



conejo valley BONSAI society

Volume 20 Number 12 December 2023

A member of the Golden State Bonsai Federation 

In This Issue

- **President's Message:**
You're Invited: CVBS
Holiday Potluck ... 1
- **CVBS Programs:**
The 2023 Schedule ... 2
- **Barrett's Bonsai Tips:**
Winter Watering Can Be Tricky—
Be Careful! ... 3
- **CVBS Refreshments** ... 3
- **CVBS Niche Displays** ... 3
- **CVBS Membership** ... 3
- **Bonsai Online:**
Norway Spruce as Not-So-Formal
Upright ... 4
- **Library/Book of the Month:**
*The Complete Book of Bonsai: A
Practical Guide to Its Art &
Cultivation* by
Harry Tomlinson ... 5
- **CVBS Event:**
20th Annual Bonsai Exhibit and
Demonstration... 6 – 17
- **Coming Events** ... 18
- **Membership:**
Welcome Wagon ... 18

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

You're Invited: CVBS Holiday Potluck

By Damon DuBois

Happy Holidays!
To celebrate, the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society will hold our annual Holiday Potluck, Raffle & Auction. It all happens on our normal meeting night of December 21. Festivities begin at 7:30 PM in our regular space, Westlake Village's Community Room. (See announcement this page.) Members are encouraged to bring their partner or a friend. This is a social event intended to get to know each other better.

Reminder: The evening's Raffle & Auction is the main fundraising event for our club. So please come prepared to pick up some bonsai treasures—bring cash or your checkbook.

Last month, in addition to our regular club meeting, CVBS held its 20th Annual Bonsai Exhibition and Demonstration on the



Damon DuBois

10th and 11th—our first in-person exhibition since 2019. It went as well as I could have hoped for!

Thank you so much to everyone who helped put this together! This was an exhibition to be proud of with a great amount of interest and engagement from the public. We displayed a lot of beautiful trees (see photos, pages 6 – 17), and the reaction from visitors to the displays was overwhelmingly positive. We

also signed up five new members on the first day of the exhibition.

At our November meeting, we held elections for club officers. Three of our officers were reelected to their positions: me as President, Antonio Viscarra as Vice President, and Ken Martin as Secretary. Members

(Continued on page 18)

Conejo Valley Bonsai Society December Potluck

Date: Thursday December 21st

Time: 7:30p - 9:00p

Location: Westlake Village City Hall

Spouse/Guest are welcomed, please make sure you have signed up with Sue Falkin.

A Raffle and Auction will take place.

Members will be providing the food and drinks

If you have any questions, please contact Sue Falkin at shebacoleman@hotmail.com

Contact Us

(Click on Email Address)

Officers

President

Damon DuBois

Phone (805) 558-2867

president@cvbs-bonsai.org

Vice President

Antonio Viscarra

Phone: (831) 238-1164

vice.president@cvbs-bonsai.org

Treasurer

Wendy DuBois

Phone (323) 243-4036

treasurer@cvbs-bonsai.org

Secretary

Ken Martin

Phone (805) 445-9221

secretary@cvbs-bonsai.org

Committees

Advisor

Ken Fuentes

Phone (805) 495-7480

advisor@cvbs-bonsai.org

Membership Chair

Nancy Smeets

Phone (213) 810-4280

membership.chair@cvbs-bonsai.org

Newsletter Editor

David E. Whiteside

Phone (805) 509-1830

cvbs.editor@earthlink.net

Program Chair

Nancy Smeets

Phone (213) 810-4280

program.chair@cvbs-bonsai.org

Publicity

Damon DuBois

Phone (805) 558-2867

publicity@cvbs-bonsai.org

Refreshments Chair

Susan Falkin

Phone (818) 970-8935

refreshments@cvbs-bonsai.org

Librarian

Mike Blumenberg

Phone (916) 390-1310

librarian@cvbs-bonsai.org

Field Trips & Activities

Nancy Smeets

Phone (213) 810-4280

activities.chair@cvbs-bonsai.org

Webmaster

Tom McGuire

website@cvbs-bonsai.org

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 10–11	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

Winter Watering Can Be Tricky—Be Careful!

By Jim Barrett

One of our concerns, when considering the weather this time of year, is keeping our bonsai properly watered. With the rains, cool weather, and the plants entering a slow growth or dormant period, one is lulled into thinking it is not necessary to worry about watering. On the contrary, we must be extra careful that our bonsai do not dry out completely.

Some of our driest days occur during the winter and, coupled with winds, plants may dry out too much and not show the effects until next spring.

To be sure, some bonsai seem to never dry out enough to require water, but this is not true of all trees, especially those in shallow or very small containers.

Check your trees every day or so, and water only those trees whose soil appears to be dry. The finger-in-



Jim Barrett

the-soil test is the best moisture gauge. If plants are receiving too much water (rain), try tipping the pot about 20 degrees and support this position with an appropriate block or wedge. Water will drain to the low end and run out of the drain holes. This procedure is used in Japan during the rainy season with great success.

Check the thickness of moss; if it seems to be quite thick, remove it. Too-thick moss does not allow the soil to “breathe” properly and may harbor pests. You should also remove any moss creeping

up the trunk. A stiff brush is a useful tool for this procedure.

Remember to remove fallen leaves and debris from bench-

Continued page 18

Refreshments	
Dec.	HOLIDAY POTLUCK
Jan.	Sue Falkin
Feb.	Rolando Guevara
March	Mike Blumenberg

Check your trees every day or so ...

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 for 2024 and let me know when you would like to present your display.

—Antonio Viscarra

Niche Displays	
Dec.	No Niche Holiday Potluck
Jan.	Volunteer Needed
Feb.	Volunteer Needed
March	Volunteer Needed

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

Norway Spruce as Not-So-Formal Upright

By Ken Martin

Online Video Review: AbdarRahman Eatwell celebrates the holiday season but misses the point of the formal upright style of bonsai.

AbdarRahman Eatwell

Bonsai Releaf

London, England

YouTube: Making a Christmas Tree Bonsai

14:25 Minutes

AbdarRahman Eatwell is a video creator and a visual storyteller. I thought it appropriate for my review this month to be the making of a Christmas tree out of a Norway Spruce—although it's not clear what makes this bonsai especially suited to the season other than this species is popular with those who celebrate the holiday.

It's a unique bonsai with a jin at the bottom, a lightning strike near the apex, and the apex a little to the side. Hardly a standard for a formal upright bonsai and something we on the West Coast of the U.S. would have a hard time relating to. As Eatwell himself says, "Spruce often grow with perfectly straight trunks, making them good subjects for formal upright bonsai." But he claims that the straight trunk of this specimen needs to be offset by an apex with exaggerated movement to maintain "visual interest," violating the aesthetic premise of a formal upright bonsai.

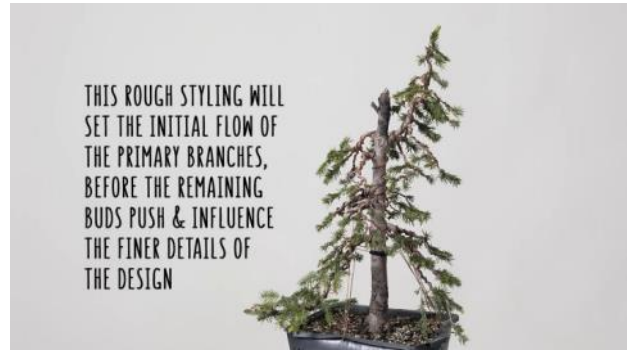
I'd give this demonstration an A grade for video production values and a C-minus for the actual styling of the tree.



The spruce at start (left).

At one year (right).

And at two years (below).



All screen captures by Ken Martin

Library

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.

—Mike Blumenberg

Book of the Month

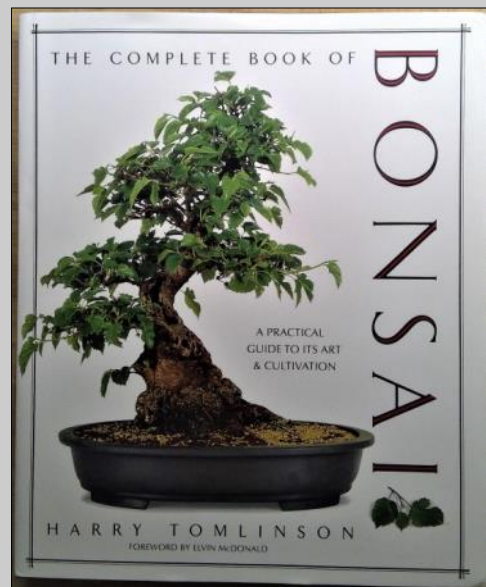
The Complete Book of Bonsai: A Practical Guide to Its Art & Cultivation by Harry Tomlinson (Abbeville Press, New York, 1991).

I’m going to review another section 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. Last month I jumped into Chapter Two: Creating a Bonsai to discuss Tools. This month let’s discuss Containers.

The Complete Book of Bonsai is a comprehensive guidebook and Chapter Two covers all aspects necessary to create Bonsai, including selection of a container or pot.

In this section, Tomlinson explains that a pot for bonsai is different than a pot for houseplants in that a bonsai pot needs larger drainage holes and is typically shallow. The insides of bonsai pots are usually unglazed while the exterior may be glazed or unglazed. Earth tones are the norm, but colorful glazed pots are sometimes used to complement flowering trees. The size and shape of the pot are selected to accentuate the size and shape of the tree, and Tomlinson includes pictures of a wide variety of pots. You can check out this book and many others at our next club meeting.

—Mike Blumenberg



Photos by Mike Blumenberg

20th Annual Bonsai Exhibit and Demonstration

By David Whiteside



The 2023 CVBS Annual Bonsai Exhibition at Gardens of the World before the crowd of visitors arrived.

The Conejo Valley Bonsai Society’s 20th Annual Bonsai Exhibition and Demonstration was held at the Gardens of the World in Thousand Oaks on November 10 – 11. This was the first live exhibition the club has held since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic four years ago. Members displayed thirty-four trees, including five in a stand for shohin bonsai.

There were eight boxwoods (including one Kingsville boxwood), making this the most popular genus shown. The second-most-displayed genus was Juniperus (to use the scientific name). There were four different species of juniper on display. Three other species tied for third with three each: olive, fig, and elm.

The remaining displays included two Rosemary bonsai and

one each Brush Cherry, Portuguese Cherry Laurel, Elephant Bush, Japanese Black Pine, Bougainvillea, Cork Oak, and Korean Hornbeam.

As a special treat for show attendees, there were four chrysanthemum viewing stones. These special stones have flower-like mineral formations visible.

Attendance was good both days although Saturday was the busier of the two days. Visitors asked many questions, which kept CVBS members busy. Club Advisor Ken Fuentes did a demonstration on Saturday. Refreshments Chair Sue Falkin made sure all volunteers were well fed. And David Williams photographed every display. 🌳

Ken Fuentes (standing in photo, right) worked on a willow leaf ficus (below before styling) on Saturday.



More photographs next page

Photos by David Williams except exhibit hall overview and demonstration photos by Damon DuBois.

Elm (*Ulmus parvifolia*)
by Rick Naber (right).



Chrysanthemum viewing stone (below) shown by Jim & Sue Falkin. The mirror image was created by cutting the stone in half to reveal the flower-like pattern. More chrysanthemum stones are on the following pages.



More photographs next page

**Juniper (*Juniperus procumbens*
'Nana') by Nancy Smeets (right).**



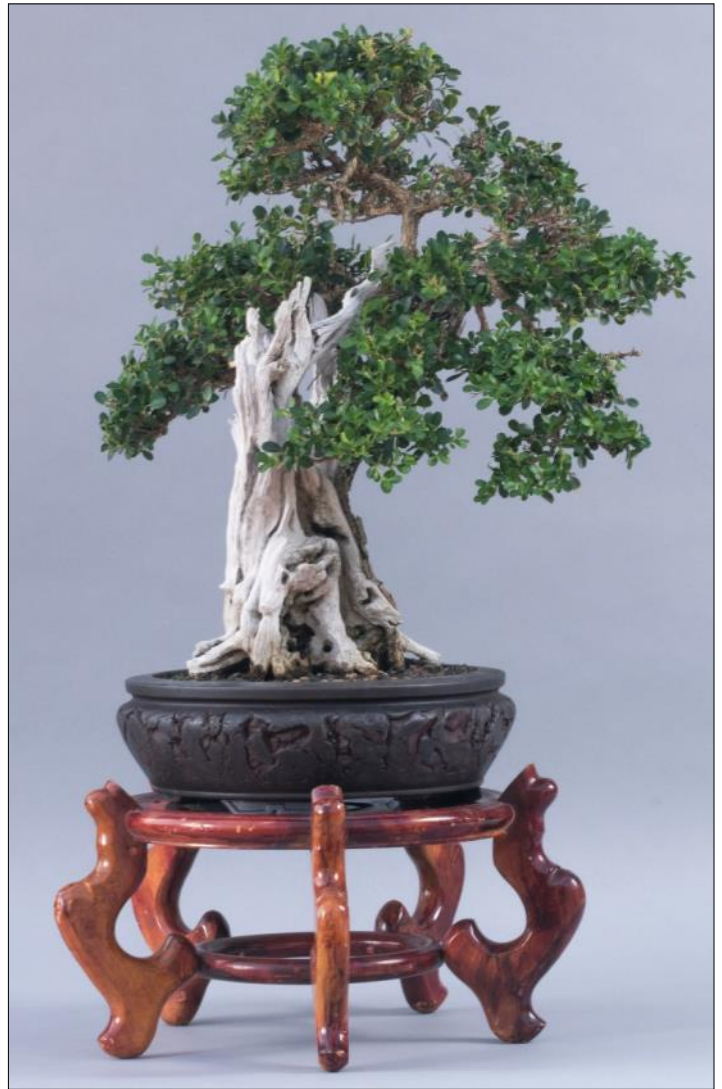
**Olive (*Olea europaea*)
by Jim & Sue Falkin (below, left)**

**Kingsville boxwood (*Buxus microphylla*
'Compacta') by David Whiteside
(below, right).**



More photographs next page

**Boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens*)
by Rick Naber (right).**



**Brush cherry (*Syzygium austral*) by Damon &
Wendy DuBois (below, left).**

**Ficus (*Ficus macrocarpa*) by
Antonio Viscarra (below, right).**



More photographs next page

Portuguese Cherry Laurel (*Prunus lusitanica*) by Rolando Guevara (right).



Cork Oak (*Quercus suber*) by Mike Blumenberg (above).

Boxwood (*Buxus microphylla* var. Japonica) by Ken Martin (right).



More photographs next page

Femina Juniper (*Juniperus chinensis* 'Foemina')
by Rick Naber (below).



Shimpaku Juniper (*Juniperus chinensis* 'Shimpaku')
by Nancy Smeets (above).

Willow Leaf Fig (*Ficus salicaria*) by David Whiteside (below).



More photographs next page

**Boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens*)
by Rick Naber (right).**



**Chrysanthemum
viewing stone (above)
shown by
Jim & Sue Falkin.**



**Rosemary (*Salvia Rosmarinus*)
by Mike Blumenberg (above).**



**Olive (*Olea europaea*)
by Ken Martin (right).**

More photographs next page

**Shohin Display
by Nancy Smeets (right).**

**Clockwise from top center:
Juniper
(*Juniperus*)**

**Rosemary
(*Salvia rosmarinus*)**

**Bougainvillea
(*Bougainvillea glabra*)**

**Boxwood
(*Buxus microphylla*)**

**Catlin Elm
(*Ulmus parvifolia*)**



**Boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens*)
by Rolando Guevara (right).**

**Elephant Bush (*Portulacaria afra*)
by Ken Fuentes (below).**



More photographs next page

**Femina Juniper (*Juniperus chinensis*
'Foemina')** by Rick Naber (right).



Chrysanthemum viewing stone (above)
shown by Jim & Sue Falkin.



Elephant Bush (*Portulacaria afra*)
by Damon & Wendy DuBois (below).



Korean Hornbeam (*Carpinus turczaninovii*)
by Mike Blumenberg (right).



More photographs next page

Japanese Black Pine (*Pinus thunbergia*) by Nancy Smeets (right).



Juniper (*Juniperus communis*) by Mike Blumenberg (below).



Boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens*) by Rick Naber (below).



More photographs next page

**Willow Leaf Fig (*Ficus salicaria*)
by Ken Fuentes (right).**



**Chrysanthemum viewing
stone (below) shown
by Jim & Sue Falkin.**



**Kishu Shimpaku
Juniper (*Juniperus
chinensis* 'Shimaku')
by Rick Naber (right).**



More photographs next page

**Olive (*Olea europaea*)
by David Whiteside (right).**



**Chinese elm (*Ulmus parvifolia*)
by Jim & Sue Falkin (above).**



**Boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens*)
by Rick Naber (right).**

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.

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
Phone: (+1) 323-828-2162

February

February 17 – 18, 2024, Lakeside Park Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Ave, Oakland, CA 94610

Live auction of approximately 115 bonsai trees, display stands, pots, and more. Sale of bargain priced bonsai pots, trees, stands, and more. 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM, Join us! Phone: (+1) 7077629154

February 24 – 25, 2024, San Marino, California

Bonsai-A-Thon at the Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, 1151 Oxford Rd, San Marino, CA 91108, in the Brody Botanical Center. 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM. This is a fundraiser for the Golden State Bonsai Federation Collection.

April

April 13 – 14, 2024, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM, Sacramento, California

American Bonsai Association Annual Show, 3330 McKinley Blvd, Sacramento, CA 95816. Headliner, Tyler Sherrod, Professional Bonsai Artist/Teacher from Georgia, will conduct a live demonstration each day at 1:30PM. A large Exhibit of beautiful bonsai developed by our members. Northern California vendors selling all things bonsai. Member Concession Tables • Beginner's Workshop: Sunday, 10 AM-12 PM, includes tree, pot, and instruction (Call Dodie Newman at (916) 799-9575 to reserve a space.) Daily Benefit Raffle will include each day's demonstration trees and many bonsai and related items. Check out our website www.abasbonsai.org for more information. Phone: (+1) 916-799-9575.

President's Message (Continued from page 1)

elected Wendy DuBois as Treasurer. She will take over recording club finances in QuickBooks, which until now has been generously done by our past president, Marj Branson. In addition, Nancy Smeets has been appointed as Field Trips & Activities Chair.

On November 26th, we took a field trip to the California Bonsai Society's sale at Yamaguchi Nursery in West LA. There was a lot of high-quality material available at great low prices. Everyone who joined the field trip went home with new trees.

We've had a lot of new members joining the club lately and have been growing fast. In response to this influx of new members, we will plan more structured workshops to help those new to bonsai develop the foundational skills needed to be successful in the art. We will cover such sub-

jects as wiring, pruning, repotting, watering, and most important of all, tree health. I'll have more information on these workshops as we finalize the details. 🌱

Membership

Welcome Wagon

By Nancy Smeets

Please join me welcoming three new members of the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society: Bill Arnold, Rochelle Wallach, and Valerie Johnson. We are so pleased you all decided to become CVBS members. Thank you and welcome to the club!

Barrett's Bonsai Tips (Continued from page 3)

es and soil surfaces. Remove any remaining leaves from deciduous trees except hornbeam. It won't hurt to remove hornbeam leaves, but since they remain on the tree after they turn brown, you may want to enjoy them.

If you do have deciduous trees, now through January is the best time to prune or remove heavy, unsightly top branches that have grown unnoticed during the year. Thin out or redirect primary branch terminal twigs. Cutting back to a secondary branch quite often is necessary to create new terminals that enhance the tree's design. Most maple secondary and tertiary branches are flexible at this time of year and can be wired and moved to fill or open a space.

Use this time to fine tune your deciduous trees.

A side benefit of winter pruning is it creates the opportunity to make old wood cuttings. Many times old

branches must be removed. Rather than throwing them away, try sticking them [in soil] as you would any cutting. If they grow, you have the makings of a good shohin material that may be several years old already.

Don't forget to pull or trim old needles on black pines.

Trim junipers to maintain their shape. Use dormant spray on all deciduous trees, Volck oil on evergreen and deciduous trees.

Repotting Japanese black pines and all junipers may be done next month. January and February are also great times for potting from nursery container to bonsai pot. I mention the January/February reminder to get you thinking about soil components, pots, and other supplies you should have ready before the time comes.

Have a great holiday season. 🌱