Fog City Bonsai

Newsletter of the Bonsai Society of San Francisco

Hall of Flowers, 9th Avenue and Lincoln Way

Bonsai Events at-a-Glance...

Thurs., Dec. 10. BSSF Annual Holiday Party and Potluck.

Thurs., Dec. 17. December Third Thursday Workshop.

Thurs., Jan. 14. BSSF January General Meeting.

Sat. & Sun., Jan. 16 & 17. Bay Island Bonsai Exhibit.

Tues., Jan. 19. BSSF/Marin Iron Bonsai Challenge!

Thurs., Jan. 21. BSSF January Third Thursday Workshop.

Sat. & Sun., Feb. 27 & 28. Mammoth Fundraiser at Bonsai Collection at Lake Merritt.

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Bonsai Development - Through the Years

November General Meeting Notes...

At our November meeting, Lawrence LeClaire discussed the development of bonsai over time. Over many years in bonsai, we will attend workshops and demonstrations. We will watch bonsai teachers and artists style a piece of raw material over a few hours. With good starting material, many times the tree will undergo a great transformation from something resembling a giant bush to something that resembles a miniature tree. What we sometimes forget is that this styling is just the very beginning of a tree transforming into bonsai. After the first styling, a tree will develop ramified branches, heal scars, and overgrow its form. *(continued on Page 2)*

December Meeting Announcement

Our Annual Holiday Party and Potluck

BSSF will be holding its annual Christmas party Thursday, December 10 at 6:30 PM at the Hall of Flowers. Hors devours will be served at 6:30 and the main course at 7PM. The club will provide a main course along with wine. Members should bring a potluck item (veggie, dessert, etc.) for the night. Great door prizes will be given, the curator's raffle with great trees and old pots will be held, and the winner of the Collection North docent raffle will be announced. So, bring your favorite dish to share, some bucks to win great prizes, and of course, some holiday spirit! See you there!

Unfortunately for the viewers of the demonstration and for beginners of bonsai, there is only a very small chance that they will ever see the demonstration material again. So unless you win the tree or are close to the owner, you will never see the techniques that are required for further development of the tree.

For this reason, it is important that we document the development the tree over time and then share the information with our bonsai clubs and members. Documentation of your trees' development is not difficult. In fact, it is downright unacceptable not to with today's technology. Nearly all of us have a small point-and-click digital camera or even a cell phone camera in our pockets. While a nice background and lighting is always best, it is not necessary. Just pull out your camera and take a picture of your tree a couple times per year.

Development of our trees is gradual. If you look at your trees everyday (which you should!), you may not notice how they change over time. Only when you flip through a few years worth of pictures will you notice how much they have developed. Such information is very valuable to bonsai artists, especially newcomers to the hobby. In fact, knowing how a tree develops over time teaches you how to look at a tree in the present, whether you are purchasing new material, styling a tree for the first time, or just admiring trees at a show.

For Lawrence's presentation, he prepared a slide show that followed the development of three trees. In fact, the three trees were involved in BSSF demonstrations within the past five years.

The first tree Lawrence discussed was a San Jose juniper (*Juniperus chinesis 'San Jose'*). The juniper was won in the club raffle in July 2005. It was a simple 5 gallon nursery material destined for a hedge row in the suburbs. In November 2005, Lawrence styled the material with the help of Marco Invernizzi at a BSSF workshop. After a long study, it was determined that the best design for the tree was a full cascade. After 4 hours of trimming, wiring, and carving, the tree was styled. As typical for freshly styled trees, the branches are merely wired in position and the foliage pads are loosely developed. The ramification of each branch was lacking and would take several years to develop.

After several years the overall design of the tree has not changed, but the branch positioning has changed radically. For the initial styling, branches are bent to positions to fill space. Over time, new branches form and the filler branches are no longer needed. Foliage pads are slowly developed as the twigs branch and are wired into position. Sometimes, trees do not follow your plans. Branches die or do not bud where you need them. For this tree, the original apex died after a single year. A new apex was developed from the next lowest branch that was wired in position.

(Top) San Jose juniper raw material in a 5 gallon nursery container. (middle) The same material 4 months later after styling with Marco Invernizzi. (bottom) Five years after its first styling, the tree the foliage pads are still developing.

After five years of growth, the tree is now becoming a respectable bonsai. But as for all bonsai, the tree is always growing and changing. Current work is focusing on developing interesting *jin* and *shari* that will shape the trunk, and the structure of the branches must be worked to maintain proper taper and twig formation.

Healthy root development is just as important. This tree was originally grown in a large nursery container. To fit in the small pot, nearly 80% of the roots were removed. Lawrence explained that because he was a beginner and a bit impatient, he repotted the tree directly from the nursery container to the small bonsai pot. The rapid reduction of the root ball slowed the growth of the tree and may have caused the loss of the original apex. Only in the past two years has the tree become healthy enough for training. The lesson? Resist the urge to repot your raw stock into bonsai pots too quickly. Spend several years reducing the root ball. Your trees will develop quicker in the long run.

The second tree Lawrence discussed was a trident maple stump won in a raffle in February 2006 at the Collection North Mammoth Sale and initially styled later that year at the BSSF show. The stump was grown by Lone Pine Gardens and only had a few branches. The only work done was a selection of branches to keep for the final design. The tree needed to grow and and the branches thicken for several years. So why start work on such raw material? The growing habit of trident maples (and other maples) results in multiple buds and branches emerging from a single point on the trunk. If a single branch is not selected from the group of buds, a large bump will form at that position. Reducing them early in the life of the bonsai will prevent the unsightly bumps.

Over the years, branches were allowed to elongate to thicken the base. Each year the branches are wired in position and the branch slowly built. The leaders were removed after the branch reached the correct diameter.

Over 4 years of development, this tree has only begun its journey as a bonsai. It still has a long way to go. Such appears to be the case for developing even decent maples for bonsai.

This tree still has at least 3-5 years of growth before it would be acceptable show material. The branches must still be developed and the apex should be a bit taller. The truck flare is present and will be a great base for the *nebari*. A few surface roots are already present at the base but a few root grafts will be necessary to help the look of the tree.

As the tree ages, the branch structure will become less pine-like and a more round, maple like form will be achieved. Right now, the goal is to place the primary branches in position and as the secondary and tertiary growth appears, it will be wired to form the new foliage pads.

The third tree Lawrence presented at the meeting was a *shohin*-sized cotoneaster. The same coton-

(left) A trident maple stump won in a raffle at the Mammoth Fundraiser at the Collection North. The tree was grown in the ground for several years before transplanting to a nursery container. The tree is about 11 inches tall in the photo. (middle) After two years, the front of the tree has changed and the primary branches have been selected. The tree was repotted to a terra cotta pot with free draining soil. After five years, the primary branches have been wired and secondary branching is being developed. The tree still requires many years of work to become an acceptable bonsai for show.

easter was featured in last month's "Fog City Bonsai" in an article about its development. The raw material was used at the April 2008 meeting as the main demonstration piece.

This tree was an excellent example of how quickly a piece of raw stock material can become an excellent bonsai in a relatively short amount of time. In less than two years, the primary and secondary branches as well as a new apex were grown for this tree. Of course, cotoneasters are known for their rapid growth. In fact, Lawrence states that the tree must trimmed monthly not only to maintain its shape, but to prevent the upper branches from growing too thick, thus out of proportion with the position on the tree. No worries if they do. If the branch is removed, another grows in its place in three months.

These trees are great for beginners to understand many of the processes necessary to create bonsai but in a short amount of time. These include selecting the trunk line by examining the taper and movement of the branches and learning how to grow proportional branches by letting branches escape the tree's form to thicken the bases. At the meeting, the tree was further trimmed to select for more appropriate secondary branches and give it a less conifer-like silhouette.

The tree grows in a simple and deep terra-cotta pot to help improve the tree's root system. Lawrence has learned his lesson from repotting his juniper too soon and will slowly move this tree into a bonsai pot!

Because Lawrence took the time to document his trees progress over the years, we can now see their remarkable transformation. No doubt the trees have a few years before bonsai greatness, but these pictures will be helpful for teaching new bonsai artists, understanding how trees develop over time, and educating the public on how bonsai trees are created.

BSSF

(top, left) raw material before styling. (top right) after 2 hours of work, the primary branches and trunk line have been selected. (bottom, left) After one year, a new apex has been developed and the foliage pads are forming. (bottom, right), the tree after 1.5 years. (above) The tree after careful selection of secondary branches at the meeting. The optimum branches have been selected for the next spurt of new growth. The new rounded top will be less pine-like than the earlier style and fit the species of tree.

Bonsai Notes For December

Last month of 2009 and the first serious full month of bonsai work. Yep, time to get to work. most bonsai work in the Bay Area is done in the winter when trees have slowed their growth.

Even though winter begins this month, we are having very mild days with lots of bright sunshine. Maybe some of your trees are reluctant to drop their leaves. Maybe some are actually pushing new growth and blooming. If the tree is not actively growing, go ahead a remove the leaves leaving the petioles. If trees are growing, move them to a shady cool area of your yard. Less light and cooler temps should help your trees go dormant. Remember to ramp up the percentage of potassium and phosphate in your fertilizer. Some growers prefer 0-10-10 while other prefer at least some nitrogen in the mix. The extra potassium and phosphate is thought to help with flower, root, and bud production, all important plant parts for next spring.

As for your junipers. Enjoy the bonus growing season! Junipers typically grow all season here. So keep fertilizing with a balanced fertilizer through the month. The Fall is also a good time to repot junipers. So consider getting a jump on repotting season. Remember, free draining soil recipes are best for your trees. Especially as the winter rains start to fall.

Our bumper crop of caterpillars are still lingering. Keep an eye out for signs of insect damage. We are not really sure why we have had so many this year. Next year, consider applying a sprinkle of *Bacillus thuringiensis* or Bt to your plants. Bt is a bacterium that only infects caterpillars. It produces an endotoxin that crashes the digestive system of the caterpillars munching on your trees. Bt is not a universal caterpillar controller. But, it's organic so can't hurt to give it a try.

December and January are the best months to work on your trees. Unfortunately, it's also a busy time for other facets of life. Try to make time for your trees. What better way to escape the busy holidays then spending an afternoon working on your trees. Consider finding a group of other like-minded bonsai people to work with trees. There are several groups in the club that get together on Saturdays to work on trees. Ask around at the next meeting. We are also having a December 3rd Thursday workshop this year. Make plans to be there!

Planning for the Spring Show Season

There is much to do right now both in grooming our trees and making commitments to participate in the upcoming bonsai show schedules. This year BSSF will be participating in the annual Lunar New Year celebration in the gallery at the County Fair Building 2/13, The San Francisco Garden Show in San Mateo, 3/24-3/28, Annual Cherry Blossom Festival in Japantown 4/17-18 and The BSSF 50th Anniversary Show in the County Fair building, 5/22-5/23. All of these displays will take staffing and planning. We will be asking club members to commit to the planning and execution of all these events. So be prepared to step up and sign up.

The 50th Anniversary show in May will take more planning and scheduling because we are responsible for every aspect of this show and must begin work on it now. The club will also be paying for every aspect of the show and our Charter requires that the membership approve such expenditures. All member's participation is crucial to the success and enjoyment of this event. Below is a working schedule for the weekend. Please read it and be prepared to weigh in on this at the Holiday Party this December 10th.

50th Anniversary Celebration Schedule May 22-23 in the County Fair building

9AM-4PM, Saturday May 22
Set up tables, chairs and all displays in the Recreation Room (demos), Garden Club Room (sales) and Auditorium (bonsai display and hospitality area) We need able-bodied people to get the basic infrastructure of this up as quickly as possible so that we can move in our trees and displays.

Saturday May 22
5-6PM - Show opens to invited guests with social hour.
6-7PM - Buffet Dinner with sit down tables on auditorium stage
7:30PM - Kathy Shaner conducts demo in Rec Room for assembled guests.
10:30PM - Demo ends with raffle of demo tree and guest depart.

Sunday May 23
10AM –-4PM - Show sale and demo areas open to the public for the day. Free admission.
4PM-8PM - Show closed removal of trees and display, breakdown tables, chairs and display and restoration of all areas used.

There are obviously many details to be worked out in this plan and that is why I will be addressing the membership about the positions we need to fill and will be prepared to take names. The following are positions we will be seeking to fill right away.

1. We need a volunteer to work on a show poster and promotions. If you have graphics and or promotions experience and would like to try your hand at this please speak to Debra or John or any of the BSSF board members. This is a job that needs to begin now.
2. We will need one or two people to schedule and coordinate members to help setting up the tables chairs and displays on Saturday 5/22 beginning at 9 am.
3. We need a member with experience planning around the attendees for the Saturday night meal and celebration.
If you can help with any of these crucial positions please speak up.

From The Board

Greetings! First, thanks to everyone for a very successful year with BSSF. With the economic downturn, many clubs have felt the account strings tighten and seen a loss of membership. BSSF is not immune, but have held our own. We were able to schedule informative programs with excellent raffle material in 2009. We look forward to 2010 with another great lineup of programs, speakers, and workshops.

2010 is going to be a challenging year with a record number of BSSF displays planned. We need everyone's help to be successful. Eric Schrader and John Edwards are charing the two major shows for next year. Please see either one to sign up for show duties as soon as possible. The planning for these shows has begun and we are already assigning tasks to members.

The 50th anniversary show will be very special. If you have any personal accounts of the club's history, please let us know. We would like to develop an article for the newsletter in April of 2010.

The pinch pots we made are ready! They will be available for pick up a the holiday party. Please try to take home your pots or they may become raffle prizes at next Spring's meetings!

Last month we elected new officers for the club and welcomed John Dale to the Board. Next year's officers are:

President: Lawrence LeClaire
Past President: Robert Smith
Vice President: Bernard Marque
Secretary: Diana Lum
Treasurer: Daryl Quijano
Librarian: Debra Bleemer
Board Members: John Edwards, Tim Kong, Eric Schrader, John Dale, & Debra Bleemer.

Upcoming Events

January 16-17, 2010 - Bay Island 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

January 19 - BSSF/Marin Iron Bonsai Challenge! Marin Arts and Garden Center 7:30PM. 6 teams of upcoming talent from BSSF and Marin Bonsai Club will square for an inter-club competition to design and create new bonsai before your eyes! Be there to cheer your club's team.

February 27-28, 2010 - Mammoth Fundraiser-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:

BSSF Meetings and Workshops

December 10, 2009 - BSSF December General Meeting Holiday Party and Potluck. BSSF will be holding its annual Holiday party, December 10 at the Hall of Flowers. We start with hors d'oeuvres at 6:30PM and the main course at 7PM The club will provide a main course along with wine. Members should bring a potluck item (veggie, side, dessert, etc.) for the night. There will be door prizes for everyone. In addition, Tim Kong has searched the Bay Area for some very special items for our curator raffle. You will be amazed at the quality of the prizes, so plan to buy tickets. The Collection North Docent raffle winner will be announced. See you there!

December 17 , 2008 - Third Thursday Members Free Workshop.
Make plans to stop by the Free Third Thursday Workshop on December 17. The workshop begins at 7PM. Take a break from your shopping. Winter weather is here so time to start major work on those trees! Also, don't forget, now is the time to start prepping for our March Show. So, bring a couple trees by the Hall of Flowers and get advice from advanced members of the club.

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.

BSSF Announcements

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 May 22 & 23, 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, you can help out!

BSSF History Project We are looking for valuable pieces of club history for to build articles and a display for next year's 50th anniversary celebration. If you have stories, pictures, or even trees that are part of BSSF's history, please let us know. We want to record as much information as possible. Look at we've already found in the archives! A much younger, super stylin' Tim Kong!

BSSF Bonsai Library
The BSSF has on hand a large assortment of books, magazines, and other literature about our favorite hobby. To access the library, arrive early at either the monthly meeting or the monthly workshop and speak to Debra Bleemer. Checking out materials requires a $5 deposit per item.

DUES!!! Your 2010 BSSF dues need to be submitted to Daryl Quijano. In the next few weeks, you will be receiving a reminder in the mail. In addition, you will have the opportunity to update your contact information and newsletter delivery preferences. Please take the time to complete the form and return your payment promptly.

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 llleclaire@gmail.com or (415) 668-8456.*

BSSF Guide to Winter Bonsai Care in the San Francisco Bay Area

Get busy! All serious bonsai work begins in the December. Wire! Prune! Are your trees ready for Spring? Proper winter work will help your trees be their best next year. Please see www.bssf.org/guides for the complete Year Round Care Guide or ask for a copy at our next meeting.

	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Black Pine (including any two needle pine; red pine delay 1 week)	0-10-10 Heavy Pruning and Wiring Needle Removal	finish wiring finish needle removal	Feed Repot as candles begin to elongate	
Maple Japanese / Trident / Natives	0-10-10 Heavy Pruning and Wiring	finish wiring	Pinch buds / Remove water shoots Repot as buds swell	
Elm & Zelkova Including Hornbeam, Hackberry, Willow (all alternate budding trees)	0-10-10 Heavy Pruning and Wiring	Pinch buds continually Repot as buds swell		
Junipers-Common (not california or sierra)	0-10-10 Heavy Pruning and Wiring	Finish Heavy Pruning & Wiring	Feed all year Repot all year - best time is Spring/Pinch and Wire all Year	
Spruce and Cedar	0-10-10 Heavy Pruning and Wiring	Loose Wiring Leave wire on Spruce -2years Cedar -3years	Pinch 1/2 of emerging tips Repot as buds swell	
Oaks E: Evergreens D: Deciduous	E: 0-10-10 Heavy Pruning and Wiring	Wire Pinch buds / Remove water shoots	Wire D: Repot	
Azaleas	0-10-10 Wiring (Alluminum only)			Fertilize with 5-5-5 Fish Emulsion every two weeks
White Pine (5 needle pines)	0-10-10 Heavy Pruning and Wiring Cut needles, leave sheath on.		Feed Repot as buds swell	

	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Fruiting and Flowering all apple, plum, ume, quince, cherry, etc	0-10-10 Heavy pruning, repotting, wiring	Do Not Feed until done blooming Wire before blooming	Remove water shoots	
Beech				Pinch before leaves open as buds form crescent shape
Redwood	0-10-10	Pinch Buds - Feed to promote Vigourous Growth, Light feeding for established trees Heavy Pruning and Wiring	Repot as growth begins	
Wisteria	0-10-10	Repot as growth begins	Flowering	
Olive	0-10-10 Heavy Pruning and Wiring	Repot	Feed / Pinch new growth	
Willow (weeping-style training)	0-10-10 Heavy Pruning and Wiring	Wire	Place pot in water	Feed Prune to Vertical Leaf
Hinoke Cypress	0-10-10	Feed Wire	Repot	Pinch back Hard
All Quince	Repot, Prune to shape & Wire	Wire	Remove flowers as they fade	
Hornbeam	Heavy Pruning and Wiring	Remove Wild or Strong Growth Wire		

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