



March 27, 2024 Meeting Special Guest: Eric Schrader

At SBBK's birthday meeting we will be host to Eric Schrader. Eric is the owner of the website: <https://www.bonsaify.com/>. The site has many wonderful articles about the care and enhancement of bonsai. The site also hosts a store of trees, pots, education opportunities.

"Eric has been growing and developing Bonsai trees for over fifteen years; you can trust that every Bonsaify product that arrives at your door has been cultivated with passion, love, and deep respect for this ancient art. Whether you're looking for a tree for your home or office, indoors or outside, you'll find one that will suit your unique lifestyle and needs from among our beautiful selection of bonsai trees and curated containers."

Eric is bringing some material for purchase at the meeting so bring some cash to snap up some good materials.



"Honey I Shrunk the Bonsai": bit.ly/3PdPcxL
[@ericsschraderbonsai](https://www.instagram.com/ericsschraderbonsai)

Celebrating SBBK's 40th Year



Founding sensei, Bob Kato

Local Events Notice

San Jose Betsuin Bonsai Club 49th Bonsai Exhibit

Mar 16-17, Sat 11:00 AM - 5:00 PM, Sun Noon - 4:00 PM
650 N 5th St, San Jose (San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin)
More info: text 408-476-1488; Phone: 408-296-7660

American Bonsai Assoc. Sacramento's Annual Show

Apr 13-14, Sat 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM Sacramento,
3330 McKinley Blvd, Sacramento,
Headliner: Tyler Sherrod, Professional Bonsai Artist/
Teacher from Georgia, will conduct a live demonstration
each day at 1:30PM

Santa Cruz Bonsai Kai Bonsai Show

Apr 13, Sat 10:00 AM - 4:00 pm, Sun 11 am-4 pm.
Aptos Grange, 2555 Mar Vista Dr, Aptos
Flyer: bit.ly/4a7AlwU (note lowercase L)

Kusamura Bonsai Club 62nd Annual Show

Apr 20-21, Sat Noon - 4:00 PM, Sun 11:00 AM - 4:00 PM.
Addison School, 1045 Webster St., Palo Alto, CA.
Headliner: Mike Pistello. Over 60 Bonsai Trees, Bonsai &
pre-Bonsai sale, Docent tour Sat 1:30 pm, Show critique
Sat 4 pm. Show chair: Idris: idrisan@gmail.com.
[kusamurabonsai.org](https://www.kusamurabonsai.org) for more details

2024 Pacific Bonsai Expo:

Oct 26-27, Henry J. Kaiser Center for the Arts, Oakland.
Call for entries: Submission Feb 1 - Apr 30
[pacificbonsaiexpo.org](https://www.pacificbonsaiexpo.org) for more details

Also In This Issue:

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- Caleb Stewart —SBBK Member highlight

President's Message

By Jerry Carpenter



Potting season is in full swing now and you better hurry. Trees are busting out in buds everywhere in my garden. Some, like my Chinese Quince, have been blooming for a few weeks now. This is a busy season and every day I come home from work I am busy with a tree for a bit. We also have just come through a very wet period and trees had moss growing everywhere. That moss needs careful removal and sometimes quickly before it creeps up the trunks of trees. We must also watch the wire we applied late last year on some species. I have had to remove wire already on swelling branches so to keep it from scarring tender skin.

We just enjoyed a wonderful repotting presentation from Gordon and Mike. Repotting is one of the essential skills to master with your trees. The example from our meeting was of a well-established tree that had been worked often over the years to create that wonderful root base. Not many trees are that well set. Often you have to determine what to do about an unsightly big root. Use caution with root reduction. You need to be aware of where the feeder roots are and how far back you can cut a root. Heavy roots provide water and resources to specific areas of a tree; cutting something too aggressively can cause a dead waterline in a tree. Later in the season as we move to repotting pomegranates, bougainvillea and the like, we will discover that one big root may feed half the tree. Lesson here is to observe the tree, learn the species, and cut wisely.

Repotting nursery stock or material from the ground is an entirely different subject for another time. So for now. Get repotting, choose good pots, learn the horticulture of the species and love your trees.



February Meeting Recap

Things to do in repotting by Gordon Deeg

- Repot all of your trees on a regular schedule
- If the tree is healthy, then normal repotting is done. If the tree is not healthy then you need to use special care.
- Use good soil when repotting
- Secure the tree in the pot
- Use wood, stones, chopsticks, bamboo, corks, and string, along with wire to make sure the tree is secure.
- Use an appropriate pot with your bonsai
- Clean out the old dead soil around the base of the tree
- Clean out wood, roots and crappy soil under the trunk
- Sharpen some chopsticks to use in cleaning out the old soil.
- Have extra chopsticks
- Do use a gentle spray or soak to clean out old soil
- When cleaning out the roots, clean radial outward from the trunk.
- All the roots of the nebari should radiate out from the trunk like the spokes on a wheel.
- Make sure your pot is level when putting the bonsai in it.
- Look at the bonsai from all angles to make sure the tree is positioned properly.
- Soil additives, such as charcoal, bone meal, and mycorrhizas are a good thing.
- After positioning the tree in the pot and adding all your soil, the soil and the buttress of the tree should be level with the edge of the pot.
- Use a tapper to secure the top of the soil.
- After repotting, water gently to not disturb the soil.
- Put the newly repotted tree in a protected spot in your yard
- Using Stress 2000 or Cloud Cover will help reduce the water loss through the foliage and reduce the stress of the tree.
- Fertilize after 4 to 6 weeks and the tree is showing signs of new growth
- Remember: Repotting normally does not kill a bonsai, the aftercare does.

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Helpful "Bonsai Tonight" links:

All About Akadama

bit.ly/49LmY5K

Welcoming Recently New Members



- Duncan W & Family
- Alex M
- Virginia K
- Norm L
- Ramona R
- Christian S
- Gianne S

Bonsai Soil for Beginners

By Jerry Carpenter

Ask any bonsai professional about soil and you will get a different answer. A soil mix should provide aeration, drainage, and water retention.

In our area, for our environment, we primarily use hard AKADAMA for water retention. It holds water & fertilizers used by the root system. Secondly, we use Pumice (hard) and lava rock for drainage.

There are arguments about the ratio of those components. It is important to know what is best for the tree in your climate. If you have a tree that needs more water, then a higher percentage of akadama can be used (60/30 or 70/20/10) being akadama, pumice, lava. Some species of trees do not want too much water retention and need a higher draining soil so you would adjust the ratio of that tree species.

To make this process more fun is the choice of organic bonsai soils components. They will contain a small amount of pine bark fines, or leaf-litter. Pine bark has an impact on pH and water absorption.

What is not used: Potting Soil mix/Peat

Potting soil will not create a good environment for root development. It will either hold way too much water or never hydrate correctly. This goes for tropical species as well. Use the water retaining mix of bonsai soil for better root development. You will find many opinions for soil in different parts of the country. Use care following the soil suggestions you find on YouTube unless you know they are a well-trained bonsai professional who knows your climate.

A choice of soil will also dictate how often you water your trees. You will need to consider the water retention affects of the different mixes for different species in your watering schedules.

One of the best articles to read is

<https://www.bonsaiempire.com/blog/bonsai-soil-requirements> and is applicable to beginner and seasoned artists.

SBBK Calendar

Mar 27 Meeting: Shohin & Mame—Eric W Schrader

Also SBBK Birthday

Apr 2 First Tuesday Workshop: Val & Gordon
San Mateo Garden Center 7-9 pm

Jun 1 - 2 SBBK Annual Club Show (details to follow)
San Mateo Garden Center (set up May 31)

It was great to see a growing attendance at both Club Meetings and at the First Tuesday Clinics. It is great to share and learn from each other. Special thanks to Bill M for sharing a resource with new members.

Show & Tell

We encourage SBBK members to bring in trees, bonsai pots, stands or projects to share during our monthly meetings. These are teaching moments and inspiring for all.



Val shared a few junipers in development from Adam Toth's workshop, and a few pines in development from Peter Tea's class. Note the double colander to bulk up the trunk.



JT shared a Japanese Boxwood in blossom.



Refreshment Rotation

Mar Mtg

Apr Mtg

May Mtg

SBBK Board

Jeremy F. & Brie T.

Gerardo O.

Birthday celeb'n

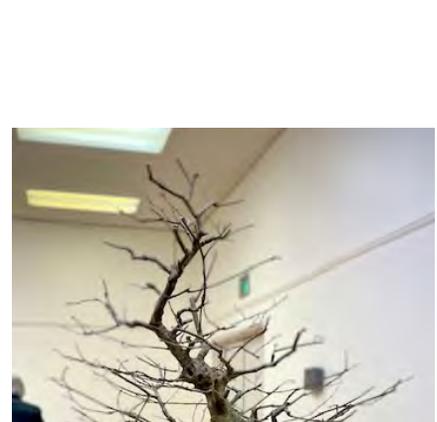
Howard & Pam G.

Barbara & Richard P.

Please find a replacement if you are unable to bring refreshments as scheduled.

Detailed Repotting Images & Notes

continued from page 2



- **Repotted a Hackberry**
- Clean up the tree prior to repotting—then leave it alone
- Cut back to encourage interior buds, about to swell
- Cleaned the base of moss
- Cut and remove hold-down wires
- Akadama, pumice/hyuga, kiryu/lava, lava. 50% Akadama, 16% of remainder
- Chopstick from the top down, getting rid of old soil
- Root Hook (single or double preferred); use caution with a triple hook or rake to avoid root damage.
- Rake straight outwards—comb away from the trunk
- This tree will allow removing 50% of the roots

- Keep the trunk clean — do not handle the trunk with dirty hands. Dirt can stay on the bark for a while. Like a maple or rough bark pine—hold from the top or wrap with a towel
- Remove as much of the roots up under the tree
- Recommend using a level on your pot before final potting the tree (is a formal upright style)
- Rootball should be below the lip of the pot, not mounded up
- Mound soil under tree; rotate tree and center to seat on soil
- Make sure both wires are rotating, not one rotating around the other
- Can use chopsticks under tie-down wires for added stability (use bamboo, not balsa chopsticks)
- Keep tie down wires low and avoid girdling the nebari

Caleb Stewart: Collector-Student

by Caleb Stewart & Michael Wei

In an effort to help club-members share their bonsai-journey, regardless of age, we wanted to share from Caleb to inspire others.

"I first got into bonsai when I was 12. I grew up in the Sierras near Placerville, and my dad was a forester and I learned to identify most of the native trees. I would often dig up trees to try to make bonsai out of them, although they never survived more than a year or so. I also liked to look at all the bonsai books at the local library, and whenever my parents would take me to the plant nursery, I would always head straight to the bonsai section.

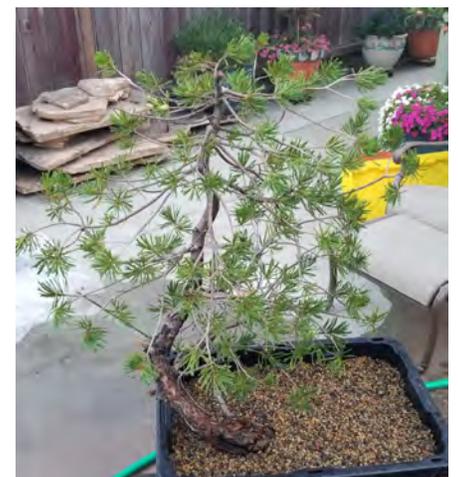
"A couple years ago, my wife and I moved into a house with a yard, and within a month I had my first (as an adult) yamadori trees from the Sierras. I joined Sei Boku shortly after. A year later, I was up to 15 trees. Now, I have 17 (mostly) healthy yamadori, although I'd say only about 10 of them have some age and character. Of course, I have lost a few of the trees I have dug, but have learned a lot in the process."

As encouragement to those new to bonsai, Caleb highly recommends digging up a wild tree, as it is very gratifying. "Just be aware that it's normally illegal without a permit on public land, and you need permission on private land. A number of the experienced club members have good tips for getting trees to survive being dug, and can probably help point you to places where you can dig them up. If you're planning a trip to a national forest, call the ranger office in the district you're heading to and ask about getting a bonsai permit. I have had them mailed to me, although some forests require you to purchase them in person."

Caleb shared that SBBK Bonsai Buddy program is fantastic for new members. One gets paired with a long-time club member who will help you feel included in the club. "Shout out to Mike Rosenthal for being a great Bonsai Buddy for me when I was new."



Caleb inspecting a lodgepole pine, on his wedding day



If you would like to be paired with a **SBBK Bonsai Buddy**, please reach out to Bill, bill@walter-mcdonald.com

Do not be too rigid or inflexible in your ideas—preconceived ideas and notions of how a tree should be styled are often the biggest stumbling block to creative design...

The famous bonsai artist John Naka recommends that you bend your mind to suit the tree if it will not bend in the direction you want it to—lateral thinking will not go amiss.

—Peter Chan, [Bonsai: the Art Of Growing and Keeping Miniature Trees](#)

2024 SBBK Calendar of Events

Please note updates in each Snippet edition as details, presenters or topics may change.

- Mar 27 Eric W Schrader – Shohin & Mame (SBBK Birthday)
- Apr 24 Show Readiness – Marsha M.
- May 22 Raw Material or What do I do with this? – Multi Table Workshop
- Jun 1 & 2 SBBK Show – Special Guest to be confirmed
- Jun 26 Bonsai Challenge – multi-club
- Jul 24 Multi-Species Tables – various table hosts
- Aug 28 Deadwood Presentation – Special guest Andres Bicocca
- Sep 21 SBBK BBQ
- Sep 25 Green Elephant (auction fund-raiser)
- Oct 23 Special guests Yannick Kiggen & Bjorn Bjorholm Style-off
- Nov 25 What Makes a Good Pot? – Val and Josh
- Dec 8 Holiday Event

What goes on in my mind before I begin

by Michael Wei

This is meant to be funny, but I confess that information overload can overwhelm me before a branch cut or attempted styling. Seek knowledge and advice, but experiment and learn from mistakes. Here's an excerpt from an educational poster you can view or order at bit.ly/3ThHJPi credit: giudansky.com



Editors Special Note:

Consider sharing your projects or best seasonal trees with the club by submitting some photos and captions for the Snippet. Please send your entries to mwei2cre8@msn.com.



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



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