

*Serenity
Through Bonsai*



DAI ICHI
BONSAI KAI

第一分盆栽會
盆中平穩

THE DAI ICHI GAZETTE

JANUARY 2016 | VOLUME 31, ISSUE 1



Reflections of 2015

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF DAI ICHI BONSAI KAI

DAI ICHI BONSAI KAI

2015 Board of Directors

John van de Wouw
President

Doyle Saito
1st Vice President

OPEN
2nd Vice President

Scott Pogolian
Treasurer

Judy Unrine
Recording Secretary | Historian

CJ Harmatz
Corresponding Secretary

Doyle Saito
Program Chair

Kei Ikari
Co-Show Chair

CJ Harmatz
Membership

Jim Morris
Librarian

Scott Pogolian
Website Chair

Kevin Sweeney
Benefit Drawing Chair

Jason Saito
Newsletter | Website | Social Media

OPEN
Hospitality

Tom Culton
Publicity

Doyle Saito
Past President

Club Founders

Leila Kusumi
Co-Founder | Sensei

Jim Tatsukawa
Co-Founder | Sensei

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy New Year's everyone!

In this month's edition of our Dai Ichi newsletter we feature a compilation of last year's events. The events of the past year demonstrate and reinforce my belief that our club is a great asset to the public. Dai Ichi is certainly in the forefront of teaching and educating the public about the art of bonsai. We are a strong beacon of light in the South Bay & West Side.



Dai Ichi continues to be involved with planning the California State University Fullerton (CSUF) Bonsai Exhibit, scheduled to take place late March through mid-April. Doyle Saito is our representative on the executive planning committee. We will be asking y'all to see who might want to display their tree(s) for a one or two week period, and we will be signing people up to staff the exhibit for a Dai Ichi day. The intent of the exhibit is to gauge public interest in bonsai; which may, in turn, lead to a permanent bonsai exhibit at CSUF.

One would think that this time of year there would be little to do in taking care of your bonsai. But I've got a long list that will lead to healthy trees for next year. It includes rotating my trees periodically to encourage more radial growth, cleaning up leaf clutter from the pots/benches/ground to limit areas for bugs and fungus, spraying dormant/fungal spray between storms, and cleaning out dead needles/leaves from the trees to get more light into the inner branches thus promoting new bud growth. Of course there is re-potting too.

This month's meeting we will have elections for 2016-2017 Club Officers, and Tom Vuong will be giving a demonstration on grafting. I recently visited Tom's yard, where he has many grafted trees, and I saw his demonstration at CBS the other week. I can confidently tell you that it will be a good demonstration featuring advanced bonsai concepts. Come on down and say Hi!

John van de Wouw

John van de Wouw
President
Dai Ichi Bonsai Kai

Reflections of 2015



It's time to renew your ANNUAL CLUB MEMBERSHIP

Individual Membership
\$25.00 per year

Family Membership
\$35.00 per year

Your dues enable the club to present activities such as our annual show, guest demonstrations, workshops, the *Dai Ichi Gazette*, club library, as well as refreshments and club raffles.

Another year passes. Add another growth ring to our trees, and to our club.

This year, we've been fortunate to have some incredibly gifted and talented people demonstrate at our club.

Our annual show and sale was a great success, and we all look forward to doing it again!

This past year the bonsai community lost a few friends and teachers, but we've also gained many new enthusiastic beginners. It is these new beginners that will carry the art of bonsai into the future. Today's beginners will become tomorrow's masters, and that's why it is so important to our club to nurture and encourage the passion people have for bonsai.

In this issue, we will reflect on memories of 2015, and look forward to the new memories and experiences to come.

***Please support the club
by paying your dues,
as well as encouraging
your family and friends,
to join our DIBK family.***



DAI ICHI BONSAI KAI

Celebrating 30 Years of Serenity through Bonsai



*2015 Commemorates the 30th year since the inception of Dai Ichi Bonsai Kai. Let's take a glimpse into the club's history.
For more pictures and club information, please visit Rick Wagner's DIBK archive at www.rjwagner49.com/Bonsai/DaiIchiBonsaiKai/history.html*

In 1985, a small group of bonsai enthusiasts got together to form a new club to serve the South Bay area in Los Angeles County. Their purpose was to start a club in which both experienced bonsaists and novices could come together to learn about, share knowledge of, and promote the art of bonsai. The Ken Nakaoka Community Center in the city of Gardena was chosen as the location for club meetings and other events, such as the annual bonsai show and Christmas dinner party. Gardena is centrally located to serve the South Bay (southern Santa Monica Bay) area.

The DIBK annual spring show, "Serenity through Bonsai," has come to be regarded as one of the best local club bonsai shows.

The club has been an important influence in the promotion of the art of bonsai in the South Bay area and has assisted many members over the years in improving their appreciation and practice of the art of bonsai.

The author, (Rick Wagner) at the time of this writing (September 2002) is the current President of DIBK, and has been a club member for many years.

1985

DIBK schedules its first club meeting. An announcement appeared in the December 25, 1985 Daily Breeze, page B6:

Bonsai Club

"A group of Bonsai enthusiasts is organizing a new South Bay club and meets at 7 p.m. on the first Friday of each month starting Jan. 3, 1986 at the Ken Nakaoka Memorial Center, 1700 W. 162nd St., Gardena. For further information, call the Gardena Recreation Department at 327-0220 Ext. 340."

DAVID NGUY

JUNIPER STYLING DEMO

David Nguy was our featured demonstrator for February and he really showed us his skills by working on three Prostrata Junipers supplied by the club.

First off, David polled the crowd on which front showed off the tree's best attributes. He then went on to explain how he approaches setting up the structure to balance the foliage; by removing bar branches and eliminating unnecessary limbs, in order to achieve the desired, triangle structure. He showed us his technique for cleaning out foliage by eliminating down facing and inside foliage to allow strong branches to grow healthy. He then passed off the tree to his capable assistant, Jason Chan, to finish the cleanout and wiring.

He then moved on to the second Prostrata Juniper, which was a little more challenging than the first, as the branch structure was one dimensional and needed serious finessing. David explains, "after choosing the apex branch, I like to eliminate the inside branches that we don't need. Once they are eliminated, we can then work on the structure." He then applied wet strips of raffia to the main trunkline and number one branch, in order to protect the branch for a radical bend. "When you apply the raffia, make sure you tightly and evenly wrap, not only the trunk, but the branch you are bending as this helps to eliminate cracks when you bend the branch." Once wired, the branch bent like butter (not really, but it was pretty easy to bend).





Jason Chan works on detail wiring as David checks the work.



Mel Ikeda watches as David examines the structure of the tree.



Congratulations to the lucky winners of David's trees. From left to right, Barry Miller, Nelson Sanabria, David Nguy, Neil Nguyen, and Jason Chan.



Paparazzi out in full force. Thanks Michael Izumoto, for the great footage!

He then detail wired the tree into a very nice future bonsai.

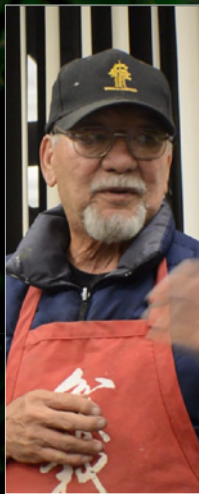
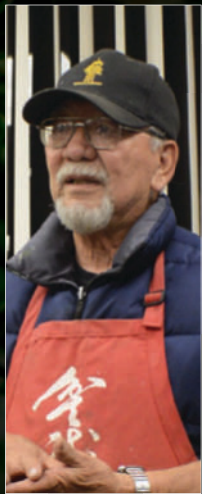
The third tree David styled was another Juniper donated by the club. Other than a nice twist in the trunk, the tree was pretty much a stick without much movement, so David decided to make a *shohin* out of it. Cutting off about 3/4 of the height, he styled and shaped the tree, complete with Jinned branches which gave it a tremendous sense of age.

In record time, David and Jason completely styled three trees that were raffled off that night.

Congratulations to the lucky winners, Barry Miller, Nelson Sanabria and Neil Nguyen.

For more information about David Nguy, his nursery and his school, Bonsai Jidai, please visit:

<http://bonsaijidai.com>.



"Michael used to be my student, and now he is my teacher."

"...these techniques work for us and they work for people in Japan, and they have trees that are over 500 years old. If it works for them, we should try to emulate their techniques instead of reinventing the wheel."



Michael trims the roots in preparation for the repot.



FRED MIYAHARA

REPOTTING TECHNIQUES

As part of DIBK's ongoing educational mission, we were fortunate to have Fred Miyahara and Michael Sykes, demonstrate repotting techniques on established bonsai.

The demonstration started out with Fred discussing fundamentals and philosophy. Fred explained, "One thing we tend to do is overpot our trees. People notice that trees from Japan are usually in very small pots and by comparison, in Southern California, and perhaps even the entire US, we tend to use larger pots. My hypothesis is that at some point, people started using larger pots and were repotting less often. With larger pots and infrequent repotting, the roots tend to grow very long, so the fine feeder roots get cut too much. That's not how to keep a bonsai happy. I think the secret to healthy trees is to repot often. Deciduous trees should be repotted every year and no longer than two years. The roots grow out, you cut it back, keep repeating this and the tree stays alive and healthy for a hundred years."

According to Fred and Michael's teacher, Kenji Miyata, the most important thing in bonsai is watering. Fred explains, "This is probably true because in Japan, no apprentice can water until their third year. Apprentices may wire and prune, but must first learn how the trees roots grow, before being allowed to take on the responsibility of watering. The second most important thing is repotting.

"Here, we tend to pay more attention to what is above the ground. In Japan, they concentrate on everything below the ground. If you take care of everything below the ground everything will take care of itself."



At this point, Fred let Michael masterfully demonstrate a repot of a grafted Kishu.

“Our first step is getting the tree out of the pot using sickles, saws, and other root pruning tools. It’s a very simple process that we use. We start combing out the top, to see where the viable roots are. You can’t cut the bottom until you know how much rootball you have on top. If you cut too much off the bottom and don’t have enough roots on top, you will have a problem, especially when putting

it in a shallow pot. As you comb through the roots, you shape the top into a conal pyramid. This allows water to easily drain down into the pot.

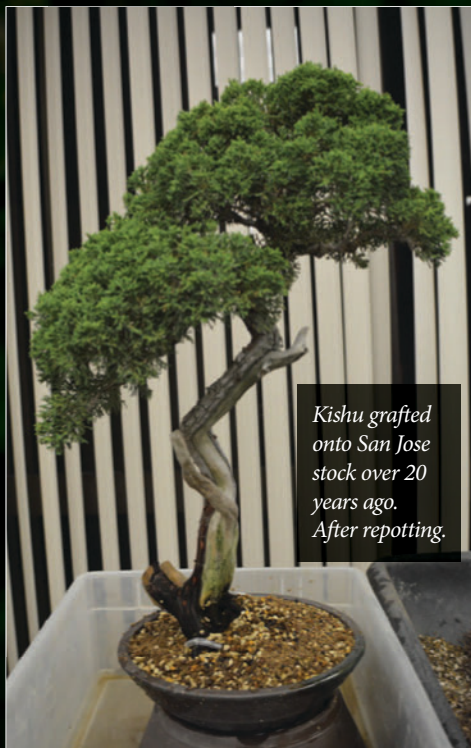
“When we repot, we do use a drainage layer. Courser soil on the bottom allows the roots to ‘air prune’ themselves, which leads to better drainage, which is beneficial for health and growth.

“If you look at the root system, it mirrors the top of the tree. We know how the top of the tree grows; the top branches are

the strongest and most vigorous, the bottom branches are the weakest. If you take the top part of the tree and turn it upside down, the root system mirrors the top of the tree. Meaning the roots on the bottom are the most vigorous, and the roots on the top, the weakest. It is exactly the same. You also want to take the biggest roots out of the bottom, because the fine feeder roots are what feeds the tree.

“You also want to tie the tree down well, because it’s critical as the rootball starts

to grow, that the tree and the roots not move. If it moves, it will break the newly formed roots, and that will set the growth back. While you can remove the wire after a year or so, I almost never cut my wire out. Only in fast growing deciduous and tropical trees, do I sometimes remove the wire; because the roots grow so fast, otherwise, I just leave them in until the next repot.”



Kishu grafted onto San Jose stock over 20 years ago. After repotting.



Fred’s Soil Mix Recommendations

“I’ve switched from pumice to perlite as pumice tends to be powdery and it retains a lot of dust and turns to sludge. Perlite is sterile, clean, and leaves no dust.”

Pines

7 parts Akadama
2 parts Perlite
1 part Lava (Scoria)

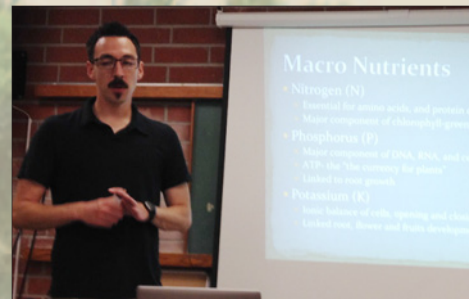
Junipers

8 parts Akadama
2 parts Perlite or Pumice
1 part Lava (Scoria)

Deciduous

9 parts Akadama
2 parts Perlite

RYAN NICHOLS THE SCIENCE OF BONSAI

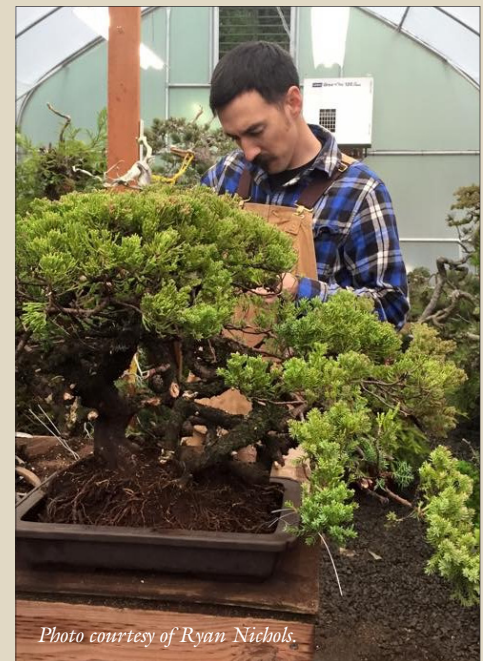


BY CJ HARMATZ | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Ryan Nichols, from Back to the Roots Consulting, is also a teacher in the Horticulture Department at Cal Poly Pomona. He coaches a landscape collegiate team that has progressed from 11th place to 3rd. A bonsai student of Al Nelson and Ryan Neil for 5 years, he recently won the Joshua Roth New Talent Competition. Ryan presented valuable information on the topic of Seasonal Transitions.

"The what informs, but the why transforms. Understanding light, temperature, nutrients and water are all important in the care of our trees. Better decisions, healthier trees, happy people," says Ryan. He emphasized that principles never change. Practices should change to adapt to achieve principles.

"Light is most important. Morning light produces the most blue light which is best for trees. Being autotrophic, trees are able to feed themselves. Through photosynthesis, trees produce food. Air + Water + Light = Sugar & O₂. Transpiration is the process by which moisture is carried through plants from roots to small pores on the underside of leaves, where it changes to vapor and is released to the atmosphere. Transpiration is essentially evaporation of water from plant leaves—a type of air conditioning for trees. Light affects leaf development. Leaves acclimate to light. Leaf acclimation can degrade plant cells and damage photoreceptors.



At the GSBF's 37th Convention, Ryan was the winner of the Joshua Roth/ American Bonsai Society New Talent Competition.

Here is Ryan's tree at the competition (left), and as it is today (below).

Photos courtesy of Ryan Nichols.



For more information and to learn more about Ryan's bonsai vision, please visit Ryan's blog and website -

www.backtotherootsbonsai.com.



"Temperature determines metabolic activity and determines the microbial activity in soil. Increased light and increased temperature can be a disaster." Ryan uses heat beds to help his trees maintain 85 degrees at night, and shade cloth during the day to avoid extreme changes in temperature.

"Soil is a source of water and nutrients and provides structural support. Particle size plays a large role in water holding capacity. Small pore space = greater force of adhesion and cohesion. Finer soils hold more water.

"Plant nutrients can be used when the tree starts to push growth which is usually 4 weeks after repotting. Organic fertilizers break down slowly. How frequently you fertilize is important.

"It is best to water early in the morning and when your trees need it. Too much water inhibits root growth."

Thank you Ryan for a great presentation! Each time we hear you, we learn and understand more about the "why".

"When you choose pieces for a display, you need to listen to yourself. You could be in a room full of ten teachers, and each one will have their own opinion. You should select pieces that speak to you."



SHOWING OFF

At our April meeting, club co-founder, Leila Kusumi shared her years of experience, offering tips to best display a show tree. Perfect timing with our Annual DIBK show coming up.

Using material brought in by our club members, Leila went through the various options and gave insight as to what to aim for when creating a harmonious display.

She discussed various aspects of creating displays such as tree and *dai* (table/stand) selection, size and form, color consideration and composition.



"This would be a good pairing by itself, but if you are using this as an accent, the table is too tall. Your accent dai should never be the same height as your main dai."



"Although this is a very nice dai, the pot is too tall for the stand. It takes too much focus off of the overall display. The color also does not complement the pot."



"This accent planting is also a nice pairing with this dai, but you need to choose accents that complement the tree, not just because it looks nice."





"This would be a good combination if the accent dai were larger and not so feminine. The hard edges of the main dai, and pot, do not go well with soft rounded corners of this accent dai."



"For it's size, this is a very heavy dai because it is so tall. While it is very pretty, for a harmonious display, the main tree would have to be a very tall tree if you use this as an accent dai."

FURTHER READING



The Art of Display

A very well written and informative article by Al Keppler. In it, he covers scrolls, trees, *dai* selection as well as accent plants and arrangement.

www.bit.ly/Al-Display



(at left)

"While a beautiful tree, the trunk is too small for the heaviness of this dai and this pot together."

(at right)

"This combination is better — it keeps the focus and scale to an ideal ratio between this tree, this pot, and this dai."



Getting Ready for a Bonsai Show

Here's a great article written by Bill Valavanis about preparing accent displays. He discusses a neat idea using customized, painted cork board to create the perfect accent *dai*.

www.bit.ly/BillV-Display

Serenity through Bonsai

30TH ANNUAL DIBK BONSAI SHOW AND SALE



Saturday morning, the first day of the show brought an early turn-out, as people waited patiently for the show and sale to open to the public. Once the sale opened, the early birds swooped in hoping to get the best deals on a variety of bonsai and pre-bonsai stock offered.

The exhibit was carefully orchestrated to showcase a variety of different styles of bonsai, on all artist levels. The reception to the exhibit was very positive, and club members, as well as friends and supporters of the club, lent their very best trees, offering them in harmonious displays of art.

The public was excited to participate in the beginner's bonsai workshop led by experienced and talented bonsai students and artists. Participants got the chance to learn bonsai basics and create their own Juniper Nana bonsai. People either experience these workshops as a fun way to spend the morning, or a first step into a lifelong passion for bonsai. The latter is why the club continues to carry on this show tradition.

We were then treated to a round robin demonstration with Mel Ikeda, Robert King, Alan Sugimura and Kevin Sweeney. The group all worked effortlessly through the demonstration, creating beautiful bonsai out of raw nursery stock. After the demo, all trees were placed into the Saturday raffle, and many lucky people went home with great material.





Later in the day, the attendees were further encouraged to network and enjoy a great meal at the show reception and dinner. The selection of food was varied and all incredibly delicious thanks to everyone that contributed a dish to the feast. Seconds were a must!

After dinner service, the attendees were treated to the magical stylings of Magician William Yamane, who graciously

donated his entertainment services to the club. William is member of the Magic Castle in Hollywood, as well as a Vice President for the Society of American Magicians. While he didn't see any people (or trees) in half, William did dazzle the audience with some impressive card tricks and other sleight of hand magic.

Sunday brought us another great demonstration with Frank Goya.

Assisted by Jaime Chavarria, Frank showed the attendees what it takes to create a three-tree Juniper *saikei*. In addition to the Junipers, the beautiful tray landscape consisted of Tufa rock (hardscape), Irodium and dwarf mondo grass (accent), and moss cultivated by Frank himself. Also assisting Frank with microphone duty was John van de Wouw and Kei Ikari.

Frank then donated the finished *saikei*, and another smaller *saikei*, to the Sunday raffle. Lucky winners were Jason Saito and Judy Unrine.

In all, it was a great weekend that gave the general public, as well as club members, a chance to interact and learn about the art of bonsai as well as the opportunity to own some great material.



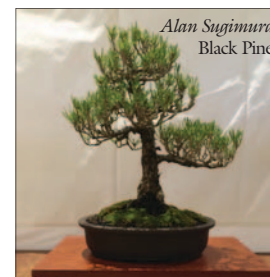
Nina Ragle
Japanese
Maple



Elissa Hoxie
Olive



Joe Morris
Olive



Alan Sugimura
Black Pine



Robert King
Ginkgo Group

Barry Miller
Bougainvillea



Doyle Saito
Prostrata



Gib Hoxie
Monterey
Cypress



Gary Ishii
Sargent Juniper
(Shimpaku)



*Frank and the lucky winners
Jason Saito (demo sai-kei)
and Judy Unrine.*



REFINING A RAFT

Mel Ikeda was our presenter for June, and he brought out the big guns — in the form of a very large Juniper Procumbens Nana raft he created at a CBS demo a few years ago. It is very unusual to see a Nana this large, so we were fortunate that Mel graciously donated the tree to the club.

A raft planting is different from a forest planting, as it starts out with just one tree. One would think creating the image of a forest this way would feel shallow and undeveloped, but with the right development techniques, a raft can have the overall look and natural feel of a traditional forest planting. To start, the tree has its bark strategically stripped, then planted horizontally with the stripped area placed below the soil line. The parts of the trunk that are buried and tied down, will then (hopefully) create roots. Once the roots along the trunk take hold, the main rootball can be eliminated completely.

Mel has an unusual approach when it comes to pre-visualizing his raft compositions. With it's first styling, he will physically create the potential finished planting, complete with moss, rocks, and sand. This gives him perspective in the direction of the overall composition and layout. With this picture in mind, any further refinement will be made to achieve this vision.

In the case of this demo material, the tree had already been wired and established for a couple of years. It was allowed to grow free, fatten up, and grow thick foliage.





“First, you learn the rules... then you can break the rules. I actually have a friend who crossed trees and it really looks nice. I’ve seen trees in nature that have fallen, and they cross. It has to be in the right setting — it has to tell a story. As long as you can make the story stick, you are alright.”



Mel explains, “Nanas are really good for raft planting. They root readily, even from the branches, so there are many possibilities for your composition.”

He then proceeded to clean out the unnecessary branches and foliage. Given there were about 18 trees in the composition, he had many options to choose from.

The goal with this raft was to create a more compact windswept look to the composition. He explained, “the first tree is chosen by the size and placement of the largest trunk. It will also be the tallest, so choosing the first tree is important, as all the other trees will then fall behind and complement it.

“Raft and forest plantings look best in pots that are not deep. It would be nice for this to be on a piece of slate, or in a shallow pot, about 1" deep. A lot of these trees are covered with soil so as important as developing foliage and movement is, so is developing the rootpads. When you see well developed *nebari* (rootpads) in a planting like this, that really sets it apart. Roots are everything... the number one priority. When you see a tree at a show, if it does not have good *nebari*, it really takes away from the tree.”



Kevin Sweeney was the lucky winner of the raft.



Now that the secondary styling is done, the planting needs time to recover. It will be allowed to grow unrestricted, then future detail wiring will bring the tree closer to the intended final design.

Our thanks to Mel for generously sharing his time and talent, and on short notice too! The raft came out great, and I’m sure Kevin will take good care of it!

Mel also showed us a unique way of developing material from cuttings. “You take 3 or so cuttings and place a wire within the bunch, then tightly wrap the bundle with cotton string or jute. Once the bundle is wrapped, you can define the shape of the cuttings. As the cuttings take and grow, the trunks will then start to fuse together, which would give you a thicker trunk as well as more options for styling.

“You leave the lower branches on so that the trunk develops quicker. You can at this point, set the first branch, second branch, as well as create the general shape of the tree — all before it’s even rooted.

“Once it roots and before the trunk fuses, the wire can be taken out, and the basic shape is already established in the cutting. It can then be wired traditionally for further refinement.

“Many species can be styled this way: Black Pine, Olive, Elm, Pomegranate, Quince, Shim-paku... almost any species can be developed this way. Anything without big leaves should work well. Use rooting hormone, anchor with a rock, and plant it deep.”



Mel also demonstrated a quick setup of a tree that will be used for a demo in next year’s DIBK show. This prostrata came from the same group of demo trees from this year’s DIBK show round robin demo.



Now, all it needs is a year of healthy growth and it will be ready for it’s next styling session. Maybe you will win it at the show raffle!

TRAVIS GOLDSTEIN

TWISTING THE NIGHT AWAY

At our July meeting, our featured presenter was Travis Goldstein. Travis is a former South Bay resident, and has extensive experience from an early age, with bonsai. He has trained with Mas and Gary Ishii of Chikugo En, as well as various sensei throughout Southern California. For our demo, Travis brought along an exquisite twisted pomegranate, that he started from a cutting in 2008.

“Pomegranates take cuttings very well,” Travis explained. “The group of cuttings this tree came from were about an inch thick, and I got about a 90% success rate with them.

“Pomegranates can also be cut back hard, both roots and foliage. I really like working with these. For this demo, I’ll cut it back hard, as well as do a little bit of carving to get the trunk looking nice, and headed in the right direction.

“Weighing the options, there are a few directions we can go, but with this tree, I see a formal upright.” He then proceeded to go through and clean out the unnecessary foliage and branches. Once cleaned out, Travis spoke about the different types of deadwood on trees. “A *Jin* is a branch that’s died, and *shari* is a portion of the main trunk that has died. When we create the deadwood, we want to make it as natural as possible. This branch has a straight cut from a saw. Unless bears have saws, I don’t see this type of branch cut occurring in nature, so we’ll carve this out to make it look more natural.”

*“He who loves bonsai, possesses a heart that loves peace.
The living art of bonsai is the very symbol of peace, and the act
of cultivating bonsai leads directly to a love of peace.”*

– Masakuni Kawasumi II



"Looking at the branch structure now, there are a few ways to proceed. I could wire the branch, but that's not typically how I treat pomegranates. If I'm trying to develop something faster, or if I have a more mature tree, I will usually wire it."

"When a tree is at this stage... still in a plastic pot, still being developed in a grow pot, I'll usually just do the clip and grow method. I'll go through and chop the branches even harder, so that the new growth comes from an earlier section."

"Bonsai trees should look natural; not something that was grown by man, but by nature. Something that helps me to do that is to think of a story for everything that has happened to the tree. A tree may have the top die off due to a lightning strike. With this tree, we have a big dead spot in the middle, so we have to figure out a story that would justify that. In this case, we'll just let the carved middle section, heal over as it would in nature."

"Basically, you want to have constant movement within the tree. Even for an upright such as this, there is still movement in the branches and within the trunk. The clip and grow technique will help develop further movement within the branch structure."

At this point, the basic styling of the tree is just about done. From here, it's just maintenance trimming for Mark and CJ, then letting nature take its course."



The lucky winners, CJ Harmatz and Mark Levinstein.





UYEN TRUONG

VISUALIZING PERFECTION

IBK was fortunate to have Uyen Truong provide a demo and critique at our August meeting. Uyen is an artist, both traditionally, and with bonsai. He has the unique ability to see raw material, visualize the possibilities, and translate that vision onto paper, as fine art.

Several people brought in trees for Uyen to critique. Uyen explained, "I'd like to talk about design and structure. Knowing good design is fundamental to identifying trees with potential. When you go to a nursery, you will be able to tell which trees have the best potential because you will understand their design requirements. The best time to shop for deciduous trees is during the winter, when the tree grows dormant and drops its leaves. It is then that you can clearly see which trees have the best structure for future design."

Uyen then went through the various styles of bonsai; *bunjin*, *moyogi*, *chokkan*, *sharimaki*, raft style, cascade, semi-cascade, etc. "When looking at a potential tree, you need to know what classifications it would look best as, then you can better visualize the possibilities."

"Looking at the trunk as a whole, you want to visually break the tree down into thirds. The top third can have one small branch that faces forward, but the remaining branches should point toward the left, right and back, all in complementary directions. You should also create foliage in the back of the tree. While it won't be prominent, having developed foliage in the back is important as it will bring a sense of depth, a three dimensional view to the tree. Also make sure that there is no reverse taper in the trunk.

"*Nebari* is also very important. If your tree doesn't have prominent *nebari*, lower the soil line to expose the largest roots to give a sense of *nebari*. Also you do not want any overly large roots exposed. They should all be in scale with the trunk.

Uyen also explained how octopus/exposed root trees are developed. "A specially made, very tall box is crafted so the roots grow down through it to the soil line. Over time, individual side panels, as well as a small amount of soil, are removed from the top, exposing and allowing more of the root to harden off. This allows for a dramatic effect of having the roots themselves, become the multiple trunks of the tree. Octopus style is not very popular at the moment."



Uyen then moved on to a pink *shobin* bouganvillea brought in by a member. “With this type of bougie, when it flowers, the clusters will grow very dense and clumped. In this case detailed structure does not matter much, as when the tree is in bloom and full foliage, you cannot even see it.”

He went on to critique specific aspects of the tree. Proper placement and direction were detailed via sketches, and a general overall direction was shown.

“When you are ready to transplant, the pink flowers would complement a nice glazed, dark blue or dark green pot. These would be good color choices for this tree.”

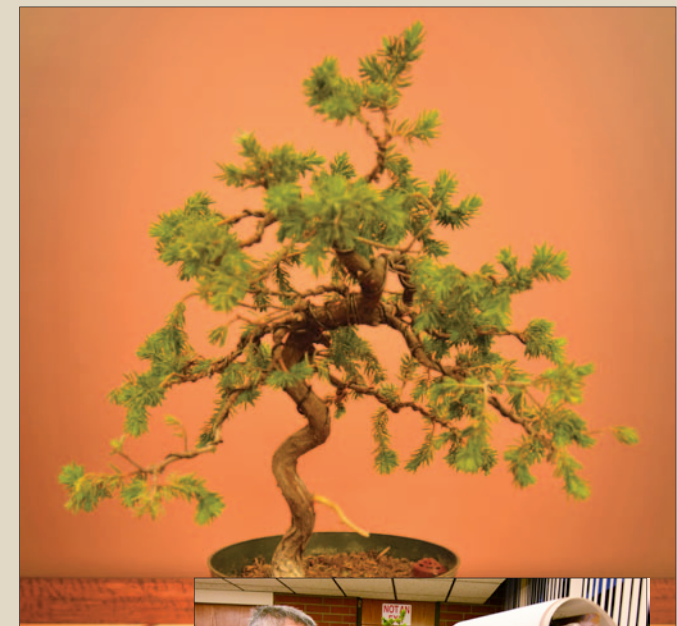


“Next up is this very nice *bunjin* style tree. With *bunjin* style, you don't have to have very many branches, and the branches also don't have to be quite as long.

“The trunk has really nice curves, and since there are many branches, we have options to decide which branches to keep and which to eliminate, in order to accent this trunk best.

“This tree would also look very good in a woven bamboo basket style, Japanese *bunjin* pot.

“You don't want to leave too many branches on this, unless you want to make a pine style, or *moyogi* style, but with this trunk, I think this will look best as a beautiful *bunjin* style tree. Very regal and truly impressive”



BOB PRESSLER

BUNJIN STYLING FROM NURSERY STOCK

Once again, Robert Pressler was kind enough to demonstrate at our club. He brought with him a San Jose juniper from his nursery. Bob went on to say “A lot of people automatically see a skinny piece of material and they want to make a *bunjin* style out of it. You can create a tree with that style and feeling, but it takes a lot more than that to make a really nice *bunjin*. It’s a simple elegance that is really hard to achieve. They generally have a long, thin trunk with an emphasis on movement and minimal foliage. But there’s a difficult to describe feeling that comes when you see a truly great, well crafted *bunjin*.”

“I would give my left arm for a beautiful old red pine *bunjin*, but we live in the wrong place to spend the kind of money that they ask for one. But this tree has some very nice qualities for young nursery stock and is perfect for learning *bunjin* style. You don’t need the big heavy trunk and it won’t take five years to develop a tree that doesn’t look like anything.

“This tree has some nice movement going on. When this tree was young, we stuck a stake down next to it and it cut the tree at the base, but that was fortuitous as it made the base flare out really nicely. It has decent branches and there are a lot of options. The branches are pretty large up top, and we’ll work these into some nice foliage.

“Generally, the lower part of the trunk is bare, so we’re going to cut off most of the lower branches. We’ll make quite a few *jin*, and also get rid of a lot of them. With *bunjin*, you don’t normally have many *jin* as the emphasis needs to be on the trunk and its movement.”





As Bob selected branches, he came across a branch that was perfect for the tree, but was too thick for its placement. "That's a common problem with nursery grown prostrata and San Jose junipers; In order to get them big, you let them grow out; but if you're not careful about occasional pruning, you'll get branches that are too thick for the tree. Usually, the bigger the tree, the worse the problem is."

Bob then finished off the styling and lucky raffle winner, Kevin Sweeney, took home the styled *bunjin* to add to his growing collection.



Club Workshop '15

Our October event was a workshop meeting, so DIBK members came prepared with their tools, materials, and a lot of passion. Members brought in everything from established material in need of minor refinement, to nursery stock that required full, initial styling. Advice and inspiration was given freely, and members went home with trees that were vastly improved.

Doyle Saito works a Juniper Nana that he started from cutting, as Mel looks on and gives his usual sage advice.





Acquired in 2002, Elissa Hoxie's Natal Plum has been featured in local shows. The fragrant blossoms are a nice feature of this developed tree, which is quite stunning when in full bloom.



Paul Minerich working on his collected Bougie.





Mel Ikeda and Michael Izumoto



Michael's Juniper after styling.



Gib Hoxie and his Pyracomeles, a Pyracantha-Quince hybrid



Kevin Sweeney helping Amati Carillo with the styling of his name Juniper.



Judy Unrine and her clump style Juniper.

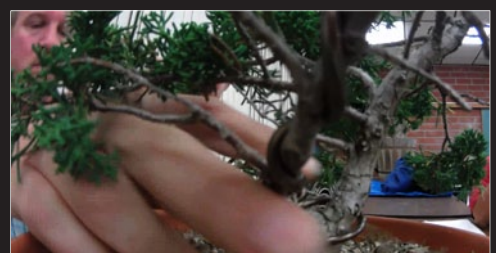


Louis Carillo working on his Bougie.



MONKEYCAM

Kevin Sweeney graciously allowed our MonkeyCam to hang around and give us a tree's eye view of his work.



CREATING BONSAI ART FROM NURSERY STOCK


Longtime DIBK member and current club president John van de Wouw was our featured presenter for November. John brought along a healthy Juniper Nana from his yard to demonstrate on.

John began by clearing out the unnecessary foliage and branches. Along the way, he talked about his experience in bonsai. “I saw an ad in the paper for the DIBK club so I started attending club meetings, as well as taking lessons from Leila Kusumi. I was also fortunate to win the GSBF *Plant a Seed Scholarship grant*, where I was able to study under Ben Oki.” John is also the Chief Operating Officer at Marina Bonsai with Ben, Shig Miya and Frank Goya, as well as a member of California Bonsai Society, and Nanpu Kai.

“When I cut a branch, I’m thinking proportions. Outside branches long, inside branches shorter. Internodes get shorter as they go down the branch, and each cut allows the tree to follow this thinking. I also like to cut the tree back pretty heavily, then let the tree grow out proportionally.

“One of the things I like about Nanas, is that their foliage grows very full and bushy. This leaves you with a lot of options to make a potentially well styled tree. Lots of directions to choose from.”

When discussing fertilizer, John states, “I’ve tried all different types of fertilizer and I’m always changing my mind based on the results. Sometimes I use Miracle-Gro, but I like fertilizer cakes the best — Green Kings in brown containers. I also use fish emulsion and mix that with seaweed extract. Seaweed extract has a lot of iron in it so that helps with any iron deficiencies. I try to do that during the week. As some of you may know, fish emulsion can be quite smelly, so I try to give my neighbors a break. I’ll fertilize in the summer sometimes. If I see that the tree wants to grow, I’ll help it along.”



“It can’t be understated how important wiring is to raising bonsai... You can go a long way without wiring, but wiring at the right time to get the right effect... there really is no substitute.”



“Unlike some of my teachers, I’ll sometimes leave more growth, but the way I generally train my trees is I’ll cut them back, then let them grow out for a couple of years. Let them grow out and refine as the tree develops.”

John basically took this overgrown tree, and using his skill and knowledge, gave it a new direction. A new lease on life. That’s really the main purpose of a bonsai artist afterall... to visualize and facilitate direction into a living thing that otherwise would have none. Time will tell if this tree grows into the vision that John has for it. Chances are, it will.

Doyle Saito was the lucky winner of John’s tree.



JANUARY DEMO TOM VUONG



Photo via OC Register



Friday January 15th

Our feature presenter for our January meeting will be bonsai teacher and president of the Vietnamese Bonsai Society, Tuan "Tom" Vuong.

Tom will be covering grafting basics and members are encouraged to bring any trees and scions they wish to graft.

Tom has been active as a bonsai artist for over twenty years and his favorite plant material for bonsai is Black Pine, but he also enjoys working with Junipers, including the grafting of Shim-paku onto other Juniper stock.

EVENTS

Jan 16-17, 2016

**Baikoen Bonsai Kenkyukai
Winter Silhouette Show**

Los Angeles Arboretum
301 N Baldwin Ave

Hours: 10:30 AM – 4:30 PM

Baikoen Bonsai Kenkyukai will be conducting its annual Winter Silhouette show where trees will be displayed in their leafless form. Benefit dinner and auction on Saturday January 16, 2016.

For more information, contact Lindsay Shiba at (626) 806-0937

February 5 – 7, 2016

California Shohin Seminar

Hotel Mission de Oro
13070 CA-33, Santa Nella Village

Hours: 10 AM – 5 PM

Demonstrations, vendor sales, workshops, raffle & benefit drawings.

Registration forms available on the website. Attendees who only want access to vendor and exhibit may purchase a day pass. For more information see our website: www.calshohin.org, email: calshohin@yahoo.com, or phone: Randi Keppeler (650) 598-0127.

February 27-28, 2016

Bonsai-A-Thon XX

The Huntington
1151 Oxford Road

Hours: 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

Admission to the event is free with Bonsai-A-Thon "early bird" registration between 8 AM – 9 AM.

For more information, contact Bill Wawrychuk at (818) 790-9415 or b_wawrychuk@yahoo.com.

For more event information, please visit
www.bit.ly/GSBF-Events

GRATITUDE

*Thank you to all who contributed.
The club truly appreciates your generosity and giving spirit.*

Benefit Drawing Contributors
Please support the club by donating your bonsai related items to raffle.

Refreshment Contributors
Please feel free to bring your favorite treats to the next meeting!

Please remember to sign the contribution sheet so that we may acknowledge your generosity.

Special thanks to

Members and friends of Dai Ichi Bonsai Kai
for their contributions to every issue of the DIBK Gazette.

ABOUT DAI ICHI BONSAI KAI

Dai Ichi Bonsai Kai ("Number One" Bonsai Club) was established in January, 1986 and takes great pride in its family-oriented character. Our club is dedicated to promoting the art of bonsai.

The club meets on the third Friday of each month at the Ken Nakaoka Community Center, 1670 W. 162nd St., Gardena, at 7:00 P.M. Each meeting features a bonsai demonstration, benefit drawing and is open to the public.

Our annual bonsai show is held on the first weekend in May at the Nakaoka Community Center. Other club activities include: bonsai digs, annual auction, potting parties, outings to nurseries and private gardens.

PLEASE VISIT AND "LIKE" US
ON SOCIAL MEDIA



WEB
www.bit.ly/DIBK-Web



FACEBOOK
www.bit.ly/DIBK-FB



YOUTUBE
www.bit.ly/DIBK-YT



GOOGLE+
www.bit.ly/DIBK-GPlus



DAI ICHI BONSAI KAI

*Please feel free to forward this publication to friends, family
or anyone with an appreciation for bonsai.*

Do you have any comments, questions, or submissions? If so, please contact:
Jason Saito ph 310.909.4598 | email jason@zenpalace.com

©2016 Dai Ichi Bonsai Kai. All rights reserved.