



## Sep 24 Annual Green Elephant 7:00PM—9:00 (Garden Center)

At our next Sei Boku Bonsai Kai meeting we will be holding our Annual Green Elephant Fundraiser. Proceeds will benefit the San Mateo Garden Center and the Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt. The evening starts with a Silent Auction, followed by a brief period of Libation & Conversation, and ends with a Live Auction. Special Thanks to our auctioneers: John & Jeremy.

If you have items to enter into either the Silent or Live Auctions, please arrive by 6:45 PM for Setup. Members are encouraged to bring auction-able items. For the Live Auction, all items are donated 100% to the club. For the Silent Auction 20% of the final price for each item goes to the club fundraiser and 80% of the final price is paid to the item's donor.

The Silent Auction will begin at 7:00 PM and end at 7:30 PM. There will be a brief pause while the winners of the Silent Auction take possession and the tally table frantically logs the information. We encourage those of you not performing these background tasks to use this period to drink heavily, check out the items for the Live Auction, and gossip. The Live Auction will start once the tally table is ready.

continued on p 2



Jeremy & John from last year's Green Elephant

## Local Events Notice

### **East Bay Bonsai Society Annual Show and Sale!**

Sep 20 - 21

Lakeside Garden Center  
666 Bellevue Ave, Oakland  
Sat 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

### **61st Annual Akebono Bonsai Club (and car show!)**

Sep 20

Palo Alto Buddhist Temple  
2751 Louis Rd, Palo Alto  
Sat 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

### **Midori Bonsai Club 62nd Show**

Oct 4

**Bonsai Style - "Trees That Captivate the Eye"**

Quinlan Community Center  
10185 N Stelling Rd  
Cupertino  
Sat 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM

### **GSBF Bonsai Rendezvous 2025**

Oct 24 - 26

**Headliners: Suthin Sukosolvisit & Mauro Stemberger**

Hotel Mission De Oro  
Santa Nella

## SBBK Calendar

### Sep 24 Club Meeting:

San Mateo Garden Center 7-9 pm

### Oct 2 First Tuesday Workshop

San Mateo Garden Center 7-9 pm

#### Also In This Issue:

President's Message

Aug Mtg Recap: Pottery Workshop

Holiday Party Plans

Autumn Lights Festival (please volunteer)

Plan for the Future — It is Coming

Refreshment Reminder

Japanese Black Pine — Michael Fernandez

A LifeLong Passion For Bonsai — Steve Jang

# President's Message

By Mike Rosenthal

Hello My Friends,

What an amazing performance by Barbara Phillips and her team at our last meeting. They were so well organized and prepared so that those who had no experience with creating pots looked like experts. There was little doubt that everyone had a marvelous time and cannot wait to see the final products. Thank you, Barbara, and team.

Coming up next at our September meeting on the 24th will be our annual Green Elephant sale with both silent auction and John Mekisich & Jeremy Foster leading an open auction. Bring whatever you want to get rid of and let's have lots to choose from. If you are selling or donating, plan to get to the meeting early – at least by 6:45 to put out your contributions and fill out your forms. Randy & Patricia will be in charge of the finances and they need to stay happy. Also remember that there will be no checking out until after both auctions are complete.

Steve Iwaki is busy planning a soil access and you all received notification. so decide what you want and respond. Also Steve & Gianne are working on a field trip East towards Sacramento planning for Saturday, Dec 13.

John Mekisich has done a wonderful job organizing our Holiday Party for December 7 at La Lanterna restaurant in San Mateo. He will provide more information but let me

remind you that your club is picking up a major portion of the expense so that you can enjoy a full meal at minimum cost. You should all be taking advantage of this and coming together for a most enjoyable celebration.

This year's big event – the GSBF Rendezvos – is coming up in October and looking forward to seeing so many of you there in Santa Nella. For those that did not already register and unable to stay overnight, it is really not that big a deal to just go over for the day. The workshops, vendors and displays will be worth the drive over Pacheco Pass and you can even stop at the Casa De Fruta. One thing to consider is that this would be a great opportunity to pick up pots for repotting season. There will be considerable options. I would most strongly recommend that our new members consider attending as this would be a great opportunity to immerse in your new adventure. Also, the Bloody Marys at the hotel are killers.

Hope you all are enjoying the last few days of summer with some warm days still to come and good luck to Gordan and Kamrin in their new abode in Oakley.

Mike

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## Annual Green Elephant (continued from page 1)

There are several key things to know:

1. Each participant needs to have a bidder number.
2. Payment for your items will happen after both auctions are complete.
3. The tally table is busy tracking item winners and how much each member owes. Please do not ask to check out early while the Auctions are in progress as the only way to safely do that is to halt the Auction, making everyone else wait.
4. We are looking for volunteers to be assistants to the Auctioneers. The tasks include helping with identification of mystery plant material and in carrying the items up to the Auction platform and then to the winning bidder.
5. The Auctioneers as well as our Board Members can be identified by the awesome new aprons they will be modeling.

Sartorial choices that enhance the festive occasion are encouraged.

While we thank you for being friendly with the treasurer and assistant treasurer, please hold your greetings until October and direct your questions to one of the other Board Members. The people at the tally table get really grumpy when stressed. Thank you !



# August Pottery Workshop

by Barbara Phillips

I want to give thanks to all who participated in the pot making adventure at the last meeting. Without all your enthusiasm it wouldn't have happened. Without my helpers it wouldn't have happened. Without my husband Richard, who gave me the linear, step by step process, it wouldn't have happened. Without my daughter Rachel, who knows how to act as ballast for my anxiety, it wouldn't have happened. I am really proud of all of us, you made the joy happen. Barbara

Special thanks to friends from Clay Creations ceramic studio in Pacifica: Julia Kroger, David Arnegard, Gretchen Fox; and from my clay group that meet at my house: Jenn Tan, Paticia Lee, Susi Leong, and Molly Gibian.



**The North American Bonsai Pottery Competition** will be held Sep 13. Categories include: Traditional, Contemporary, and Non-Competitive. Watch for images to be posted after.



# Holiday Party Plans

by John Mekisich

An early MERRY CHRISTMAS to Sei Boku from all of us at the North Pole working hard so all good girls and boys have a very enjoyable holiday season. You may be wondering why none other than Kris Kringle himself is contacting you? Well boys and girls, HO HO HO, a letter came to me from an anonymous source confident that you have all been good boys and girls this year (you have been, haven't you?) mentioning a very special event planned this holiday season asking me Kris Kringle to extend a special invitation to all Sei Boku members to attend.

Date is Sunday December 7th from 1 to 4 pm taking place at La Lanterna Ristorante, 180 West 25th Ave in San Mateo. Attending certainly sounds like a wonderful way to celebrate this year's holiday season, HO HO HO. Our location will be decorated very festively, and you will have it all to yourselves Sei Boku, how cool is that? Holiday festivities will include a raffle with a chance for everyone to win, please consider bringing an unwrapped bonsai-related raffle item of your choice. Also, Sei Boku there will be a gift exchange, for those of you that wish to partake, please bring these items wrapped. Those that bring a gift exchange item will have the opportunity to go home with a gift exchange package of their choice. Kris Kringle knows you know what gifts to bring better than I HO HO HO my job is package delivery in a sleigh led by reindeer oh my. Can you name all my reindeer Sei Boku HO HO HO.

Holiday party cost is ONLY \$30 per member. Each membership may bring a guest for \$30, and each additional guest is \$60. Reservations to be prepaid, checks made out to SBBK sent to Santa's Helper at 435 25th Avenue San Mateo, Ca. 94403. Your check is your RSVP. Cost coverage, corkage fee (BYOB) and appetizers paid for by the club, Merry Christmas HO HO HO. Members can choose from the entire lunch menu to include salad, entree dish, dessert, and non-alcoholic beverage. Appetizers will be calamari and bruschetta. Cash Bar for alcoholic beverages.

To make things even more festive, members please bring holiday-themed centerpieces for the tables and small holiday-themed bonsai trees for a show and tell. Kris Kringle has no idea what a show and tell is Sei Boku but knows that all of you do, sounds like fun though. In the spirit of Christmas those of you with vivid imaginations just may feel my presence at your holiday gathering HO HO HO.

Questions reach out to Santa's Helper at 650-477-8540 text preferred or call. Do have a Holly Jolly enjoyable time Sei Boku. Happy Holidays,

Kris Kringle.



Photo credit: Reddit/Bonsai/Bonsai Empire

## Late Summer Care

Bonsai Tonight Blog by Jonas Dupuich

"When everything goes well, there isn't a lot of bonsai work this time of year. Deciduous trees are recovering from their last pruning of the season, decandled pines are filling in, and tropical bonsai are getting their final cutback of the season.

That said, the next month is pivotal for improving and maintaining tree health..."

(follow the link to the online blog)



## Redwood Pinching (video)

Bonsaify (YouTube) by Eric Schrader

"Eric shares how he gets dense growth on Sequoia sempervirens - the California Coast Redwood. It's a great species for bonsai.

Learn what pinching is, and the details of how and when to use it to make a tree compact and beautiful!"

(follow the link to the YouTube video)



# Autumn Lights Festival – Volunteers Please!

by Randi Keppler

Just as continuous care for each bonsai tree is critical, so too is caring for the ecosystem that surrounds the tree. This includes not only the soil, water, and nutrients but also the surrounding physical and social infrastructure and the communication of the art of bonsai to new minds. The City of Oakland has wholeheartedly embraced our bonsai clubs and has worked to keep the Bonsai Garden as well as the other Gardens of Lake Merritt thriving. The Autumn Lights Festival, held annually in October, is a fundraiser to help the City with the cost of maintaining the Gardens. The BGLM opens our doors during the Autumn Lights Festival as a way to say Thank You and to give back to the citizens of Oakland. This cycle of receive and give back is part of the greater bonsai ecosystem.

Please join us in this effort. If you have ideas for a lighting display we would like to work with you to make it happen. If you can spare us some time with preparation, setup, being a docent during the festival, or helping with cleanup on the final day, any and all help is greatly needed and much appreciated. This year the Autumn Lights Festival will be from Thursday October 16th through Saturday October 18th with cleanup on Sunday October 19th.

Landscape lighting to highlight each and every bonsai tree in the garden is installed in the weeks leading up to October's event. October 11th and 12th we can use help installing rope lights along the walkways. This will keep kids (and parents) on the pathways. Some of the more weather resistant accent lighting displays are set up at this time as well. On Wednesday October 15th and Thursday October 16th during the daytime, the less weather resistant accent lighting is installed. During the Festival itself, we need



volunteers to be docents and samurai guards. With over 1000 visitors each night we need people to keep the bonsai trees safe and to answer visitors' questions. And finally on Sunday October 19th from 9am to roughly 2pm we take everything down and box it up in preparation for next year.

While we cannot gift families with admission tickets, we can get the Thursday, Friday, and Saturday night docents admission as a volunteer. With enough docents, we rotate guard duties so that each person can spend time exploring the rest of the Autumn Lights Festival. We hope that you will join us in having fun and giving back to the community around us.

We greatly appreciate it if you can help us out during any of the following periods:

## SETUP:

- Saturday October 11th, 9am to 3pm
- Saturday October 12th, noon to 3pm
- Wednesday October 15th, 9am to 3pm
- Thursday October 16th, noon to 4pm

## FESTIVAL GUARD/DOCENT

- Thursday October 16th, 6pm to 11pm
- Friday October 17th, 6pm to 11pm
- Saturday October 18th, 6pm to 11pm

## TAKE DOWN/CLEAN UP:

- Sunday October 19th, 9am until we are done (usually by 1:30 or 2pm)

Please contact Randi Keppeler ([calshohin@yahoo.com](mailto:calshohin@yahoo.com) or 650-773-5119) if you can help or if you have any questions.

There is a sign up page at [SignUpGenius](#):



# Plan For The Future - It Is Coming!

by Mike Rosenthal

With the passing of Gerry Fields, our long time and most treasured member, realization sets in that many of us are approaching a time when managing our collections will become a major obstacle to keeping our creations healthy and alive. Also unexpected events could leave our families with the huge responsibility of either maintaining or having to divest trees and related material including pots, tools, soil and more. This is not something we really want to contemplate but should. I for one am in a position where no one in my family has any real interest in keeping my collection or even tending to it, so making plans for the inevitable is not too soon.

Fortunately, we are a large club with many expert members who would be most willing to help in the event that is needed. Therefore, each of us should be considering discussing plans for what is to be done with family, friends and perhaps club members who you would trust with dealing with your collections. Decisions regarding where special trees might wind up including donations to clubs, collections like Lake Merritt, Filoli and other gardens, selected trees to friends and family members and to discuss how you want proceeds from sales to be handled are best made before untoward events take place

These are not small nor easy decisions to be made but just leaving it to others without any input or expression of desires is placing a tremendous burden on them especially if their knowledge of value and your wishes are unknown.

Tough to think about but once accomplished it is a major relief to know that all the effort you have expended for so many years and the investments you have made will not just be lost. Many of your collections are true legacies and need to be passed on in ways that they continue to prosper.

## Refreshment Reminder

| Sep Mtg          | Oct Mtg  | Nov Mtg             |
|------------------|----------|---------------------|
| Board Members    | Jenn Tan | Roy & Jeannette M.  |
| "Green Elephant" | Lon Tran | Richard & Jill Oaks |

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



Adam Toth (@atbonsai)  
Cork Bark Shohin Oak in  
Development (YouTube)



## Stocking Up On Soil

by Steve Iwaki

As you all know, repotting season is coming and it may be a good idea to take stock of your soil needs. We have an opportunity to join in again with Kusamura to purchase soil components at a wholesale price from a vendor in Southern California, given we have the quantity to offset shipping costs.

- **AKADAMA:** (super hard) 1/8- 3/16" for \$30 (14-liter bag)
- **BLACK LAVA:** 1/8"- 3/16" for \$17 (14-liter bag)
- **HYUGA:** Blue bag (Japanese pumice) - 1/8"- 3/16" for \$17 (18-liter bag)
- **PRE-MIX:** Equal parts of Akadama, Black Lava and Hyuga - 1/8"- 3/16" for \$30 (14-liter bag)

However, this shipment comes from LA, so it will have to be trucked up to us and incur freight costs. **If you would like to participate, let me know what and how many bags you would be interested in by emailing [steve@iwakibonsai.com](mailto:steve@iwakibonsai.com) by September 24.** I will let you know the total estimated cost including freight by September 29. If you would like to go forward, I will **need your confirmation by no later than October 3.**

The more we purchase together with Kusamura, the less per bag shipping charge. Anticipated delivery will be mid-October (confirmed date to follow), however let's see if we have enough interest to warrant the process. Contact me for questions.

**NOTE: if you are a member of BOTH clubs, place your order with only ONE club.**

## SBBK Aprons

If Julia Child had been a bonsai enthusiast, she surely would have sported our new club's apron. At this month's meeting we will have Sei Boku branded aprons for purchase. They are one size fits all, Khaki color with front pockets and are especially handy as potting season is coming.

Cost: \$15.00 each; cash or check made out to SBBK. See Steve Iwaki.



Khaki apron  
with hunter green logo

# Japanese Black Pine – Kuromatsu

by Michael Fernandez

I'm writing this article in response to Michael Wei's request to share about one of my Japanese Black Pine trees. I've been involved in bonsai off and on for over 30 years, but I've taken it seriously for the last 15.

From the beginning, I've always been drawn to the Black Pine.

Over the years, I've been fortunate to travel throughout Japan several times a year. I often plan my trips around major bonsai exhibitions like the Kokufu-ten and Taiken-ten. Seeing these trees at the shows—and in their natural environment—is an incredible experience.

Several years ago, Steve Iwaki introduced me to Hiroyoshi Yamaji-san of Sanshoen Bonsai Exports.

That connection took me to Takamatsu, on the island of Shikoku, where it's said that over 80% of all Japanese Black Pines in Japan are grown. I visited Yamaji-san and several other bonsai nurseries during my trip. I have to say, I didn't want to leave—what an absolutely magical place.

More recently, I received some unexpected news: Mike Rosenthal informed me that my Japanese Black Pine was selected to represent Sei Boku Bonsai Kai at this year's GSBF Bonsai Rendezvous in October.

I'm still surprised—considering all the incredible trees shown at our exhibit and in members' collections—but I feel extremely honored. I'll do my best to represent the club.

As I mentioned, the Japanese Black Pine (Kuromatsu) is my primary focus. In my current collection, I have:

- 7 Japanese Black Pines in the garden
- 22 more in various stages of development or refinement
- 3 Japanese White Pines (Miyajima Goyomatsu)
- 1 Japanese Red Pine (Akamatsu)

Several of my trees were imported from Japan before the current ban; some are over 60 years old. The White Pines were imported a few years ago.



The tree I'll be showing at the Rendezvous is, I believe, a Japanese import as well. I purchased it from a friend several years ago and have been maintaining it ever since—wiring, trimming, decandling, and A few years ago, I noticed that many Japanese Black Pines in Japan were being displayed in grey pots instead of the traditional brown. I liked the more modern look, so I repotted this tree into a grey-tinted Tokoname pot, where it currently sits.

The tree is approximately:

- 18 inches tall from the top of the pot
- 20 inches wide
- 6 inches in trunk diameter

To get it ready for the Sei Boku June show, I decandled the tree earlier than usual this year. My only concern now is that the buds may be longer than I'd prefer by the time the Rendezvous show comes around—since most pruning and bud selection usually happens around November. I hope all members get a chance to visit to GSBF Rendezvous Show this October, it is one of my favorite show

## GSBF Rendezvous 2025

Additional encouragement to connect with bonsai friends, see some great trees from clubs across California, watch young talent styling trees, participate in or observe hands-on workshops, and pick up tools, pots, or trees to enjoy. Even for a day, it is a good experience.



Link for Event

The link to the right is a look back at the trees shown in 2023.



# A Lifelong Passion for Bonsai

by Michael Wei

As I help to curate articles for the Snippet, it's a pleasure to get to know you all and share individual member's talents and experiences in bonsai. Steve Jang started practicing bonsai in San Francisco, and was a SF Bonsai club member. He moved to San Mateo over 30 years ago and joined SBBK. Steve has shown trees in SBBK shows, including his Korean Hornbeam (right) that welcomed you at our last show. You may have worked with Steve at club meetings on styling junipers & wiring workshops. He has offered advice to the public as Dr. Bonsai at our annual shows. It was a pleasure to visit his collection to see what he has developed and projects that he is working on. So many trees, so many stories. I hope you get the opportunity to learn from Steve as you pursue developing and caring for your trees.



# New SBBK Calendar of Events

2025

- October White Pine — Hiroyoshi Yamaji
- November Tree Improvement & Critique (bring in a tree)
- December Holiday Party, no meeting

2026

- January Scott Chadd Group/Forest Planting  
Extra workshop to follow
- February Young Choe Kusamono  
Extra Workshop to follow
- March Birthday Meeting. Adam Toth Shohin
- April Kaya Mooney
- May Multi Species Workshop
- June Bonsai Challenge

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)



Crabapple in full bloom — shared by Irene Hall.

*"I've moved 3 times. And no matter how stressed this little beauty gets, she always blooms her heart out!!!"*

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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