



Apr 23 Making Accent Plants and Annual Exhibit

Led by Valerie Monroe

7:00PM—9:00 (Garden Center)

The accent makes a nice foil or counterpoint to your bonsai in an exhibit. Aside from holding a space in the display, it also can show contrasts of shape, color, and foliage texture to your main tree.

Join Valerie & Jenn in making some accent plants for yourself. Jenn has been working with Kusamono for a while now and will share her perspective on their creation. Always a fun meeting, members bring materials to swap or share and end up with some tiny cuties to take home.

Nancy Schramm will be our guest vendor, with an array of interesting small plants for sale.

Bring your supplies to create some plantings of your own: plants, grasses, little pots, stones, slabs, moss, and a large bin or tray to contain the mess. Please plan on helping to clean up after the meeting.



Young Choe
Kusamomo
Bonsai Mirai



SBBK Calendar

- Apr 23 Club Meeting: Making Accent Plants & Exhibit
San Mateo Garden Center 7-9 pm
- May 6 First Tuesday Workshop
San Mateo Garden Center 7-9 pm

Local Events Notice

California Native Plant Tour - Bonsai & Kusamono

Apr 13

Palo Alto, private address to be shared by email

Sun 4:00 PM

Kusamura Bonsai Club of Palo Alto 65th Show

Apr 26 - 27

Addison School, 1045 Webster St, Palo Alto

Sat 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Marin Bonsai Club - Austin Heitzman, woodworker

May 6

Terra Linda Community Center in San Rafael

Tues 7:00 PM

Bay Area Satsuki Aikokai and Yamato Bonsai Kai Club Show

May 17 - 18

Lakeside Garden Center

666 Bellevue Ave, Oakland

Sat & Sun 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM

SBBK—Bantowsky Family Bonsai Sale

May 17 (trees, pots, books, misc.)

Pacifica (address to be shared by email)

SBBK members 9:00 AM, non-members 10:00 AM

Sale ends at 2:00 PM

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2025 Show Time

President's Message

By Mike Rosenthal

As we enter the bonsai show season in the Bay Area many of us are selecting trees for display with cleaning, styling and creating our masterpieces. It would be terrific to have many of our newer members join in showing trees for the first time. If you have any doubts as to the acceptability of your trees do not hesitate to bring them to our April or May meeting and have any of our experienced members give you advice. From my own experience I can testify to their willingness to provide their opinions. They will be critical but do so in a most instructive manner. In other words make use of them and learn. That is one of the great aspects of Sei Boku.

Marsha Mekisich is continuing to do her outstanding job in planning for our annual show in June and I expect that she will have all the help that she needs. Please sign up to provide support at our next meeting. I have always found it more fun to participate and gain so much satisfaction and pride by being a part of one of the best bonsai shows.

Earlier this month I had the pleasure of joining Gianne Souza and 4 other enthusiasts on a full day field trip to Clear Lake area. I was most reticent about spending 7 hours in the van but the company and the Evergreen Gardenworks nursery Gianne selected made it all a wonderful experience. Steve iwaki and I had planned not to purchase any trees but the specimens and competitive pricing won out. Gordon,

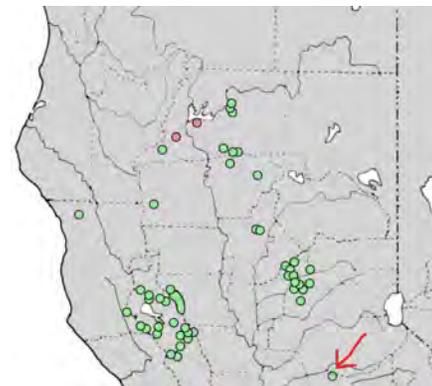
now that I have matured a little I only purchased 3 – far better than the 19 at Brussels – and these are still alive. I have asked Gianne to work with Valerie and Steve as our Education and Program Committee Chairs to come up with more ideas for SBBK field trips and I encourage you all to take advantage – especially if I can find more pork buns.

Finally, as many of you are aware, I am obsessed with the little Chinese figurines – Mud Men. When I first became involved with SBBK I had Mud Men displayed in all of my trees. After being harassed to the point of exhaustion I finally relented to the not always benevolent advice of our consulting sensei (GD) and removed them. However, I still display them as accents to the amusement of colleagues. I am now preparing a brief (?) article for the May Snippet outlining the history and wonders of these little men and women. I know you all will be most excited in anticipation of this contribution to your education about bonsai. As your President I had considered ordering you all to include Mud Men in your displays but impeachment is not something I want to add to my resume.

Until then have fun preparing your displays, trees and accents for June. Our upcoming meeting on April 23 will feature our own Valerie Monroe and Nancy Schramm presenting the creation of accents. I loved this the last time and can't wait to participate.

Native Species Spotlight: McNab Cypress by Caleb Stewart

Following my interest in collecting native Sierra Nevada trees, I purchased the excellent book titled "Trees and Shrubs of California" by Stuart and Sawyer to see how many species of trees there are in the Sierras. There were a handful that I had never heard of, and one that really intrigued me was the McNab Cypress, *Hesperocyparis macnabiana*. It is a California endemic species (meaning it's only native to California) and grows in disjunct populations in the northern coastal range and the Sierra Nevada foothills. It is found in dry chaparral or dry woodlands, often on serpentine soil. It is estimated that there are 28 native populations of this species.



Map of natural range with red arrow showing location I visited, (source: Wikipedia)

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Bonsai Tonight (Jonas' Blog)
Spring Maintenance



Refreshment Reminder

Apr Mtg	May Mtg	Jun Mtg
Judy Karp	Randi Keppeler	Norm Land
Caroline Koss	Linda Kuhl	Russell Leonard

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

Sei Boku Field Trip to Evergreen GardenWorks Saturday March 29 2025

by Gianne Souza

On the morning of Saturday, March 29, six brave bonsai enthusiasts (Mike Rosenthal, Steve Iwaki, Patricia Lee, Jenn Tann, Vince Pina, and Gianne Souza) climbed into a van at the San Mateo Garden Center to travel to Evergreen Gardenworks. Although the road to Clear Lake was long, our lively conversation and beautiful landscapes made the miles fly by. The van turned out to be a finicky beast to drive, and the windy mountain pass up into Clear Lake proper was a challenging mindfulness exercise for the passengers.



The journey was worth it though - Brent Walston and David Stillwell, owner and operator of Evergreen Gardenworks, heartily welcomed us to the property and then we were turned loose on nearly 10 acres of a bonsai candyland. Shortly after, we were joined by Barbara and Richard Phillips, who had driven up the previous day and were staying near Clear Lake. We spent nearly 3 hours scouring the fields, benches, and greenhouses for the perfect pre-bonsai to take home, ranging from cuttings of special cultivars to huge container grown specimens that had escape rooted into the ground. Of special interest to the shohin growers among us were the Hohman dwarf boxwoods, a unique sport of the Kingsville boxwood, the home of which Brent actually grew up only 10 minutes away from! Brent had struck many hundreds of these slow-growing cuttings 30 years ago ("enough to last a lifetime"), and now he has only a few dozen left of the original lot - his intent at the time was to make enough to last him his whole life, but with our newfound zeal for these little trees as mame and shohin material, they may not last long!

Steve and Mike were particularly interested in the large mother trees at the back of the nursery, which required a Sawzall to coax out of the ground. I spent most of my time perusing the benches and looking for the perfect



chuhin size elm or beech to work on. Many stories were traded as we wandered the lot in search of trees, including the amazing fact that many of the unique black pine cultivars Brent had come direct from Kathy Shaner. After a quick lunch and group photo, we carefully loaded our trees into the van. Some of the little ones we had to put on the seats! The ride home was joyful, although occasionally punctuated by a wince when one of us heard the sound of a pot sliding across the van floor during a particularly sharp turn. As we made our way through San Francisco, Mike and Steve started talking about these amazing pork buns at a Chinese bakery in the Richmond district - and of course we had to stop! The shop had exactly six buns left and we enjoyed them right there in the van.

Thanks to everyone that came on the trip! It was a really lovely day and hopefully we can do another Sei Boku Field Trip soon!



March Meeting Recap: Jonas Dupuich on Show Display

by Michael Wei

SBBK enjoyed Jonas' interactive Show Display presentation. Despite AV gremlins and few accent plant options, he shared the finer points of traditional of Bonsai Show Display.

Seasonality influences each show, so certain trees may be best to show when flowering (spring/summer), fruiting (summer/autumn) or defoliated (winter).

Japan Bonsai shows offers a 6ft space. This was influenced by tatami mats, and space for displaying bonsai. Traditionally displays follow convention based on tree sizes: 18" to 36" tree would have one accent; and smaller trees (Shohin) can have 5-6 trees in one display. In a Shohin display, all trees should contrast with the adjacent tree: foliage, trunk size, color, pots, etc. In this display space are elements of the Tree(s), Accent Plants, and a Stand.

When composing a display, start with the main tree. Find the front and direction of flow, and place it in the 6ft space, to one side with the flow pointing towards the open space. The Accent plant or item will balance out the space. For a two point display, the main tree is positioned slightly back, and the Accent slightly in front.

A tree will have a "direction of flow", to the left or the right. Some trees are styled with explicit direction and others being more complex. Imagine cutting the tree at the base, and predict which direction it may fall. The accent plant and the tree should point towards each other.

Some factors determining the direction of flow:

- Apex (upper trunk)
- Lower trunk angle
- Location in the pot (visual cue), if not centered
- Side with the first significant branch
- Lean of the apex/canopy (towards the steep angle)
- If the apex is on one side, relative to the base

Accent plants can help: (1) show seasonality, (2) offer some contrast — leaves or color, (3) indicate place e.g. landscape.



It is desirable to show contrast between the tree and accent plant. Ideally don't match accent plant pot color and style with main tree, desire contrast. Same for selection of the accent plant foliage—seek some contrast in color or shape. If the main tree has a tightly controlled canopy shape (ramification), then the accent may be less constrained. Accent arrangement looks nice to spill over and not just be cute. If a deciduous tree shown in fall/winter is defoliated, then the accent can contrast with bright color.

A few notes regarding Stands:

- All stands have different levels of formality. Avoid having a more formal stand under the subordinate accent.
- When using round or hexagonal Stand, identify its front. by looking at the grain of the wood or find the single leg that is perpendicular to the grain.
- Use of a slab, often a forest planting or bunjin. And the live edge can be a contrast to the complimentary stand.

We hope these pointers will help you prepare for this June SBBK Show, as well as appreciating displays as a viewer.



JT's Bougainvillea



Val's Juniper



Legacy: Trees of Life (honoring family, friends, and colleagues)

by Michael Wei

As we study and appreciate gardens and shows, we may hear of Legacy trees—attributed to a bonsai artist or sensei. We may learn of the provenance of trees or their age. Gio Piril suggested an article idea for the Snippet, based on this question. “Who might be caring for trees from friends, family or honored bonsai growers?” and what stories we may share? Others agreed with us and this may be the beginning of stories on the theme of Trees of Life.

If you have a legacy tree, from a family member or dear friend, please send me a photo and story and I will share them periodically. Enjoy.

This link is to a BonsaiNut thread on the same topic that may be of interest.



A cherished legacy Japanese Maple.

by Lynne O'Dell

This Japanese Maple (*Acer Palmata Seigen*) is the star of my yard whose spring foliage is a brilliant red that slowly fades towards summer. Kusamura members Robert and Carol Hilbin were early members and Robert was President in 1965. They imported this tree from Japan in the early 1980's and then passed it on to John Planting also a founding member of Kusamura. John and Sandy Planting trained a host of bonsai enthusiasts over the years including myself. John mentored me over the years and this Japanese Maple was passed onto me for caretaking. I consider this a Kusamura Legacy Tree and will be kept in the club for care. I also thank SBBK for welcoming many of us from Kusamura, and value a dual relationship with SBBK. Lynne O'Dell



Passion Shared by Father and Son

by Steve Iwaki

I was fortunate to share the bonsai passion with my father, Ted, who passed away in 2019 at the age of 103. He and his bonsai friends: John Naka (sensei), Harry Hirao, Ben Oki, George Yamaguchi, Kay Kamei and few others were instrumental in starting the bonsai movement in LA.

In the beginning, bonsai gatherings rotated from member's house to another member's house once a month. As the art-form became more popular, they formed the Los Angeles clubs: Nambu Kai and California Bonsai Society (CBS), opening bonsai to make it more inclusive to all.

When I went home, I would visit his bonsai in his backyard. Apparently, he noticed and about 30 years ago, he started passing on his trees to me. Every trip home, he would say “take them home.” Hopefully I will be able to say this to my kids one day.

To this day I have twelve of my father's trees and in the process of getting them back to health, I've shown a few of them. Here are a few of those trees.



The McNab cypress is in the Cypress plant family, which contains junipers, redwoods, and cypresses. Within its genus of *Hesperocyparis* are other native California cypresses, including the closely-related Monterey Cypress- the iconic and statuesque tree that is a skyline staple of coastal California.

The foliage of the McNab cypress is largely unique among its genus in that it forms flat sprays, with white resinous glands spots, and is described as having a spicy resinous smell. Its growth habit is of a bush or small tree, typically from 6 – 30 feet tall. It is a fire-dependent species, depending on the fire to open cones and bare ground to germinate seeds, while the adult trees typically perish in the fire.



McNab foliage, source Wikipedia

In December, I happened to be near the Amador County population with my cousin who lived in the area and who knew where the trees are. This small grove is the southernmost Sierra Nevada population, separated from the next population to the north by about 50 miles. Since I had not seen the species before, I excitedly asked if he could show me where they were, and he agreed. We parked in a small rural neighborhood, and started hiking up the north side of large hill on a fire road in the early evening. The local trees on this hike were mainly gray pines, surrounded by grass and small bushes. About halfway up the hill, my nose picked up a whiff of something fresh and fragrant in the air for a second. I didn't think anything of it. A few minutes later and nearing the top of the hill, the same scent came in on the wind strong and very fragrant, and having read the description of the smell, I figured out that I was smelling the cypresses! A couple minutes later as we approached the crest on the hill, I spotted the first McNab- it was scraggly and leggy, about 30 feet tall with a 16" diameter trunk. I was thrilled! A few steps later and we arrived on the top of the hill as the sun was setting- and I was met with a grove a few acres in size of a pure stand of McNab cypresses. All the trees were 20-30 feet tall, widely spaced, with seedlings all around. The ridge had been cleared of brush several years prior, revealing fresh ground for seedlings and a view to behold.



View of the McNab cypress grove just as we crested the hill

One particularly scraggly old tree, pictured below, gave me some inspiration on how I might shape a McNab bonsai to match its natural form.



My cousin had given me some seeds from this grove a year prior, and I was able to germinate only 2 out of the hundred or so seeds. I collected some cones while I was there to try to sprout some more. I haven't seen this species used as bonsai before, so I'm excited to see how it progresses.



Seeing a new species of a rare native tree was exciting for me. I really enjoy identifying native trees and find walks in the woods to be a discovery of different kinds and shapes of trees. I like to draw inspiration from their mature forms for bonsai styling, of which I still have much to learn.

Happy identifying, Caleb

ArtBias: Connecting Art and Bonsai

by Michael Wei

We hope you had the opportunity to visit ArtBias, in San Carlos, to see a blend of art and bonsai. ArtBias is a collective of artists who work, and monthly host an open house. This month a number of bonsai were displayed for visitors. We hope that this may be a recurring event, and will share the invitation beforehand.



New SBBK Calendar of Events

2025

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

Welcoming New Members



- Paticia Lee
- Nathaniel Smith

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

Garden Center Open House & Sale

SUNDAY MAY 4 10 AM TO 3 PM

We need two or three members to staff a table at the SMGC.

SBBK will have one 6 foot table. Set up is from 9:00 to 9:30 and the event is from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Signing up for part of the day is welcome.

Last year over 900 community members attended and it was an excellent way to advertise our club. Plus it was fun bringing trees and even doing some simple work to introduce the public to bonsai. We can even sell items.

Those interested in staffing our table should contact Bill McDonald. All are welcome to stop by and see what other SMGC clubs are doing.

Austin Heitzman: Traditional Display

The Marin Bonsai Club will be hosting bonsai enthusiast and master woodworker **Austin Heitzman** at their **May 6 meeting in the Terra Linda Community Center in San Rafael**. Austin's presentation will include an explanation of traditional Japanese display, covering selecting the proper size for a stand as well as color and design to enhance our trees. He will discuss how to choose a jita for accent plants to pull the entire composition together. His talk will also explore non-traditional display and how to make our displays individual and meaningful.

The meeting starts at 7:00. Come early to peruse the inventory Austin has brought for sale, we will be set up by 6:45. We hope to see many of you there.

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



Sei Boku Bonsai Kai

President:

Mike Rosenthal, mhr@stanford.edu

Vice President:

Roy Murakami, rmura221@yahoo.com

Treasurer:

Randi Keppeler, calshohin@yahoo.com

Recording Secretary:

Catherine Tierney, ctierney32@gmail.com

Corresponding Secretary:

Michael Wei, mwei2cre8@msn.com

Past President:

Jerry Carpenter, jcsf1090@comcast.net

Newsletter Editor:

Michael Wei, mwei2cre8@msn.com

Board of Directors:

Joshua Diaz, elieljoshuad@gmail.com

Pam Gallego, PamGallego4693@comcast.net

Bill McDonald, bill@walter-mcdonald.com

Marsha Mekisich, springhill.2@outlook.com

Gary Smith, gls94019@gmail.com

Gianne Souza, gianne00@gmail.com

Adjunct Board Members:

Valerie Monroe, mcsnail@aol.com

Steve Iwaki, siwaki@comcast.net

Show Chair: Marsha Mekisich,
springhill.2@outlook.com

Consultants:

Gordon Deeg, gdbonsai90@gmail.com



Sei Boku Bonsai Kai Inc.
Proud member of
Golden State
Bonsai Federation



2025 Show Time – Check in and Reminders

by Marsha Mekisich

Have you chosen your tree(s) for display? If so, please let me know asap. We have signups so we know what to expect as well as can create your tree information cards. We need to know by May 23rd latest, please. How about your stand as well as accent? Hopefully last month's show display program with Jonas gave everyone some ideas on just how to present your tree at its best.

This month's program you'll have opportunity to create some possible accents to use.

Do you need a stand for your tree? Please reach out this month to either Gordon, me or others. Don't wait for last minute. Sei Boku as a club, always strives to be our best as well as give everyone an opportunity to participate in our show. Signups available are circulating at the meetings, but you can also reach out to me directly, text, call or email. I am happy to help answer any questions and help you find solutions. Come join the fun as we are all preparing to make this year's show our best show yet!

Jennifer will provide a valuable show critique Sunday morning starting promptly at 8:30-9:30. You won't want to miss.

Here's a few reminders to keep you on track:

SUNDAY WORKSHOP – 3 openings still available. First come first serve. Opportunity to work on your own material under Jennifer Price's guidance from 10-3 with lunch break. Only \$50. Let me know. All you need is your material, tools and wire. Available to all.

SALE ITEMS – The show sale is a terrific opportunity to create bench space or room for your new purchase. Members can sell healthy groomed trees, plants, pots, or other bonsai items. The proceeds will be split between you, the seller and SBBK at 80%/20% split. The biggest sale opportunities are Saturday morning as soon as we open at 10. Bonsai sale items **MUST** have properly completed sale tags and form. Get forms and tags from Mike Mello in advance during club meetings or let me know and will help arrange mailing. Sales sheets and tags will be distributed at upcoming meetings. You must have both the sale sheet correctly completed and individual tags affixed prior to bringing items into the sales area Saturday morning by 9 a.m. **PLEASE DO NOT** bring your sale items prior to Saturday morning.

RAFFLE and Door prize Donations – All members are asked to bring two bonsai related items valued at \$25 or more. Items can be pots, healthy attractive trees, books, tools, scrolls, stands or garden center gift cards etc. If you have nothing for the raffle it is acceptable to write a check to SBBK and give it to Randi Keppler, our treasurer. Please bring donations Saturday morning prior to the show opening. Our raffles occur each day at 3pm with door prize drawings throughout the day.

SHOW Sign-Up sheets will be available at our April meeting. We ask everyone to sign up for 2 hours both Saturday and Sunday. These duties include:

- Welcome Table – greeting guests as they arrive, giving door prize ticket for 3:00 raffle and watching that folks leaving are not leaving with unpaid items.
- Security – welcoming folks within the show room, monitoring displays and answering questions they may have. Guests should look but do not touch.
- Sales – Be present, helpful, and watchful in the club sales area. Help guests find their perfect tree or pot, ensuring security measures are followed by subtly keeping an eye for price tag manipulations etc. Does not happen much but beware. Just paying attention should curb opportunities here.
- Hospitality – Help monitor and supply lunch provisions for member and club invited guest lunches 11-1:30 both days plus help with Set-Up dinner on Friday night. SBBK purchases pre-prepared food, no potluck, but do have signups for snacks, drinks and ice/chests. Same as last year so easier prep and clean up and more time for you to work on your tree prep and enjoy the show.
- Raffle – Sell raffle tickets for demo trees and raffle prizes, receive, monitor, and display prizes for Sat/Sun raffles and door prize drawings.
- Doctor Bonsai – Experienced members are available to advise, help and answer questions on all bonsai related topics including styling options.

❖ Set-Up/Take-Down –

1. Display Staging – As tables are set on patio folks can bring their trees, accents, and stands for display staging.
2. Friday night- Back drop team is up first setting up tables and chairs for use inside and out then bringing down tablecloths and back drops from Rose Room. With backdrops assembled and tables in place with lifts installed

3. Tablecloth team will box fold tablecloths around the room's edges.

- Once back drops are installed for Tokonomas apply black slip covers to those tables.

4. Sunday take down process is set-up process in reverse. Please, do not move other people's trees or items without permission, and be sure all items are safely removed from the show areas before any disassembly and putting away of items begins...

Bring your show display materials Friday night and place them on patio tables provided for this purpose. Have your stand, accent and tree show ready. Selected senior members will be responsible for setting up the displays once room is ready. Please be available once your tree is selected to help ensure the stand and tree are ready to go.

Display Setup – Receive and review trees, their stands and accents for show display set up. Set-up guided by Val and team. Gordon will do Shohin displays and his Tokonoma. Tree name cards – place cards consistently and id who doesn't have card yet. Hopefully still time to make a few, but everyone should have provided already. Accents – Those trees needing accents should verify with Show Tree Placement monitor and handle as suggested. Those of you with Tokonoma displays may choose to incorporate scrolls.

Dinner will be provided on Friday night around 6:00. Bring something to drink for yourself and share if you like. We'll have a few coolers available. Please also bring what you would like to drink for Sat/Sun. During show hours you can eat in the Rose Room or downstairs on the Garden Shop Patio. Please clean up after yourself and help us adhere to Garden Center requirement to recycle responsibly. Please be sure to keep track of your work assignments. Copies of signups will be in Rose Room and Redwood kitchen. If for some reason you can't work your shift(s) please find another member to cover and update the sign-up sheet. If you are unable to find someone to cover, please contact the lead for your assigned area for help or myself. We need all hands to help and will have leads and seasoned folks to help coordinate.

Getting the word out - Bill McDonald is our marketing coordinator. He has prepared material for you to share online via social media such as Next Door, Facebook, etc. We also have flyers and postcards available to share with friends etc.

We have hired a professional photographer this year. Steve and his team will work with him to carefully shuttle trees for photos Sunday morning during Jennifer's show critique. Going to do something special with the photos this year. Stay tuned...

Be sure to wear your Happi Coat and or name badge so our guests can identify you as a club member. If you don't have one, please let me know asap and I'll try to get one for you. If you have any questions, issues and/or ideas at any time before or during the show please reach out to me via Email, text or call. Springhill.2@outlook.com (650) 477-4761 With everyone's efforts and participation we will have another beautiful show to be proud of. The show displays, club camaraderie, tree sale opportunities, exciting raffle items, fun food and our vendors combine to bring club members from all over the bay area and beyond to exclaim our show is one of if not their very favorite shows of the year! It is all due to each of your efforts. Thank you in advance everyone. I am really looking forward to seeing all your displays as we have another beautiful and fun show.

Marsha Mekisich your SBBK Show Chairperson

GSBF Golden Zoom: Scott Elser

“Air-Layering: propagation”

Monday April 28 6:30-9:00 PM

(Zoom link to be shared by email)

Scott awarded Best XL Conifer at the 2024 Pacific Bonsai Expo: Coast Douglas Fir

Bantowsky family in finding new homes for their mother's bonsai

We are coordinating a sale of approximately 150 bonsai, mostly started from seed or cuttings by their mother, Edith. As it has become difficult for Edith to continue working on them, all trees will be priced to sell. Proceeds will be shared with SBBK, assisting in the sale.

The sale will be held on Saturday, May 17th, in Pacifica (address to be shared by email). The sale will be open to SBBK members at 9 am. Come early because the sale will open up to non-member buyer's at 10 am. The sale ends at 2 pm.

In terms of payment, we will be taking cash and credit cards. You may want to bring a cart. There will be pots, books and other bonsai related items on sale as well.

