

*Serenity  
Through Bonsai*



DAI ICHI  
BONSAI KAI

第一分盆栽會  
盆中平穩

# THE DAI ICHI GAZETTE

APRIL 2015 | VOLUME 30, ISSUE 4

RYAN NICHOLS  
THE SCIENCE OF BONSAI

BONSAI AROUND THE GLOBE  
BONSAI WITH PASSION & ALOHA

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF DAI ICHI BONSAI KAI



# DAI ICHI BONSAI KAI

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*Co-Founder | Sensei*

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Spring is in the air, pines are pushing out new candles, and all of my deciduous trees have leafed out. I've stated my growing season fertilizing regime. Okay, I must admit, once again I did not meet my target for the number of trees that I wanted to repot. Sigh!



I know last year I joked about the need to conserve water, and that I was thinking the only way I could find to reduce my water usage would be to sell a percentage of my trees at the Dai Ichi show. Well, with the little rain we did get, and the Governor's mandate to reduce our water usage by 25%, it is no joke. We should all be thinking what we can do to help out. And again, any bonsai items sold at our show in May, the club gets a little cut!

Speaking of the Dai Ichi Bonsai Show, it's less than a month away. I hope to see a bonsai display from all of our members. I strongly encourage all new members who have joined in the last year to display a tree. I like to have "novice" trees, so that when the public comes to our show, they can see that we are an open and accepting club, that encourages learning and loving the art of bonsai.

Last month we had Ryan Nichols as our guest speaker, and I always love to hear his technical expertise and suggestions for growing bonsai. This month, Leila Kusumi, one of Dai Ichi's founding principle members will talk about her experiences.

Wow, what a great article on the bonsai community on O'ahu. I was actually surprised to see so many pines and junipers in the collections. Thanks to all in the Hawaiian Bonsai 'Ohana for meeting with Jason so that he could bring your stories to us.

We can always use your help at our show May 1st - 3rd. Many of use will be there the entire time to help and promote both the art of bonsai, and Dai Ichi Bonsai Kai. Please come and help. See you there!

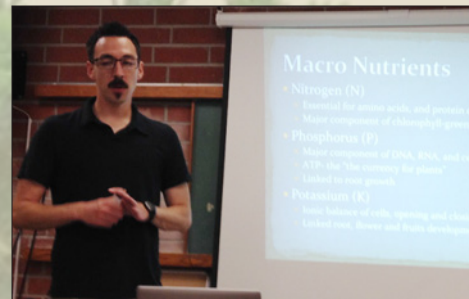
*John van de Wouw*

John van de Wouw  
President  
Dai Ichi Bonsai Kai

On the Cover | Herbert Okemura's Shimpaku Juniper.  
Inside Cover | A carved, old growth Bouganvillea from Roy Yamashiroya's collection.



## RYAN NICHOLS THE SCIENCE OF BONSAI



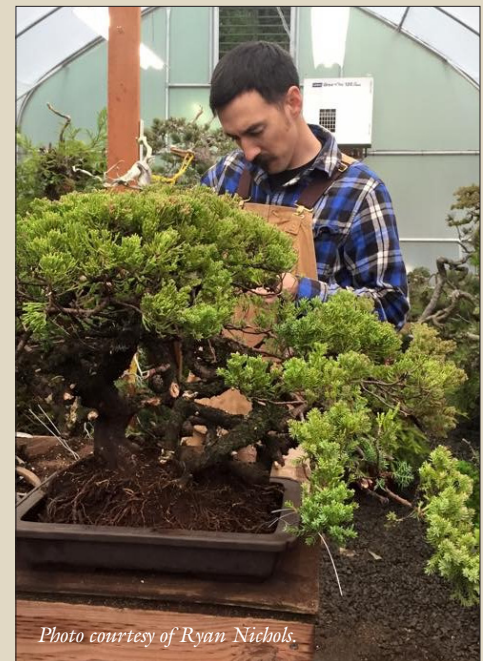
BY CJ HARMATZ | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

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 & O<sub>2</sub>. 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.*

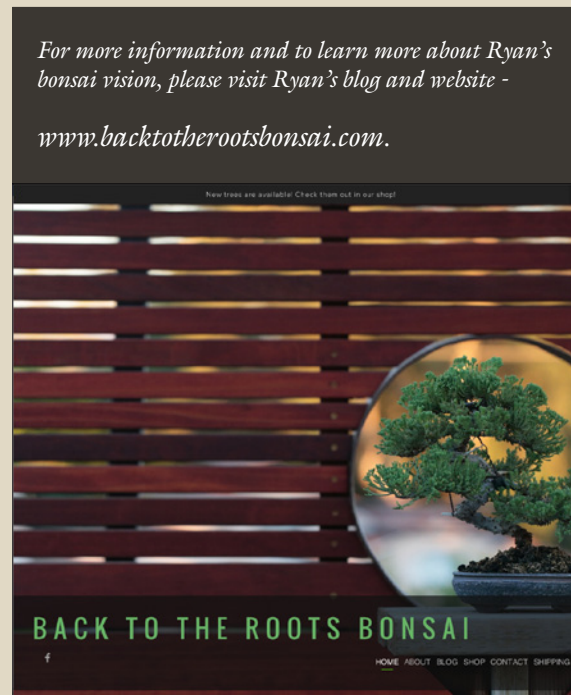
*Here is Ryan's tree at the competition (left), and as it is today (below).*

*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](http://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”.



# 30<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL DIBK SHOW & SALE

With the 30th Annual DIBK Show and Sale, *Serenity through Bonsai*, just around the corner, now is the time to get your trees ready. In anticipation, DIBK club co-founder Leila Kusumi will be the featured presenter at our April meeting, where she will be providing tips and advice for preparing your trees for display.

The annual show is our yearly opportunity to introduce to the public, the art and beauty of bonsai. The sale is a great way for club members to reduce their collection, and to support the club by selling their finished and pre-bonsai stock that they have outgrown. The after-show reception is also a great networking event that cannot be missed.

We are still in need of volunteers to assist in the show setup, and to contribute food for the reception. Here is the sign up list (to date), so that you can get an idea of where you can contribute. There will be a signup sheet at the next club meeting.

*As in years past, this is sure to be another successful show and sale, and it is all because of generous DIBK members like you!*

## Friday 3:30 Setup

Ed Walters  
Doyle Saito

## Sunday Breakdown

Doyle Saito  
Ed Walters  
Louis Carrillo  
Mark Levinstein  
Jason Saito

## Plant Sale

*(Tags/Forms are available)*

## Saturday-Sunday:

Doyle Saito  
CJ Harmatz  
Jason and Alyssa Saito

## Vendors:

David & June Nguy  
Mel Ikeda  
Dai Ichi Club Sale

## Food Reception

### Friday Setup:

Doyle Saito

### Saturday Morning Setup:

Doyle Saito  
Jason Saito

### Dinner Setup:

Doyle Saito  
Judy Unrine  
CJ Harmatz  
Lynn Morris

### Sunday Morning/

### Lunch Setup:

Doyle Saito  
CJ Harmatz

## Beginners Workshop

### Saturday 10:30am

Kevin Sweeney  
Scott Pogolian  
Leila Kusumi  
Barry Miller  
Jason Saito

## Round Robin

Scott Pogolian  
Allan Sugimura  
Kevin Sweeney

## Dai Ichi Dinner Sign-up

### Appetizers:

1) Judy Unrine

### Salads:

- 1) Doyle Saito - Chinese Chicken Salad
- 2) Leila Kusumi
- 3) John Van de Wouw
- 4) Louis Carrillo

### Rice, Bread & Rolls:

1)

### Main Dish:

- 1) Doyle Saito
- 2) CJ & Mark Levinstein
- 3) Ed Walters
- 4) Leila Kusumi
- 5) Jason Saito - Char Siu Pork

### Side Dish:

1) Jim Morris

### Dessert:

1) Doyle Saito - Cake

### Drinks:

1)

### Table Cloths, Plates,

### Utensils:

1) Judy Unrine - Table Cloths;  
Center Pieces





# Serenity through Bonsai

**DAI ICHI BONSAI KAI**

## 30<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL BONSAI EXHIBIT & SALE

**May 2 and 3, 2015**  
**Ken Nakaoka Community Center**  
**1670 W. 162nd St., Gardena**



**SATURDAY • MAY 2**  
 10am-4pm Show & Sales Area Open  
 10:30pm Beginner's Hands-on Workshop  
*(free tree to first 15 newcomers to sign up Saturday morning)*  
 1pm Round Robin Bonsai Demonstration  
 6pm Reception & Entertainment

**SUNDAY • MAY 3**  
 10am-3pm Show & Sales Area Open  
 1pm Mr. Frank Goya, Saikai Demonstration



**For more information, please call Doyle Saito at (310) 539-9265.**

Novice to master exhibitors, daily demonstrations and drawings, bonsai plants, tools, and accessories on sale throughout the show. Free admission and parking.

**Directions:**  
 405 Freeway or Arroyo Boulevard (91 Freeway) to Western Avenue. Western Avenue north to 162nd Street. Turn east (right) on 162nd Street to the Ken Nakaoka Community Center, located on the south side of 162nd Street at 1670 W. 162nd Street.



Photos courtesy of Thuan Lam



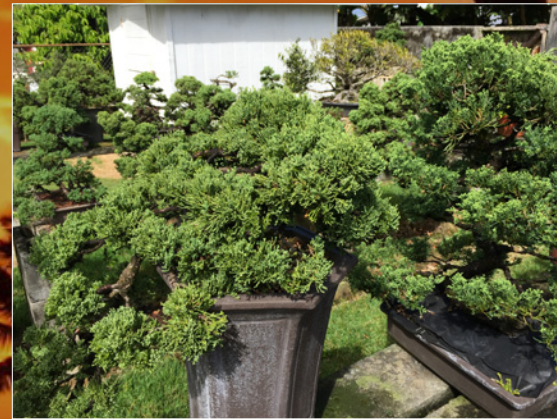
## BONSAI WITH PASSION & ALOHA

BY JASON SAITO | EDITOR

Last month, I went home to Hawai'i and had the opportunity to check out the Hawaiian bonsai scene. As you can imagine, the rich, red volcanic soil, year round sunshine, rain, and the humidity, is great for growing tropicals; but there are many other species that can and do thrive there as well.

Being isolated from the mainland, and also having to deal with tough agricultural restrictions, many species we enjoy developing in Southern California cannot be sourced in Hawai'i. On the other hand there are many native Hawaiian trees that can be developed for bonsai.

I met with a few of Hawai'i's bonsai artists and teachers, to get their take on the bonsai scene, and how it compares to Southern California and Japan.





**M**y first stop was meeting and hanging out with former DIBK club president, Rick Wagner and his wife Andrea. Since relocating to the islands some four years ago, Rick and Andrea certainly have taken advantage of all the activities and aloha the islands have to offer.

#### How long have you been practicing bonsai?

I first signed up for bonsai lessons with Jim Tatsukawa and Penny Jensen in 1985 (almost 30 years ago), when they were giving weekly classes at Hamilton Adult School in Torrance. But I had purchased some bonsai pots and was experimenting with trees a few years before that. I first tried bonsai (pruning, root pruning, repotting) when I was 14 (1964), after reading an article about it in *Sunset Magazine*. Before I signed up for classes in 1985, I had a copy of the Sunset book on bonsai, still a classic.

#### What are some of the differences between bonsai in Hawai'i vs. the Mainland vs. Japan

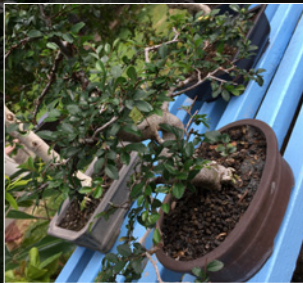
Naturally, in Hawai'i, there is no frost in the winter, so it's more difficult to do the traditional deciduous trees (maple, zelkova, etc.), but tropicals are a lot more common, such as banyan and other figs. In California, I grew a lot of the native trees from seed (oak, monterey cypress, redwood, etc.), and I am doing the same thing here. I have the Hawaiian natives hau, milo, koa, etc., and a lot of imported tropicals such as kiawe, ironwood, bougainvillea, and hale koa. It's harder to find some trees in nurseries here, such as junipers. They're just not popular as landscape plants, even though they grow well here. However, I now have two different varieties of juniper and several black pines. What I know about bonsai in Japan I have learned from others who have been there, and from books and photographs. Japan is one of many places I would like to visit some day. I have seen a few bonsai shows on O'ahu and Maui. In the fairly short time we have been here (four years), my impression of Hawaiian bonsai is that the people are talented and friendly and very curious about how we do things on the mainland. Many have mainland bonsai experience too. We are fortunate in California to have a very large bonsai practicing population and many great bonsai clubs.

#### What is the most important thing a beginner should know?

What a tough question! What is the single most important thing about bonsai? I think it's what John Naka told me, and it's in his books too: when you are growing bonsai, you are really growing roots. That is, the rootage (*nebari*) is the most important thing about the tree. It's the first place your gaze falls, and then you take in the trunk and branches. If you have good *nebari*, a lot of faults can be overlooked. Naturally, other things are important too, but you asked for the single most important!



Andrea talking bonsai, and trying to keep Emma from drinking all the wine.



Rick and Andrea's lush backyard, sits next to a natural running stream.





Since good bonsai material is hard to source in Hawai'i many of Roy's trees were started from cuttings.



**R**oy Yamshiroya, and his wife Jane, have been active in the bonsai community for many years, and are both close friends of Mel Ikeda (who set up our meeting — Thanks Mel!). Roy was gracious enough to spend the morning with me, talking shop and giving me a tour of his beautiful yard and bonsai collection.

#### How long have you been practicing bonsai?

I started bonsai in 1990 and most of my training come from sensei in Hawai'i, California and Japan. I was fortunate to assist one of Japan's greatest bonsai masters, Tohru Suzuki, at the Puerto Rico WBFF and ASPAC convention in Japan. My numerous trips to Japan visiting nurseries, and private collections, have broadened my concept on how a bonsai should be styled, both spiritually and naturally.

#### What are some of the differences between bonsai in Hawai'i vs. the Mainland vs. Japan

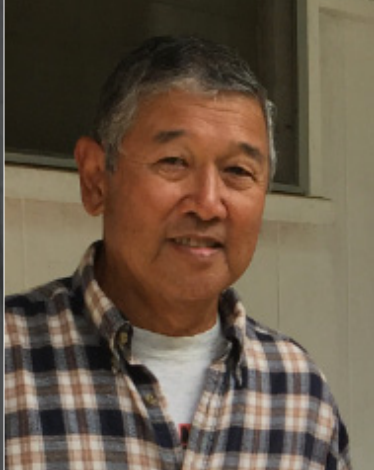
In Hawai'i most of the bonsai artists tend to follow the traditional style of bonsai that is practiced in Japan. However, because of the influx of information that's available on the internet, there is a shift towards a more contemporary (Western/European ) style of bonsai that is slowly gaining some popularity. Unfortunately, one of the biggest problems we have in Hawai'i is the availability of good bonsai material. We have a very limited resource, and our strict agricultural import policy only makes it more difficult to obtain trees from the orient and the mainland.

#### What is the most important thing a beginner should know?

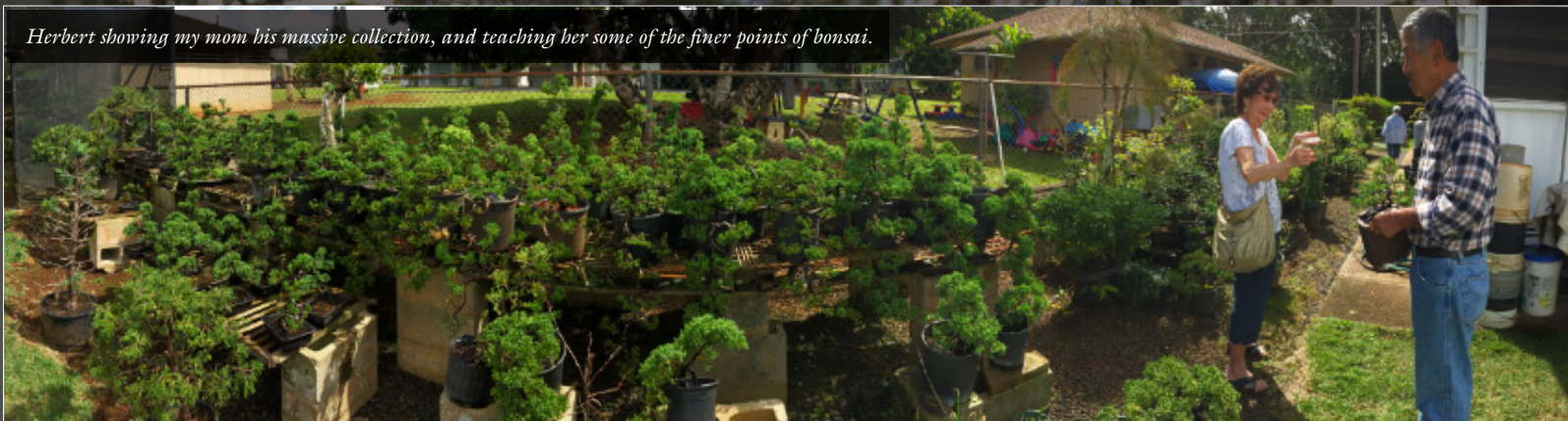
I can only give one piece of advice. Trust your sensei and never doubt his ability.







*Herbert showing my mom his massive collection, and teaching her some of the finer points of bonsai.*



**M**y mom and I were also able to spend some time with my cousin Herbert Okemura, an active and very talented bonsai artist. Herbert has extensive knowledge and experience developing bonsai. His work, and his collection was impressive, to say the least.

**How long have you been practicing bonsai?**

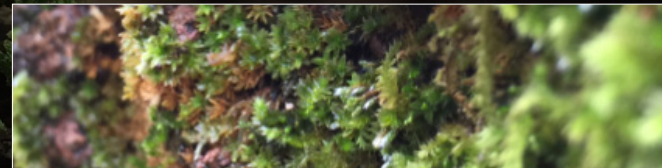
Been doing bonsai for more than 20 years, and it all started when a friend of mine suggested that I enroll in an ABC class.

**What are some of the differences between bonsai in Hawai'i vs. the Mainland vs. Japan**

Most of the bonsai that we create in Hawai'i, except for some of the ficus, are not tropical trees and do not grow as well as those in Japan and the continental U.S. Our climate, without the cold season, does not allow for good growth. As a result the trees, especially the trunk and foliage, aren't quite as nice.

**What is the most important thing a beginner should know?**

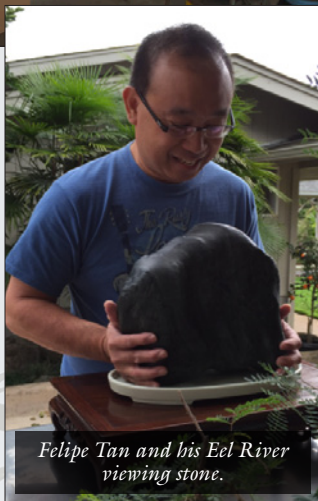
A beginner should enroll in an ABC class, get various types of trees or start a whole bunch of cuttings, and practice all the basics of styling a tree. Take every opportunity to do hands-on work on a tree.





I was also able to attend a meeting of the Rainbow Bonsai Club. Rick and Andrea are very active members of the club, and at the meeting I met the club members, who were very friendly and showed me much aloha. The club had a show coming up and they discussed and critiqued their material for the show. The club meets monthly at The Plant Place, a beautiful nursery in Waimanalo, that sits at the foot of the lush, Ko'olau mountain range. For more information about the club, please visit [www.rainbowbonsai.com](http://www.rainbowbonsai.com).

*Club President, Marion Uyeno and Treasurer, Andrea Wagner, discussing club business with members.*



*Felipe Tan and his Eel River viewing stone.*



*Mike Uyeno, a long time bonsai artist, gives Rick advice on his Hale Koa tree.*



*The Rainbow display was a part of the Kunia Orchid Society show, so in addition to the bonsai displays and demos, there were a ton of orchid vendors, all featuring these beautiful tropical plants.*



*Demonstrations were held throughout the day.*



*Keith Schultz*



*John Arafilis*



*David Molina*



## APRIL EVENT LEILA KUSUMI

At our April meeting, DIBK co-founder and sensei, Leila Kusumi, will be discussing the finer points of showing a tree. Bring your best trees and get some solid advice on how to show off its best attributes.



## EVENTS

**April 23-26, 2015**

**Costa Mesa**

**Orange Empire Bonsai Society:  
Club Display at the South Coast  
Plaza Spring Garden Show**

Crystal Court Wing-South Coast Plaza  
3333 Bristol St, Costa Mesa

Hours: Thursday and Friday 10-9,  
Saturday 10-8 and Sunday 11-6:30.

Gary Lai will be doing a "stock to pot" basic demonstration on Thursday at 4:30 in the West Elm store.

**May 2 - 3, 2015**

**Gardena**

**Dai Ichi Bonsai Kai: Annual Exhibit  
"Serenity Through Bonsai"**

Ken Nakaoka Community Center,  
1670 W. 162nd Street, Gardena

Hours: 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Admission is free. Novice to master  
bonsai exhibits, sales, auction.

Saturday - Hands-on workshop at  
10:30 AM, round-robin demonstra-  
tion 1PM. Sunday - Saikei demon-  
stration by Frank Goya at 1PM.

For more details about our club and  
show, please visit: [www.bit.ly/DIBK-Web](http://www.bit.ly/DIBK-Web)  
or [www.bit.ly/DIBK-FB](http://www.bit.ly/DIBK-FB).

**May 30 - 31, 2015**

**Van Nuys**

**Sansui Kai: 2015 Annual Exhibit  
Japanese Gardens**

6100 Woodley Avenue, Van Nuys

Hours: 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Admission is \$5 which includes  
entrance to the gardens. This year the  
exhibit is being held in the main build-  
ing overlooking the Gardens. Come  
visit the gardens and stroll through our  
Bonsai Exhibit. There will also be a  
Bonsai material sales area.

For more details please visit  
[www.sansui-kai.org](http://www.sansui-kai.org).

## GRATITUDE

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

**Benefit Drawing Contributors**

Doyle Saito

**Refreshment Contributors**

Scott Pogolian, Jim Morris,  
Doyle Saito

**Refreshment Signup for April**

Carl Crouse, Nelson Sanabria, Jason Saito

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

*Special thanks to*

Ryan Nichols, CJ Harmatz, Mel Ikeda, Thuan Lam, Rick and Andrea Wagner,  
Jane and Roy Yamashiroya, and Herbert Okemura  
*for their contributions to this issue of the DIBK Gazette.*

## ABOUT DAI ICHI BONSAI KAI

**D**ai 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](http://www.bit.ly/DIBK-Web)



**FACEBOOK**  
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**GOOGLE+**  
[www.bit.ly/DIBK-GPlus](http://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](mailto:jason@zenpalace.com)

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