



Fresno Bonsai Society

Newsletter

January 2018

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.

Welcome to 2018!

The first meeting of the new year will be a different format. We will combine the General Meeting of the club, the Shohin Study Group and the Bonsai Basics Class in a single day-long event combined with a potluck lunch. All this will happen at Steve DaSilva's ranch in Fowler on Saturday, January 20. We will start at 10 AM. We'll have a brief business meeting. Steve has a lot of trees in his growing fields and many of these trees are for sale. Immediately after the business meeting Ray Theime will demonstrate how to create a forest planting and will lead Intermediate students. After lunch the Shohin Study Group will meet. The Bonsai Basics Group will divide into beginner and intermediate groups in the afternoon. The Intermediate folks will continue to work on forest plantings with Foemina junipers. The beginners will have a class on repotting. They will then work on repotting either their own trees or some maples provided by the club. These bonsai will be sold at the Koen-Nai in April as will the juniper forest plantings. Aluminum wire and bonsai soil will be available for sale in smaller denominations for those with few trees of their own. The club will provide wire and pots for the sale bonsai. Ron Bereman has kindly provided the junipers, wire and cut paste for the club at cost, with out thanks.

The club will provide hot dogs and sausage for the potluck, as well as water, coffee and tableware. Members are asked to bring a side dish, salad or dessert to pass. If your birth date is an even number,

Yard Sale 2017

December 2nd marked the 10th anniversary of the FBS Bonsai Yard Sale. The event has grown in attendance every year. We attract enthusiasts from northern and southern California as well as the central coast. This was the first year that it was conducted in the Clovis Botanical Garden. The new venue provided modestly more convenient unloading and parking. It also provided additional promotion from the CBG organization. In addition to sales by club members we had at least five bonsai retailers offering trees, pots, etc.

Customers included a mix of curious passers-by, local and Central Valley bonsai hobbyists, and buyers from Sacramento, Modesto and Los Angeles. Used pots were particularly hot items.

The Clark Bonsai Collection offered a wide spectrum of bonsai for sale as the organization attempts to liquidate duplicate species and styles.

Bob Hilvers sold several hundred dollars worth of trees.

All of the sellers and buyers seemed to go home happy with their sales or their new finds! The bargain prices in Fresno and the free



access to tables and customers are attractive to buyers and sellers. The FBS attracts a few new members and the yard sale provides an inexpensive source for tree material and pots to new members and senior members alike.



Bonsai Almanac for January

Our bonsai are dormant or nearly so in January, but this is not an idle time for the bonsai artist!

This is the time to do clean up chores. Remove dead leaves pots and benches which may harbor insects and fungus. Wash pots with a dilute mixture of soap and bleach. Scrub lime deposits with Sandflex or other coarse textured sponge. Rinse and dry in the sun.

This is the best season to study the design of each bonsai by carefully reviewing the branch structure, trunk line and pot placement. Make a list of the trees which require repotting in a few weeks.

It is too early to fertilize (except lightly for some conifers) but the right time to add trace elements and/or gypsum to help reduce alkalinity in the soil.

January is the time to apply Dormant Spray and insecticide to kill mites and pest insect eggs.

This is the time to remove some old needles and to reduce shoots to improve balance and interior light to refined black pine bonsai. This is a good time to graft pines and conifers.

Now is the time to evaluate your needs for bonsai soil components, obtain those components and to begin sifting and mixing bonsai soil based upon your repotting plans. Most bonsai texts suggest not to repot in January, but our climate zone will permit repotting of some species (pines and junipers) by late January in temperate years.

Deciduous species should be kept in shady and cooler areas to avoid early budding during unexpected warm periods. If a deciduous tree does sprout early, however, it should be moved into the sun, because new growth that develops in shade tends to be weak and leggy.

January is another busy month for bonsai.

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number, please bring a salad or dessert. Or bring what you like.

Bonsai Basics folks should bring the trees they wish to repot. Everyone should bring their tools and dress warm. If you anticipate buying a tree from Steve's growing ground, bring tools to dig and a container.

Steve and Laura DaSilva live at 6470 East Manning Avenue, in Fowler. Their home is just a quarter mile west of highway 99.

The potluck at the DaSilva Ranch has become annual event for the FBS. It is truly fun.

Ryan Neal at the Clark Collection

During the weekend of December 16 and 17, the Clark Bonsai Collection at Shinzen brought Ryan Neal to the garden. The primary purpose of this event was to have Mr. Neal style or re-style several bonsai in the collection and to offer his expert guidance about many more of the trees. The secondary purpose of his visit was to provide teaching to the curatorial staff and other enthusiasts in our community. This was not sponsored by the Fresno Bonsai Society per



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se, but audience, like the curatorial staff, was entirely FBS members. Many in the audience was regular subscribers to Bonsai Mirai streaming classes as well. Ryan Neal is probably the best known and most sought after bonsai teacher in America. He proved this that weekend, as his audience sat in the cold for eight hours, two days in a row.

Mr. Hilvers arranged for Mr. Neal to devote the first two hours of his visit to critiquing a personal bonsai from members of the curatorial staff. He went down a long table, tree to tree, discussing both horticulture needs and styling opportunities with these bonsai. This was a precious opportunity to get the perspective of a world class professional.

He then turned his attention to the huge Monterey Pine. Mr. Neal had expressed his desire to work on this tree during his last visit and it was now healthy enough to take on. He noted that he had Googled images of Monterey pines growing in the ground. He acknowledged that they are unusual as bonsai, like many native species. He then asked the audience, as he did with later trees, "Are we making a Monterey Pine or are we making a bonsai?" That is, was our goal a "naturalistic" image or a stylized one. The crowd responded emphatically "a Monterey Pine!" This was good because that was clearly his preference.

He also noted that there is a paucity of horticultural information regarding Monterey Pines as bonsai, but since they are "two needle pines" he suspected they are "multi-flush pines" and probably can be managed like Black Pines.

Mr. Neal devoted considerable time to helping the audience select the front, based upon the nebari and trunk bends. He felt that a different potting angle would emphasize the bend in the great trunk and dramatically improve the interest in the tree. He proceeded to thin and select the major branches, before performing structural wiring. All the while, discussing his decision process and answering questions. He felt that the tree was a bit too tall and he jinned the apex. He pointed out that the “defining branch” defines the movement of all the branches on the tree. It need not be the bottom branch. He also noted that Monterey Pines are coastal species and as such, are often “wind influenced.” Wind influenced trees typically have smaller foliage pads. All these details go into creating a “believable” and naturalistic bonsai.

Mr. Neal worked about six hours on the Monterey Pine on Saturday, as darkness fell and completed the upper branches in about two hours on Sunday morning.

Then he turned his attention to a Sierra Juniper that had never been styled. The question again was “Are we making a Sierra Juniper or a bonsai? Answer: “A Sierra Juniper!” The tree had wonderful character with a unique corkscrew branch and a long shari. Mr. Neal again noted that a change in potting angle would make the viewing much for inviting. He noted that this rugged, wind swept species would have very sparse foliage in nature. He proceeded to pull the defining branch downward from it’s junction with the trunk as snow-burdened, high mountain pines do naturally. He finished the structural wiring just in time to head back to the



Current Officers of the Fresno Bonsai Society

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Above: a kusamono from Harold Mitchell's collection. A forsythia is in the center.

airport and his home in Oregon.

Twenty some students listened to Mr. Neal for eight hours on Saturday and the crowd thinned on Sunday due to the holidays. Everyone there acknowledged that they learned a lot.

The good news is that plans are under way for Ryan Neal to return to Fresno in the coming months. Mr. Hilvers is committed to repaying volunteers for both curatorial work and docent-ing with free admission to Mr. Neal. He will schedule more volunteer work days on week-ends so more FBS members can participate.



FBS Calendar for 2017-2018 Season

September 9	FBS Meeting and Presentation on Bonsai Diseases and Pests with Pro. Beth Teviotdale	Clark Collection Reserve Area
September 23	Bonsai Basics: Introduction to Bonsai with Dave Soho	Carson Avenue, Clovis
October 14	FBS Meeting: Bonsai Raffle and "Evolution of Bonsai Art in the USA	Clark Collection Reserve Area
October 28	Bonsai Basics: Styling and Wiring with Dave Soho	Carson Avenue, Clovis
October 25-29	GSBF Convention Forty	Riverside Convention Center, Riverside CA
November 11	FBS Meeting: Bring a Tree Critique with Al Keppler	Clark Collection Reserve Area
November 18	Bonsai Basics: Soils and Pot Selection with Bob Wright and Dave Soho	Carson Avenue, Clovis
December 2	Annual Bonsai Yard Sale	Clovis Botanical Garden
January 20	Combined Meeting with Bonsai Basics, Shohin Study Group and Potluck	DaSilva Ranch in Fowler
February 2-4	Shohin Convention	Santa Nella
February 10	FBS Meeting: Mini Bonsai Show and Discussion of Preparation and Accents	Woodward Library
February 17	Bonsai Basics: More on Soils & Repotting with Dave Soho	Carson Avenue, Clovis
March 2-5	Fresno Home & Garden Show, FBS Display	Fresno Fair Grounds
March 24	FBS Meeting: Air Layering with Pete Schaffert and Thread Grafting with Mike Saul	Clark Collection Reserve Area
April 13-14	Koen-Nai and FBS Outdoor Show	Shinzen Garden
May 12	FBS Meeting: Spring Work with Tridents with Al Keppler & Shohin Bonsai with Steve Da Silva	Clark Collection Reserve Area
May 19	Bonsai Basics: Watering and Summer Care—Soho	Carson Avenue
June 2	Annual FBS Potluck Picnic	Clovis Botanical Garden

Join us for the January 20th meeting! Bring a dish to pass, a tree to repot or a container if you want to dig a tree.

REMEMBER TO VISIT THE FBS WEB PAGE AND LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!