



The Bent Twig

Dedicated to the learning, enjoying and promoting of bonsai

March Demonstration – David Nguy

David Nguy is a well known bonsai artist and his styling of California junipers is amazing. David started by saying that you have to study the life line of your tree before bending or cutting. If you cut the life line, limbs and perhaps the entire tree will die. He also said that when you make dramatic styling cuts, aftercare is the key – the tree should be watered immediately, the foliage sprayed daily and the tree should be placed in the shade for at least 30 days.

David worked on some of the deadwood and removed deadwood from the life line because this wood is very hard and it cannot be bent. A member asked how you can distinguish dead from live wood. David used a chisel to peel up dead bark. You peel in and follow the movement of the line of the bark that you are stripping off.

Another important point in styling California junipers is to make sure the tree is healthy before starting and to ensure that the roots are stable. He used wood blocks to stabilize the tree and ensure it didn't move. David does not use wire to stabilize the tree and roots because it allows movement where a wood block will not.



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Once the tree was secure, David used power tools to carve and he cautioned that body position is very important – you must control the tool by using both hands. He dug a deep “V” groove (tunnel) up the trunk after first drilling a hole in the trunk to anchor the wire. He then ran a heavy wire (#8 copper) up the groove.



break (the lower trunk), and he told us to leave that tape on at least a year. The time it should be left on depends on the thickness of the branch. He wrapped green tape up the first 12 inches of the trunk.



David also talked a little bit about his apprenticeship in Japan. He said that there was never any formal training as the master was working on a tree. All the apprentices were too busy working and so he learned the most on his lunch break. He would eat really fast and then go out into the nursery and study the trees and figure out how they were bending it. He also mentioned that watering in Japan was done only by the most advanced students because it is very difficult to water correctly – you have to know the trees and the soil.

We should also listen to the tree when bending and when it says that's enough – you have to listen. David always bends with his hands instead of tools because you can feel when the tree has had enough work done. Raffia is used to wrap before a bend because it compresses all the fibers and that reduces tension on the branch, and tension is what causes branches to break. He joked that when you hear a crack don't be concerned because only the deadwood cracks – the live wood will just die if you've cracked it.

David told us that the best time to make heavy bends in a juniper is during the cold season. It's a little risky now, but heavy bends should never be made later than March or in the summer. He applied green plant tape to the area most likely to



Scott Chadd assisted David in bending and wiring the juniper. David made the bends and Scott followed the bend with wire. He again stressed that you have to use your hands to bend so that you can feel the tension in the branch. A guy wire was then applied to achieve a more dramatic bend – but David continued bending while Scott tightened the wire down after it was bent. David stressed that you should not bend the tree with the wire – bend with your hands and then tighten the wire.

A member asked about fertilizer and David said that he used a slow release organic fertilizer from Japan. He said that you can use osmocote but he recommended that we don't feed too much because you don't want the tree to grow too much or too fast.

David finished by saying that the apex of this tree should be over the center. In the future the foliage needs to be close to the trunk, and the other limbs will be cut to make it more compact and powerful looking.

The lucky winners were Gary and Lucy Judd!



Modesto Bonsai Club Show

Modesto Bonsai Club was kind enough to move their show date so that it did not conflict with American Bonsai's show. Please take the time to support them and visit their show on the weekend of April 27th and 28th. The show will be held at the Marriott Courtyard Hotel at 1720 Sisk Rd. in Modesto. Saturday show hours are 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday the show will be from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Sam Adina will do the demonstration on Sunday and there will be raffles and auctions as well as member sales and sale of plants, pots, tools and more!

April Demonstration – Doc Ward

Club member Doc Ward will present our April Demonstration, so please plan on attending. Doc always presents an interesting talk and demonstration.

Show and Tell







Bonsai Sale – May 18th from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

There will be a private bonsai sale of pots and many trees of difference varieties and stages of development – from two year old cuttings to fully mature bonsai. The sale will be at 23072 Broadmoor Ct. in Lake of the Pines North of Auburn. Take Hwy. 49 North from Auburn, turn East on Combie Rd. which becomes Magnolia Rd. and follow to the Lake of the Pines entrance. Tell the guard at the gate that you are there for Oscar's bonsai sale. After entering, turn left on Torrey Pines Dr., then left on Foothills and then left on Broadmoor Ct.



Meeting Refreshment Schedule

The following members have volunteered to bring snacks to the monthly meeting. Please feel free to help out and bring additional treats. **Please email Barbara (jwbed@sbcglobal.net) if you can provide snacks for the months following May.**

April – Kathy O'Donnell

May – Paul Holtzen

Home Tour – June 15th

Our club home tour will take place Saturday, June 15th this year. Members will meet at 8:30 a.m. and carpool from the Garden and Arts Center. Member homes to be visited will be Renee Seely, Ed Slomovic and Gary and Lucy Judd, and we'll have refreshments at the end of the tour.



Calendar of Bonsai Events:

- **April 23rd – ABAS Monthly meeting and Demonstration with Doc Ward**
- **May 4th and 5th Sacramento Bonsai Club's Annual Bonsai and Suiseki Show at the Betsuin Buddhist Church.**
- **May 18th and 19th Satsuki Aikokai of Sacramento's 40th Annual Show.**



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