



# 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  
3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the Month  
7:30 PM – 9:00 PM

Visit Our Website  
[www.cvbs-bonsai.org](http://www.cvbs-bonsai.org)

## President's Message

# It's CVBS Annual Exhibition Time!

By Damon DuBois

The Conejo Valley Bonsai Society's 20th Annual Exhibition at Gardens of the World is just around the corner! It will happen on Friday, November 10th from 9:30 AM to 4:30 PM, and Saturday the 11th from 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM. Ken Fuentes will do a demonstration at 12 PM Saturday.

We will be exhibiting about 31 trees and have made a fairly big marketing push, so we're hoping for a good turnout. Exhibits like ours are very important for introducing the public to bonsai, growing the bonsai community, and awareness of bonsai in general. I want to thank everyone who has volunteered to help with our exhibition!

Our November monthly meeting will be a workshop, so bring your trees!

Please also remember that in December CVBS holds our annual Holiday Potluck, Raffle & Auction. It all happens on our normal meeting night of December 21st. Festivities begin at 7:30 PM in our regular space, Westlake Village's Community Room.

Everyone please bring a dish for the potluck buffet: main course, salad, desert, or other (see Sue Falkin's item, right). Please put some thought into what you could bring and how many people



Damon DuBois

will be in your party. Members are encouraged to bring their partner or a friend.

The Holiday Potluck's raffle and auction are our main fundraisers for the year, so please bring your wallets, purses, or check-books!

About two weeks ago, the Golden State Bonsai Federation held its biannual Rendezvous. This event was really successful, was a lot of fun, and very inspiring. It brought in well-known professionals from all over the state. World-

renown Bjorn BJORHOLM was the headliner. The next GSBF Bonsai Rendezvous will be in 2025. (See related story, page 4.)

See you at our Exhibition on the 10th and 11th, and the meeting on November 16th! 🌳

## Membership

# Welcome Wagon

By Nancy Smeets

Please join me welcoming three new members of the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society: Alejandro Centeno, of Oxnard; Darren Horrocks of Simi Valley; and Ristin Wilson of Camarillo. All have joined in the past three months. We are so pleased you all decided to become CVBS members. Thank you and welcome to the club! 🌳

## Refreshments

# Potluck Planning

By Sue Falkin

Conejo Valley Bonsai Society members please begin thinking about the dish you will be contributing to our December Holiday Potluck. I will provide a signup sheet for the potluck during our November meeting. If you are unable to attend the November meeting, please send me an email to ensure all members have signed up for our potluck. My email address is [shebacoleman@hotmail.com](mailto:shebacoleman@hotmail.com) and use Subject: Bonsai Club December Potluck.

Thank you for helping make our annual Holiday Potluck another huge success! 🌳

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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— <b>BRING YOUR TREES</b>
February 16	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting & Presentation: Trimming junipers led by Marj Branson followed by Workshop— <b>BRING YOUR TREES</b>
<b>SATURDAY</b> March 4	1:00 – 4:00 PM: Workshop on Potting Ventura County Nursery, 4595 Balcom Canyon Road, Somis <b>BRING YOUR TREES (CLUB WILL SPONSOR SOIL)</b>
March 16	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting & Presentation: Wiring a tree into the pot led by Ken Martin followed by Workshop— <b>BRING YOUR TREES</b>
April 20	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting & Presentation: Bugs & Fungi led by Ken Fuentes followed by Workshop— <b>BRING YOUR TREES</b>
<b>SATURDAY</b> 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
<b>SATURDAY</b> May 6	1:00 – 4:00 PM: Workshop: Bring Your Own Trees Ventura County Nursery, 4595 Balcom Canyon Road, Somis <b>BRING YOUR TREES</b>
May 18	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting & Presentation: Fertilizers led by Ken Martin followed by Workshop— <b>BRING YOUR TREES</b>
June 15	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by <b>DEMONSTRATION</b> —PETER MACASIEB
July 20	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop and <b>Swap Meet</b> — <b>BRING YOUR TREES AND OTHER ITEMS</b>
August 17	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by <b>DEMONSTRATION</b> —DEBRA MAUZ-MELITZ
September 21	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by <b>PEER CRITIQUES I</b> — <b>BRING YOUR EXHIBITION TREES</b>
October 19	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by <b>PEER CRITIQUES II</b> — <b>BRING YOUR EXHIBITION TREES</b>
November 10–11	<b>NOTE: FRIDAY – SATURDAY</b> <b>20TH ANNUAL CVBS EXHIBITION</b> GARDENS OF THE WORLD
November 16	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting with <b>Club Elections</b> followed by Workshop— <b>BRING YOUR TREES</b>
December 21	7:30 PM <b>HOLIDAY POTLUCK, RAFFLE &amp; AUCTION</b>

# Maybe Still Time for Selected Pot-to-Pot Moves

By Jim Barrett

November can be a frustrating month for hobbyists as well as for our trees. Most trees will continue to grow as long as the weather stays balmy with warm nights (above 45 degrees F).

So what to do? If the weather stays warm, we can still repot (pot-to-pot) black pines and most junipers. It would be better to wait until spring, but if you can't and have been waiting for cooler weather, it can be done now using common sense with regard to soil and root removal.

If your maple leaves are still relatively fresh, they might give you some fall color. If the leaves are tired and worn out, think about removing them. Make sure they are destroyed and not left on branches or soil surfaces of the bonsai. If you are planning to remove the leaves, then spend some time pruning your unwanted twigs, branch-



Jim Barrett

es, and deadwood.

Check all wire on your trees this month and remove it if it was applied last spring or if it is beginning to scar the bark.

Black pines should have had their fall candle and branch pruning by now, but if it was not done last month go ahead and do it this month.

Watch for pests, especially red spider mites on junipers. If the weather stays warm,

you may find aphids on your crabapples, quince,

and other fruiting bonsai. Check for scale on elms.

This month is a good time to restyle junipers and black pines. They will develop their foliage mass quicker in the spring.

Refreshments	
Nov.	Arbi Baghdanian
Dec.	<b>HOLIDAY POTLUCK</b>
Jan.	Sue Falkin
Feb.	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>

**November can be a frustrating month for hobbyists as well as for our trees.**

## 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 – 2024 display volunteers at right) and let us know when you would like to present your display.

—Antonio Viscarra

Niche Displays	
Nov.	Rolando Guevara
Dec.	No Niche Holiday Potluck
Jan.	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>
Feb.	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>

## 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 Collections Exhibit at the Rendezvous

By Mike Blumenberg

The Golden State Bonsai Federation (GSBF) Rendezvous was held in Santa Nella on 20 – 21 October 2023. One of the highlights of the Rendezvous was the GSBF Collections Exhibit, which showcased some of the finest bonsai from the three GSBF public collections:



- Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt, Oakland;
- Clark Bonsai Collection in the Shinzen Friendship Garden, Fresno; and
- GSBF Collection at the Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens, San Marino.

Shown here are some of the best bonsai from the best collections in California. 🌲



**California Juniper (right).** Donated by eighteen generous friends of the Huntington. This tree was collected by Harry Hirao and styled by Masahiko Kimura at the 2006 GSBF Convention, where a bidding war at the auction was won by eighteen people who pooled their funds. In 2009, it was repotted by Ben Oki and Jim Barrett in a new pot made especially for this tree. A few years ago, Ryan Neil refined the branch structure.



**Mendocino Pygmy Cypress (right).** Donated by the estate of Frank Carrison. Mendocino Pygmy Cypress trees are native to the coastal pygmy forest of Mendocino County where their growth is naturally stunted by the dense, silty soil. This tree was donated to the BGLM by the estate of Frank Carrison in 2006. It was maintained by Andrea Burhoe and Kathy Shaner until 2019 and more recently by Gary Tom and Alise Offeman.

**Elm (left and detail right).** Donated by Shig Miya. Shig began styling this elm more than 60 years ago as one of John Naka's first students. He donated it to the GSBF Collection in 2001.



*More photographs on page 8*

Photos by Mike Blumenberg

# Sacrificial Branches and Torched Jin

By Ken Martin

Online Video Reviews: Tom Lau on sacrificial branches and Bjorn BJORHOLM shows how to style a field-grown Japanese black pine.

**Tom Lau**  
**Baikoen Bonsai Kenkyukai**  
**Los Angeles, California**  
**YouTube: Secrets of Sacrificial Branch Growth**  
**7.5 Minutes**

Tom Lau is a member of the Los Angeles-based Baikoen Bonsai Kenkyukai. He has quite a few YouTube demonstrations under their name.

Tom says there are several reasons for a sacrifice branch, and he showed three of them: fattening the lower trunk, fattening the whole trunk below the sacrifice branch, and healing a wound more quickly. He said that after three to four years the sacrifice branch has given all it can and it can be removed,



Tom Lau (above).



Fattening the base of a shohin trident maple (right).

**Bjorn BJORHOLM**  
**Eisei En Bonsai**  
**Nashville, Tennessee**  
**YouTube: Styling Field-Grown Japanese Bonsai.**  
**37.5 minutes**

Bjorn is closing his U.S. location and moving to Kyoto, Japan early next year. I hope he continues to put demonstrations and/or classes on the web. I thought I'd review one of Bjorn's older classes prior to his move. If you look closely at the jin, you can see it has been blackened by fire. For jin, he peels strands of deadwood a small amount at a time and then puts a torch to the area to make a more natural looking jin. This is a good tutorial on styling a field-grown tree.



Fig 1: Field-Grown Black Pine prior to styling (left).



Figure 2: Selected the smaller trunk for the top of the tree and Jinned the larger one (right).



Fig 3: Trimmed some of the top branches. About 75 pct foliage removed (left).



Figure 4: Wired all the branches. This is the new front. Finished for now (right).

All screen captures by Ken Martin

# Bonsai 911 Rescue Bougainvillea

**Editor's Note:** Nancy Smeets showed this bougainvillea as the niche display at CVBS's October 2023 meeting. Here's what Nancy said about this tree's unusual history.

My sister and brother-in-law bought a house in Fallbrook, inheriting dead and dying bougainvillea in ancient plastic pots with no drainage. Amazingly resilient, I rescued these poor neglected beauties, and only lost one in the attempt to resuscitate. That is why this pot is not exactly right—it was an emergency pot, and I consider it a training pot for this pre-bonsai.

I took off the longer high branch once I got it home from our club meeting, in planning on big bunches of flowers next year and a fatter base trunk. I will re-pot to grow that base next spring during the warm period, or summer depending on the temperature.

The accent fox pot is one I hauled home with me from Japan, with succulents in a kind of bunjin style. Something a bit different for an accent plant. Next time I do the niche, I will bring two or three accent plants and let the club help decide which one would be the best!

—Nancy Smeets

**Nancy Smeets displayed this rescued bougainvillea (right) at last month's CVBS meeting. She removed the long upper left branch after the meeting.**

**The accent succulent is in a fox pot (bottom left) Nancy brought home from Japan.**

**Note the moss and stepping stone details on the soil surface (bottom right).**



Photos by Nancy Smeets

# 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 CVBS website [www.cvbs-bonsai.org](http://www.cvbs-bonsai.org).

—Mike Blumenberg

## Book of the Month

*The Complete Book of Bonsai: A Practical Guide to Its Art & Cultivation* by Harry Tomlinson (Abbeville Press, New York, 1991).

I’m going to review another chapter of *The Complete Book of Bonsai* by Harry Tomlinson. I previously reviewed Chapters Four through Six, which covered Routine Maintenance, Propagation Techniques, and offered a Compendium of Trees and Shrubs for Bonsai. This month I’ll jump into Chapter Two “Creating a Bonsai.”

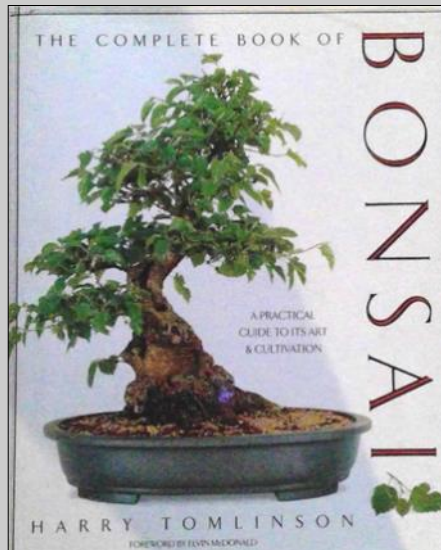
Tomlinson’s *Complete Book of Bonsai* is a great reference because it is a comprehensive guidebook. Similarly, Chapter Two “Creating a Bonsai” is a comprehensive review of what an aspiring bonsai artist needs to know about creating a bonsai: bonsai styles, pots, tools, tool usage, propagation, pruning, wiring, deadwood, and various planting options (e.g. group plantings, root over rock plantings, etc.). He succinctly covers lots of ground and effectively uses photographs and illustrations to support his text.

For example, the Tools section condenses a “bewildering number of tools” down to a two-page spread with pictures of the tools that you’ll probably find in most club member toolboxes. For beginners, Tomlinson recommends starting with a basic tool set (see photo, right). There are a few additional tools that more advanced bonsai artists may want (see photo bottom left). The next section of the chapter then explains how to properly use each of the essential tools (see photo bottom right).

Finally, the author notes that many bonsai artists use toolboxes to keep and carry their tools. I’m always intrigued by the different toolbox options that I see around the club and other bonsai workshops; everyone seems to have a unique solution!

You can check out this book and many others at our next club meeting.

—Mike Blumenberg



### A BASIC TOOL SET

Although tools are usually sold individually, it is sometimes possible to buy selected tools as a set. This example is a basic first tool set including the two essential pruning tools, trimming shears and a concave branch cutter, together with a wire cutter. More comprehensive sets are available for advanced work, but many bonsai enthusiasts prefer to buy an empty **tool case** and build up a collection of tools to suit their own range of work.



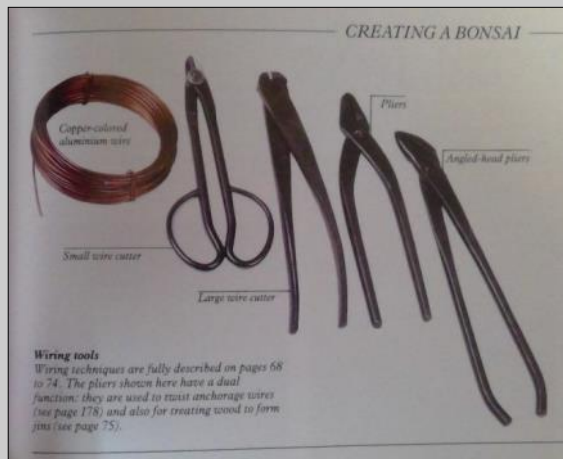
### TRIMMING SHEARS

This is the basic cutting tool for trimming branches, twigs and roots. The large handles allow you to use all your fingers in the cutting motion, giving maximum power and control. It is also possible to use your fingers independently to remove pruned twigs without putting the shears down.

When correctly adjusted, the rivetted joint of the shears should not be too tight: the handles should fall open in your hand, without you having to pull them open. Blades are sharpened to a fine knife-edge, rather than a scissor-edge, which enables them to cut cleanly without crushing the stem. The tips of the blades are used for delicate twig trimming. Heavier branches, up to approximately 6mm (1/4in) diameter should be cut closer to the joint of the blades where the metal is stronger and thicker. Take care when using the shears for root trimming, as potting soil containing grit can chip the blades.



When using trimming shears to cut shoots, take care to introduce the blades in a way that ensures you cut only the stem, not the foliage.



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

#### November

##### November 10 – 11, 2023 Thousand Oaks, California

Conejo Valley Bonsai Society 20th Annual Exhibition, Gardens of the World, 2001 Thousand Oaks Boulevard Thousand Oaks, CA 91362. Hours: 9:30 AM to 4:30 PM Friday and 9:30 AM – 3:30 PM Saturday. Demonstration: 12:00 PM Saturday. For more information, please contact Damon DuBois at [president@cvbs-bonsai.org](mailto:president@cvbs-bonsai.org).

##### November 18, 2023 Clovis, California

Fresno Bonsai Society Annual Bonsai Sale and Auction. Shop for Pre-bonsai and bonsai, new and used pots, books, and supplies. Large silent auction of spectacular bonsai, some from the Clark Collection. Vendors of all things bonsai are welcome. There will be a small fee for vendor tables. Saturday, November 18, 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM. 945 Clovis Ave, Clovis, CA 93611. Contact Genaro Cuan for more information. (+1) 559-305-1720.

### 2024

#### January

##### Jan 13, 2024, 10:00 AM – Jan 14, 2024, 4:30 PM, Arcadia, California

Baikoen Bonsai Kenkyukai—60th Winter Silhouettes Show, 301 N Baldwin Ave, Arcadia, CA 91007. First bonsai show of the year, bonsai trees in their leafless glory bonsai, pre-bonsai, pots, and tools for sale Giant raffle/auction and entertainment. Demonstrations both days at 1:00 pm. For more information, please contact Joe Galgoul, [joegalgoul@yahoo.com](mailto:joegalgoul@yahoo.com)  
Phone: (+1) 323-828-2162

*GSBF Rendezvous (continued from page 4)*

**Olive (right). Donated by Charles Nelson. This olive is believed to have been collected from an abandoned orchard and originally styled by a member of the old Akasaki Bonsai Club of Fresno. Held in the private collection of Charles Nelson for many years before being donated to the CBC, it was restyled by Ryan Neil in 2019.**



**White Pine (left). Donated by Tim Kong. This five-needle pine is an informal upright style that was purchased in Japan during the 1960's. Tim Kong acquired this tree in the 1990s and maintained it until he donated it to the BGLM in 2017. The tree was prepared for display in 2023 by bonsai professional Peter Tea and his assistant Eli Iristree.**



**A small bamboo accent plant (right).**

