



Jan 28 Meeting: Forest Plantings with Scott Chadd

by Mike Rosenthal

One of the more challenging yet rewarding endeavors in bonsai is the creating, styling and maintaining forest or group plantings. A large variety of trees have been used with the more common being maples, elms, junipers, hornbeams and even redwoods. A few examples include the following:



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2026 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.

Refreshment Reminder

Jan Mtg

Lynn O'Dell

Kit & Margaret S.

Feb Mtg

Enrique & Jen O.

Kathi Page

Mar Mtg

SBBK Board

(Club Birthday)

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

SBBK Calendar

Jan 17-18 **BABA 42nd Annual Show** Sat 5:30-9pm
Bay Area Bonsai Assoc. Sun 10am-4pm

Garden Center at Lake Merritt

Sat 7pm presentation by Adam Toth

Plant sales, raffle, food, free admission

Question:s Ron (925) 997-4446

Jan 28 **Club Meeting** Wednesday
San Mateo Garden Center 7-9 pm

Jan 31- Feb 1 **Shohin School** Sat & Sun
Harrison Rec. Center 9 am - 5 pm

1450 High St, Alameda

Registration use QR code:



Feb 8 **Forest Planting Workshop** Sunday
San Mateo Garden Center 10 am - 4 pm

Feb 22 **Repotting Party** Sunday
San Mateo Garden Center

Mar 7-8 **GSBF Mammoth Auction & Sales**
Lakeside Park Garden Center

666 Bellevue Ave, Oakland

Saturday 1:00 - 4:00 pm Auction

Sunday 10:00 am - 3:00 pm Bargain Sales

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President's Message

By Mike Rosenthal

Hello, My Friends and A Happy, Healthy and Safe New Year to You and Your Families,

After a most productive planning meeting lead by Valerie Monroe, I am most excited about the programs we have set-up for the coming 18 months. With participatory workshops, demonstrations by established experts and artists and our usual bonsai challenge and green elephant, I think you will all be thrilled with what we have in store. The results of that planning meeting will be available in next month's Snippet.

Last year was a huge success in expanding our membership with the addition of so many new enthusiasts and I anticipate more of the same for 2026. The collegial atmosphere and mutual support so evident when we all get together has made being a part of SBBK so wonderful and I know that will continue. I want you all to note that our SBBK Annual Show usually held on the first weekend of June will be moved to the second on June 13 and 14, 2026, due to a scheduling conflict at the SMGC; so please put that weekend on your calendars.

You all should take the opportunity to touch base with your Board at any time to voice suggestions or express

concerns for any aspect of our activities. We want you all to participate to the fullest extent you desire and are able. As noted in an accompanying article this month we will be having Scott Chadd as our visiting sensei on January 28 for a demonstration of group planting followed by a workshop on February 8 at San Mateo Garden Center (SMGC) to create a group or forest bonsai under the direction of Valerie. More of these defined item workshops are in the works for this year, especially to accompany select demonstrations by our member experts or invited guest presenters.

Finally, I want you to note that SBBK will have a repotting workshop get-together at the SMGC on February 22 from 10 to 3. All members are invited to participate and depending on weather conditions space inside and/or outside will be available. Lunch will be provided. Several of our more experienced members will be present to provide guidance where needed. Anyone participating needs to bring all of the material needed to include mesh to cover the holes in your pots, pots, tools, soil, wire and of course your trees.

Now that the rains have subsided remember to monitor your trees for hydration and keep your topicals as well as yourselves warm. — Mike

Create a Shohin Forest

Notes from Bonsai Empire (YouTube)

- Select seedlings between 1-3 yrs, with varied size trunks and heights
- Recommend growing them together young, prefer to use an odd number of trees
- Place your largest and tallest tree towards the front, and smallest in the back. Alternatively, you can place small trees in the front and back for a different feel and interest.
- Adds moss to help retain soil, add oxygen and retains moisture for finer roots.
- Let this grow out a few years and enjoy.



Image captured from YouTube: Bonsai Empire



Forest Planting Workshop

by Valerie Monroe

There are a few spaces available for the February 8th workshop, so if you are interested contact me (mcsnail@aol.com) to participate. This will be a fun day.

Materials needed for the workshop: Trees (several different sizes of the same variety. Two, three, or any odd number is okay); Pot/container (a walled tray or box or growing pot that will hold all of the trees you want to use. For this workshop, deeper may be better for getting your group started); Soil (enough bonsai soil - good drainage - to fill the largest container you are bringing); Tools (scissors, tweezers, wire cutters, pliers, lots and lots of chopsticks, soil scoop, tray for catching soil, wire, screen); Lunch (bring a snack, we will be here all day).

For members to pre-order material by Jan 22nd for Scott to bring to the meeting, Val is preparing the order. Details on page 4.

Forest planting workshop

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On January 28, SBBK will be fortunate to have as our guest sensei Scott Chadd from Placerville, California. Scott began his bonsai adventure in 1972 while serving as Director of Public Works in Auburn. Paying a visit to a local bonsai nursery owned by a Japanese man, George Yamasaki, Scott bought his first tree and like many of us became hooked. As he states "When a person buys a bonsai, it is the beginning of a relationship." Initially Scott began importing trees from Japan, but with increasing cost and the need for isolation he expanded his collection by harvesting mainly in the Eldorado and Inyo National Forests.



Over the next 50 plus years he has become one of the leading experts in the creation of group plantings and along with his wife, Bolet Salvador, have operated the Lotus Bonsai & Nursery Gardens in Placerville (<https://www.lotusbonsai.com>).

Following Scott's lecture and demonstration, our own Valerie Monroe will be leading a workshop on Saturday, February 8 at the San Mateo Garden Center to allow 10 SBBK member participants to create their own group plantings with the guidance of our own experts. There are still openings available for a fee of \$30. Participants must provide their own material including tools, trees, pots, soil, wire and mesh for the pot holes. Members can sign up by contacting Valerie directly or at our January meeting. This will be a unique opportunity to create your own long-lasting bonsai creation. If needed, planting material (trees) will be available for purchase from both Scott Chadd and Bob Shatsky at our January meeting.



“There are no borders in bonsai,
the dove of peace flies to palace as to
a humble house, to young as to old,
to rich as to poor.”

John Yoshio Naka,

National Endowment for the Arts website

(right) An ancient hollow trunk tree collected by Harry Hirao and John Naka on display at Lucy Judd's garden.

Forest planting workshop

Tree material available to purchase by members from Scott Chadd.

Boxwood three tree \$100 [A]

Boxwood five tree \$139 [B]



Acer palmatum three \$100 [C]

Acer palmatum five \$130 [D]



A palmatum shi shi gashira three \$75 [E]

A palmatum shi shi gashira five \$100 [F]



Dwarf hinoki cypress three \$100 [G]

Dwarf hinoki cypress five \$150 [H]



Bonsai Master—Tak Shimazu

by Michael Wei

As I was down south for the holidays, Gio suggested that I connect with a grower in Riverside. Tak Shimazu was at the 2024 GSBF Rendezvous, and some of you may have picked up some Shohin material from him.

He was a kind and talented bonsai grower, allowing me to ask questions and photograph his trees. I was inspired by his propagation and development of Shohin material, and purchased a few trees.

Mr. Shimazu grew up in Kumamoto, Japan, before immigrating to the US. In Japan, he was the only person in his family passionate about bonsai and was an informal student of Mr. Sasaki, visiting and helping out at Mr. Sasaki's garden. Later, Mr. Shimazu studied with Kunio Kobayashi (mastering JBP)

COLLECTING CALIFORNIA JUNIPERS AND AFTERCARE:

For collected California Junipers, his aftercare is unique. Since this tree grows lower altitude and often only sees rain in the winter, he does not water the soil for the first 4-5 months. Instead, he covers the soil with plastic and waters the foliage only. Enough moisture will feed the root development. He also bags the foliage at first for humidity control.

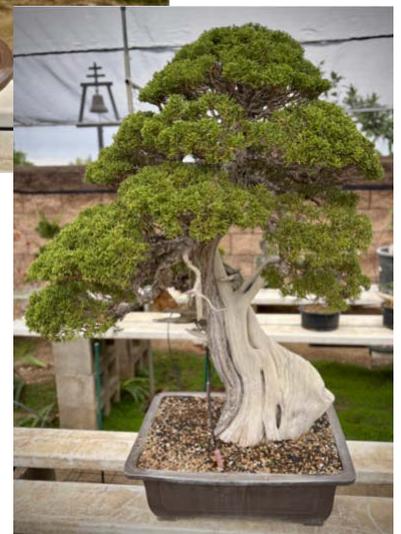
He pots in 100% pumice on the top 6", but leaves the original soil in the lower part of the pot. During repotting he finds the lower roots and original soil have died off and new roots develop in the top pumice soil.

STYLING POINTER

One detail that he pointed out was a traditional Japanese style, not often practiced in the US—where the angle of the descending branches start close to the trunk. In the US, he often sees branches extend laterally and then angle the ends downwards. But when angling close to the trunk, the branch will look heavy and old. (example below). Then the branch will cascade and have a left/right movement.



Internationally awarded juniper that he collected and grafted itoigawa over 15 years ago (above)



Tak Shimazu continued from p 5

Tak's nursery is his backyard. With a small footprint, he has created great material by cuttings, air-layering, and by seed. He has a wide variety (shown below) of mostly Shohin size. At one time he provided so many Beauty Berry bonsai to So Cal that there was no more need for it. Keep an eye out for him at larger California Shohin events or visit him if passing by.

Potato Vines (top, center) are not common bonsai material, but an example of Tak's great development skills.. He found his first vine in a parking lot and developed and propagated great shohin over the years. Once in a bonsai pot & bonsai soil, the leaves can reduce easily. Flowers Apr-Aug.



“Time in Pot” Bonsai Store in Half Moon Bay

By Bill McDonald

In March 2025 a bonsai store called “Time in Pot” on Highway 92 was opened. Located at 12511 San Mateo Road (Hwy 92) and operated by owner Jian Zhang. Look for the huge “BONSAI” sign on the south side of the road at Pastorino Farms.

Jian has a Chinese university degree in nursery horticulture and has been involved in bonsai for the last 35 years. All of his trees are his creation and include a wide variety of species including juniper, black pine, elm, ash, maple (though not in the store until foliage present), mini boxwood and others. He has nurseries in



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“Time in Pot” continued from p 6

Los Altos and East Palo Alto. Tree prices range from \$85 to \$1200 and other items such as pots, stands, tools, stones etc. in stock.

Store hours are Friday 1 to 5 pm; Saturday 11 to 5 pm; and Sunday 11 to 5 pm. The website: timeinpot.com phone: (650) 388-6396 email: contact@timeinpot.com.

Time In Pot has graciously offered a 10% discount on any item in the store or website to current Sei Boku Bonsai Kai members (valid through 12/31/2026). To identify yourself as a current SBBK member the secret code is “JohnNaka” (one word for internet orders).



Sacramento Field Trip Report

by Gianne Souza McCaskill

On a truly frigid morning in December, a group of Sei Boku bonsai enthusiasts with varying degrees of seasonally appropriate attire set out for Sacramento. I, for one, definitely did not bring a warm enough jacket - the inland areas of the state had been socked in with a thick blanket of icy fog for the better part of a month, and I, the naive coast dweller, had no idea how cold it would be just a few hours drive in! Many thanks to Steve Iwaki and Steve Jang for volunteering to drive us. I rode in Steve Jang's van with Jenny and Jenn, and Steve shared with us many stories and helpful tips along the way! This was especially welcome given that the three of us were all fairly new to bonsai.



Mike Rosenthal and Gianne Souza McCaskill with “Mike’s Maple” in bright yellow Fall foliage!

Our conversations made the miles fly by, and in no time we were at Maruyama nursery. Maruyama has been growing and importing bonsai material for decades, and the offerings for sale reflected many years of dedication. There was something for everyone - numerous pre-bonsai with lots of potential, field grown material with thick trunks and impressive nebari, bags of soil components, a warehouse full of imported bonsai pots at very reasonable prices, and refined material that was to die for. I came with the intention of finding a Korean hornbeam to add to my collection, and I needed only to look for the colorful splashes of bright yellow, orange, and red to distinguish them from the other deciduous and coniferous material. At some point Steve Iwaki, Steve Jang, and I wandered into the back of the lot and browsed among the recently potted up field grown material, some with trunks as thick as your wrist. We rejoined the group when they were looking at some of the more refined material, some of which

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Sacramento Field Trip Report

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could have been entered into the Pacific Bonsai Expo with only a few more years of work (of particular note was a gorgeous redwood that Mike Rosenthal couldn't stop looking at!). At the very end of our visit, just as we were getting ready to gather everyone up and go get lunch, Mike pointed out a beautiful little Japanese maple with bright lemon yellow fall foliage - and I couldn't leave without it! I have since named it "Mike's maple" and have been told (or was it ordered?!) by our fearless leader that it needs to make an appearance in our show soon!

We picked up lunch at a nearby Japanese market that specialized in takeaway bento boxes, then continued to Lucy Judd's home. We ate in Lucy's workshop (some of us huddled close to the fire burning stove for warmth!) and partook of Lucy's wonderful generosity in the form of homemade cookies, tea, and years of stories. We then explored Lucy's garden, which was the product of Lucy and Gary Judd's absolute dedication to the art for over three decades. The trees



Lucy Judd shares how a Japanese bonsai book describes the wiring weeping branches - always cut the bottom branchlet off and wire the top one down in an upside-down "u" shape.

speak of multiple generations of consistent love and care, with a few "pre-war trees" that preceded and survived the second World War and internment camps. I loved an old twisting apricot cared for by Lucy's mother, and an ancient hollow trunked tree that was collected by Harry Hirao and John Naka near the 105 freeway! (see page 3) Every tree had a story, and every part of the garden was created with love - I especially adored a part of the garden with bonsai trees planted in the ground and tiny chairs and tables, which Gary had put together so Lucy could "feel like a giant" when standing in it!



Both the Maruyamas and Lucy Judd were so inviting, kind, and considerate. Hopefully we can visit again in late Spring when the azaleas are in full bloom (and a little bit warmer!).

Lucy made this wonderful video of us visiting her garden: https://youtu.be/2e_9zQzQljM



Lucy has an impressive collection of azaleas!



The Beauty Berries all had bright purple fruit - some were available at Maruyama's Nursery!

Root-On-Rock

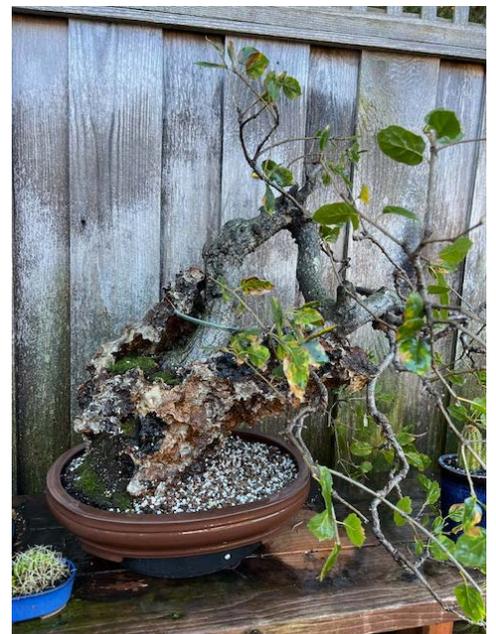
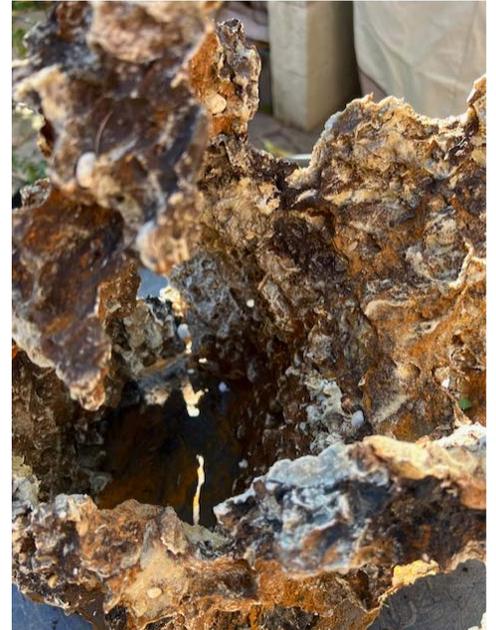
By Steve Iwaki

Recently I received a shipment of stones from Austrian bonsai artist, Josef Rauscher. At least you think it's stone. Actually, he has developed a unique technique to make them, actual material unknown.

"Vertical stones" is what he called this batch. To me they are sculptural in nature, a rock-like in composition, perfect for the root-on-rock style.

After much contemplation, we settled on an oak, formerly owned by Mike Page, with a long enough trunk to plant in the hollow cavity Josef formed with this material. The length of the trunk and movement of the branch structure worked perfectly with the stone. We did have to chisel out some material to get the tree in. With the addition of soil, muck and an oval pot to hide the plinth, we declared victory!

Here are some quick snapshots of the process. Pictures don't do it justice.



New SBBK Calendar of Events

2026

Jan	Scott Chadd Group/Forest Planting
Feb	Young Choe Kusamono Extra Workshop to follow Forest Planting Workshop
Mar	Birthday Meeting. Adam Toth Shohin
Apr	Kaya Mooney
May	Multi Species Workshop
June	Bonsai Challenge

BGLM Mammoth Auction & Sale

By Suzanne Muller

BGLM Mammoth fundraiser is schedule for March 7 and 8, 2026. The two-day event is roughly two months away!

This month starts the call for auction and sale consignments and donations. Quality bonsai trees, pots, stands, and related bonsai items are needed for the auction. Sale items can be suitable pre-bonsai trees, bonsai trees, pots, stands, tools, and bonsai art.

For additional information contact Director Suzanne Muller at queueinteriors@comcast.net.



One last glimpse of the group enjoying lunch in Lucy's workshop

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 <https://seibokubonsai.org/>
or at <https://facebook.com/seiboku.bonsaikai>
or at <https://instagram.com/seibokubonsai>



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