



Pedro Morales—Tropicals

by Mike Rosenthal

Wednesday, Aug 26, 2026 at 7:00pm

Our monthly meeting will feature a guest artist sensei Pedro Morales. Pedro is from Puerto Rico and will be doing a demonstration and discussion with a tree to be auctioned at the end of the meeting. Pedro is a recognized master who has and continues to lecture throughout the world and is considered one of the top experts with tropical trees. In addition to our meeting, he will also be participating in both a full day and half day workshop at Steve Iwaki's home on Wednesday the 26th. If you have any interest in participating, you can get in touch directly with Steve either by e-mail (steve@iwakibonsai.com) or call/text (650-703-9234).



Photo credit Entrevista 2025

SBBK Calendar

Aug 22-23 Redwood Empire Bonsai Society Show

Rohnert Park Community Center

5401 Snyder Lane, Rohnert Park

Free admission & parking

Sat 10:00 am - 5:00 pm

Sun 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

Aug 22 Naka Memorial Exhibition

244 San Pedro St #505, Los Angeles,

The Naka Memorial Exhibition is a juried bonsai show.

Contact nakamemorialexhibit@gmail.com

or nakamemorialexhibit.com for more info.

Nov 14 SBBK Fieldtrip: Peter Tea Garden & more

Meet at the San Mateo Garden Center

Carpool to Auburn. Details to follow.

Refreshment Reminder

Aug Mtg

Zake Stahl

Bob & Joyce Shatsky

Sep Mtg

SBBK Board

Green Elephant

Oct Mtg

Philip Tabet &

Marguerite W

JT Thompson

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



**PACIFIC
BONSAI
EXPO 2027**

The 2027 Pacific Bonsai Expo

The 2027 Pacific Bonsai Expo will be held on February 6-7, 2027, at the Alameda County Fairgrounds in Pleasanton, California.

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President's Message

by Mike Rosenthal

I wanted to update you all in what is around the corner for us. We should all be considering our involvement in the annual Green Elephant Sale at our monthly meeting on September 23rd. This is a wonderful opportunity to sell (and purchase) any bonsai related materials including trees both by a silent auction and live. I am attaching the entry sheet you will need for vending. Any items sold will leave a minimum 20% for SBBK, but members can elect to designate more or all of the sale for our club. In addition to selling this will be a great opportunity to acquire new material, especially by our newer members. This is always a fun meeting with a lot of action and laughs.

Gianne Souza McCaskill has set up another great field trip for our members in November. Peter Tea is a highly respected Bonsai expert, well known to our community who has agreed to open his nursery to

SBBK on Saturday, November 14. Peter is located in Auburn so the trip would be about 2-2.5 hours. Murayama Nursery is also in the area and there may be an opportunity to combine that as well. Seeing Peter's collection is alone worth the trip, but acquiring trees and other material may be included in this visit. Gianne will provide more information in our September Snippet and a sign-up sheet will be available. Those participating will likely go by car-pool, meeting at the San Mateo Garden Center. To learn more about Peter Tea you can access information at <https://www.ptbonsai.com>.

Finally, remember the Redwood Empire Bonsai Society Show in Rohnert Park on August 22nd and 23rd. This is one of the better shows in the Bay Area and well worth the visit.

Hope you are all having a wonderful summer,

Mike

July Recap: JT's Wiring Workshop

by Michael Wei

A great thanks to JT for leading a fun wiring workshop. JT provided a simulated branch and wire, and demonstrated the principles. Those who participated were grateful to take home their wired branches for study and reference. JT provided handouts on his Wiring Guidelines, resharing below for those who were not at the workshop.

Wiring begins with tree cleanup and assessment. Fingers, scissors and tweezers.

- Remove inactive foliage, dead twigs - snags and stubs - for a clear, smooth wiring surface.
- Check for cracks and older dead wood that may split if not properly supported.
- Test branch flexibility- Pre-bend branches - exercise (but not back and forth) the branch before applying wire - can increase the amount of bend you can get once wire has been applied.
- ID tree's development stage & shaping alternatives: i.e. pruning only; tie-down; spreader; tumbuckle; Wiring, or a combination of these.
- Work out where and how you would like trunk and branches moved for your design.



Wiring sequence and Size selection. Wire cutters and pliers.

- Wire the tree up from the base and out to the tips of the branches. Conversely, remove wire by either uncoiling or cutting in pieces from the outside in and from top to bottom.
- Do not use the same wire from the base to the tip of the apex.
- Change wire size to mirror the taper of the tree. Transition from heavy wires for trunk and major branches to lighter wire for smaller branches and

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Information And Inspiration, Part II

by Richard Phillips, *Student Of Bonsai*

In July's Part I article, I wrote about the need for inspiration as well as information to help us achieve the goal of creating a bonsai that is a reflection of nature in miniature. Later, it occurred to me that I'd implied that information and inspiration were two separate sources for our bonsai practice. But the question came to me: "When is inspiration also information?"

I can best illustrate this through my experiences on California State Highway 88 in the Sierra Nevada. The section of Hwy 88 that passes over the mountains into Nevada is known as the Carson Pass. Beginning around 7000 feet elevation, you will begin to see Sierra junipers. As is typical of junipers, many of the trees will have significant deadwood on them. And deadwood, of course, is an essential part of a juniper bonsai because it denotes age.

There are several places where you can safely pull off the road and go for a closer look at the trees. I have done this on hot summer days and during snowstorms. Each time, I have been inspired by what these trees endure season after season, sometimes for centuries. What I didn't realize at those times was that I was also receiving information - "the information of direct experience."

To be in the same environment as those trees is to receive information of a much deeper kind than is possible through other means. It is information that is absorbed through the senses, not through an inquisitive and/or acquisitive process of thought.

The Japanese haiku poet Basho wrote about this very eloquently when he wrote:

"Go to the pine if you want to learn about the pine, or to the bamboo if you want to learn about the bamboo."

He was not talking about learning how pines or bamboo look, but how the poet feels when they are with them.

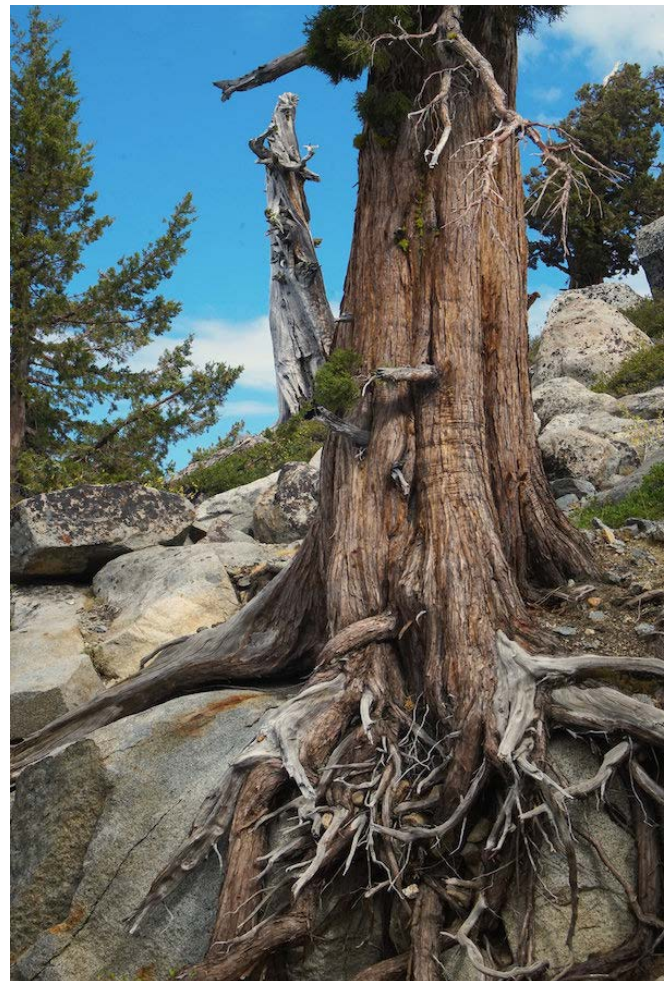
He was referring to how to write authentic poetry, but his thoughts apply equally to the practice of bonsai creation. He goes on to say:

"And in doing so, you must leave your subjective preoccupation with yourself. Otherwise you impose yourself on the object and do not learn."

Of course, when I'm looking at the junipers, I'm studying how the deadwood looks - its color, texture, and form - because I want to try to recreate this in my bonsai. That's technical information, and I take lots of photographs for future reference.

But what's equally important is to be aware of and open to the forces that are acting on that deadwood and on the tree as a whole in the present moment. That calls for putting the camera away and simply experiencing whatever is happening: heat if there's heat, snow if there's snow, wind if there's wind.

At their best, bonsai evoke an emotional response and a sense that they represent something beyond what they appear to be. Imbuing a bonsai with this quality takes technical skill, for sure. But it equally needs the artist's direct experience of how Nature is the ultimate creator.





twigs. Continue a heavier wire $1\frac{1}{2}$ - 2 spirals past a branch so that you can then lay-in the next smaller sized wire next to it and have a good anchor for maximum bending capability.

- Don't use under-sized wire for large branches or over-sized wire for small branches.
- Plan to wire 2 branches of like size with 1 piece of wire.
- Use the size wire that will make the bend you need at any given point on the tree!

Generally select the size of wire that is about $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ the branch diameter for copper wire on conifers or $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ the branch diameter for aluminum on deciduous trees and a length about $1\frac{1}{2}$ times the distance to be wired (include both branches and interim trunk section). For thicker branches it is safer to cut a longer piece than one that is too short!

Set yourself up for successful wiring. (For a right-hander)

- Wiring should be effective, minimal and neat. Try not to cross the wires. Wire towards yourself so keep the target branch pointed towards you.
- The right hand's job- hold the end of the wire from the tip with thumb and forefinger – lay wire on the trunk or branch in a spiral fashion using the right forefinger as necessary to prebend and guide the placement of the wire while other fingers help clear foliage and twigs from path of wire.
- The left hand supports the branch and wire from below and just behind the point of application and the left fingers move twigs and foliage out of the

wire's way and twist branches as the wire is applied so that twigs will grow upwards or to the side rather than downwards.

Change support position after each spiral.

Applying the Wire - Anchor 1st -

- Bend a "U" in the wire at the length of the 1st branch. Fit the "U" behind the branch/trunk junction and support it there with the left hand while you wrap the wire around the branch $1\frac{1}{2}$ - 2 times with your right to anchor it. Reverse hands and support the partially wired branch with your left hand while wrapping the other end of the wire out to the end of the 2nd branch. Then go back and finish the 1st branch.
- With a light touch, hold the wire straight out at the end with thumb and forefinger and gently Pre-bend

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the wire and lay it easily onto the branch. Use the right forefinger as a more aggressive guide in tough areas. Don't use the branch as a fulcrum as you will crush the bark and scar the branch.

- Adjustments can be made for spacing the spirals by moving wire back and forth with right hand to compensate for oddly spaced twigs or branches.
- Check regularly that there are no gaps between wire and branch. Use wire pliers as needed to adjust this.
- At the junction between branch and trunk, if the branch is to be bent down the first spiral should start over the top of the branch. If the branch is to be bent up the first spiral should start beneath the branch.
- Conifer branches grow downward and out so you would typically start spiral wire above branch. Hardwood branches go up so start wire below. Be consistent so that secondary wires will fit without crossing over another wire.
- If you twist the branch as you bend it, apply the wire in the direction so that it will tighten, not loosen, as you twist.
- The wire must come from the opposite side of the direction that the branch will be bent.
- Wire equal-spaced spirals of about 45° to 35° (more open) on the branch. In this case, 90° girdles the branch and 0° is straight down the branch towards you without spiraling .
- If there is no other branch close, wire one branch alone but anchor the wire by running it parallel with another wire for two revolutions or tucking the end under an existing wire.
- In a pinch, you can double a wire and split the ends to wire two branches.
- Before applying secondary wire, test to see if primary wire is able to make the bend. If the wire you applied is not sufficient to bend the branch, apply another wire of the same size along side of the first one. Different sized wires will slip if you use wire pliers to bend them.
- Run any secondary wire snug alongside the existing primary wire for best anchor.
- Use wire pliers to finish if the wire is too short or stiff.

Finish off the wire by bending the end under and across leaving a stub to the side.

Bending the branch - Hands and Wire Pliers

- Push the wired branch into position at the point you want a bend while supporting with your left hand. Let your fingers feel the wood. Many times you can feel the wood slipping or creaking inside before the branch is ready to crack. Trust you fingers - not your eyes.
- If you can't get sufficient bend with your hands or there is no room for your fingers, use tweezers or wire pliers to hold and stabilize the wire at the base of the bend. Leverage works wonders.
- A turnbuckle on a wired branch can give and hold an even more acute bend.
- Use raffia prior to wiring, lengthwise and spirally, to strengthen the branch if you think it might snap.
- Paper-wrap wire to protect sensitive bark.
- Wire should remain on until the branches have grown enough to hold their position. This may be 3 weeks or 2 years depending on species and growth. Check regularly.
- Remove wire from branches as soon as the bark begins to grow around it; then re-wire immediately if it does not hold in place. In most cases, though, do not unwire the whole tree, only those branches that are affected.
- Spray a solution of Anti-Stress 2000® or Cloud Cover® on wired branches to protect small cracks from drying out.
- Practice will make it easy and automatic.

Relax and enjoy it



First Tuesday Workshop

by Michael Wei

Val led another full house workshop, with the help of Richard Phillips. There were around 18 club members working on their trees. Welcome to all our new members. Thanks for all who shared refreshments, and a happy birthday to Val.

Val reviewed some fundamentals and refreshers on the following key topics. Adequate sun, water and soil is a balance for healthy and happy trees. If too much sun, move your tree to a location with more shade. Avoid overwatering or under-watering—and the discussion was what the soil should look like to indicate when it needs water. If you have a location that may dry out sooner than you can water, then consider an adjustment in soil (water retention) or sphagnum moss covering.

Sun

Water

Soil/Repot

- Using a rocky, granular soil
- Can use anything as long as it is in the right place in the yard

Fertilizer

- During the growing period

Pruning

- Cutback
- Where you cut, will bifurcate for ramification
- Thinning
- Cutting back may make it dense, so thinning may be needed



New SBBK Calendar of Events

2026

Sep	Mtg: Green Elephant Sale & Auction
Oct	Mtg: Peter Macasieb - Shohin
Nov	Mtg: Business Meeting, Fall Clean-up Workshop
Dec	Holiday Party



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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