



August 2024

The Bent Twig

A monthly newsletter of the American Bonsai Association of Sacramento
<https://www.abasbonsai.org/>

Arboreal Abstractions

I am moving. Don't worry though, not far. It's hard to find the silver lining of such a dreary task. All of my energy is focused on packing and unpacking by the end of the month. This means my trees are short on attention. But that's ok, because the advantage to all of this is the opportunity to reset my bonsai life. My new place is where my work greenhouses are located. There is ample space to dedicate to my trees, my pots, and bonsai work. It is a chance to build my own horticultural empire to my specs, limited only by time and money!

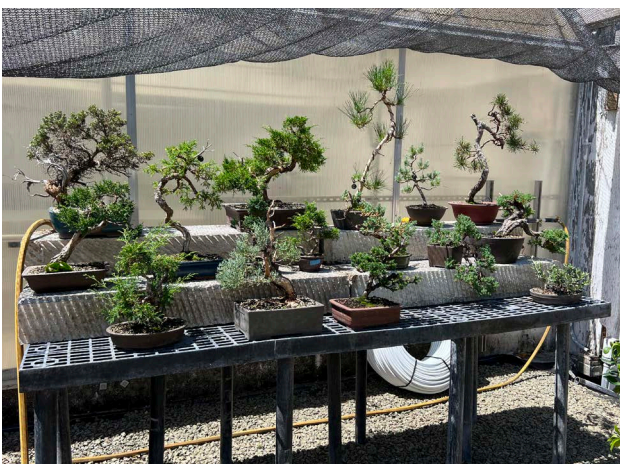
Long before I started packing my clothes and my dishes, I was creating a landing pad for my trees. It is a joy to build a bonsai garden with ample intentionality. The site is graded, with a layer of gravel atop commercial weed block fabric. My benches are used greenhouse benches, but with three tier levels made of repurposed greenhouse cooling pads as risers. In addition to having more space to give each tree the light and air flow they need, they will be arranged to be more visually distinct.

This lies in stark contrast to my old garden: single level benches, jam packed with trees due to lack of space and irrigation emitter sharing. This garden was set up in a manner I am sure many of you are familiar with: acquire some trees, build as you go, expand here, pack-in there, add an irrigation line, squeeze in another tree, add a bench... Before long, I had an indistinct, merged plant canopy. If short internodes are the goal, crowding bonsai is the wrong tactic. The color of shaded light is a signal for plants to push internodes out; elongate, quick, so that you can outcompete your neighbors!

On top of the horticultural issues this setup presented, it was also not good for my bonsai practice. You can't evaluate a single tree with intent when you can't tell where one starts and the other ends. The gardens I saw in Japan were filled maximally with trees, but they were often tiered so that each tree could still be appreciated. These gardens were full, but not chaotic; optimally dense would be a better description.

Now, I start anew with a purpose-built space that is large enough that if I reach the point of crowding, I know I really have a bonsai problem and I need to be moving trees out at a greater rate than in. So, I encourage you, if the opportunity arises to turn your material life upside down, shake it out, and reorganize it, take it. (Re)build your bonsai garden with the same intentionality you give pruning and potting technique. My mental space starts with my physical space, and ten times out of ten, having my physical space set up methodically and serenely influences me to think methodically and serenely. I am looking forward to the fall work season.

--Ian Baker



Above left: it's just a start, above right: monument at the Okinawa Peace memorial



Adam Toth

Tuesday August 27

This coming Tuesday, August 27, we welcome bonsai artist Adam Toth to our club. He has been studying bonsai seriously for over seven years, beginning with Jonas Dupuich. He more recently studied for three years under Taiga Urushibata at the Taisho-en bonsai garden in Shizuoka. During his time in Japan, he spent a lot of time studying and thinking about growing and producing better shohin and small sized trees. He received an official shohin certificate from the Japanese Shohin Bonsai Association.

Adam will be discussing Shohin Basics at our August meeting. We encourage members to bring shohin trees that Adam may utilize during his program or to be shared during the Show-and-Tell portion of the meeting.



2024/25 Board Election Results

- Dodie Newman: President
- Bob Ricker: Vice President
- Ian Baker: Correspondence Secretary
- Carmen Scott: Member at Large
- Gina Chaput: Member at Large
- Roger Steele: Member at Large
- Gage Marchini: Treasurer
- Ellen Evans: Website Coordinator, Deborah Ballanti: Recording Secretary
- Renee Seely: Past President/New Member Coordinator



What to Work on August

As we move from the end of August into September, our trees will give their final push of growth before beginning the transition to winter dormancy at the end of October. Much of our work remains the same. Deciduous and broadleaf evergreens may need additional pruning, pinching, wiring if there is a push of new growth. Conifers (cypress, junipers, cedars, and redwoods) can be pruned, thinned, and wired. It is too late for de-candeling Japanese black pines and red pines (double flush) however fall work, cleaning and pulling old needles, may begin. September is the month to begin work on single flush pines (white pines, Scots pine, lodgepole pine, etc).

Checklist:

- Check wire on deciduous and broadleaf evergreens to make sure it is not cutting in
- Stay vigilant monitoring for pests and disease
- Adjust watering as temperatures increase and decrease
- Fertilize as needed (see yearly care sheet on the ABAS website)
- Provide shade for sensitive and delicate species

Last Meeting Summer Splash

In July, we held our annual Summer Splash social event. In the past, the event was to facilitate in-person board elections, but now that elections are primarily digital, it is an opportunity to socialize with club members, share food, and watch (or collaborate!) with members styling trees. Tuesday evening, Ian Baker, Gina Chaput, Bob Ricker, and Ed Slomovic styled various trees for the audience. All manner of feedback and input was offered by the audience, so it was interesting to see the diverse outcomes from the different deciduous and coniferous camps. Each tree was then raffled off to a lucky winner. A lovely spread of appetizers and beverages was shared and enjoyed by generous club members. In addition, members who prefer pen and paper were also able to cast votes in-person.



Above, right: Scenes from Summer Splash 2024



Welcome New Members: Jim Corbett, Matt Jones, Ruth Hansen, Denis Kabardin

New members are connected with their area liaison and will receive a welcome letter with a free pass to one of our member workshops. The mentors are listed on our website under 'Member Resources, Club Liaisons', with contact information.

Member Workshop. The next member workshop is Saturday, September 14. Contact [Renee Seely](#), or sign up via our website to reserve a spot. Remember to specify if you prefer morning, 8:30am - 12:30pm, or afternoon, 1:00pm to 5:00pm. As always, the club provides wire for use; bring your own tools. Each workshop session is \$10 payable to ABAS. Mention the word "spritz" for a chance to win a free raffle ticket at the next meeting.

Pacific Bonsai Expo

PBE is coming! If you have not already, secure your tickets for the Pacific Bonsai Expo October 26 - 27 at the Henry J. Kaiser Center for the Arts in Oakland, CA. This is the premier west coast bonsai exhibition and it's not to be missed! Parking for the event will be limited, so please plan to carpool or use the nearby BART station.

September - Annual Live Auction and Consignment Sale, September 24. Looking to create some free space on your bonsai bench or obtaining new material? Mark your calendar for our annual Live Auction and Consignment Sale. ABAS members may enter up to 5 bonsai trees in the live auction. These trees need to be in pots and developed beyond the initial pre-bonsai stage. Consignment sales are open to all ABAS members. Auction and Consignment inventory sheets will be emailed to ABAS members and posted on the ABAS website. Please contact treasurer, [Gage Marchini](#) to obtain your seller number.

October - Dueling Demos and BYOT with Bjorn and Yannick

In addition to hosting our October club meeting, Bjorn and Yannick will be holding separate full day "bring your own tree" workshops. Bjorn's workshop is full but space remains in Yannick's. Yannick is an excellent bonsai instructor and his workshop is highly recommended. The workshops will be held on Monday, October 21 from 9:00 am - 4:00 pm for a maximum of 6 participants in each workshop. Yannick's workshop will cost \$130 per participant***.

Bring 2-4 trees to work on during the workshop, depending on the amount of work each tree will require. You may sign up for a remaining slot in Yannick's workshop at our August meeting or by emailing [Dodie](#). Participants will need to pay in CASH in order to have their spot secured in the workshop as no names will be entered on the sign up sheet without cash payment. No refunds will be given, but participants are welcome to trade / sell their workshop seat to someone else in the event they cannot participate.

***Prices quoted are if the workshops are full (6 participants). The total cost will be divided by the # of participants in the workshop in the unlikely event that they do not fill to six participants.

Events Calendar

2024

Saturday, August 24, Member Workshop [In-person](#)

Tuesday, August 27, Shohin Development w/ Adam Toth [In-person + Zoom](#)

Saturday - Sunday, August 31 - September 1, REBS Annual Show [Rhonert Park](#)

Saturday, September 14, Member Workshop [In-person](#)

Tuesday, September 24, ABAS Live Auction and Consignment Sale [In-person & Zoom](#)

Saturday - Sunday, October 5 - 6, SGAAC Fall Sale [In-person](#)

Saturday, October 12, Member Workshop [In-person](#)

Tuesday, October 22, Dueling Bonsai Demos w/ Yannick and Bjorn [In-person](#)

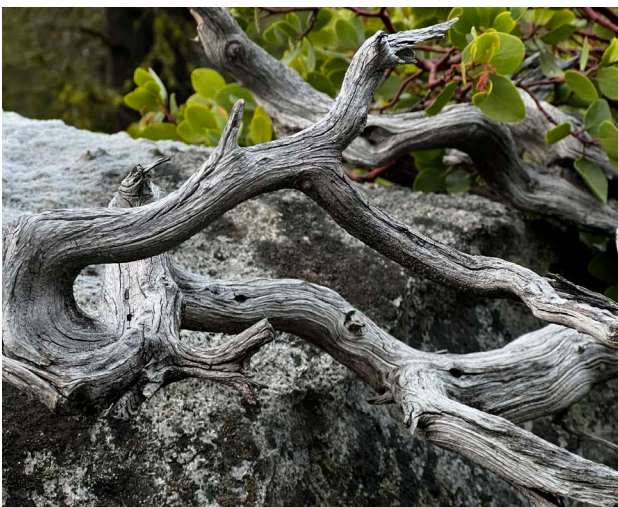
Saturday - Sunday, October 26 - 27, Pacific Bonsai Expo [Oakland](#)

Saturday, November 9, Member Workshop [In-person](#)

Tuesday, November 26, Hands On Fall Care w/ Renee and Carmen [In-person](#)

Wednesday, December 11, ABAS Holiday Party [In-person](#)

Saturday, December 14, Member Workshop [In-person](#)



Above: Bonsai inspiration





**DOING OUR PART AND
FUNDRAISING TOO!**

WIRE RECYCLING PROGRAM

**BRING YOUR CLEAN, SEPARATED AND
USED ALUMINUM & COPPER WIRE TO THE
MONTHLY GENERAL MEETING. THERE
WILL BE LABELED COLLECTION BOXES
AVAILABLE.**

Email Debbie Ballanti at juno@pacbell.net with questions.

Sponsored by ABAS