



## KUSAMURA BONSAI CLUB

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

3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of the Month  
7 pm Techniques  
Workshop  
8 pm General Meeting

## December 2009

### President

Jerry Carpenter

### Vice president

Stephanie North

### Recording Secretary

Dave Curbow

### Cors. Secretary/ Newsletter

Bang Vo

### Librarians

Ricardo Archilla, Rita Curbow

### Benefit Drawing

Dave Curbow

### Hospitality

Bang Vo

### Treasury

Helen Reist

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Lonnie McCormick

Michael Greenstein

Mo Suresh

Jane Iki

Janet Refvem

John Planting

## The Bonsai Corner

### Refreshment

**Dec:** None

**Jan:** Mo Mohan and

Bonnie Morton

**Feb:** Barbara Murray and

Stephanie North

### Hospitality

**Dec:** Charlene Fischer

**Jan:** Dave Curbow

**Feb:** Helen Reist

## Potting Parties Continued

These potting parties are lots of fun and help to create good-looking plants for sale at the show in March. With the show in March this year, we will have the potting parties concluded in January so we will need your help to make this a very productive event.

**Potting Party of December 13:** This will also be the day of the urban dig at Stephanie North's home nearby. We will have two parties. One party will be digging and we will send over the bagged plants to the main potting party for final potting and styling. We'll be digging approximately 30 trees so we will need 4 to 6 able-bodied folks to commit to digging while the rest work on potting. Stephanie has some digging tools, but please bring shovels or other digging tools if you have them. Coordination of this event will be by Stephanie and another member at the Planting's for valuing the trees for donation.

Urban Dig will begin at 9AM at Stephanie's home. The potting party will begin at 10 AM at the Plantings. The dig will remove about 30 trees. The potting party at the Planting's will last until 4 PM.

**NOTICE:** *Due to health issues our club president, Jerry Carpenter, will need help from members to coordinate the potting party during Dec. He will also needs a coordinator to work with Stephanie on the Urban Dig. Please contact Jerry at: [jcsf1090@comcast.net](mailto:jcsf1090@comcast.net) or by phone at 408.823.9525 or Stephanie at 650.321.3974 if you can help with those responsibilities.*

Planting parties are held at the home of John and Sandy Planting located at 898 Coleman Ave in Menlo Park. Pots and soil and other items needed for potting are provided by the club. Just bring some tools and have some fun.

**Dec 13 and Jan 10, 2010:** We will be working on donated plants that can be repotted in the fall. This includes trees you may be taking care of from the previous shows, Sumigawa nursery-donated trees from the bus trip, and club trees.

## December 18 Meeting – Holiday Potluck Night

Welcome to our Holiday Party Night. Thanks to Jane Iki and Janet Refvem for coordinating our event. Our tradition is for members to bring a dish that will serve at least four people. A Turkey and Ham will be provided by the club but entree dishes are most welcome. It is best to let us know what food group you are bringing. Please contact Jane or Janet for further details. The gift exchange is always a fun part of the meeting. Gifts can be of value up to \$25 and may be bonsai or other related gifts. Each person who enters with a gift will be given a ticket and may choose from the wrapped gifts.

**A Bonsai Calendar** excerpt  
from Jim Ransohoff

**January:** Reviewing and improving your plant appearance by watching and eliminating crossing branches, excess branches. However is best not to prune this month. Observe the wires to be certain that they are not cutting in. Preparing soil mixes for repotting; all mixes MUST permit free drainage.

**February:** This is the REPOT month for all of the deciduous – maples, elms, etc as well as broad-leaf evergreen. Place your repot tree in full sun and DO NOT feed for three weeks and remember to rotate. Don't forget to add bone meal to your mix to help with the rooting.

**March:** Get your plan ready for our 50<sup>th</sup> annual show.

This is going to be a busy month if you have not finished repotting in February, continuing repotting and tries to complete your work before their new growth gets underway. Do not wire fast growing tree likes maples; elms for scarring will happen quickly. Pinch back the second set of leave on maples as they start to open.

**April:** More pinching and repotting this month, beginning to feed your bonsai from February and early March, use half strength Miracle Growth or equivalent. Plan to feed every few week. Don't forget to water your plan. Keep the soil damp not soggy.

**May:** Spring is here! Continue to pinch and trim but hold off on wiring until the soft growth of deciduous materials hardens. Maintaining your watering regime, keep your soil damp. Never let it dry out. And remember to ROTATE.

## Beginning Classes in Bonsai with Sandy Planting

Planting's Bonsai offers beginner classes only once a year, during the winter in order to provide the maximum survival rate for the plants.

Six 3-hour classes on consecutive weeks

Each student will finish with 5 bonsai and one "practice" plant

Starting in late January, depending on weather

Maximum of 6 students per class

Week-night starting time: 7:30 PM / Saturday starting time: 9 AM

Costs: \$10/class + the cost of plants, pots, soil, and wire (Average cost of materials is about \$15 per lesson—beginning with lesson 2)

Session Agenda will include: Principles of Bonsai styling and wiring techniques, Informal Upright, Formal Upright, Cascade and Semi-cascade, Group Planting, Rock Planting

The Planting's are located at 8898 Colman Ave., Menlo Park, CA 94025. Please **call** Sandy for class signup at: 650.323.6955

## Dues Now Due

Hard to believe but another year has gone by and our membership dues are up for renewal. We hope you all choose to continue with us and bring a check to Helen Reist or Jerry Carpenter valued at \$35 for a Single and \$45 for a Couple made out to Kusamura Bonsai Club. Dues are collected on a yearly basis and should be paid in full by no later than January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Name badges and club pins will be made available from Helen. We will be giving out the Kusamura club pin free of charge to all members. Helen will be bringing them for any who wish one.

We will make club pins available as a supporting contribution at the annual show this year to the general public who can give us a donation of \$5.

## Kanji – KusaMura

What is in a name? Well, a great deal is in a name. The characters being incorporated into our logo stand for kusa mura. The word Kusamura combines two units to come up with the meaning. Interesting enough, defining the two words and investigating alternatives of a single printed character have been an investigation into entomology and linguistics. As in our language, no word has a single meaning. And just as English, it has been morphing throughout time and history depending on the needs of an era. Having the privilege of knowing several languages helps us understand these nuances and helps in the investigation of meaning.

The name Kusamura was attached to our club in the late 1950's from our founding masters and students. Their original meaning and why they chose that name is not currently available to **us**, but in looking into the language we can begin to see the rationale, especially considering the legacy of our founders. What does this mean? Let me take you through some of the investigation that has resulted in 7 pages of documentation and historical usage so far. Some of the key phrases will be in bold and italic.

**June:** The weather is now getting warm and your bonsai has been putting on new growth rapidly. De-leaf your maples if they are healthy. Feed them with low nitrogen for about two weeks prior to cutting off the leaves. Place your tree in partial shade area and out of the wind.

**July:** Growth is rapid at this time and keeps a sharp eye on wiring to be certain that they are not cutting in and causing scars. Weather is now getting warmer; do not let your plants dry out. Check insects and fungus.

**August:** Vacation time! If you plan to go on a long trip, see that a capable and reliable person to water during your absence. Fertilize as usual this month.

**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, also this is the last month to wire. Remember DO NOT wire too tightly. 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:** It is an excellent time to style and wire your trees. 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.

### **Kusa:**

1. A structure in the form of a network often used in medical terminology
2. **A dense growth of small trees or shrubs** and in the English usage of "thicket"
3. Chinese root meaning clump, thicket or bush but also a "**group of people** or things"
4. **Origin** of the word is "intelligent"
5. Grass/weeds or **Irregular group of** grass or **bushes** per the Pocket Japanese Dictionary
6. Weeds, herbs, grass radical, grassy field

### **Mura:**

1. Town, village
2. flock, group, crowd, herd, cluster
3. faction or clique, rural community, rustic,
4. **group**, multitude

Kusamura: Combined character

1. A series – a thicket of cedar trees
2. A general term for plants

### **3. A cluster of plants**

4. Tree
5. Name of a group

An excerpt from martial arts: "Blade of Grass" by Joe Maurantonio, BNYD

*"In ancient times one of the names of the ninja was **kusa**. This alias, much like shinobi, was used to describe mysterious operatives from a certain Japanese clans. The kanji pictograph for kusa means grass' and is derived from the clan members that strategically used hiding in fields and woodlands to become invisible to their enemy.*

*"The first insight is that grass is abundant. Grass can grow most anywhere it has space. Blending with the grass gives us the notion that our training must be abundant and take place wherever grass grows."*

*"Our second insight is that although each blade of grass looks the same they are all unique. Different in size, texture and color they still blend together to form a collective body in our gardens and fields."*

With all that being said we extrapolate our meaning as a group of people in our time and with relationship to what we do as a group. We are a "Group of People" who works with trees that may be shown in the form of a "Clump, Group, Grove or Thicket". We as a group work on subject matter that may all "look the same but are each unique". We work on our trees individually but also as a community, a community that is small and tightly knit clustered around our hobby; to create living art. We create our living art using the design styles created in Japan by executing an "irregular" triangle of form wherein total balance is not what is desired, rather to create the irregular or isosceles triangle in form of the group of trees or the single unit.

I have a challenge for the members of our club. Let's see who can extract from these words a motto that relates to these kanji characters which we can use in print. What will it be?

## Calendar

**January 16–17 Pleasanton, California – Bay Island Bonsai Annual Bonsai Exhibit** New location. Bigger facility. Hall of Commerce, Alameda County Fairgrounds, 4501 Pleasanton Avenue, Pleasanton, 94566. Admission \$ 5.00. Free Parking. Same great auction on Saturday, with preview at noon and auction at 1 PM. Guided tours of the exhibit both Saturday and Sunday. Bonsai sale and vendors both days.

Hours: 10AM–4PM Saturday and Sunday.

For more information: (510) 865-1008 or [www.bayislandbonsai.com](http://www.bayislandbonsai.com)

**February 27–28, 2010 Oakland, California– GSBF Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt** Mammoth Fundraiser, 2010 at the Lakeside Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Avenue. Saturday (Feb 27): Auction of fabulous bonsai 1PM–4PM with preview at 12 Noon. Sunday (Feb 28): Mammoth Fundraiser and Bazaar, 9AM–4PM. Demonstration at 1:30PM by Collection Curator, Kathy Shaner. Silent auction, vendors, benefit drawings, raffles and a large consignment sale of bonsai and bonsai-related items.

For general information: [www.bonsailakemerritt@gmail.com](mailto:www.bonsailakemerritt@gmail.com) or Linda Soliven, 925-776-2342.

## Club Calendar

**December** - Holiday Party

**January** – Pots/Potting by John and Jerry

**February** – Show Tree Workshop/Tune-up with Critique Sheets - Team

**March** – 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Kusamura Bonsai Club Show, Mitchell Park, Palo Alto

**April** - Refvem Utah Juniper Deadwood demo