



Fog City Bonsai

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

Calendar at a Glance...

Thurs., Mar. 8. BSSF March Meeting - Bonsai Display - Eric Schrader

Thurs., Mar. 15. BSSF 3rd Thursday Workshop

Wed. - Sun., Mar. 21-25. Bonsai Society of San Francisco Spring Show

Wed. & Thurs., March 28-29. BSSF Bonsai Basics Class

Sat. & Sun., Mar. 31-Apr. 1. San Jose Betsuin Bonsai Club Annual Show

Sat., Apr. 7. BSSF Bonsai and Plant One-Day Sale

Thurs., Apr. 12. BSSF April Meeting Companion Plants - Kora Dolager

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**BONSAI
SOCIETY
SAN
FRANCISCO**

www.bssf.org

presents

2007



SAN FRANCISCO
FLOWER & GARDEN
SHOW
www.gardenshow.com

A BONSAI EXHIBIT
AT THE **SAN FRANCISCO**
FLOWER AND GARDEN SHOW
COW PALACE
on Geneva in Daly City

Wednesday through Sunday March 21st-25th

Wednesday-Saturday: 9am-8pm Sunday: 9am-6:00pm

~ Ongoing demos daily ~

A BONSAI SALE
AT THE **SAN FRANCISCO**
COUNTY FAIR BUILDING

Ninth Ave. and Lincoln Way.

Recreation Room and Patio
next to Lincoln Way. parking lot

Saturday April 7

10 am - 3 pm

Bonsai and related plants,
bonsai pots for sale by club members

Purchase by Check or Cash Only



Preparing for the BSSF Bonsai Exhibit

The BSSF Bonsai exhibit at the San Francisco Flower and Garden Show in the Cow Palace will be held on March 21-25. Hours are 8AM-9PM Wed-Sat and 9AM to 6:00PM Sun. Ongoing bonsai demonstrations will be held daily.

All BSSF members are encouraged to display a tree in the exhibit. However, due to space limitations this year, members may only submit one tree for the show. Trees for the display should be brought to the exhibit in show condition. If you are not familiar with how to prepare a tree for a show, please bring your tree to the March meeting or the March 3rd Thursday workshop for show prep. **NOTE:** Please bring or arrange for appropriate accent plantings and stands for your tree.

Instructions for show setup... Show setup will be on Tues., March 20 from 12PM - 8PM. The show will be held in the Petal Plaza arena. The Petal Plaza arena is on the south side of the Cow Palace. Parking for the show setup is free, however you must have a special parking pass. Setup parking passes will be distributed at the March Meeting and workshop.

Instructions for Volunteers... Volunteers will provide security for the trees in the display and distribute information about the BSSF and Collection North. At least four volunteers are required at the display at all times. Each day will be divided into 3 shifts: 9AM-1PM, 1PM-5PM, and 5PM-9PM. To sign up for a shift, please call or email Joe Nersveen at 415-252-1555. Volunteers **MUST** contact Joe to receive special exhibitor wrist bands for admission. Volunteers should report to the 'Will Call' booth to receive their designated wrist band for your day.

During the day, bonsai demonstrations will be held at the exhibit. There is no schedule for the demonstration. If you are a volunteer for a particular shift and would like to demonstrate a particular bonsai technique, please bring your material and tools to the show. **Please call Diana Lum for volunteer and demonstration opportunities 415-731-7793.**

BSSF Bonsai and Plant Sale

WHAT? - The Bonsai Society of San Francisco will be holding a one day bonsai and bonsai-related material sale in lieu of selling bonsai at the San Francisco Flower and Garden Show.

WHEN? - The sale will be held on Saturday, April 7 from 10AM to 3PM. RAIN or SHINE!

WHERE? - The one-day sale will be held in the recreation room and patio of the Hall of Flowers located at the corner of Lincoln Way and 9th Ave. **Parking** is available in the lot off Lincoln behind the Hall of Flowers, along 9th Ave or the new Golden Gate Park Parking Garage.

This will be a great chance to find developed bonsai and bonsai starter material as well as pots and equipment.

Rules for Sellers!

1. You do not need to be a member of the BSSF to sell items. All members from local clubs as well as the public are welcome to bring items for sale.
2. BSSF will receive 20% of the final sales price.
3. All material should be bonsai related. (masterpiece bonsai, not-so-masterpiece bonsai, pre-bonsai stock, bonsai pots, tools, equipment, books, magazines, stones, etc.)
4. Plants must be healthy! NO fresh repots allowed and no diseases please.
5. Unlike the sales at the Cow Palace, bonsai material need not be in bonsai pots. Nursery containers or training pots are welcome.
6. Material must be brought to the Hall of Flowers on the day of sale.
7. Tell your friends! The more people that know about the sale and bring items, the better the sale.

So, time for Spring cleaning! If you have too many trees to water, April 7th is a great opportunity to "thin the herd" and make a few extra bucks. Plus, you will help the BSSF to continue to fund quality monthly programs.

Volunteers are needed to coordinate sales items, assist customers, and set up the room. Volunteers should report to the Hall of Flowers at 9AM to setup the sale and plan to stay until 4PM to clean up. To volunteer, please contact John Edwards at (415) 621-0935.



Repotting: The Secret to Great Bonsai

February General Meeting Notes - Eric Schrader

For our February 2007 meeting the club came together for a night of repotting and root work. Special thanks to John Edwards for taking charge of our newer members. Repotting can be a mystifying process for people who have no knowledge of the proper way to do it. John provided help and instruction to more than a half dozen people, all of whom I'm sure were very grateful.

As I mentioned in the article about this program, repotting is a fine art in many ways. You should aim to refine the surface roots of your tree with every repotting. For example, on a healthy growing maple, cut off downward growing roots so that new finer roots sprout from the surface roots. Planting trees in wider, shallower trays will encourage the surface roots to run and fatten up. Consider also that trees sometimes look better with more or less root showing than has been the case before repotting. For pines and some other conifers, a twisting mass of roots spreading in every direction helps to complete the look of a tree. Avoid at all costs burying all the roots which will make your trees look like a stick in the mud.

Soil is a vital component in maintaining a tree in top health. Mix your bonsai soil while all components are bone dry and sift to remove fine particles. If the soil is too wet to dry out practically, sift the components underwater to remove the dust particles. If you neglect to sift out the fine particles the bottom of your pot will become clogged and the roots will sit in a swamp all year long, causing diseases and poor general health. There are as many formulas for soil as there are bonsai enthusiasts. Some include only a few components and some include a lot. The most important thing to remember is this: roots need air as much as they need water. When you pull a tree planted in heavy soil out of a pot all the roots are circling at the bottom and along the sides. If you have good aeration in your soil you will find a network of fine roots in the middle of the pot as well. This network is the key to a tree in good health, and to the tree maintaining vigor after repotting.

Akadama is the most commonly talked about soil component in bonsai. It is expensive and it is Japanese. Is it worth the money? That question is one that you will have to decide for yourself; some people use pure *akadama* for their trees while others balk at the expense. *Akadama* is a baked clay which, although inorganic, acts like organic material in the soil by retaining fertilizer and micronutrients for the tree to absorb between waterings. The cheaper alternatives to *akadama* are fir bark or other small barks or any of a number of fired clay products. Oil-dry is widely talked



(above) *Bonsai Soil Components.* A sample of the most common used bonsai soil components. Top center is small akadama, right center 1/4" pumice, and bottom left, 1/4" akadama.



(above) *Excess roots are trimmed from the bottom of a healthy Trident maple.*

(below) *Old soil and is removed from nebari with a wooden chop stick.*





(above) The bottom of a freshly cleaned Trident maple. Excess material is cut away from the bottom of a tree with knob cutters to build a concave shape to the base of the tree.

about on internet chat rooms as a cheap and effective alternative to *akadama*. It is a fired clay and is designed to absorb oil spills. It is far less expensive, but so far I have not seen or heard any evidence (based on head to head comparison) that says it does the job equally as well as *akadama* or fir bark.

Pumice, either imported from Japan or quarried locally is another common soil ingredient. Pumice is lightweight and does not decompose in a pot. It will maintain the matrix of small pockets in the soil even once other components start to decompose. Pumice is frequently used as the “drainage layer”, the layer of soil just covering the bottom of the pot which helps to maintain free flow of water throughout. Lava rock is much the same as pumice, and is also available locally. It is slightly heavier. Decomposed granite is much much heavier than the other soil ingredients but using a small amount in the soil will provide the potential benefits without making pots terribly heavy.

From the Prez.



March madness. Busy time for bonsai people, keeping up with repotting trees, more budding out each day, and working on potential show trees to be ready for our annual display at the San Francisco Garden Show. This all adds up to a lot of time when dropped into our already busy city lives. But you must take the time to make sure the tree you repot is in a pot that shows it to it's best advantage and enhances the composition you have given the tree. Take the time to make sure the tree is placed at a depth and angle which likewise shows the disposition of the tree faithfully. And when it is repotted and the soil you labored to sift to the proper size for you tree is watered in well and the run off is clear and free of dust stand back and admire your dedication and this beautiful thing you have guided and cared for.

Each action we take brings our trees closer to our visions for them. This is what is on display at our show. Vision and results of hard work. Choose the tree you want to show based on your perception of its ability to charm. If it charms you it will charm our audience.

Preparing a bonsai for exhibit is an essential part of this process of becoming a bonsai artist. You must show your work. It keeps you improving the tree. by working on the details. As long as the tree is growing it will require your guidance.

A good way to learn more about bonsai is to be around them and the people who grow them. Volunteering to work a shift at the

Garden Show puts you in the company of many examples to learn from and in an environment where you can talk about it non-stop. If you are a new member I highly recommend you take part in one of the shifts at this year's exhibit. Call Joe Nersveen and see where you can fit in the schedule. It will be 3 hours of bonsai intensive exposure.

On the 17th, the weekend before the show, we will be looking to fill two docents spaces at the Collection North, also a bonsai intensive experience with many rewards for the curious student. You can sign up directly on the BSSF website or the GSBF site Collection North docent page or contact me.

I had the pleasure in February to set up a small display at The SF Botanical Garden's Lunar New Year Flower Market representing BSSF. John Pennington stayed through the show and Lawrence LeClaire stood in as well to talk with the public about our club and bonsai in San Francisco. Even at an event where bonsai is not the main focus we got a very warm and appreciative reception.-John Edwards



Horticultural charcoal is another ingredient which, when used in small amounts, can provide an extra bit of insurance.

There are a number of steps in the repotting process which should be followed as closely as possible. Repotting of a newly collected or young tree can differ substantially from repotting of an older established bonsai.




(above) The roots of this Trident maple are ready for a fresh pot of bonsai soil. Proper care of your bonsai's roots will lead to good tree health and excellent nebari.

Important Points from the Meeting...

1. If you are using a different pot than what the tree is already planted in prepare the pot before beginning. Cover drain holes with screen and add tie wires. Then, start by cutting the old tie wires and bending the stubs and the wires holding screening over so that they are not touching the pot and can move freely through the holes when you pull on the tree and rootball.
2. Using a root sickle, cut along three sides of the pot, removing some soil and the mat of roots that grows against the side of the pot. Angle the sickle so that the rootball is smaller than the inner rim of the pot if the pot rim hangs inward. Cut one long side and the two short sides on a rectangular pot, or two-thirds of the way around a round pot.
3. Tip the tree out of the pot. If you are transplanting into the same pot, take this time to set the tree aside and wash and re-wire the pot. Do not scrub pots with wire brushes or other harsh cleaners. Pots will gain patina over time, so wash with only natural bristle brushes and do not use petroleum products to clean. If there are calcium deposits on the pot they can be covered by an application of walnut oil, which will make the pot look clean.
4. Lay the rootball on the side that has not been cut,

with the tree hanging off the side of the table. Using a three-pronged rake or bent tweezers, rake the bottom of the rootball and then cut it flat with root scissors. If there is not a cohesive rootball simply trim the roots even and flat. You can make the bottom of the rootball concave by trimming more in the middle than on the edges, but do not make it convex because that will make it harder to tie the tree into the new pot properly.

5. Clean off your table and set the tree on it. Start working around the edges of the rootball using a root hook or tweezers or chopsticks. Comb the roots outward removing old soil. Once a tree is in good soil it is not necessary to bare-root it every time it is repotted. If you are concerned about the tree's health and it is in old soil, you can bare-root only half, leaving the other half for the next repotting.
6. Once you have finished cleaning out old soil cut the roots around the rootball, leaving the roots slightly longer than the soil that remains, but smaller than the size of the pot. Do not curl roots into the pot except in extreme cases where there are few healthy roots.
7. Place a drainage layer in the pot, and add a small mound of soil over it. Make sure all the tie wires are headed out of the pot and will be accessible.
8. Place the tree over the mound of soil and gently but firmly twist and press down slightly to firm the tree over the new soil.
9. Add a small amount of soil around the tree and chop it in gently
10. Tie the tree in. There are a thousand different ways depending on size of the tree, placement in the pot, and number of holes in the pot and other factors. Some practice will teach you the best method.
11. Add more soil, chopping in gently to fill pockets. Try not to chop so vigorously that you penetrate the drainage layer or that you damage the roots excessively. Generally, use a smaller size soil on the top than on the bottom of the pot. It will retain moisture closer to the surface of the pot.
12. Brush and pat the surface of the soil flat and give the pot a tap or two to further settle the soil. The soil should not be mounded, and should ideally be slightly below the lip of the pot so that it doesn't run off when you water. Mounded soil causes uneven distribution of water when you are watering.
13. Water the pot until the draining water runs clear.
14. Do not fertilize newly repotted trees for 4-6 weeks. After 4-6 weeks use organic fertilizer, but use chemical fertilizer only after 6-8 weeks. If you buy a large nursery tree, you will probably have far too many branches, and you can cut off as much as the top $\frac{2}{3}$ of the tree. (I think this is what he means.) This gives you the opportunity to cut away all but those that will make the best design. -Eric Schrader 

Upcoming Events

Bonsai Society of San Francisco Spring Show March 21 - 25

Our annual Spring Bonsai show will be on March 21-25 at the San Francisco Flower and Garden Show in the Cow Palace. Hours are 8AM-9PM Wed-Sat and 9AM to 6:00PM. Ongoing demos daily. Please call Diana Lum for volunteer and demonstration opportunities 415-731-7793.



San Jose Betsuin Bonsai Club Annual Show March 31 - Apr. 1.

San Jose Betsuin Bonsai Club will be holding its 37th annual show at the San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin, 640 North Fifth St., San Jose, CA Saturday March 31 and Sunday April 1.

BSSF Meetings and Workshops

March 8 - BSSF General Meeting - Display and Show Setup

For our March general meeting we will be doing a practice run on setting up the show at the Cow Palace. Bring the tree you would like to display and possibly a couple of alternates, along with accent plants, stands and anything else needed for the display. The reduced size of the show this year means that each member will be able to display only one tree, but we will still have a wonderful exhibit and be able to reach many people in the gardening world.

For the meeting we will have a discussion concerning display practices which will lead into a mock setup of the show. Members will have a chance to learn some of the guidelines for Kei Do, the art of bonsai display, and to critique the displays of fellow members.

March 15 - BSSF 3rd Thursday Free Workshop

Bring those trees into workshop for help from John Edwards, Tim Kong and others!

Although we normally do not have a 3rd Thursday workshop in March because of our show, this year the show will be a week later, so we have the opportunity to use the 3rd Thursday workshop for show preparation.

Free moss and top dressing will be provided at the workshop. Show prep involves a lot of diverse things, from cleaning the pot to removing needles and leaves that do not fit in with the silhouette of a tree. Take this opportunity to get advice from other members about making your tree look as fantastic as it can.

Aside from show prep, March should keep you busy. Finish up your repotting. If your trees have already leafed out, then it is too late. Pines and other conifers can be repotted later, although the tree will be weakened more the longer you wait.

Pinching should be reserved for trees that are nearing completion. Trees in training should be allowed to grow out until new growth hardens off, then the new growth should be wired. This will keep the tree stronger and will hasten the development of the silhouette of the tree. Further refinement can be accomplished by cutting back the growth later to further ramification and shorten internodes.

Remove flowers from flowering trees as soon as they are finished blooming to prevent the tree from forming seeds. Unless you plan to show the tree this fall or winter, there is no reason to allow fruit to grow; if you want to grow fruit on a tree, do it only every other year, this will allow the tree to focus more energy on leaf and branch growth.

March 28-29 BSSF - Bonsai Basics Class

Two evening classes covering the basic techniques of cultivating bonsai are offered to BSSF members the week between our show and sale.

Between the hours of 6:30PM to 10PM, Wednesday and Thursday, you will be instructed in fundamental techniques and guiding principals of bonsai. Each student will be given two trees and individual guidance in applying these techniques. The first evening will concentrate on basic bonsai styles and the use of pruning and wiring to achieve design objectives. The second evening is a continuation of basic wiring techniques, pot selection, repotting theory and technique. Learning the basics best prepares the budding bonsai artist with good and efficient work habits and a deeper understanding of trees.

The class is \$60 for BSSF members. Non-members must pay additional membership fee to enroll. This fee covers the club's cost for the trees, pots, soil, wire and room rental. Each participant should bring any tools they may have. The purchase of a branch scissor for the class is recommended if you don't already have one. Some tools will be available for student use.

Send a check to Daryl Quijano, club treasurer, marked 'Bonsai Basics Class'. Contact John Edwards to sign up for the class (415-621-0935). The class will be limited to 10 people.

April 12 - BSSF General Meeting - Companion Plants

For our April general meeting we will have Kora Dolager as a guest to lead a workshop on companion plantings. As you may already know, or have learned

Board Members and Officers

President:

[John Edwards](#) - (415) 621-0935



Vice President | Website Guy:

[Eric Schrader](#) - (415) 786-1349

Treasurer:

[Daryl Quijano](#)
(415) 307-5569 | (415) 332-0657 x 104

Secretary | Website Guy:

[Aaron Newton](#) - (415) 235-7466

Newsletter Editor

Lawrence LeClaire - (415) 668-8456

Board Members at Large

Tim Kong
JD Durst
Diana Lum
Joe Nersveen
John Pennington
Rebecca Williams
Ron Weaver

Librarians

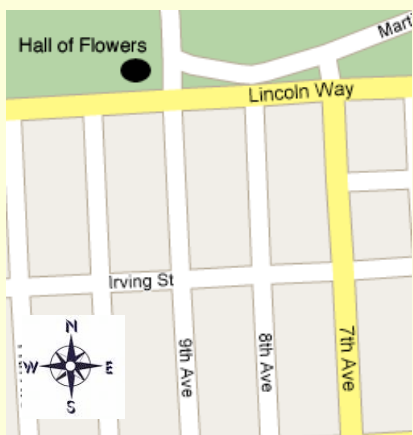
[Paul Hrisko](#) - (415) 861-5244
[Rinda Burleigh](#) - (415) 931-2638

General Meeting Hospitality Host

Tim Kong - 415) 468-1664

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 **second 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 Fourth 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 the south side of the building to the club room.



at the March meeting, companion plantings are small plants used with bonsai in displays to set the tree off and convey a feeling of nature in the display. Companion plantings should be natural looking. The grass, fern or other plant should fill the pot entirely and look like it has been growing there for quite some time, even if you just put it there. While trees represent man in traditional display, the companion planting is meant to represent nature.

Kora will be bringing supplies for people to make their own plantings including pots and plants. Participation will be \$15 per participant, or free to observe. Participants will receive one pot and plants to go with it.

Announcements

Dues!

Yearly dues are being collected now! Please mail your dues to Bonsai Society of San Francisco, County Fair Building, 9th Ave and Lincoln Blvd, San Francisco, CA 94122. The yearly renewal fee is \$25 for individuals, \$45 for families, and \$20 for seniors. Alternatively, bring your dues payment to our monthly meeting. Prompt dues payments are necessary to fund monthly programs, the website, and newsletter. Dues must be received by the March Meeting. Thanks!

Collection North Docents Needed.

The GSBF Collection North needs volunteers to be docents. This is a fun and educational opportunity for all bonsai hobbyists. No matter your skill level, you can help care for these wonderful trees and educate the public about the art of bonsai. Please check the docent calendar at <http://www.gsbf-bonsai.org/collectionnorth/docent.htm> or call Hollis & Kay Hardy at (952) 933-9543.

Bonsai Sales at the Monthly Meeting

Please remember that any time during the year you wish to sell bonsai trees, the BSSF welcomes you to bring the trees to our monthly meetings or workshops. The club will receive 20% of the purchase price.

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 Paul Hrisko or Rinda Burleigh. Checking out materials requires a \$5 deposit per item.

FOG CITY BONSAI is the monthly newsletter of the Bonsai Society of San Francisco. 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 Spring Bonsai Care in the San Francisco Bay Area

YES! Spring is here for Bay Area residents. Maples are budding. Quinces are blooming. Pine candles are swelling! Prepare for your spring bonsai chores with our SPRING bonsai care calendar. Please see www.bssf.org/guides for the complete Year Round Care Guide or ask for a copy at our next meeting.

	Feb	Mar	Apr
Black Pine (including any two needle pine; red pine delay 1 week)	Feed		
		Repot as candles begin to elongate	
Maple Japanese / Trident / Natives		Pinch buds / Remove water shoots	
		Repot as buds swell	
Elm & Zelkova Including Hornbeam, Hackberry, Willow (all alternate budding trees)		Pinch buds continually	
		Repot as buds swell	
Junipers-Common (not California or Sierra)		Feed all year	
		Repot all year - best time is Spring	
		Pinch and Wire all Year	
Spruce and Cedar			Fertilize after initial Spring growth
			Pinch 1/2 of emerging tips
			Repot as buds swell
Oaks E: Evergreens D: Deciduous	Wire	Wire	
			Pinch buds / Remove water shoots
			D: Repot
Azaleas		Fertilize with 5-5-5 Fish Emulsion every two weeks	
		Wiring (Alluminum only)	
			Cut Large Branches - leave stub on
White Pine (5 needle pines)	Feed		Increase Feeding
			Decandle when candle is covered in white dots
		Repot as buds swell	Buds appear 10-15 days

	Feb	Mar	Apr
Fruiting and Flowering all apple, plum, ume, quince, cherry, etc			Do Not Feed until done blooming
			Fertilize after blooming is finished
		Remove water shoots	Light Pruning
Beech			Pinch before leaves open as buds form crescent shape
Redwood		Pinch Buds - Feed to promote Vigorous Growth, Light feeding for established trees	
		Heavy Pruning and Wiring	Keep moist (not wet) all year
		Repot as growth begins	
Wisteria		0-10-10	Fertilize after blooming is finished
	Repot as growth begins	Flowering	
			Down Roots as weather gets hot - soak bottom 1/2 of pot
Olive			Feed / Pinch new growth
			Repot
Willow (weeping-style training)			Feed
			Prune to Vertical Leaf
			Place pot in water
Hinok Cypress			Feed
			Pinch back Hard
			Repot
All Quince			
			Remove flowers as they fade
Hornbeam			Remove Wild or Strong Growth
			Pinch

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