Marin Bonsai Club

Bonsai Wire

Marin Bonsai Club

Monthly Meeting
3rd Tuesday, 7:30PM
Marin Art & Garden Center
30 Sir Francis Drake Blvd. Ross, CA

January 2012

President's message

Happy New Year to you! With this season comes the excitement of making New Year resolutions. And what better time is there than to think about ways to improve your bonsai? The list could be short or long. Here are my top three bonsai resolutions: studying with multiple bonsai teachers to gain a wider knowledge of practical bonsai techniques; learning about grafting to improve the existing branch structure of some of my pines, and going on fieldtrips to collect trees from the wild (with permission). Not lofty goals, but realistic for my schedule and time commitments. So, what will be your 2012 bonsai resolutions?

At our last board meeting we spent some time thinking how we could help to create an even more rewarding experience for our club members. I think you'll find our lineup for meetings will include a greater number of guest speakers and demos, which will appeal to our newer and more seasoned members alike. We are continuing our mentor program whereby new members can choose to work with an experienced member to fast-track their progress (please talk to me about how this can work for you). And we are exploring ways to further promote our club to the public to increase awareness of bonsai as an art-form. More about these plans will follow in future newsletters.

To achieve our plans, we do need help from you by way of your continued membership for 2012. Please fill out the membership application and send in your check to our treasurer, Frances Noles. We very much appreciate you doing this as soon as possible, and we would love to hear how you might help the club as a volunteer. Year round we need people to docent at the Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt in Oakland, provide refreshments at our club meetings, help set up shows, etc. All of your efforts help to create a really great bonsai club that nurtures our bonsai skills and development!

To kick off 2012, our workshop meets on January 3 at 7pm at MAGC, in our new location, Decorations Guild (the Multi-Purpose Room). Now is the time to start all that important work on structure and repotting. On January 17, guest speaker and certified instructor Gordon Deeg will present 'Pot Selection'. Selecting the right pot is a very important part of correct presentation of your bonsai. Gordon has studied bonsai over 45 years, and is currently chairman of the board for the Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt. Don't miss this opportunity to hear about pots, and better still, drop in to the collection and see the trees and their special pots. You may even see Kathy Shaner, Gordon and others doing work on the trees as well. You're welcome to join in the fun.

- Alison Seaman

2012 Programs

It's that time of year again. Forced inside by inclement weather and dwindling daylight hours we find ourselves with the time and inclination to reassess our bonsai collections and consider goals for the New Year; goals for our trees' development, goals for expanding our knowledge and goals for growth as bonsai enthusiasts and practitioners.

Luckily, if you are a MBC member, you have a board of directors that is thinking about the same things in the context of club activities. Our focus as a club is to present our members with sound information on growing and developing their trees. We make every effort to present to the club new voices in the bonsai world as well as seasoned experts, to foster opportunities for acquiring good bonsai material and to develop the knowledge to make those critical decisions when the moment of truth arrives.

So far on the schedule for 2012 we have planned a discussion on bonsai pots for January and our usual repotting workshops for the beginning of the year to help us all start our trees off for optimal growth. We'll see the return of Ted Matson both for a meeting demonstration and workshops this spring, as well as seasonally timed presentations on native California oaks and satsuki azaleas by noted experts. There will be plenty of home grown talent* as well, featuring our popular wiring intensive with the wire whisperer, John Doig, and other innovative programs yet to be announced.

Is there something you would like to learn, do, practice or talk about at the club meetings? Please let us know. The schedule is not fixed in stone and we welcome input and help of all varieties from our members. Let me know what rocks your bonsai world and we will do our best to bring it to you.

- Candace Key, VP of Programs

Some of this local talent will be on display at the East Bay Bonsai Society club meeting on Wednesday, January 11 at 7:30pm.* ***Chris Ross* *and* ***Candace Key*** *will lead a discussion on camellias as bonsai and do a demonstration to be raffled at the end of the evening. Come to lend your support or heckle the presenters and support our friends in the East Bay. The club meets at the Lakeside Garden Center at Lake Merritt in Oakland, 666 Bellevue Avenue.*

Marin Bonsai Club - Holiday Party
December 11, 2011

Thank you to Roger and Marlene for hosting yet another wonderful holiday party!

Photos by John Doig

January Meeting

We are fortunate to have for our January meeting bonsai expert and teacher **Gordon Deeg** to talk about bonsai pots. It is a deep and varied topic, but Gordon will do a fine job no doubt in helping us learn to make the right decisions about potting our trees.

We have all probably heard a few generalities over the years about unglazed pots for pines and junipers and glazed for fruiting and flowering trees, but these generalities don't begin to scratch the surface of what there is to know about pot selection. Even a basic rectangular pot can have dozens of variations, i.e. rounded edges or crisp ones, straight sides or slanted, endless variations on feet, and even with a plain brown pot there are different colors to consider as well as the elusive and highly sought after 'patina'. How do you evaluate the worth of a pot? When do you decide your tree is ready to go into a show pot and, by the way, what is the difference between a show pot and a growing pot?

Gordon brings a wealth of knowledge gleaned from over 40 years of bonsai practice so be sure to take advantage of this wonderful opportunity to learn more about bonsai pots. You can even bring a tree and proposed pot, and if there is time we will try to get Gordon to give you an expert opinion for your tree. Now a bit about Gordon . . .

Gordon Deeg began his bonsai practice in the Sacramento area in the 1960's and has taken advantage of the many bonsai experts and teachers in the area, studying constantly to improve his knowledge and skills. This includes 10 years of study with Kathy Shaner, as well as working alongside her at the Bonsai Collection at Lake Merritt in Oakland on collection trees. He has also spent several years traveling to Japan to study with Yasuo Mitsuya. A certified bonsai teacher, Gordon has taught classes and seminars throughout California on a wide variety of topics. Gordon has a special interest in shohin bonsai and is past president of the California Shohin Society. Currently he is on the Board of Directors at the Bonsai Collection at Lake Merritt, playing a crucial role in the management and growth of this invaluable bonsai resource in our midst.

- Candace Key

Bonsai Tips and Tricks

Need pumice and a place to pick up chicks?

Try your local feed store. If you're like me and have gazillions of bonsai and/or pre-bonsai to repot in the next couple of months, a 40 pound bag of Dry Stall (pumice) will come in very handy when making up your bonsai soil mix. Reasonably priced at around $12.

Oh, and the chicks? Keep in mind that the kind of chicks you can pick up at feed stores will grow feathers.

- Sharon Bone

It's Weeding Time at the Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt

Please mark your calendars:

Saturday, February 18, 2012
from 10:30am to approximately 2:30pm
for weeding at The Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt.

It is our Club's annual contribution to clean up the Garden a week before the Mammoth Auction and Sale. Bring a hat, gloves, weeding tools, knee pads, and lunch!! These nasty little weeds never go away and we need to get rid of them.

There will be a sign up sheet at the workshops and meetings so please – if you don't mind getting a bit grungy and want to contribute to the Garden's enhancement – weed!! You may also sign up by email to Jeanette Arnold at arnoldje@comcast.net.

- Jeanette Arnold

MARIN BONSAI CLUB

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL

(PLEASE PRINT)

NAME(S)_____ DATE:_____

Check one: Single_____ Family_____ Student (under 18)_____

ADDRESS_____

_____

HOME PHONE: ( )_____ WORK PHONE: ( )_____ CELL: ( )_____

EMAIL**_____ Year you joined Marin Bonsai Club_____

** It has become increasingly important for us to have your email address so you can be kept up to date on last minute shows and events. Please print clearly.

Membership Fees: Single $45 Family $65 Student $25

Make checks payable to Marin Bonsai Club. Send check and application to:
Marin Bonsai Club, PO Box 437, Ross, CA 94957

Monthly Newsletter: We distribute a monthly Club newsletter—*Bonsai Wire*—to our members.
It is also published on the Club website at http://www.marinbonsai.org/newsletters.php.
Please indicate how you would prefer to receive the newsletter:

_____ Email notification _____ USPS mail _____ No newsletter

As a member of Marin Bonsai Club, we ask that you volunteer in at least two areas where you can be helpful to the Club. You will also be asked by our Hospitality host to bring refreshments once a year. Please indicate which areas you are interested in:

Monthly Meeting / Workshop Activities

_____ Raffle events
_____ Field trip coordination
_____ Publicity
_____ Newsletter contributor
_____ Website assistant
_____ Photographer
_____ Welcome Committee
_____ Cleanup management

Annual Activities

_____ Setup and takedown Marin County Fair show
_____ Auction Committee (need lots of people)
_____ Setup and coordination Fall Show
_____ Summer picnic
_____ Holiday party

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INPUT AND YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT OF THE MARIN BONSAI CLUB

Taskmaster - January 2012

January in the Northern Bay Area microclimates is a study in ocean currents and their effect on coastal weather. We have a mild Mediterranean climate overall, but rains can occasionally be heavy and prolonged, and nights can sometimes snap a frost into the high twenties out of nowhere. The price for mostly mild weather is that we must always be prepared for the occasional extreme.

Most bonsai can stand some low temperatures, and some, including azaleas, actually benefit from a few frosts. But if the temperature stays below 33° for more than four hours, there may be some danger to roots or small stems or buds. So why take a chance? Put tender plants and shohin size pots under the eaves, under the low branches of any leafy canopy, or in the garage or carport for a day or three when winter cracks that old whip. Moist trees and soil do best in deep cold, wet ones do poorly, and dry ones may die.

Wait to repot everything until just before leaf bud swell, because everything you cut right now, including roots, will heal very slowly, bleed too much, and may admit disease. Go get an Old Farmer's Almanac at any bookstore and get a broad picture of the year's likely weather trends by season for our locale, and start watching the skies and the buds in late January to late February for the right time. If you don't understand what you're seeing, take along a small magnifying glass and really look at buds and tips and note the changes.

For now, if you haven't done the second, Christmastime application of dormant spray, get it done now and remember to do it again in three or four weeks. Always drape the soil with plastic, and always shake off excess when you're done. Clean off the benches, clear away all old leaves and debris, and get as much sun as possible on everything.

If the rains get heavy, prop up the ends of your pots so the water drains faster. If weeds and ants move in, move them back out right away. If moss grows on trunks or exposed roots, brush it off before it rots. If water stands on the soil, stick a slim chopstick or, even better, a metal barbecue skewer down to the bottom of the pot in several places to create drainage and air passage, then mark those pots for first dibs on repotting in February.

Pluck all remaining old needles from pines (white and five-needle pines must be cut, not plucked), but leave immature buds and the adventitious growth in or near crotches alone because it may become valuable as the place to cut back to for perfect shaping later on.

Give everything a dose of 0-10-10 fertilizer this month and next, and chop in a teaspoon or three of cotton seed/ bone meal in a 70-30% ratio to the outer perimeter of each pot to assure strong healthy spring growth and cold and fungal resistance in the meantime.

Then sit back, make a cup of sassafras tea with tupelo honey, and try to write a Haiku that captures the bittersweet and uncertain feeling that being stranded in a dormant time inevitably brings to every heart.

January moon
Shines cold over the bonsai
Spring seems far away

Email all completed Haiku to this newsletter as soon as possible.

- The Taskmaster

Editor's note:

The Taskmaster is serious about the Haiku assignment. Please send your fabulous Haiku to mbcnews@marinbonsai.org. Who knows, you may see your work in print someday…

After some research, I found that there are all kinds of rules for and types of Haiku. Below is a link to Scholastic's version (basically, 17 syllables arranged in three lines of 5-7-5 with the inclusion of a seasonal theme):

What is Haiku?

BAY AREA BONSAI EVENTS

January 11 **Oakland, CA**

East Bay Bonsai Society club meeting Wednesday at 7:30pm. Marin Bonsai Club's own Chris Ross and Candace Key will lead a discussion on camellias as bonsai and do a demonstration to be raffled at the end of the evening. The club meets at the Lakeside Garden Center at Lake Merritt in Oakland, 666 Bellevue Avenue.

January 14-15 **Oakland, CA**

Bay Island Bonsai: ***Annual Bonsai Exhibit*** at the Lakeside Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Avenue. Hours are 10AM-4PM, both days. On Saturday at 1PM there will be an auction, with a preview at 12Noon. Guided tours of the exhibit both days. Benefit Drawing (need not be present to win). Vendors; club member and educational bonsai material will be for sale. Free entry to the exhibit. Donations accepted. For more information call 510-919-5042 or visit www.bayislandbonsai.com

January 28-29 **Oakland, CA**

Bay Area Bonsai Associates: ***31st Annual Bonsai Exhibition*** at the Lakeside Park (Lake Merritt) Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Avenue. Show hours are Saturday, 5-9PM and a demonstration by Ryan Neil starts at 6:30PM, followed by a raffle of the demonstration tree. Sunday hours are 10AM-4PM. A plant sale (including bonsai related items such as pots, tools, soils, wires, books, etc.) will be continuous both days. Admission is free. For more information contact John Roehl at bigbluemoon@comcast.net or 707-827-3206.

February 3-5 **Santa Nella, CA**

California Shohin Seminar 2012 at the Hotel de Oro. Demos on Friday, Workshops on Saturday. Registration forms and information can be found at www.calshohin.org, email calshohin@yahoo.com.

February 25-26 **Oakland, CA**

GSBF Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt: ***Mammoth Fundraiser 2012*** at the Lakeside Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Avenue. On Saturday an auction of fabulous bonsai will be from 1-4PM, with preview at 12Noon. Sunday hours are from 9AM-4PM and will feature demonstrations by Collection Curator, Kathy Shaner and Team, many vendors, a large consignment sale of bonsai and bonsai related items and several raffle drawings throughout the day.
For general information email www.bonsailakemerritt@gmail.com, visit www.gsbf-bonsai.org/lake-merritt/NewHome.htm or phone Randi Keppeler 650-598-0127.

Bonsai Wire **newsletter submissions:**

Issue	**Deadline**
February 2012	January 26
March 2012	February 24
April 2012	March 23

Please email any news, articles, event info, Haiku, etc. to mbcnews@marinbonsai.org

Lotus Bonsai Nursery Workshops:

Sunday, January 8 - Root Over Rock, Class II
Sunday, January 22 - Better Bonsai Workshop
Saturday, March 10 - Better Bonsai Workshop
Saturday, March 24 - Weeping Cherry
Saturday, April 14 - Better Bonsai Workshop

Lotus Bonsai Nursery & Gardens
1435 Lower Lake Drive
Placerville, CA 95667
(530) 622-9681 Phone
www.lotusbonsai.com

MARIN BONSAI CLUB EVENTS

January 3, 2012: Workshop
Decorations Guild, 7pm - Bring in your trees for our monthly workshop. $10 for members, $20 for non-members.

January 17, 2012: Meeting
Decorations Guild, 7:30pm - Bonsai pots - Just about everything you need to know about selecting the right pot for your tree, presented by bonsai expert and teacher Gordon Deeg.

February 7, 2012: Workshop
Decorations Guild, 7pm - Bring in your trees for our monthly workshop. $10 for members, $20 for non-members.

February 21, 2012: Repotting Workshop
Decorations Guild, 7:30pm - Bring in your trees for more repotting.

For a full list of currently scheduled MBC events, see http://www.marinbonsai.org/events/index.php.

Marin Bonsai Club

2012 Marin Bonsai Club Officers:

President	Alison Seaman	415-789-1167
VP Programs	Candace Key	415-491-1989
VP Shows	Jay McDonald	415-847-8909
Secretary	Jeanette Arnold	415-883-2651
Treasurer	Frances Noles	415-461-0437
Historian	Carolyn Robbins	415-460-0339
Librarian	Roger Lion	415-924-5134
Newsletter/Web	Sharon Bone	415-898-9618
Hospitality	Marlene Philley	415-924-5134
Docent Coord	Roger Lion	415-924-5134

Marin Bonsai Club
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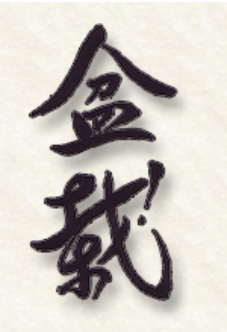
Ross, CA 94957

www.marinbonsai.org

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