



Fresno Bonsai Society Newsletter

May 2017

Our Mission

The purpose of the Fresno Bonsai Society is to expand the knowledge and skills of Bonsai within its members while offering opportunities for appreciation of this art form to the broader community. We do this through the inspiration of the beauty of the natural world and the rich cultural heritage of Bonsai.

Greetings,

We have enjoyed a cool, moist Spring and a major bonsai event in the Koen-Nai No Bonsai at the Clark Bonsai Collection in Shinzen. The repotting season is quickly drawing to a close for this year. Many of us have new material purchased at the fundraiser that we are anxious to start working on, with hopes that it is healthy and robust enough to tolerate our plans! Those hopes will mesh well with our next meeting!

On May 8th, we will enjoy a workshop with the talented and humorous John Thompson. "JT" is a bonsai enthusiast, lecturer, demonstrator and artist from San Jose, California. He has served on the board of directors for ABS and the board of trustees for GSBF. He writes a monthly care column for several Bay Area clubs and has authored articles for ABS and other publications. In his workshops and demonstrations, he tries to utilize the unique characteristics or flaws in each tree that will set it apart from others of the same species. JT's experience and bonsai collection encompass a wide range of species and styles. He is best known for his passion for oak bonsai, Sierra junipers, boxwoods and other collected trees.

Note that our May meeting will be one week earlier than our usual schedule. We will conduct our business meeting from 9 until 10 AM. The workshop will run from 10 until 2 PM. The Bonsai Basics Class will be combined with the General Meeting for this workshop. The fee for participants will be \$20. There is no charge for observers. While he is noted for his talents with collected Oaks, JT will help with any species of bonsai. Bring your tree and tools and be prepared for a good time!

Great Talk at April Meeting

We really enjoyed a well organized and comprehensive discussion from the great Al Keppler at our April meeting. Along with a mastery of bonsai design, Al is a clear and humorous speaker. He provided a detailed handout as well. We will try to summarize the salient points here, but it's hard to do just to the huge amount of practical information about styling and how it should be applied to purchasing raw material.

He started by quickly reviewing the five basic bonsai styles. He then made a very important point: when selecting raw material, avoid the obvious. For example, if a procumbens juniper

has a long limb, do NOT immediately plan it as a cascade. Secondly, the size of the trunk is crucial to a good bonsai, therefore always look for the smallest and most compact bonsai in the tree. Don't be afraid to cut off all but a small portion of the original material to get a great trunk

If you do select a cascade, remember that sharp angled bends are far more interesting than curves.

Al discussed the concept of Visual Speed of the viewer; if the eye moves too rapidly to assess an object, it is disquieting. It is more pleasing for the eyes to rove around, explore and make brief comfortable pauses (but not complete stops.)



Factors which slow visual speed include texture of the container, bark and foliage, trunk movement, and features such as shari and jins.

He also noted that the Rhythm of the bonsai needs to be consistent; if the trunk has much movement and taper, the branches need movement and taper. If the trunk leans to one side, the foliage mass should be to the opposite side.

Mr. Keppler noted that there are two general approaches to bonsai design: Stylized Bonsai that tend to follow design rules closely and Natural Bonsai which do not follow rules as rigidly (and are often yamadori). Very good raw material for stylized bonsai is difficult to find and is often grown specifically for bonsai. That development often limits the style choices available to the artist. Neither stylized nor natural is better, each is a matter of personal taste or the Mental Model of what the artists sees as a bonsai.

He pointed out that the nebari sets the foundation for

Our bonsai and establishes the image of a tree in terms of stability and grounding. If too much root is visible or aerial roots, the tree often looks clumsy and ugly. Both ugly nebari and reverse taper in the trunk can really only be repaired by air-layering. This will add at least a year to the tree's development if successful.

Likewise, bar branches create a "visual stop" that is a non-starter for a good bonsai.

Thus, a buyer has to make important decisions at the time of purchase: 1) do I have the time and skills to repair defective nebari or reverse taper? 2) if I remove a bar branch, is there an alternative branch close by or can I graft one where needed? Al advised buying good material to begin with, rather than working on poor material for some years before realizing that even with better skills, this material will never be a good bonsai, or we won't have the time to achieve it.

He made several important points about branching:

- 1) thicker branches in the upper part of the tree are visual stops because they are unnatural.
- 2) The angle of branches is a visual cue about the age of a tree...mature trees have drooping branches due to weight and age
- 3) Lower branches are thicker because they are older
- 4) Older trees have more branch ramification
- 5) The apex of a mature tree is more rounded.

Next month Al will give a separate lecture on the historical significance of the Hogarth Curve... Our sincere thanks to Al Keppler for a great talk!



JT Thompson on May 6th

FBS in the 2017 Koen-Nai No Bonsai

The Fresno Bonsai Society provided the manpower and many of the activities for the annual fundraiser for the Clark Bonsai Collection at Shinzen on April 22-23. We had a very fine turnout and equally fine weather on Saturday, despite some disappointments. A bus load of bonsai enthusiasts from Sacramento were unable to attend due to a breakdown. Despite this, the live auction generated more than \$8000 and the silent auction another \$1300.

David Nguy and Peter Tea each provided truly outstanding and educational demonstrations.

Pat Galle took first place honors in the Tokokazari Competition, while Steve DaSilva and



Al Keppler placed second and third. (I believe this may be Al's third time as Miss Congeniality...)

I should mention that Al's little juniper was the hands-down favorite in the Tomadachi event!

The Spring Celebration of Cultures in the Shinzen was an outstanding success this year as well.



Bonsai Events in May

May 6 - 7, 2017 Sacramento, California Sacramento Bonsai Club: 71st Annual Bonsai & Suiseki Show at the Buddhist Church of Sacramento, 2401 Riverside Blvd. Show hours are Noon - 5 PM on Saturday and 10 AM - 4 PM on Sunday with demonstration at 2 PM each day. Demonstration by Sam Adina, followed by the demo raffle and more prizes. Free Admission.

May 20 - 21, 2017 Sacramento, California Satsuki Aikokai of Sacramento: Annual Bonsai Show will be held at the Shepard Garden Center, 3330 McKinley Blvd. Hours are Saturday 10 AM – 5PM, and 10 AM – 4PM, with demonstrations at 1 PM on both days by Yuzo Maruyama. Class “Create your own flowering azalea bonsai” at 11 AM daily with class fee \$20. Satsuki information booth, vendors, raffles, etc.

May 20 - 21, 2017 Palo Alto, California Akebono Bonsai Club and Kashu Suiseki Kai: 55th and 51st Annual Show held at the Palo Alto Buddhist Temple, 2751 Louis Rd. Show hours are Noon to 5 PM each day with demonstration at 2 PM, followed by demo raffle and door prizes. Free Admission.

Enjoy FBS on Social Media

Several new educational articles have been posted to the FBS website, including the first three of a five part series from Jonas Dupuich on selecting raw bonsai material. A slide presentation of thread grafting maples is available on the webpage. It follows the process used by Peter Tea in his class.

Please check the website every month for new information. The newsletter and next meeting information will be posted on the website monthly.

Please remember to Like the FBS and the Clark Bonsai Collection on Face Book. And follow the CBCS and the Shinzen Gardens on both Face Book and Instagram. Images of FBS activities will be posted monthly and CBCS images are put up almost daily.



Fresno Bonsai Society Calendar for 2016-2017

DATE	EVENT	ACTIVITY	LOCATION
September 10	First General Meeting	Book Sale and Bonsai Work	Shinzen Garden
September 17	Bonsai Basics	Introduction to Bonsai	Shinzen Garden
October 5-16	Big Fresno Fair	Bonsai and Suiseki Display	Fair Grounds
October 8	FBS General Meeting	Pot Selection- Bob Wright	Shinzen Garden
October 15	Bonsai Basics	Wiring, styling and growth	Kareen Baker's
October 26-30	GSBF Convention	Exhibits, Workshops, etc	Sacramento
November 12	FBS General Meeting	Tool Care- John Wright	Shinzen Garden
November 19	Bonsai Basics	First Annual Bonsai Development Team Challenge	2152 Carson Ave Clovis
December 3	Bonsai Yard Sale	Bonsai, pots, books etc for sale	736 West Browning Ave
December	FBS Christmas Party		TBA
December 11	Bonsai Basics	Students encouraged to attend David Nguy Workshop	Round Valley Nursery
January 14	FBS General Meeting	Annual Bonsai Raffle, Bonsai Critique, and "Preparing Your Bonsai for Show"	Woodward Park Library
January 21	Bonsai Basics	Bonsai Potluck, Pre-Bonsai in the Ground Sales, and Rock Planting Project	6470 Manning Ave, Fowler
February 11	FBS General Meeting	Workshop with Sam Adina Olive Bonsai	Woodward Park Library
February 18	Bonsai Basics	Bonsai Development Team Challenge Repotting	TBA
March 2-5	Fresno Home & Garden Show	Bonsai Exhibit, Demos, Bonsai Sales	Fair Grounds
March 18	Bonsai Basics	Bonsai Development Team Challenge	TBA
April 8	FBS General Meeting	TBA	Shinzen Garden
April 15	Bonsai Basics	Bonsai Development Team Challenge	TBA
April 22-23	Koen-Nai & Blossom Festival	Bonsai Show, plant sales, Bonsai Auction, Demos, Toko Kazari	Shinzen Garden
May 06 8AM	General Meeting & Workshop	Oak Bonsai- JT Thompson	Shinzen Garden
May 20	Bonsai Basics	Bonsai Development Team Challenge	TBA
June 10	FBS General	TBA	Shinzen Garden