, equipment, everything in early 2024 and he, his Chinese-born wife, and two-year old daughter will be moving to Kyoto, Japan and starting a nursery there with plans to open early 2025. He still plans to produce videos incorporating visits and discussions with local Japanese bonsai masters. 🌲

Bjorn BJORHOLM with the Virginia pine before (below, left) and after (below, right) he refined its styling.



All screen captures by Ken Martin

Semi-Cascade ‘Sea Serpent’ Japanese Maple

Editor’s Note: David Whiteside provided the niche display at CVBS’s August 2023 meeting. He showed this semi-cascade Japanese maple. Here’s what David says about his tree.

I acquired this Japanese maple in a \$255 workshop at the Golden State Bonsai Federation’s fall convention in 2008. In its nursery can, it was positioned as an upright tree. I was disappointed because I could not find a good way to style it in that position. The workshop leader, Lotus Bonsai Nursery owner Scott Chadd, suggested I try turning it on its side. We both immediately saw its potential as a slanted or semi-cascade bonsai. Originally, it was a two-line semi-cascade with a secondary apex above and to the right, but that trunkline died (note the large scar), so I restyled it as a single-line bonsai. I like the gnarly curving trunk so have kept the twisting exposed roots to give an overall impression of a sea serpent.

David Whiteside’s semi-cascade Japanese maple (below) is styled as if a sea serpent rising from the water.



Photo by David Whiteside

CVBS Bonsai Library at Your Service

Please remember to return any overdue items borrowed from the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society library. But also remember that if you want a good bonsai book or DVD to review, you can see me during a meeting or give me a call and request a book, pamphlet, periodical, or DVD. For a complete list of our library holdings, please see “Library” under the “Resources” tab on the revamped CVBS website www.cvbs-bonsai.org.

—Mike Blumenberg

Book of the Month

World War Bonsai, Remembrance & Resilience (published by the Pacific Bonsai Museum, May 2021).

Our next Book of the Month is *World War Bonsai, Remembrance & Resilience*. This small pamphlet was originally published to accompany a special exhibit by the same name at the Pacific Bonsai Museum from August 2020 to October 2021. It tells fascinating vignettes about individual artists who kept the art of bonsai alive through World War II, both here in the United States and in Japan.

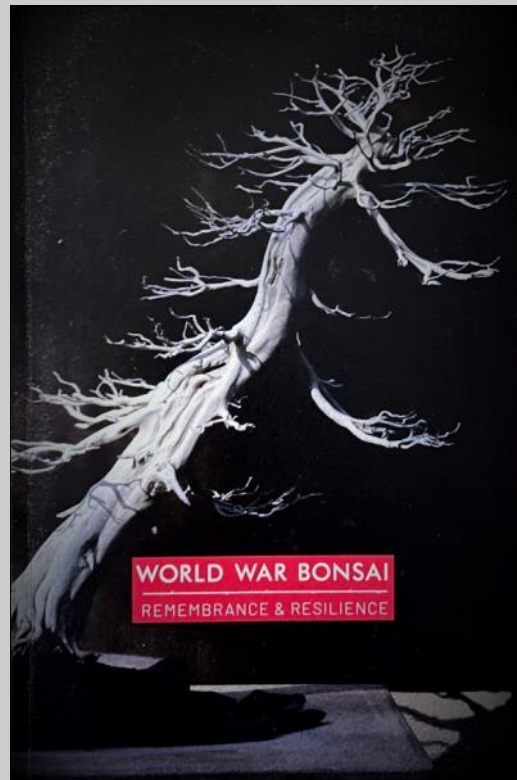
The stories are told through a series of personal anecdotes that are at times sad, inspirational, and remarkable. We have a rich legacy of bonsai artistry in Southern California and an article about Camp Amache (a Japanese internment camp in Colorado) explains how interred Japanese bonsai artists (Toichi and Kaneji Domoto, Sam Doi, Morihei Furuya, and Frank Nagata) kept a few bonsai at the camp. After their release, Doi, Furuya, and Nagata returned to Los Angeles. These three artists were later joined by John Naka, and this group founded the California Bonsai Association.

The pamphlet’s graphics provide a glimpse into the history of bonsai as well as highlighting several beautiful bonsai from the exhibition. The symbolism of the cover photo is striking: a deceased bonsai as a memorial to the millions of lives lost during World War II. It was an Eastern White Cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*), by Reiner Goebel; photo by Francesa Sarpola.

The Golden Atlas Cedar (artist Mas Imazumi) perched on an ammunition crate provides another powerful image while the photo of foreign service members touring a Japanese bonsai nursery after the war reflects the spark of interest that helped export this historically Asian art form.

You can check out this pamphlet for yourself at our next CVBS club meeting.

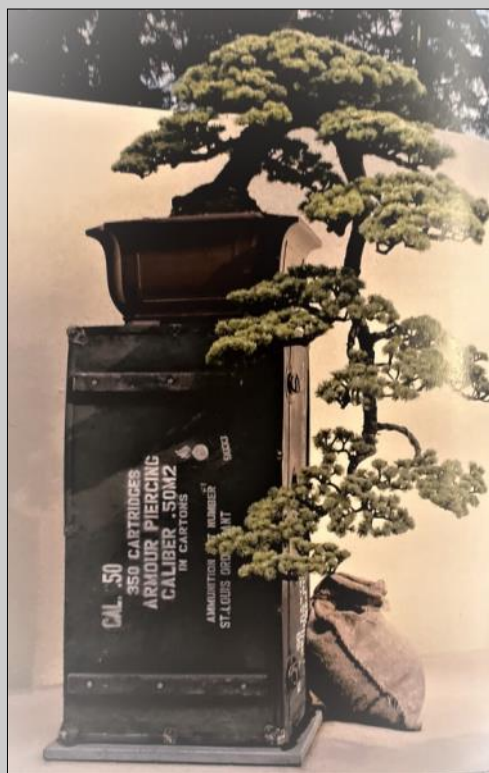
—Mike Blumenberg



World War Bonsai (top, right), published by the Pacific Bonsai Museum. The bonsai on the cover is a deceased Eastern White Cedar.

A Golden Atlas Cedar (left) with an ammunition case as its display stand.

Foreign service members (right) visiting a Japanese bonsai nursery.



Photos by Mike Blumenberg

Coming Events (Click on the Addresses to visit Websites or send Emails)

In-person bonsai events have returned (see below). Most gardens also are open—confirm status and Covid protocols of the garden ahead of time. We also list virtual bonsai events.

2023

September

September 23 – 24, 2023 Penryn, California

The Sierra Bonsai Club will display bonsai and suiseki in the temple as well as outdoors in conjunction with the Placer Buddhist Church Food & Cultural Festival Bazaar all weekend, September 23, 10:00 AM – September 24, 4:00 PM. Dine in the outdoor covered tents with friends/family, visit cultural booths of food and crafts, bingo, entertainment, & children's games. A bonsai demonstration will be inside the temple. The bonsai will be auctioned at the completion of the demonstration. Winner must be in attendance. 3192 Boyington Rd, Penryn, CA. For more information, call (916) 300-8103.

October

October 14 – 15, 2023 Union City, California

Yamato Bonsai Kai Show. Exhibition of bonsai trees, plant sales, and vendors. Free admission and free parking. Demonstrations both days at 1:30 PM, with Jonas Dupuich on Saturday and Yamato Bonsai Kai Club demonstrator Howard Correa on Sunday. October 14, 10:00 AM – October 15, 4:00 PM. 32975 Alvarado-Niles Road, Union City, CA 94587. Demonstration trees will be raffled off as grand prize each day. For more info and updates find us on Facebook by searching "Yamato Bonsai Kai". Phone: (+1) 510-378-9150 or Email: irishfishboy@yahoo.com.

October 14 – 15, 2023 Oakland, California

East Bay Bonsai Society show features an impressive exhibit of quality bonsai as well as a demonstration by Jason Chan, owner of Eastern Leaf Bonsai Nursery, past board member of GSBF, and author of a bonsai book dedicated to helping beginners and new bonsai enthusiasts. October 14, 10:00 AM – October 15, 4:00 PM. Lakeside Park Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Ave, Oakland, CA 94610. There will also be a raffle, silent auction and a sale of bonsai and related materials. For information, visit website www.eastbaybonsai.org. Or contact Michael Hylton mhylton@rocketmail.com.

October 20 – 22, 2023, Santa Nella, California

Golden State Bonsai Federation Rendezvous at Santa Nella, 13070 CA-33, Santa Nella, CA 95322. October 20, 10:00 AM PDT – October 22, 4:00 PM PDT. • Bonsai Sales • Auction • Workshops • Lectures • Community. Very little information is available at this time. We will publish more as it's made available. Please visit www.gsbfbonsai.org.

October 21 – 22, 2023, Sacramento, California

Capital City Bonsai Show, October 21, 10:00 AM – October 22, 3:00 PM. 3330 McKinley Blvd, Sacramento, CA 95816. This group show features tree and suiseki displays from participating area clubs. This is all the information available at this time. Watch this space for details as they are released. Please visit www.abasbonsai.org.

CVBS Program

Kusamono Workshop Delights Participants

On August 17, 2023, Debra Mauz-Melitz led a demonstration-kum-workshop about the creation of kusamono in hypertufa pots. Ten CVBS members participated. All went home with a kusamono in one of the pots Debra hand made for the event. She provided not only the pots but also all the plants, soil, and tools.

—David Whiteside

Ten CVBS members in the kusamono workshop (below).

Debra Mauz-Melitz (below, left).

CVBS member Min Xue works on her kusamono (below, right).

