



December Gathering



We hope that all who were able to gather on Dec 10th for an end of year Holiday gathering had a wonderful time. Here are some photos shared.



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Events Notice

Bay Area Bonsai Association 42th Bonsai Exhibit:

Jan 13-14, Sat 5pm-9pm, Japanese Black Pine presentation by Bill Castellon at 6:30pm; Sun 10am-4pm. Admission is free. Lakeside Park Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Ave, Oakland, CA

Annual Mammoth Auction & Sale Fundraiser:

Feb 17-18, Sat noon-4pm, Sun 9am-3pm. Lakeside Park Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Ave, Oakland, CA

President's Message

By Steve Iwaki

Winter is here and by now your deciduous trees have lost their leaves. Most of your trees will slow down and awake in February or March. We've had a great 2023 year and hopefully have been successful in bringing you informative bonsai information.

As you know, for this to take place, there are some very special people involved and most always behind the scenes.

Much appreciation and gratitude go to Jerry Carpenter; VP and Corresponding Secretary, Randi Keppeler; Club Treasurer, Mike Rosenthal; Recording Secretary.

In addition to these contributors, kudos go to our Board of Directors that include; Caroline Koss, Bill McDonald, Kevin Corrigan (also past President), Gary Smith, Joshua Dias and deceased member Klaus Diederich.

We also appreciate the efforts of past President; Val Monroe and Gordon Deeg - special consultants and our 1st Tuesday workshop instructors. Special appreciation goes to Show Chairperson, Marsha Mekisich. And finally, all the members that help set-up and tear down, as well as supply delicious refreshments for our meetings.

Thank you all for your contributions!

This end to the year also brings my role as president to a close, as I will be stepping down. It has been an honor and pleasure to serve you. Let's all welcome Jerry Carpenter as my successor, he will do a fine job.

Also In This Issue:

President's Message

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Asking for Board Positions

- SBBK needs your help. If you are interested in helping your club as an officers, we need a Secretary who has the obligation of attending our board meetings and doing some basic recording. Mike Rosenthal has a template can be followed to assist with the process. Our meetings will be efficiently run and not require too much time.
- We are also looking for a Corresponding Secretary who has the responsibility of emailing the club, maintaining a roster of email, sending some special correspondence.
- We are searching for an assistant to our Treasurer.

Jerry Carpenter

Calendar (2024)

- Jan 2 — *First Tuesday Workshop: Val & Gordon San Mateo Garden Center 7-9 pm*
- Jan 24 — Meeting: Oaks: "JT" Thompson
- Feb 28 — Repotting: Gordon Deeg

Refreshment Rotation

Jan Mtg

Richard Dobson
Gerry Fields

Feb Mtg

Jeremy Foster, Brie Tiura
Howard & Pam Gallegos

SBBK Planning Meeting - Wednesday, January 10th 6:00 Invitations will be sent soon.

December Gathering (continued)



November Meeting Recap

Bill McDonald shared his Tanuki projects, growing juniper whips along channels on a deadwood.



"In Tanuki bonsai, a living tree is joined to an interesting piece of deadwood to create a composite in the driftwood style. The deadwood usually has the form of a weathered tree trunk, or at least its lower portion. To add living material to the deadwood, a groove or channel is first carved into it." [Wikipedia]

The deadwood is suspended above the soil-line to prevent rot.

Editors Special Note:

Consider sharing your projects with the club by submitting some photos and captions for the Snippet. Please send your entries to jcsf1090@comcast.net

Gary Smith shared his talents and experiences with carving stands.



Gary Smith, a member of SBBK, shared his talents and experiences with carving stands.

"I started building formal stands during the lock-down, both for something to do and to use material scrap I had. A couple years ago, a friend gave me some pieces of wood he gathered from a fire and another gave me some driftwood he'd collected and I started making less formal stands. Both are fun and challenging in different ways."

PROCESS

- When I gather material, I look for pieces that I think will have interesting grain inside (guesswork) and aren't too large for me to cut.
- The first cut establishes both the top and bottom planes. The top is pretty much the only surface that should appear cut, everything else should look like it was mother nature's handiwork.
- The height of the stands is largely limited by the working capacity of my tools.
- If the stand isn't balanced, I just re-cut the parallel planes.

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Carving Stands—Gary Smith (continued)

- If the stand isn't balanced, I just re-cut the parallel planes.
- I don't sketch or work from any formal plans
- I usually start from the bottom to hollow the inside.
- I use a hand-held drill with a variety of bits to start, and then an angle grinder with an Arbortech ball gouge cutter (fun tool!) and a variety of bits in the Dremel. I also use some carving knives.
- I think it's always wise to use a dust mask when producing fine saw dust.
- I usually finish with Watco Danish oil, because I like the look and would get confused if I used too many different products. I sometimes top coat that with spray lacquer.
- Note: burned wood is harder than non burned—so it cuts differently and can strengthen the piece, if desired.



1st Tuesday Bonsai Clinics

Open to all SBBK Members, bring in a tree or project, and questions. Sage advice, personal guidance, and gleaning from others. December's Clinic happened to have 3 Japanese Black Pines—each at a different stage of development, and an opportunity to learn about JBP by observation. Val Monroe & Gordon Deeg hope to see you there in the new year.

Resource: Winter Care for Bonsai

Bonsai Tonight: <https://bonsaitonight.com/winter-care/>

“Begin by removing leaves from deciduous trees and brown needles from conifers. If trees show any signs of insects or fungus in fall, treating them before moving them into storage will help them recover and prevent the problem from spreading to other bonsai. Some people apply dormant oil to all of their trees in fall as a precaution.” (follow the link for more advice)

Aspiring New Member: Christian Sierra

We would like to introduce one of our newest members and certainly the youngest, Christian Sierra.

Christian is 20 years old and at the age of 10 he started to watch YouTube videos focusing on the art and technique of bonsai. Growing up in Morgan Hill with his parents and younger sister there was no exposure and little encouragement other than Youtube videos. But still he was hooked.

Last year, Christian joined Midori and studied with John Thompson (JT), although for 10 years before that, he studied and worked on bonsai on his own. This past year he took “Best in Show, Medium Sized Tree”, at the Midori show (see photo below); quite an accomplishment.

Christian currently has 30 trees and needs to reduce his inventory to 15 or so, because he is starting an apprenticeship with Peter Tea in Auburn. Christian's goal is to apprentice with Peter Tea to gain enough knowledge and experience to do a full five year apprenticeship in Japan and be certified as a Bonsai Professional. Upon completion of his apprenticeship in Japan, he plans to return to the U.S. and start a bonsai business.

Christian is well aware of the rigors and difficulties of completing an apprenticeship in Japan. He has contacted current apprentices working in Japan and knows that there will be no pay for the three month trial period and then only a meager stipend for food for the remaining 5 years.

To prepare for meeting his goals, he is currently attending Gavalin College in Gilroy with a full load of classes, including Japanese language. He considers JT and Juan Cruz mentors and is constantly seeking to gain knowledge of bonsai techniques to improve his skills. His enthusiasm, drive and dedication are obvious to anyone who has been in a workshop with Christian.

We welcome Christian Sierra into Sei Boku Bonsai Kai, wish him success, and look forward to following his bonsai journey.





Photos taken at the Bonsai Garden of Lake Merritt, Oakland, CA

“The Japanese codified and gave names to styles that correspond to different trunks. It is more important to understand the growth habits of these trees than to learn the Japanese names by heart...

On the plains, trunks are straight or slightly leaning (if it's windy).

In the mountains, the shapes are all more complex, since conditions are harsh (wind, snow, drought, large range of temperatures, stony soil, avalanches, lightning, etc).”

Bonsai Aesthetics: a practical guide,
by Francois Jeker.

“Between every two pine trees there is a door leading to a new way of life.” - John Muir

Wishing you a Happy Holiday & New Year

Michael Wei

Having only joined SBBK this last spring, I have felt very welcomed and I appreciate your generous spirit of teaching, of materials and time, humor and community. Thank you.

For those looking for a last minute gift for that special person, check out: Bonsai For Men: The ultimate guide for men - a guide for inner peace through Bonsai (Amazon), recommendation as humor.



Visit us on the web at <http://seibokubonsai.org/>
or at <https://facebook.com/seibokubonsai>
or at <https://instagram.com/seibokubonsai>



Sei Boku Bonsai Kai

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