



Fresno Bonsai Society

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

WHAT'S INSIDE...



OPEN WORKSHOP, TANUKI, SHOHIN, OPEN WORKSHOP, STYLING

The **Fresno Bonsai Society (FBS)** is a 501c3 nonprofit organization formed with the mission to expand the knowledge and skills of bonsai while offering opportunities for appreciation of this art form to the broader community. We do this through the inspiration of the natural world and the rich cultural heritage of bonsai.

BY GREGORIO MATIAZ



The FBS President's Message:

As the heat waves crashed into this season, it brought the official April-June 2024 Newsletter of the FBS. During the past three months beginners and experienced bonsai artists learned various lessons from various well known presenters. Themes such as Styling, Tanuki, Shohin, and other important bonsai topics were covered which enriched the FBS community member's knowledge. **Genaro Cuan**

OPEN WORKSHOP AT DR. MIKE'S

PRUNING, STYLING, REPOTTING | APRIL 6, 2024



The open bonsai workshop took place at Dr. Mike's place. It was a successful event where members of the FBS mingled and learned from each other.

Members brought various types of trees they worked on including: junipers, box woods, maples, ficus, rosemary, amongst other bonsai trees.

The photo on the left shows members pruning and restyling their trees.

Middle photo below shows Marc engaging in conversations with one of the FBS members about the principles of pruning and styling a boxwood tree.

Far right bottom photo shows Dave working on his informal upright rosemary tree. It looks like it needed major cutting back and reshaping the various hanging branching. He seems quite concentrated on what to cut and what to leave.

Bottom left photo: you can appreciate the work that goes into reshaping a boxwood. This particular tree shows careful selection of interior branches to allow light to penetrate the inside of the tree to produce more internal budding. The workshop was very productive.



STEVE IWAKI

TANUKI WORKSHOP | APRIL 13, 2024



PHOTO BY HOMER GEE GREEN JR



Instructor Steve Iwaki developed an interest in bonsai during his childhood, inspired by his father's backyard bonsai trees. He is renowned for his work on collected trees, known as yamadori. Among these, his redwood trees are particularly notable, as he skillfully carves them to depict the effects of natural forces like decay, lightning, and fire.

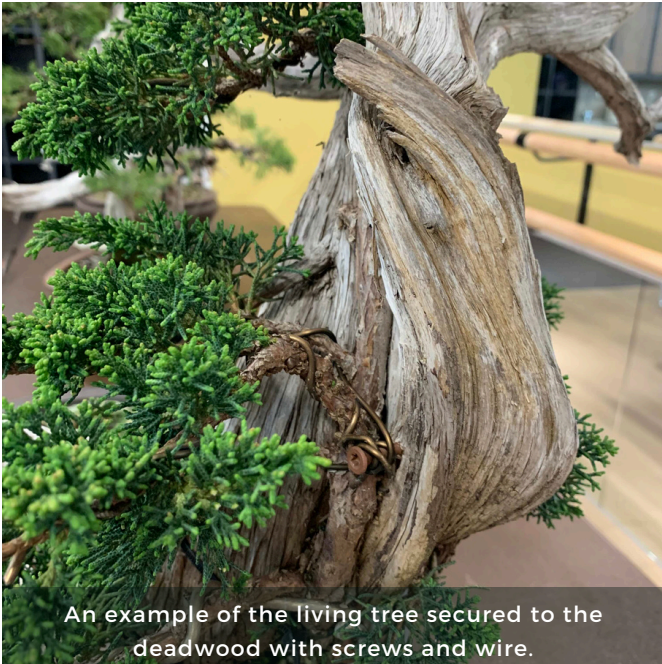
He is also known for creating Tanuki bonsai trees, which was the focus of today's lesson. For more info. Visit Steve at: iwakibonsai.com

At the end of the workshop, the tanuki tree was raffled off, and Kylie Hurn, pictured in the middle bottom photo below, was the lucky winner. Congratulations! Other participants received a bonsai starter tree, courtesy of Don Stephens (pictured above). Thank you Don!



TANUKI

TANUKI CONTINUES



An example of the living tree secured to the deadwood with screws and wire.

What is Tanuki? In bonsai, the term "Tanuki" refers to the technique used where a living tree is grafted onto a piece of deadwood; this creates the illusion of an ancient tree. Overtime, the living tree grows and integrates into the deadwood. The presentation illustrates a old or ancient tree. This is achieved over years and techniques that integrate the two components, living and dead materials.

For a Tanuki project: Select a piece of deadwood with interesting textures and shapes. Select it to act as the tree trunk. Next, choose a young, flexible bonsai tree to be attached to the deadwood.

Work on the deadwood: Carve grooves into the deadwood to place the live tree. Secure the live tree to the deadwood using wire or screws. You may need to attach it to a wooden base. Overtime, the living tree will grow and integrate with the deadwood. Prune off unwanted branches, wire branches, and maintain your new bonsai tree, soon you will have a master piece.

Examples of trees used for Tanuki: Junipers and Shimpaku junipers are popular choices.

Some bonsai enthusiasts view Tanuki bonsai as less authentic, while others appreciate its artistic challenge.

PHOTO BY KYLIE HURN



Instructor Steve is being assisted by two FBS members, Homer and Jay, in attaching the wooden base to the pot, which will anchor the deadwood.

ADAM TOTH

SHOHIN BONSAI | MAY 18, 2024

Adam Toth has been practicing bonsai for eight years and is experienced with shohin bonsai. He has studied with renowned experts such as Taisho-en, Taiga Urushibata San, and Jonas Dupuich.

Shohin bonsai refers to a category of bonsai trees that are very small in size, typically no more than 20 centimeters (approximately 8 inches) tall. These miniature trees are designed to capture the same beauty and essence of larger bonsai in a compact form. The term "shohin" means "a small thing" in Japanese, emphasizing their diminutive size.

Characteristics of Shohin Bonsai:

1. **Size:** Shohin bonsai are generally up to 20 cm (8 inches) tall. Some enthusiasts extend the size limit to 25 cm (10 inches).
2. **Styles:** Shohin bonsai can be styled in any traditional bonsai form, including informal upright, slanting, cascade, and more.
3. **Containers:** They are often placed in proportionally small, shallow pots to enhance their miniature appearance.
4. **Details:** Due to their small size, attention to detail is crucial. Each leaf, branch, and root must be meticulously cared for.
5. **Care:** Shohin bonsai require careful watering and fertilization. Because of their small soil volume, they can dry out more quickly than larger bonsai.
6. **Display:** They are often displayed in groups or on special stands to showcase their small size and intricate beauty.
7. **Popularity:** Shohin bonsai are popular because they require less space and can be easily moved and displayed in various settings.
8. **Species:** Many tree species can be used for shohin bonsai, including but not limited to junipers, maples, pines, and elms.
9. **Challenges:** Creating and maintaining shohin bonsai can be more challenging than larger bonsai due to the precision required in styling and care.
10. **Events:** There are exhibitions and competitions specifically for shohin bonsai, highlighting their unique appeal and the skill required to cultivate them.

The photo on the right showcases the final presentation of the elm tree that Instructor Adam restyled and pruned for the audience.



Instructor Adam demonstrates to the attendees how to select branches for styling a shohin tree.



SHOHIN BONSAI

SHOHIN BONSAI CONTINUES



Photo above: Instructor Tom showing one of his shohin bonsai (an elm) after removing some of the unwanted branches to allow light in the interior which eventually will induce more growth. When working on shohin bonsai trees keep in mind the trunk flow, main branch, and foliage direction. Start to remove branches gradually, the ones coming from the same lateral position. Wire all the way around the trunk. The wire should be at least half the diameter of the branch. The size of the trunk should be proportionate to the overall size of the tree; the canopy should match that. Tom states that if you want a thicker trunk let one leader grow to achieve this. Additionally, Tom demonstrated how to use a water pressure gun to clean the trunk. Members also received critiques of their trees. Members donated trees and plants to the FBS.



OPEN WORKSHOP AT DR. MIKE'S

STYLING | MAY 25, 2024

The FBS open workshop on the above date was held at Dr. Mike's place. FBS members worked on pruning, restyling, and repotting their trees while engaging in lively bonsai conversations amidst laughter and smiles. Trees that members worked on included Chinese elm, juniper, olive, and ficus.

The photo on the right shows Mark making decisions on which branches to keep on his ficus, with suggestions from experienced members.

In another photo, he gives a thumbs up after successfully repotting his ficus tree into a new terracotta pot, which the ficus will surely thrive in. Summer is the perfect time to repot ficus trees since they are tropical plants. They thrive in warm weather; however, be sure to keep them well watered in our Fresno heat.

The photos below captured FBS members meticulously working on their respective trees.

A big thank you to Dr. Mike for always providing a space for the FBS to meet to learn.



WORKSHOP WITH JULIAN TSAI

STYLING | JUNE 15, 2024

Instructor Julian Tsai is an experienced bonsai artist based in the Los Angeles area. Well-known in the Central Valley, Julian has led many workshops for the FBS. Additionally, he assists the Clark Bonsai Collection in Fresno, located in the Japanese Garden at Woodward Park. He has a great passion for the artistic presentation of bonsai trees and has studied under bonsai masters such as Keiichi Fujikawa at Fujikawa Kouka-en in Osaka, Japan.

FBS Workshop: On the above date, Julian visited the FBS to give a presentation on styling a juniper tree. The photos at the bottom show instructor Julian providing detailed observations on each of the FBS members' trees.

The photo on the right shows Julian working on a juniper tree that presented some challenges due to its poor health. The foliage was weak and brittle, but Julian was able to demonstrate techniques for overall styling and positioning branches for future pad development. He noted that the tree will need proper care to recover.

For further information about instructor Julian, you can visit him at: justbonsai.com



JAPANESE POETRY

BY HOMER GEE GREENE JR.



Japanese poetry differs greatly from the ones in the western world in areas such as forms, themes, and elements. For those who do not know the art form of Japanese poetry, some basic definitions before I write the death poem, as my creative act.

AJisai, (in Japanese) is a farewell poem.

Jisai is also a distinctive genre of Japanese poetry, written by the Samurai in the face of certain death.

Another way to understand this type of poetry is that it is a Japanese death poem, A Jisei, or death poem. The term is compounded from ji (word) and sei (world, inheritance): the poem is a word left to the world.

Haiku poems developed out of a tradition of renga or linked verses. A haiku was typically a short verse of three lines made up of 5,7,5 syllables. A second verse would have two lines of 7 and 7 syllables. The third verse would repeat the form of the first and the fourth would repeat that of the second and so on.

Tanka is poetry of 31 characters. It is written in (5-7-5-7-7) in Japanese.

Seppuku means ritualistic suicide.

If you watched the Hulu streaming series Shogun, one of the central characters, the traitor Yabushige, was ordered to commit seppuku by his master and he wrote the following death poem:

Summer Haiku 2024

Summer Bonsai Trees

Vigorous thriving green growth

Radiance of life

-Homer Gee Greene Jr.-

Death Poem

"My dead body

Don't burn it

Just leave it in the field

And with it

Fill the belly of some hungry dog"

I will now write a death poem or jisei for a dishonored bonsai master written in the Tanka form, who has been ordered to commit seppuku by his master or Shogun.

Live Another Four Hundred Years (Spring 2024)

Winter has now come

I have Lived Ninety Years

No More Springs For Me

Bury My Body Under

A Spring Seeding Black Pine (On - Matsu)

-Homer Gee Greene Jr.-

UPCOMING EVENTS & CLUB LEADERSHIP



UPCOMING EVENTS

8/10/2024 | GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING | AT THE CLOVIS SENIOR ACTIVITIES CENTER | 9AM-1PM:

This month, we will be conducting a general, open bonsai session. Those new to the art, as well as seasoned bonsai artists will gather to share their passion for the creation and maintenance of tiny trees. Bring a tree to work on and be prepared for hands-on help and guidance with techniques such as pruning, wiring, and potting.

11/2/2024 | GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING | AT THE CLOVIS SENIOR ACTIVITIES CENTER | 9AM-1PM:

This month, we are pleased to present Sam Adina, sensei (teacher) of the Modesto Bonsai Club. This meeting is open to all Club Members and visitors. Bring a tree to work on and be prepared to be inspired. This class is intended for all experience and skill levels and 100% free.

11/16/2024 | FRESNO BONSAI SOCIETY FALL SALE AND AUCTION | 10AM-4PM | SATURDAY:

Don't miss the 2024 Fresno Bonsai Society Fall Sale and Auction. Browse hundreds of fully developed bonsai, a huge variety of pots, a wide range of tables and stands, as well as healthy raw material. This event will also include a silent auction which will feature fully developed, high quality, and show-ready plants. Admission is FREE.

12/7/2024 | GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING | 9AM-1PM:

This month, we are pleased to present Julian Tsai, one of the youngest and most energetic bonsai masters operating in the U.S. This meeting is open to all Club Members and visitors. Bring a tree to work on and be prepared to be inspired. This class is intended for all experience and skill levels and 100% free

LOCATION: All events will take place at the new Clovis Senior Activities Center which is located at 735 3rd Street, Clovis, CA 93612

VISIT US AT: WWW.FRESNOBONSAI.COM

CLUB LEADERSHIP

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Marilyn Shelton, Secretary

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