

Fresno Bonsai Society Newsletter



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.

Officers of the FBS

President.....Mike Saul
 Vice President.....Chris Saldana
 SecretaryMarilyn Shelton
 Treasurer.....Bob Wright
 Board Members Suzette Follett
 John Wright
 Past President.....Dave Soho
 Newsletter ...Carol & John Wright

January/February 2021



President's Message

I hope February finds you all well and immunized soon. We have been blessed with another mild winter and there is hope for rain as I write this. Both comments would be odd, except in our current world. A generation ago we were talking about safe sex. Now we are talking about safe church and schools!

We are still trying to practice safe bonsai training. I am grateful to John Wright for urging me to organize that ZOOM meeting with Jonas Dupuich in January. Jonas is an outstanding teacher. I received only very good reviews. I hope those who missed the live presentation had an opportunity to watch the cloud video.

We will do the same thing for our February meeting. We will enjoy a ZOOM meeting with John Thompson on Saturday, February 20th, at 9 AM. Those of you who have been in the club for a couple years will remember an outstanding talk from JT on collecting native oaks two years back. He will discuss *Boxwoods and Thoughts on Repotting* this month. Notice that this meeting will be a week later than our usual second Saturday of the month. I am optimistic that by March, one of two things may happen: either the weather and the pandemic will permit us to

Upcoming Events

February 20th	FBS February meeting, 9 am to 11 am Zoom meeting
May 21—23rd	FBS participation at the Fresno H&G Show <i>Subject to County Health Approval</i>

conduct an outdoor meeting or we may be able to safely conduct our annual exhibit at the Fresno Home & Garden Show. If the latter does happen, it will likely be an outdoor event in late March. The Fresno County Health Department is the key factor in this decision. Once I know what the Home & Garden people plan, I will approach you all to find out if you wish to participate in the exhibit and sale or some variation.

I hope that the Bonsai Basics participants are gaining the fundamental skills they need to keep their trees healthy and on the road to development. I would like to thank Pete Schafert and Tim Robinson for committing their time and planning to their respective study groups. If there has been one benefit from the pandemic, it has been that it forced us to arrange small groups. Small groups are a far better environment for learning.

Another thing that I have learned is there is a broad spectrum of learning goals among our large group of Bonsai Basics students. Some are looking to take a deep dive into bonsai techniques and others are very content with only general information. The result is that attendance at Bonsai Basics meetings has been smaller than I anticipated. Better for everyone involved. It has been useful for me to learn this and to accept that this is a hobby and that every member of the FBS deserves to seek what they want from the club. My goal is to provide that to everyone.

Mike Saul



This month Mike Saul and Bob Wright had the pleasure of helping one of the very senior members of the FBS prune and wire some of his beautiful old trees. This was a reminder that the FBS looks out for our bonsai community. It's also a reminder that if you are a member and have an illness or crisis, you can contact us for help to water or care for your trees.

January FBS Zoom Meeting

This was our first attempt at a Zoom meeting for FBS. There was a strong turnout including some members from the Sacramento Bonsai Club. The Zoom meeting was recorded and is now available.

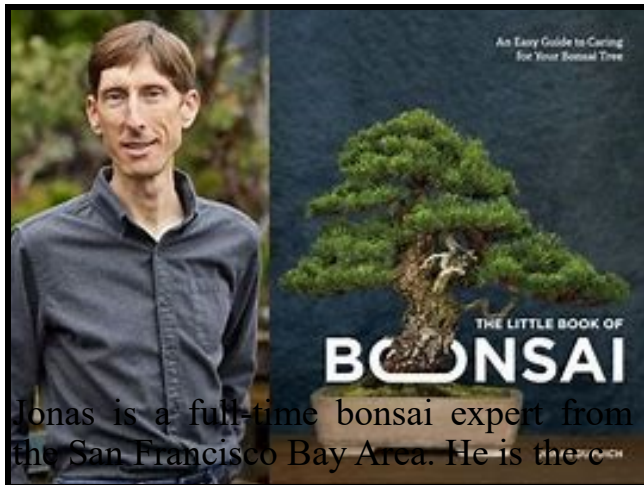
Mike asked if anyone was not receiving the FBS Newsletter. He also asked if those involved in Bonsai Basics had received the handouts. If not, they can contact Mike or their Bonsai Basics leader.

January Meeting continued

Regarding the annual Fresno Home and Garden Show, Mike said that the Fairgrounds and the County Health Department were still discussing a possible outdoor only setup for the event. They are expected to make a decision in the next few weeks. Mike ask for an indication of whether there was support from the FBS to setup and staff such an event this year. The event will be further discussed as we get more specifics.

Mike mentioned that members and their families that are dealing with Covid 19 can reach out to the FBS for help caring for trees if needed.

There being no other business or comments, Mike Saul introduced Jonas Dupuich.



Jonas is a full-time bonsai expert from the San Francisco Bay Area. He is the creator of *Bonsai Tonight*, one of the top websites in the world and author of the recently published book *The Little Book of Bonsai*. His presentation covered the topics of good genetics, good roots and good trunk. Some of his tips for growing good trees included:

- First strategy is to select a tree with “good genes”: with desirable traits like short internodes and small leaves and vigorous growth
- Cuttings are preferable because of the long time to grow from seed
- Commercial seeds are a mystery
- The primary or first priority during the first three years is circumferential root development
- A shallow wood box is ideal
- Roots don’t improve spontaneously in grow box...they need to be arranged

- Pines, like other trees require root development early, but development close to the trunk to the pot wall are important
- Cut longer roots
- Keep the soil close to the trunk so roots will grow there
- Pond baskets are better for pines which need to dry out more between watering and push roots closer to trunk as longer roots dry out near the sides of the basket.
- Stacking colanders allows roots to maintain moisture like deeper soil
- Placing colander in the ground reduces convenience of pruning
- Real young pines do not require akadama
- Growing in 100% lava with 1/8 to 1/16 particle size produces very green needles
- Jonas repots pines earlier than some professionals...February (now).

- Wiring primary branches early is necessary
- Keep in mind the dimension of branches early
- The radius of trunk curves determines the overall height of tree
- The primary attractive feature of junipers is curves (movement) and deadwood.
- Preserve every branch and wire everything in early development of junipers.
- Start Shari early
- Shohin junipers are usually grown from nursery stock but may take 25 years to develop
- The best time to start a bonsai was 20 years ago.
- A very useful strategy to develop quality bonsai is to grow trees in batches
- The grower can cull out bad trees
- Another good strategy is to study beautiful trees, go to shows
- Get help from experienced people

Urban Yamadori Project at Nick Trujillo's

FBS members Puneet Sra , John Wright, Cris Saldano and Seng Tran dug out a row of boxwoods. The 6 inches between the wall and the concrete driveway was a challenge but with some muscle and a pry bar, it happened. Good to be with FBS members!



Bonsai Almanac for February

We are in the midst of repotting season in our climate zone. Deciduous trees should be repotted first and conifers later, although junipers may be repotted now as well. Ume and Japanese maples are done first. There is a danger to deciduous species if repotted after the buds have opened. Too early is better than too late. (Trident maples, however, may be safely repotted as long as the new leaves are red.) Once trees are repotted, be careful to protect them from a sudden hard freeze or wind. Trident maples will tolerate very aggressive root pruning. Do NOT, however, bare-root conifers. Old garden soil from conifers should gradually be removed over 2-3 repottings. After repotting, trees should be left out in the sun (contrary to old advice) as heat from the sun will stimulate root growth. All species which are subject to mites or scale insects should be sprayed with dormant spray. If a deciduous bonsai, in shade, begins to bud, it should be placed out in direct sun. If left in shade, it will produce longer internodes and larger leaves. It is too early to fertilize, but iron, and other soil additives may be added. Gypsum is suggested for Black Pines if the local water is alkaline. Fruit bearing species may be pruned after blossoms have dropped. Cuttings for propagation may be started in late February and grafting on deciduous species should start this month. This is the final month to graft pines and other conifers. Watering remains problematic. It depends on our rainfall and temperatures. It must be individualized. Care should be taken to assess wired branches over the next few weeks, because a warm spell may suddenly push bud push and branch diameter causing wire cuts.

**The next meeting of the Fresno Bonsai Society
will be held on Saturday, February 20th at 9AM. This will be a Zoom meeting,**

We will have a presentation by John Thompson on boxwood bonsai. John presented an excellent program on oak bonsai last year to FBS members. John has some wonderful boxwoods and will be sharing aspects of their cultivation as bonsai. The Zoom app is free and can be used on phones, iPads, lap tops and desk top computers. If you need tech help, contact a member of the club or ask someone under 40. These sessions are live and interactive, so come with questions in mind. Just remember to share the air time.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

FBS is always in need of those willing to volunteer for upcoming activities.

Membership Dues

Membership dues for the Fresno Bonsai Society are \$40 per year for individuals or a family. Students are free. Checks should be made out to the Fresno Bonsai Society and given to Bob Wright, our treasurer. Please complete a membership form with your name, phone number and email (printed in large clear letters) when you pay your dues.