

OCTOBER 2011

Meeting Date:
October 21, 2011



St Mark's Episcopal Church
600 Colorado Ave.
Palo Alto, CA

3rd Friday of the Month
7 pm Techniques Workshop
8 pm General Meeting

KUSAMURA BONSAI CLUB

President

Rita Curbow
408.732.4957

Vice President

Charlene Fisher

Recording Secretary

Dave Curbow

Treasurer

Suresh 'Mo' Mohan

Cors. Secretary/ Newsletter

Bang Vo

Librarian

vacant

Benefit Drawing

Lynne O'Dell

Hospitality

Bang Vo

Past President

Jerry Carpenter

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Michael Greenstein

Lynne O'Dell

Helen Reist

Stephanie North

Jim Thompson

Mark O'Brien

The Bonsai Corner

Refreshment

October: Mark O'Brien
and Janet Refvem

November: TBD

December: Holiday Party

Hospitality

October: Lynne O'Dell

November: TBD

December: None

Show & Tell—Open

Raffle—Open

Library—Open

Repotting a Root Bound Tree and Workshop on Fruiting and Flowering Trees

The first hour of our program will be a demonstration by Gordon Deeg on how to deal with a root-bound tree in its off season. In the second part of the program, Gordon will assist members with their fruiting and flowering trees in a demonstration-style format. So bring in your azaleas, crab apples, quinces, etc. for some expert advice on how to improve them at this time of year.

Gordon Deeg, a bonsai artist since the mid-60s, has studied with many preeminent bonsai teachers in Northern California including Kathy Shaner, the curator of the GSBF Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt. Gordon is also a certified instructor on Satsuki Azaleas and a member of Bay Area Bonsai Association (BABA) and Sei Boku Bonsai Kai.

CLUB NEWS

Board Meeting

Mark your calendar our next Kusamura board meeting will be Monday, November 14, at 7PM at the Curbows.

Potting Party

Mark your calendar for this year's potting party date:

November 13, 2010

This is the first potting party to prepare for our 2012 show. The potting party will be from 10 AM to 4 PM at the home of the Planting's - 898 Coleman Ave in Menlo Park.

Bring trees being held from previous show sales to be improved. We will work on donated plants that are repotted in the fall. This includes trees you may be taking care of from previous shows, Sumigawa nursery donated trees from last year, and other club trees. In addition to helping work on club owned trees, each club member is also obligated to donate three trees or bonsai related items to the sale. A potting party is an excellent opportunity to work on those trees and use club soil, wire, pots, etc and even other members' styling expertise to make them ready for the show sale.

Funds raised at our annual show are used to support the clubs' on-going monthly activities and pay for the upcoming year's show.

Future potting party dates are January 8 and February 12.

Bonsai in Fall

This is a good time to check your bonsai wires and branching as well as shape any pines, junipers, etc. you may have in your collection. Ezo Spruce, Quince, and Zelkova species can be set into slightly larger **bonsai** pots, selecting pot colors to go with the colorful blossoms the quinces will produce in the spring. Tropical and other tender plant materials should be brought in gradually to adapt them to their winter shelter environment.

During the fall, it is also a good idea to inspect your bonsai root system to plan for spring potting or repotting priorities. Fertilize with low or no nitrogen like 0-10-10. Low Nitrogen feeding helps to develop strong roots. Winter is all about root feeding. Flag any bonsai that have roots coming out of drain holes and any whose roots are starting to run along its pot walls, round and round.

You need not hurry to perform these bonsai fall maintenance activities, if you begin early enough. Handle every bonsai individually and enjoy it. Trim a little; shape a little, plan for the next season's work. Relax and enjoy, its fall, the time when plants rest and relax. Shouldn't this also be your time of rest and relaxation?

Upcoming

- *November*: Potting party on Nov 13. Board meeting at the Curbow's on Nov. 14. The club meeting on Nov. 18 will be a workshop on winter prep for our trees led by Michael, John and Lonnie.
- *December*: Holiday potluck party with opportunity for gift exchange (bonsai-related items are preferred).

Root Pruning and Repotting Modified article of Root Pruning by Brent Walston

These go together as a topic since they are generally performed at the same time. Root pruning is performed to reduce the root system in order to re-pot the tree in either the same-size or smaller pot. It needs to be done at the proper time, depending on the type of tree, to ensure the tree's survival.

A little fact about roots: only the growing tips of fine root hairs actually perform the intake functions of the root system. The thick tap root, and the several foot-long, coiling roots in a nursery pot do very little for the tree. Helping the tree to replace these long thick roots with a tighter mass of fine roots is healthier for the tree.

Roots growing out of the drainage holes are sometimes a sign a tree is root bound; loss of vigor, more frequent watering needed, or just having a tight, matted soil in the pot would be warning signs.

How Often to Root Prune

The frequency of root pruning is related to: a) the species, b) the container size, and c) the environment. The bottom line is that a bonsai should be root pruned and repotted when it shows symptoms of decline or when it begins to push out of the pot.

In small containers, most plants will colonize the pot within a single growing season. This is especially true of mame (very small bonsai). Nearly all mame should be repotted every year. Shohin (under eight inches) should be repotted every year to two years depending on the species and the growing conditions.

Large potted specimen plants may be root pruned and repotted every other year to as long as ten years depending on the species. Many large pines are comfortable with five-to-ten year root-pruning programs. Cedars and spruce may be similarly treated.

What Time of the Year to Do It

Root pruning damages a plant, restricting its ability to take up water and nutrients, therefore it must be done at times of the year that the stresses on the plant are minimal. For temperate climate plants, there are two times of the year that these conditions are optimal, **late fall and early spring**. Tropical plants can usually be root pruned and repotted during periods of slow growth.

Manipulation of Growth Through Root Pruning

Root pruning can a very valuable tool in the bonsai training process. By carefully timing the root pruning and the top pruning of a plant, growth may be either slowed down or speeded up. The character of the growth can also be manipulated.

**Wise Bonsai Calendar
from our beloved past
member Jim Ransohoff**

September: Slowed down or reduced nitrogen feeding on your plants. This is a good time to strike your hardwood cuttings.

October: This is your last chance to repot conifers or non-fruiting deciduous tree before winter set in. This is an important time for plants to store nutrients, but do not overfeed with nitrogen as the growing season is over. Feed monthly with 0-10-10 to provide rootage and woodiness.

November: Clean off dead leaves and remove weeds. Water your trees, as they need it. This means that you should wait until the upper crust of soil has dried and is lighter in color before watering. *Don't forget to prepare your turkey for Thanksgiving.*

December: Keep your plants watered and don't let them freeze! Enjoy your holidays.

How to Do It

Root pruning a container plant is a relatively simple process. Simply un-pot the plant and proceed to comb out the roots in a radial pattern. There is one superior tool for this process, the root hook. It will untangle and straighten roots with a minimum of damage. Small plants may only require chopsticks to do the job.

Very often it will not be possible to move from the nursery container to the bonsai pot in one step. In this case, remove as much of the root ball as safely possible and repot to a smaller, shallower training pot. After a year or two, it should be safe to further root prune and shift to the final bonsai pot.

If the plant was in a fairly good nursery mix with coarse materials, it is not necessary to completely remove all of the old soil, although most of it should be removed. When plants are collected from native earth during the dormant season, it is probably best to remove as much of the heavier material as possible to make the transition to container mixes. It is tempting to blast the root ball with water to remove the old soil, and for some species this is perfectly acceptable; however, it does cause more damage to the fine root hairs than combing out the soil.

Place the root ball on a shallow pad of new soil in the pot and proceed to dibble more soil into all the spaces between the roots with a chopstick. Keep poking holes until there is a slight resistance, this means the voids have been filled with soil. Lightly tamp the soil surface and water thoroughly. This first watering should saturate and flush the soil. Water two or three times longer than you normally would to settle the soil and wash out the fine material.

You can finish by placing a layer of heavier gravel or decomposed granite on top, applying moss, or both. Then water again.



Crabapples with various colored fall fruit.
(Photos courtesy of Shutterstock.com and International Bonsai.)

Events

October 22-23 Sacramento, California

Capitol City Bonsai Association: 12th Anniversary Show to support the GSBF Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt and the Sacramento bonsai clubs. Location is the Shepard Garden and Arts Center, 3330 McKinley Blvd. in McKinley Park. Show hours are Saturday, 10AM-5PM and Sunday, 10AM-4PM. Demonstration both days at 1:30PM by sponsor clubs with special bonsai raffle drawings to follow. Vendor and club member sales areas, contact Gary Judd, juddbonsai@att.net or 916-622-8048 for more information.

October 27, 28, 29, 30 Riverside, California

GOLDEN STATE BONSAI FEDERATION CONVENTION XXXIV, Bonsai Full Circle at the Marriott Hotel and Convention Center, 3400 Market Street. Headliners are: Kathy Shaner, Ryan Neil, Roy Nagatoshi, and Pedro Morales. Demonstrations, seminars, critiques, workshops, benefit drawings, vendors and more. More information available at www.gsbf-bonsai.org.

November 11-12 Ross, California

Marin Bonsai Club Annual Fall Show at the Marin Art and Garden Center, 30 Sir Francis Drake Blvd.: Show hours on Friday are 5:30 - 9:30PM; dinner from 6 - 7 PM, demo by Ted Matson on a Bunjin Shimpaku juniper from 7 - 9PM along with raffle and silent auction. Show hours on Saturday are 10AM - 4PM. Saturday's lineup includes a demo by club members from 11AM - 1PM and a show critique by Ted Matson from 1:30 - 3:30PM. Raffles, vendor and club sales. For more information, email arnoldje@comcast.net, call 415-883-2651, or visit the club website at www.marinbonsai.org.

December 3 Fresno, California

Fresno Area Bonsai Clubs: Fourth Annual Bonsai Yard Sale at 736 West Browning Avenue from 8AM-3PM. There will be a very large selection of raw materials, some finished bonsai, used pots, books, magazines, and stands, all at very reasonable prices. Everyone is welcome to participate. If you wish to sell or trade bonsai related items or need a table, please contact us in advance so that we may plan space accordingly. Lunch will be available. Contact Ralph Schroeder at 559 271-8299 or ralisch@sbcaloba.net

Kusamura Bonsai Club

3580 Butcher Drive
Santa Clara, CA 95051