



# Fog City Bonsai

Newsletter of the Bonsai Society of San Francisco  
Hall of Flowers, 9th Avenue and Lincoln Way

## Bonsai Events at-a-Glance...

**Sept. 1,3,4,5,7,8,9.** Edu-Fun Yasuo Mitsuya. GSBF Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt.

**Thurs., Sept. 10.** BSSF Sept. Meeting and Club Auction.

**Thurs., Sept. 17.** BSSF Third Thursday Workshop.

**Sat. & Sun., Sept 19-20.** San Mateo Bonsai Club 46th Annual Show.

**Sat. Sept. 26.** Midori Bonsai Club 48th Annual Show.

**Thurs. - Sun., Nov. 5-8.** GSBF XXXII Convention, Riverside, CA.

**Thurs., Oct. 8.** BSSF October Meeting - Fruiting & Flowering Trees.

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## Kathy Shaner: Taking Your Bonsai to the Next Level

### July Meeting Notes

What you do to your trees and when you do it is critical to their health and progress.

With that admonishment Kathy Shaner held class with BSSF members' trees in a discussion about taking your

tree to the next level of development. The conversation that ensued became an opportunity to discuss fertilizers, pinching, pruning, wiring and styling, wood carving and dead wood enhancement techniques. (continued on page 2)...

## Pinch Pot Workshop

### August Meeting Notes

At our August meeting, we spent the evening making "pinch pots". Pinch pots are pots that are simply pinched into interesting forms using your hands. No special equipment, such as rollers, forms, or turntables, is needed. In bonsai, pinch pots are commonly used with accent plantings or with trees that present a "rugged" form or style. That's because pinch pots usually have an "unfinished" or "unrefined" appearance.



Pinch pots can be twisted in to unlimited shapes and forms. Pots that resemble standard forms (rectangles, ovals, etc) can be made but more organic forms are typical. The most appealing aspect of pinch pots is that you can make them yourself and customized a pot for a particular display or arrangement. (continued on page 3)...

(continued from Page 1)

Also we discussed the importance of knowing the way trees grow.

This knowledge comes to Kathy from a deep commitment spanning many years including apprenticeship in Japan and continuing to learn as she tends to the trees as curator of the Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt and as teacher to hundreds of bonsai enthusiasts across the US.

BSSF members brought a variety of trees each of which Kathy examined and then talked about what she saw and discussed how the look of the tree could be improved upon.

Beginning with a small deciduous shrub commonly grown to resemble trees in bonsai. The potential bonsai had no clear leader and all foliage growing out on the ends of long branches away from the trunk. In order to train this material to better represent a tree Kathy suggested raising the largest trunk to clearly represent the main line of the tree. She explained how brittle thick wood can be moved gradually over time by attaching bamboo to the trunk and incrementally repositioning. Next the foliage needed to be cut back hard to force inner growth. Kathy explained how we must take advantage of the growing season, to force growth where it is needed.

She recommended that the tree be given regular feeding during the coming months and continually cut back to force inner growth while the main trunk is gradually guyed into place. Many of us face similar challenges with nursery or collected materials where old wood needs to be moved and growth redirected.

There were a number of different kinds of junipers of different ages. For a younger tree without much foliage development Kathy recommended heavy feeding and letting the tree grow out to provide the most opportunities for further development. Conversely with a mature tree with lots of ramification cleaning out of the foliage and thinning the branches to reveal the structure of the tree was prescribed. A collected Chinese juniper with extensive dead wood was used to discuss wood carving techniques and various dead wood preservation solutions.

Kathy was clearly inspired with the quality and selection of the material, which was offered. She emphasized how each tree has an individual story to tell and about how foliage and branches grow differently and how that should guide us in what we do to direct and influence them by exposure to sunlight, fertilization and wiring. With the respective owners permission she demonstrated some of the techniques she was describing.

It was a long intense session which lasted late into the night. Kathy has much to impart and like John Boyce's old byline "Pieces of Bonsai" she shared her knowledge and experience with the club. -J.E.





(continued from Page 1)... When starting a pinch pot project, the major limitation is where to fire the clay. With a bit of searching your neighborhood, you may find a pottery artist that can help. Or you may join a pottery group at a local neighborhood center. A good choice if you plan to continue making your own pots. Besides, there are numerous techniques that can be used that will affect the final look of the pots (gas-fired versus electric for example).

Clay for making the pots is easy to find. San Francisco has several arts and crafts stores to choose from and a single package of clay can produce hundreds of small pots. For our workshop, we used three colors of clay, Black Mountain (dark grey), Death Valley (red-brown) and Sandstone Buff (tan).

Clay sliced off the stock using a thin wire and then molded into forms. The two most basic ways to begin is either by slow pinching a ball of clay into round form or by rolling out a thin sheet of clay and then rolling that sheet into a pot-like form.

Our workshop used clays that when fired, give an earthy appearance. These pots will not be glazed for more color. So, to add more interest to the pots, we recommend giving the pot some texture using any household item. Once again, a chopstick is a great tool for creating small indentions in the clay or marking grooves in the surface. Plus, no need to wash up, they are compost-able (the cheap wooden ones). Other than chopsticks, consider using forks, knives,

burlap material, and even the plastic mesh we use to cover the drainage holes in our pots. All of these things can make interesting patterns on the surface of the clay.

A few ideas to keep in mind when making your pot: 1) Try to keep the walls of your pot relatively thin and also a uniform thickness. This will prevent the pots from drying and firing unevenly that may result in cracks (or worse) in the finished product. 2) Drainage holes! Don't forget that your pot will need to drain. Simply use a knife or punch to add the holes. Adding holes after firing is nearly impossible. 3) Keep in mind what will be planted in the pot! Succulents, ferns, moss, etc. Try to match the textures of the plant with the look of the pot. 4) Size. Think about the overall display you want to use. You should make a variety of large and small pots to fit the design. 5) Shrinkage. As the pots dry and are fired, they will shrink slightly. It's not too obvious, but if you are aiming for a particular sized pot, this could be an issue.

If you really enjoyed making pots, consider joining a class. Our small and simple workshop was no more complicated than a high school art class. There are volumes of books written on the art of firing your clays, glaze formulations, and more that we could no way cover. This coming spring, we will discuss plants to chose for your new pots and how to make great accent plantings using your own pots. -L.L.



## Bonsai Notes for September

I think this time of year is one of the toughest for taking care of your trees here in the Bay Area. First, there's the fog. Will the sun shine today? How should I water? If you live close to the coast, trying to guess what the fog will do each day can be maddening. Especially if you cannot be around during the day in case a cold morning turns into a dry windy day that may dry your trees too much. Plus, it seems that our trees are always wet from the constant drizzle. So, watch for those rare sunny days, tip your pots to help with drainage, and keep an eye out for insects and fungus that love the damp leaves of your tree.

Watch for munching insects! More than other times of the year, aphids, caterpillars, and mites start appearing on our trees. Look for their signs and pick them off early before they eat your precious buds and new twigs.

The next problem with this time of year is that our trees, especially deciduous trees, start to look ragged. The tips of the leaves may be brown and dry, or even yellow. Sometimes the tree will lose leaves because of lack of sunlight. Growth is slowing and if you are not careful, you can lose a bit of interest in them. Resist! Keep inspecting them everyday. Start planning for Fall work and chores. Watch the wiring and by all means, keep true to your fertilizing regiment. Soon, the fog will go away and our warm Fall will be here.

HEADS UP!!! Yes, it is the middle of 2009. But, already, we have **THREE** (3) shows planned for the first part of 2010. What does that mean for you and BSSF? Well, start planning and selecting what trees you want to show! First up, the 2010 San Francisco Flower and Garden Show is officially ON. Currently, we are slated to have 50% more tables than the 2009 show. That means we will need more trees. 2010 will also be the 50th Anniversary of our club. To celebrate we are having a giant show at the County Fair Building in May. We want as many members, new and old, showing trees. The annual Cherry Blossom Festival bonsai display will also be around the same time. While not as large, we always want our display to be top notch.

So, go to your garden. Pick your 5 best trees and start grooming them for the shows. Bring them to 3rd Thursday workshops for advice and start getting them 'show ready' now. With good timing, your trees will be in perfect condition for the show.

## Auction, Auction, Auction!!!

Our annual fundraiser and auction will be Thursday, September 10 at the Hall of Flowers. Our annual auction is a great event and perfect opportunity for members to obtain material for bonsai. It is also a good time to clean out your own collection of trees of trees you cannot take care of. Great deals can be had on bonsai items such as raw material, tools, books, pots, and more.

Material for the auction should be brought to the Hall of Flowers between **6:30PM** and **7PM**. Preview will begin at **7PM** and the auction will begin promptly at **7:30PM** after club announcements.

**Items for the Auction!** All items in the BSSF auction are full donations. All proceeds go to the BSSF. No consignments. **If you cannot be present at the meeting or if you need help transporting the material, please make arrangements to have it picked up for you. Call either Lawrence LeClaire (415-200-8967) or Bernard Marque (415-254-2985) for help.**

**We also ask that all members please donate at least one item for the auction.** We all have material in our gardens, extra tools, and pots that are taking up valuable space. Use this opportunity to clean out your extra stuff. We have many new members who could benefit. New member? This your chance to snag a new tree and test out your new skills.

The club will be providing some refreshments. However, if you have favorite dessert or wine, please share!

John Boyce will be our esteemed auctioneer. John will provide useful information and suggestions for each item up for bid. Only cash and checks will be accepted for payment at the end of the evening. See you there!

## From the Management

As the last few meetings off 2009 approach, we would like to make a few announcements.

1. Elections! A slate of officers and board members is being assembled by Diana Lum, BSSF secretary. If you have been enjoying your time with the BSSF, consider volunteering to be an officer or board member. It is only by the time given by our members that all the great resources of the BSSF exist. We need lots of help to keep our club active and exciting. Elections are held at our November meeting.
  2. Our 50th Anniversary Show will be held next year in May. As soon as the final date is set, we will need many volunteers to plan and prepare the show. If you would like to help, see John Edwards at a future meeting and keep a lookout for posts and updates on the website and newsletter.
  3. In the past, our November meeting has been a full day workshop with traveling bonsai master Marco Invernizzi. We are currently in negotiations with Jim Gremel to bring Marco back this November. The final date has not been finalized but will either be November 12 or 19th. However, if you are interested in participating in the workshop, contact Lawrence LeClaire to secure your spot. Space is limited to 6-7 people.
  4. Our annual auction is on slate for this month's general meeting. The auction is one of our major fundraisers for the year. We encourage members to sort through their plants and donate those trees, plants, and tools to the auction they no longer need, find interesting, or cannot manage. All items in the auction are 100% donations - no consignments.
  5. Even though we are still living 2009, we are already making plans for next year's meetings. If you have a suggestion for a meeting, please speak to an officer and we will try to cover your idea in the future.
- THANKS!!!

### EDITOR NOTES:

First, apologies for the lack of an August newsletter. I'm back on track with this month's edition. Second, thanks to those who have volunteered to write content for the newsletter. Articles for the newsletter are the major limitation to getting the newsletter out in a timely fashion. If you would like to contribute, no need for an English PhD to write about your bonsai experiences. Just speak with me at our next meeting.

Thanks, Lawrence.

## Upcoming Events

### September 1,3,4,5,7,8,9 2009 -GSBF Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt- Edu-Fun Yasuo Mitsuya, a master of *Gendai* in Japan, teacher of Kathy Shaner, will have workshops and seminars at the Garden. Reservations will be on first come first serve basis. Workshop details are available on: [http://www.gsbf-bonsai.org/lake-merritt/Mitsuya\\_atB\\_GLM.htm](http://www.gsbf-bonsai.org/lake-merritt/Mitsuya_atB_GLM.htm). For more information send email requests to [bonsailakemerritt@gmail.com](mailto:bonsailakemerritt@gmail.com) or [gsbcnorth@gmail.com](mailto:gsbcnorth@gmail.com).



**September 19-20, 2009 - San Mateo, California.** San Mateo Bonsai Club 46th Annual Bonsai Exhibit at San Mateo Central Park Recreation Center, 5th & El Camino Real. Hours are Saturday, 12PM-5PM and Sunday 10AM-4PM. Demonstration at 2 PM both days. Bonsai sale and raffle after the demonstrations. Free Admission. For more information, contact Sam Tachibana [stachibana@sbcglobal.net](mailto:stachibana@sbcglobal.net), 650-548-9470.

**September 26, 2009 - San Jose, California.** Midori Bonsai Club: 48th Annual Bonsai Show at the Northside Community Center, 488 6th St. Includes 18 separate, 2 and 3-point displays of fine bonsai. At 1:30PM, nationally acclaimed bonsai artist, Boon Manakitivipart, will style a *bunjin* Japanese Black Pine. Sales of trees, tools, pots and bonsai accessories will be offered by Jim Gremel, Shibui Bonsai, Inc., and others. Free styling help and advice for the public from "Dr. Bonsai". Contact JT at (408)371-7737 or [jtbonsai@earthlink.net](mailto:jtbonsai@earthlink.net)



**November 5-8, 2009 - Golden State Bonsai Federation XXXII Convention** - The GSBF annual convention will be held in Riverside, CA at the Riverside Convention Center. Many lectures, workshops, field trips, and displays are planned for the event. Please visit the website at <http://www.gsbfconvention.com/> acquire meeting registration materials from Robert Smith at the next meeting.



**October 3, 2009 - Salinas, California.** Salinas Bonsai Club: Annual bonsai show at the Lincoln Avenue Presbyterian Church, 536 Lincoln Ave. Show hours 11AM-4PM. Demonstration at 1:30PM by Katsumi Kinoshita. A raffle of the demonstration tree and other items will follow the demonstration. Tea and cookies will be served and there is plenty

of parking. For more information please contact Don White, 831-724-9283; [whiteslib@aol.com](mailto:whiteslib@aol.com) or Maggie Brubaker, 831-663-5044; [maggee36@aol.com](mailto:maggee36@aol.com)

## BSSF Meetings and Workshops

**September 10, 2009 - BSSF September General Meeting - Annual Auction** - Come to our annual auction where expert longtime member John Boyce will serve as high auctioneer. Plan to your bring your material between 6:30-7PM. Preview, wine, and food 7PM-7:30. Auction begins promptly at 7:30. See you there!

**September 17, 2009 - Third Thursday Members Free Workshop.** Make plans to stop by the Free Third Thursday Workshop on September 17. The workshop begins at 7PM and is a lot of fun for everyone. Summer sun and fog are here! Stop by and learn what steps are needed to develop your tree. So, bring a couple trees by and get advice from more experienced members of the club. For this workshop, we will be setting up a corner of the room to discuss tool care and sharpening. Bring your tools and sharpening stones if you would like to participate.

**October 8, 2009 - BSSF October Meeting - Fruiting and Flowering Trees with Tim Kong.** The best season for viewing flowering trees is in the spring, but primary work on these trees is done in the Fall. Tim Kong will discuss with members the best flowering trees for bonsai. Demonstration material will be raffled at the end of the meeting. Several examples will be on display for discussion. Feel free to bring your own flowering trees by for show-and-tell.

**October 17, 2009 - Bonsai Basics Class II - Wire Workshop.** Our wiring workshop will be held from 10AM-2PM at the Hall of Flowers. The cost of the workshop is \$30 and includes workshop materials, wire, and plant material. The instructor will be Lawrence LeClaire. Please speak to Lawrence at the next meeting for more details.

**November General Meeting - Marco Invernizzi Workshop** - Our November General Meeting will feature an all day workshop with Japanese-trained bonsai master Marco Invernizzi. The workshop will be limited to 6-7 participants. Two four hour sessions will be available 1PM-5PM and 6PM-10PM. The cost is \$40 for one session or \$75 for both. The class is for intermediate-skilled members or seasoned-beginners with exceptional material. Dinner is provided. The General meeting will be held at 7:30 and all members are invited for silent observation of the workshop. The date has not been finalized but will be held either November

## 2009 Board Members and Officers

### President:

**Robert Smith-**  
(650) 726-1713



### Vice President:

**Lawrence LeClaire-** (415) 200-8967

### Treasurer:

**Daryl Quijano**  
(415) 307-5569 | (415) 332-0657 x104

### Secretary :

**Diana Lum-** (415) 731-7793

### Newsletter Editor:

**Lawrence LeClaire** - (415) 200-8967

### Board Members at Large:

**John Edwards**  
**Debra Bleemer**  
**Tim Kong**  
**Bernard Marque**  
**Joe Nersveen**  
**Eric Schrader - aka Website Guy**

### Librarian:

Debra Bleemer

### General Meeting Hospitality Host:

Tim Kong - (415) 387-7398

### About our Club

The Bonsai Society of San Francisco exists to perpetuate the enjoyment of the art of bonsai. BSSF General meetings are on the **2nd Thursday** of the month at **7:30PM**. The **members' workshop** is the following Thursday (**3rd Thursday of the month**) at **7:00PM**. BSSF Board meetings are held on the **4th Monday** at **7:00PM**. All of the meetings occur in the **Hall of Flowers (Strybing Arboretum)** at the corner of **Ninth Ave and Lincoln Way**. Enter through the parking lot at Tenth Ave and Lincoln and walk along sidewalk behind the building to the doorway to the garden club meeting room.



12 or 19 (our usual meeting and workshop dates) at the County Fair Building. Contact Lawrence LeClaire to secure your workshop spot.

## BSSF Announcements

**NOVEMBER ELECTIONS!** Each year in November, BSSF accepts nominations for all officers and Board Members. If you would like to volunteer your time to help with club business, education, and/or planning please speak to Diana Lum about serving as a BSSF officer or Board Member. Elections are held in November to elect 2010's officers. It is only through the generosity of our officers that BSSF thrives. So please consider giving some of your time.

**50th Anniversary Show** - 2010 is the 50th Anniversary of the Bonsai Society of San Francisco. To commemorate this event, we will be having a grand bonsai display and party at the County Fair Building in May 2010. For such a large event, we will require a large number of volunteers to plan and execute our plans. Please plan to volunteer for this event. Even if you will not be available on the event date (which will be published soon), you can help out!

**Old Geezer Crew** - It is an unfortunate matter-of-fact that we are getting older. For some of us in the bonsai club we have difficulty caring for our trees because our mobility, eye-sight, etc is not what it used to be. Do not let all your life's bonsai work be lost because of grumpy old father time. The Old Geezer Crew is being assembled by Debra Bleemer to help you out. Contact Debra at if you need help with trimming or transporting our trees or if you would like to help out. **(Debra Bleemer 415-797-2480)**.

**FOG CITY BONSAI** is the monthly newsletter of the Bonsai Society of San Francisco. Images and articles are the property of BSSF and permission must be granted before reproduction of any kind. If you have advertisements or announcements for the BSSF or local bonsai community and would like them published in Fog City Bonsai, please contact Lawrence LeClaire at [lleclair@gmail.com](mailto:lleclair@gmail.com) or (415) 668-8456.





**BSSF Guide to Late Summer Bonsai Care in the San Francisco Bay Area**  
 Yuck! Summer Fog got you down? Trees looking a bit untidy? Spend some time checking your trees from hungry insects, oxalis seedlings and dandelion sprouts. Start planning for Fall chores and fertilizing regimens. Start picking out trees for next year's shows and see you at the next meeting.

	Aug	Sep	Oct		Aug	Sep	Oct
<b>Black Pine</b> (including any two needle pine; red pine delay 1 week)	Normal Feeding			<b>Fruiting and Flowering</b> all apple, plum, ume, quince, cherry, etc	Fertilize		0-10-10
	Check Wire		Remove Wire if necessary				Heavy pruning, repotting, wiring
						Remove Fruit	
<b>Maple</b> Japanese / Trident / Natives		Feed	0-10-10	<b>Beech</b>	Cut Leaves in 1/2		0-10-10
	Check Wire	Check Wire	Remove Wire Remove leaves -leave Petiole				Heavy pruning, repotting, wiring (remove leaves first)
<b>Elm &amp; Zelkova</b> Including Hornbeam, Hackberry, Willow (all alternate budding trees)		Feed	0-10-10	<b>Redwood</b>	Pinch Buds - Feed to promote Vigourous Growth, Light feeding for established trees Keep moist (not wet) all year; Shade tollerant for fast growth place in full sun, for slower more compact growth morning sun only.		0-10-10 or Light Fertilizer
	Check Wire	Check Wire	Remove Wire				
<b>Junipers-Common</b> (not california or sierra)	Feed all year		0-10-10	<b>Wisteria</b>	Fertilize after blooming is finished		0-10-10
			Repot all year- best time is Spring / Pinch and Wire all Year				Drown Roots as weather gets hot - soak bottom 1/2 of pot
<b>Spruce and Cedar</b>	Fertilize		0-10-10	<b>Olive</b>	Feed / Pinch new growth		0-10-10
							Heavy Pruning and Wiring
<b>Oaks</b> E: Evergreens D: Deciduous			D: 0-10-10	<b>Willow</b> (weeping-style training)	Check Wire	Feed	0-10-10
			E: Cut Leaves in half				Remove Wire
			E: Repot				Place pot in water
<b>Azaleas</b>	Summer Shoots / Terminal Buds		0-10-10	<b>Hinoke Cypress</b>		Feed	
	Pinch to two leaves / two shoots				Check Wire		
<b>White Pine</b> (5 needle pines)	Normal Feeding			<b>All Quince</b>			Remove Wire
				<b>Hornbeam</b>	Feed		0-10-10

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