



The Snippet

Sei Boku Bonsai Kai Inc.

April 2021

This Month's Meeting

April 28th at 7:00PM—David De Groot—Birthday Party



This month is SBBK's 38th Birthday and we are celebrating with one of our favorites; Dave De Groot. He will be surprising us with his version of a mixed grove planting.

David is the retired curator of the Weyerhaeuser Bonsai Collection (now Pacific Bonsai Museum) in Washington state. He has written two books on bonsai design and is an engaging speaker and artist. He brings his perspective of combining music and the visual arts to his bonsai work.

While there will not be a birthday cake in person this year, join us for

this special program; party hats and cupcakes optional.

staffed donation table will also be available for SBBK members who choose to provide trees or other material, where proceeds will go directly to SBBK.

In recognition of our continued awareness of the COVID pandemic, masks will be required for all those in attendance including sellers and volunteers. Social distancing will be strongly encouraged and monitored by our volunteers. There will be a single entry and exit location that will also be staffed by volunteers. Numbers of participants on the property will be controlled at the point of entry to maintain safety for all. If there are any questions or concerns such should be forwarded to Mike Rosenthal at mhr@stanford.edu.

June 5, Bonsai Tree Sale— See UPDATED Info

For JUNE Announcement

As we begin to seek a new normality but remain cautious in recognizing that the pandemic is still ongoing, SBBK has decided, in lieu of our cancelled annual June show, to offer our members an opportunity to come together to sell their trees and other bonsai related material to our Bay Area bonsai community. This sale event will be open to the bonsai public from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. SBBK members only will be granted admission at 9:30 for a pre-sale opportunity. Sellers will be restricted to active SBBK members. Information about the sale has been sent to all local Bay Area bonsai clubs. It is anticipated that we will have about 20 stations (tables) with a wide selection of varying quality material. Set-up will be available on Friday, June 4 from 2:00 PM to 7:30 PM. Parking for the set-up and the event should be available across the street from the sale venue at Encinal Elementary School or on local streets where permitted. There will be no access to Gordon's personal collection during the event, nor will there be any parking available on the premises. All purchases will be made by cash or check and transactions will be the responsibility of the seller. Credit card purchasing may be made available by individual sellers but should not be anticipated. Sale tags will be provided as will an indication of purchase to be evident at time of exit. A \$25.00 donation will be expected for each table to be provided either by an individual seller or shared if more than one seller per table. A

Thank you to our volunteers

I would like to thank our members who stepped up to volunteer at our June 5th bonsai sale. John Mekisich, Kevin Corrigan, Bree Tiura, Mike Tracy, Lynne O'Dell, Russel Leonard, Irene Hall, Jeremy Foster, and Richard Oaks. Thank you, your help is much appreciated.

Bill McDonald

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President's Message

By Steve Iwaki

Spring has sprung! Nature is making her presence known with birds chirping and playfully chasing each other. Flowering deciduous have blossomed and others are pushing out new growth.

Although Covid has recently marked its 1st anniversary, we celebrate SBBK's 38th anniversary and our continued sense of community.



Hopefully, most of you have received your vaccine shots and your repotting is almost complete. Now is the time to plan out your styling, trimming and/or wiring schedules, if you haven't already.

For our June 5th Bonsai Sale, all 15 sales tables have been awarded to SBBK sellers and volunteers are in place. Further details will be found later in this newsletter. Thank you all for your support for this fundraiser

that benefits the club.

As long as our pandemic recovery continues, mark your calendars, we are planning our first fall SBBK show during the weekend of November 6th and 7th. With the help and guidance of our resident doctor, Mike Rosenthal, we will continue to monitor the recovery closely. Start getting those trees ready, as I know there will be some fall color we've never seen before. Our new Vice President, Jeremy Foster, will be in charge and will be updating us along the way. Please give him your support.

March Recap: Redwood Re-potting

By Jane Lancaster

Valerie Monroe on Repotting a Coast Redwood Grove

Using a video filmed in late December at Richard Phillips' studio, Valerie took us through the steps required in repotting our bonsai. Trees need to be pruned pre-repotting to match the root removal. She had some trouble with these trees after they were pruned early in 2020, so she let them grow



out all year. For this demo, she pruned each branch back to the sprouts at the branch bases. These trees were grown from cuttings, and each cutting then grew into a mini-clump. She cleaned up the soil around the base of the trees to get a view of any large roots. Then she cleaned each clump's roots from the sides and the bottom. She took off about 2 inches from the bottom of the root ball.

2021 Calendar

(Subject to change)

April—Birthday Party,

Dave De Groot, Special Guest

May—Olives (Jerry Carpenter)

June—Post Bloom Care on Azaleas
(Jonas Dupuich)

June 5—Tree Sales Event

July—Guest Speaker

August—TBA

September—TBA

October—TBA

November—SBBK Show 6/7 TBA

December—TBA

January—TBA

As the calendar firms up, date changes may occur. Please check accordingly.

Editors Special Note:

Consider sharing your projects with the club by submitting some photos and captions for the Snippet. Or a short video of your trees for a Zoom meeting.

Please send your entries to jcsf1090@comcast.net

Reusable Zoom links

The Zoom links used for the meetings in 2021 are reusable, so members can keep them on hand to use for a future meeting. The four recurring meetings each have their own title for easy identification.

SBBK Monthly Meeting is our fourth Wednesday evening meeting. It starts at 7:00pm.

SBBK Monthly Workshop and Chat is our third Saturday workshop meeting. It starts at 2:00pm.

SBBK Board Meeting is our meeting for board members. It takes place the Wednesday following the Monthly Meeting, and starts at 7:00pm.

Website Meeting SBBK is the meeting for the website committee. Start times may vary. Zoom codes will be sent out prior to the meetings.

Sei Boku Bonsai Kai

President:

Steve Iwaki

Vice President:

Jeremy Foster

Treasurer:

Randi Keppler
rakahikikep@sbcglobal.net

Recording Secretary:

John Mekisich

Corresponding Secretary:

- open -

Newsletter Editorial Team:

Jerry Carpenter,
jcsf1090@comcast.net
Caroline Koss,
caroline@gregkoss.com

Board of Directors:

Mike Mello
Mike Tracy
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Sei Boku Bonsai Kai Inc.
Proud member of
Golden State
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March Recap—Continued

For this repotting she didn't want to bare root the trees which would remove all of the soil. She wanted to preserve the clumps' root attachments by just cleaning and reducing the root balls.



Valerie then demonstrated how to make staples to hold the drain screen flat over the drain holes in the bottom of the pot. Two tie-down wires were sufficient to hold the trees in place. When she

placed the tie-down wires in the holes, she positioned the wire against the edge of the hole, and pre-bent the wire against the hole so the screen doesn't shift.

Her soil mix is 1/3 akadama, 1/3 lava, 1/3 pumice (hyuga). This is the basic mix Gordon Deeg uses and was made up as a club project before our SBBK Barbecue a while ago. Make sure you pre-sieve your mix to remove dust. She didn't use a drain layer since redwoods like water. Marsha M. commented that she has her redwoods in 100% akadama. Whatever works for you is best. Water quality seems to be the main limiting factor for redwoods.

Next, Valerie pounded a chopstick into the root ball at one corner and pulled the tie-down wire over the chopstick to protect a clump of trees that weren't



solidly rooted together. Pull the opposite wires tightly together, then release the tension before you twist the wires. She uses her left hand to hold the wires when she is twisting the ends together with pliers. Keep the twist flat and not curling around.

She likes to work her soil in with her fingertips, at first. Be careful not to have any air space under the root ball.

When the soil is 1/2 to 3/4 of the way up the pot, use a chopstick to poke the soil around and into the roots. Generally, try to keep the top of the soil level as flat as possible. With this clump, she thought it would be good to slope it upwards like a hill, since she had moss to protect the slope. Redwoods can tolerate moss growth, because they like to be kept wet. A tamper will lock in the soil, so it doesn't shift when you water.

Steve I. has read that group plantings should have the larger, taller trees in the front, smaller trees in back for distance perspective. Small trees in the front may block the view of the big trees, so you don't get that feeling of distance. Valerie chose her front based on its look and a nice flow. (continued—page 4)

March Recap—cont

Her two big trees are in the middle of the group. If she could adjust her first big tree, it would go 1/3 of the way from one side of the pot, facing the other 2/3 of the pot. The second big tree would either be next to the first tree or across the pot from the first tree. Group plantings and saikei are very popular and easy to relate to, but are not always considered "hard-core bonsai."

Valerie plans on letting everything grow out and get green and healthy, then later she will try to do some foliage sculpting. Gary S. pointed out that he liked the one tree that is lying down. She considers this an idiosyncratic touch that makes this group a one-of-a-kind. Linda wondered about how high up on the trees the branches started. They are about 2-1/2 to 3 inches up the trunks. Linda has a larger redwood that has branches much higher up on the trunk, which is appropriate for an older tree.

Valerie recently switched to using water treated with a reverse osmosis system, which is giving her good results. Even her junipers are putting out beautiful new growth, when previously she



had bad color, tip blight and scale. Steve I. recently lived in Lompoc with a much hotter, drier climate and hard well water resulting in the loss of some of his redwoods. Be aware that redwoods prefer conditions that are found along our coast and water with low total dissolved solids and pH on the acid side.

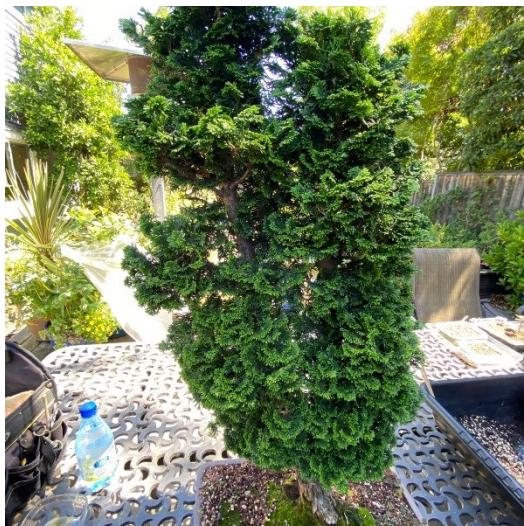
Learning by Doing

By Caroline Koss

I went to college at Cal Poly SLO, and the school's motto was "Learn by Doing." That's something that has stuck with me, for hands-on learning is the best way to learn, IMO.

I have watched several demos on air layering in the past (both in person and on video), so in theory I had "learned" how to do it. And yet, I had never tried it myself, so had I really learned it?

In May 2020, Gordon presented a demo on Air Layering at our SBBK Zoom general meeting, and I decided that this was actually the time to finally try it myself! I had a twin trunk hinoki cypress that I was not in love with. It was very healthy and had gorgeous foliage, but it wasn't that interesting to me, and it was heavier than I liked, causing me to curse every time I tried to move it (let alone schlep it to a workshop). I almost got rid of it last year, right before COVID, at the Mammoth Fundraising sale. But something I heard in a Jonas video struck me – I'm paraphrasing, but it was something like, only keep trees that you give you joy (ala Marie Kondo) or that can teach you something. Well, clearly this one didn't give me joy, but I thought that it could teach me something, so I held onto it.



In early June 2020, I finally gave air layering a try. And not just once, but twice, since it was a twin trunk tree. I took notes during Gordon's demo, and got all the necessary prep materials. I even took before-and-after pictures of my actions, so I would remember what I did. And, I

wrote a quick blurb for the Snippet, to share the start of the journey with everyone.



Fast forward to April 2021... What happened? My air layering was a "failure" for both trunks! Nothing took. Actually, I had an initial unveiling party in the fall, and discovered no roots had formed. So, I cut in a bit deeper, added a bit more honey/rooting hormone, re-wrapped the trunks, and crossed my fingers. But, no luck – in the second reveal party, we got nothing. Nada.

Why? It looks like I actually cut in too deeply. I didn't take pictures at the second unveiling, but Steve said that it looked like I had cut down to the hardwood. Meaning I had cut off the lifeline from the lower portion of the tree to the upper portion of the tree. Oops!

(Continued—page 6)

Learn by Doing—continued



Not to worry – a week ago, we cut off the tops of both trunks (which were goners anyway), and then worked on making the remaining trunks look better for the tree, highlighting some deadwood. I'm happy with the progress – the tree is more interesting now, plus lighter. It's not done yet, but gives me hope and inspiration to keep improving it. And, I learned some things not to do when I try air layering next time.

What's my key take-away? Just because a tree doesn't give you joy, don't rush to dump it on someone else. Take some time to consider if tackling some challenge about the tree might teach you something new. My new goal is to find a new victim to try air layering again. I will keep trying until I get it right. So, take that risk and try something new – even if it is a "failure", you will indeed learn something from the experience!

Sei Boku Bonsai Kai Inc.

Club Meetings

Our club meetings are currently being held online. The meeting is scheduled for the 4th Wednesday of each month, except for December. The meeting starts at 7:00 pm and ends before 10:00 pm.

When we can meet in person our location is at the San Mateo Garden Center is at 605 Parkside Way, San Mateo, CA right off the Alameda de las Pulgas near Hillsdale Mall.

3rd Saturday Virtual Open Workshop 2-4 PM

Zoom Workshop is available this month.

It's 2021 and we're still sheltering in place until we can all get vaccinated, but that doesn't mean we can't get together virtually! We are able to ask and give advice, and although some of us stayed on for the whole two hours, some folks just dropped in for a little while.

It's a great opportunity to work on your trees and catch up with your Sei Boku friends!

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86992887655?>

Contact Us

Send us an email or visit our website for more information.

Sei Boku Bonsai Kai Inc.

Visit us on the web at <http://seibokubonsai.org/>