



## Jan 22 Wiring Workshop

7:00PM—9:00 (Garden Center)

### Valerie and Company

We'll be starting off the year with a wiring workshop. Bring a tree, your tools, and some wire, and get some guidance from some of Sei Boku's more experienced members on applying wire to your tree.

Maybe you were able to pick up a tree from the after Christmas stock from the box stores or nurseries. Any candidate will do for this skill building workshop.

Aluminum wire in a variety of sizes will be the easiest to master, (but you can also use copper); scissors, a concave cutter, wire cutter, and perhaps pliers may be used during the wiring of your tree.

Share some of your projects on the show and tell table; winter silhouette, newly wired and styled trees, a potting redo, - all are welcome.

## SBBK Calendar

- Jan 22 **Club Meeting: Wiring Workshop**  
San Mateo Garden Center 7-9 pm
  - Feb 4 **First Tuesday Workshop**  
San Mateo Garden Center 7-9 pm
- Open invitation to bring in a tree to Show & Tell**

## 2025 Dues are Now Due

With all these programs and activities this year, comes a cost to the club, which in turn, at this time of year, we are asking for membership dues.

**Dues: \$45 (single member); \$55 (family member).**

If you've been a member for 10 years and are 72 or older, individual membership is \$25 and family is \$35.

20cm

Bill Valavanis Bonsai Blog (revisit)  
2023 California Shohin Bonsai Society Seminar



## Local Events Notice

### Bay Area Bonsai Associates 43rd Annual Exhibit January 18 - 19

Lakeside Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Ave, Oakland  
Sat 5:00 pm - 9:00 pm. Sun 10:00 am - 4:45 pm.  
Fine Bonsai displays, demonstration, plant sales, and raffle.

### California Shohin Society Seminar January 31 - Feb 2

Santa Nella, CA

Full registration \$150, Day Pass \$45

Workshops are extra, but paying for material/tree that is provided. Visit the website for more information.



### GSBF Bonsai Garden Mammoth Auction & Sale March 1 - 2

This is a call for event volunteers. Volunteers make the annual fundraiser a big success.

For Mammoth 2025, Sign-Up Genius will be used again to invite, register and assign event tasks. Use the link below to connect with the online app.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C094FAFA62BA5FCC25-bglm#/>



If you are new to bonsai or have not yet acquired repotting soil, pots, or tools—this is a good time to buy these. Feel free to ask a club member for recommendations.

**GSBF Golden Zoom, Mon Jan 27 6:30-9:00 pm**  
**Featured presenter: Mauro Stemberger.**  
Details and link to be emailed out prior to Jan 27.

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## President's Message

By Mike Rosenthal

Hello, My Bonsai Friends and Colleagues,

Before I begin this, my first and likely longest President's message, we must take a moment to acknowledge what we are witnessing in southern California. The devastation is unimaginable as is the suffering of those directly involved. Lost lives, irreplaceable memorabilia of life history, to say nothing of the economic disaster that so many are facing is so hard to comprehend. The loss of life's work and property has affected so many including some within our own bonsai community. I believe that all of us would agree that whatever we can offer to offset some of the losses should be our goal. Your Board will be gathering information regarding the effects of this tragedy on our bonsai community and will then determine how best we can help in this time of need. Please as we go about our daily lives keep all of those affected in our thoughts.

Now, let me thank you, albeit questioning your judgment, for selecting me to carry the SBBK torch for the coming year. I first joined about 12 years ago having been invited by my tailgating friend and Stanford classmate of my daughter and son-in-law, Russ Leonard. Since then, I have been blessed with a cadre of senseis (Gordon, Jerry C., Steve and JT) who have endeavored through much frustration to educate and train me in the art of bonsai especially limiting my use of MUD MEN. Having retired in 2021, bonsai has become a passion as I struggle to improve my wiring, potting and styling skills, all still only approaching adolescence. SBBK has been such a wonderful experience, and I cannot tell you how much I enjoy all your company and now your support. Having agreed to become Vice-President and now President, I do so with the full recognition of my limitations in bonsai and have only done so with the reassurance of the support I am already enjoying – you guys are the greatest.

As we begin our adventures together in 2025, I first want to pay special tribute to our consultant, advisor, sensei Gordon Deeg. His generosity in providing unlimited instruction and guidance as well as volunteering along with his wonderful spouse, Kamrin, his home and garden for potting workshops and our annual BBQ has finally been recognized by the SBBK Board with awarding him the first Lifetime Honorary Membership in SBBK. For those that may not be as familiar with his many roles, Gordon has just stepped aside as CEO of the Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt and has assumed the



role of Curator for one of the finest exhibits of bonsai in the United States. I know that he will welcome any assistance from our members regardless of expertise who desire to spend time at the Garden working on trees as an amazing opportunity to gain experience with such diverse and outstanding specimens.

Regarding my thoughts and plans for the coming year I am extremely fortunate to have a Board of outstanding contributors. You can see who they are elsewhere in the Snippet but let me welcome Gianne and Pam as new members and to thank Steve and Valerie for so many years of service including multiple terms as Presidents. Although leaving the Board as active voting members I have asked them both to remain as adjunct members in their new capacities as Co-Chairs of our Program Committee. Other appointments I have made include Valerie as Chair of our Education Committee to include her continued presence in leading the first Tuesday of the month workshop for both new and old members. This workshop often includes Gordon as well and is a tremendous opportunity for individual instruction and guidance as we all attempt to improve our skills. Further, I have asked Bill McDonald to Chair our Membership Committee. Bill has been most productive in welcoming and orienting new members and will continue to do so in his new capacity as Chair continuing to provide innovative guidance and support. Gary and Roy have agreed to be responsible for logistics with the support of all of us in setting-up and breaking-down what is needed for meetings. Catherine Tierney will continue

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# President's Message

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responsibility for coordinating the providing of refreshments for our meetings and all should note her thoughts in an accompanying message in this Snippet.

I want in this my initial President's Message to familiarize all of you with what to expect in the coming year. On January 8, there was an extremely productive planning meeting attended by members of your Board of Directors as well as members of the SBBK Planning Committee (Russel, Kevin, Gio, Dustin and Howard). Under the direction and leadership of Co-Chairs Valerie and Steve we were able to create what I think is an exciting and most interesting meeting schedule through June of 2026. In this Snippet they have provided a summary of the results. Although some may still be tentative awaiting availability of guest presenters, I hope you will all agree that we are in for great times in SBBK. At the meeting Gordon graciously offered his home and garden for a repotting session on February 22 and our Annual BBQ on September 20, both in 2025. Other activities still in the planning stages will include our Xmas Party in December being organized by John Mekisich and Bill McDonald and a number of field trips to nurseries, harvesting areas and other interesting locations. Finally, we are and better be indebted to Marsha as she continues to function as Chair of the SBBK Annual Show. Her agreement to continue was a requirement of my accepting the presidency and I have assured her of as much support as she needs while definitely staying out of her hair. What a job she has done in the past and we are all so proud of the successes of our shows through the years.

To, finally, end this missive let me also recognize the contributions of Michael Wei as both our Communications Secretary and Editor of this Snippet. And last but definitely not least – Jerry Carpenter. His leadership over the past year has been exemplary and I am most appreciative of the guidance he has and will continue to provide me over my tenure as your President. Jerry will continue on the Board as well as Chair our Nominating Committee for 2026 and manage the SBBK web-site.

I promise that my future contributions will not be this voluminous and I will be depending on others to provide you with tips and suggestions for timely work on your trees. If you see any problems or have any concerns with what appears above, you should take it up with the last nominating committee – Steve and Kevin. At my age senility is always a good excuse so picking on me will be fruitless.

GO SBBK!!!!!!!

# Some Recommended Podcasts

For your listening pleasure and education, for the garden or drive. Search for: Bonsai Wire, The Black Pondo, Mirai Asymmetry, Bonsai Time, A Bonsai Side Quest.



# Refreshment Reminder

We are such a friendly club, and we collectively are grateful to each other for the monthly snacks.

Three months-worth of refreshment assignments are published in the Snippet. Two members per month are assigned to bring refreshments.

### In Advance:

- In advance of your meeting, contact your partner for the month to decide who will bring what; perhaps one for sweet and one for savory.
- If you cannot be at your assigned meeting, you are responsible to find a replacement, perhaps by switching with someone from an upcoming month.

### What to Bring:

- Though special treats are appreciated, simple and store-bought food is fine.
- Avoid single-serving drinks; the club provides cups for larger bottles.
- Wine is welcome.
- Arrive early (6:45) to set up the refreshment tables.

The club provides plates, cups, napkins, forks/spoons, cork screw. Bring special utensils if necessary (cake knife, tongs, etc.).

Thanks to club members who share in the hospitality of snacks at each month's meetings. If you are new or would be on stand-by to help out, please email Michael W.

Jan Mtg	Feb Mtg	Mar Mtg
Ivan, Matt, Jason H	Virginia K	SBBK Board
Michael W	Michael L	(SBBK Anniversary)

Please find a replacement if you are unable to bring refreshments as scheduled. Refer to the SBBK roster.

Resources: [BonsaiTonight Guide for Beginners are more](#)



Link to [GSBF Newsletter for Jan. Golden State Bonsai Federation](#)



# Progression Corner

By Steve Iwaki

Michael: I always appreciate seeing background photos shared with a Show & Tell tree during our club meetings as well as online. Steve has kindly shared a series of photos of a tree through his development. This is also a call for your contributions to share in future Snippets.

## Steve: Trident Maple root-over-rock I started in 2005.

The development process included rock planting, soil removal, potting and repotting, all supported by a clip and grow pruning method.

The following is the year-by-year process:

- 2003 One of the small (baby finger size) Trident maples purchased from Tassajara Nursery in a club field trip to collect material for a group planting.
- 2004 Planted on rock and buried in a 3 gallon container.
- 2005-2008 Slowly removed soil in layers to expose roots.
- 2009 Planted in training pot
- 2010 Planted in oval pot in club mix.
- 2014 Repotted in non-organic bonsai soil
- 2017 During a repotting, dropped the tree and broke off 2 lower branches
- 2022 Repotted in glazed oval



Thanks to Steve and thanks in advance to future club-member submissions. This is not restricted to final trees, but any progression over the years. Please submit your suggested Progression Series and History. Email [mwei2cre8@msn.com](mailto:mwei2cre8@msn.com).

## February Juniper Workshop

By Steve Iwaki

I will have a sign-up sheet at the January meeting to purchase pre-bonsai Shimpaku juniper material for the February Workshop Meeting. They will be styled at our February workshop, and then will be repotted later this year in November. The trees were purchased from Round Valley Nursery last year. They will be available for \$70 each, which is at cost.



## 400 Miles and an ATM

By Michael Wei

I was invited on a road trip to Lindsay to visit Round Valley Nursery for my first time. Amongst the orange and olive orchards, we stretched out legs and sought an ATM (Ed, the owner, also accepts other cashless transactions). "Tucked away" is an under-statement, but the variety and quality of pre-bonsai material was worth the trip. Gio, Ernesto, and I explored the many Japanese Black Pine, Cork Bark JBP, Korean Hornbeam, Itoigawa Junipers with lots of movement, Tridents, Maple varieties, Princess Persimmon, and Blue Atlas Cedars, to name a few.

Ed was helpful and offered the history of how certain species were brought into his nursery, selected for their best attributes, then propagated. From the Bay Area, it was roughly 400 miles round trip, so best to share the ride with friends. Ed strongly recommends that you call ahead to ensure he's available, not running errands: (559) 562-1019.

Visit: 24022 Ave 230, Lindsay, CA



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## Behind the Snippet

By Michael Wei

After volunteering as the Snippet editor for a year, I thought I would make a quick introduction to those who I have not had the pleasure of meeting in person yet. I have no bonsai bono fide but have learned a great deal after joining SBBK.

My father was a traditional painter of Chinese Watercolors trained in Tree & Rock compositions, which is an inspiration to my bonsai education. My mother has a green thumb, had volunteered at local local bonsai garden, and her Japanese style garden inspired me to start down this path. I am drawn to bonsai due to an affinity towards horticulture & design, pottery & carpentry, and reflecting on nature.

As the editor, I hope readers will enjoy reading & sharing their experiences with each other. I solicit any contributions: photos, notes, or guidance on applicable topics. Thank you in advance.

You can follow me on Instagram ([growing.small\\_gardener](https://www.instagram.com/growing.small_gardener)).

Inspired by  
Francis L.S. Wei



## New SBBK Calendar of Events

Well, you the members asked and we answered! Thanks to all of your ideas for new programs, and the work of the program committee, we have an amazing year of meetings scheduled.

We were able to incorporate just about every idea you provided, and the result is a nice blend of basic skill building, hands on learning, and guest speakers. We are planning to bring back our annual favorites; the bonsai challenge and the green elephant sale and auction.

Here is a look at our calendar for 2025/2026. At this point, while we firm up details, check in with your monthly Snippet for any possible updates or changes.

### 2025

January	Val and Company Wiring Workshop.
February	Steve Juniper Styling.
March	Birthday Meeting - Jonas, Display Prep and Setup.
April	Show Info, Accent Plant Workshop.
May	Steve Collecting Redwoods, Bill Permitting Process, Nursery Material.
June	Club Show (Sat & Sun)
June	Mike Lane Growing/Cutting Techniques.
July	Josh Bonsai Challenge.
August	Barbara, Making Pots.
September	Green Elephant Sale and Auction.
October	Yamaji White Pine.
November	Steve Repot Junipers.
December	Holiday Party, no meeting.

### 2026

January	Scott Chadd Group/Forest Planting. Extra workshop to follow.
February	Tom Vuong Grafting.
March	Birthday Meeting. Adam Toth Shohin.
April	TBD
May	Multi Species Workshop.
June	TBD

## Welcoming New Members



- Imanol Arrieta Family

If new members would like to be paired with a **SBBK Bonsai Buddy**, please reach out to Bill, [bill@walter-mcdonald.com](mailto:bill@walter-mcdonald.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](mailto:mwei2cre8@msn.com).

Accept my apology for any delayed or missed Snippet distributions to members as we update our roster and distribution list.

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



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