

*Serenity
Through Bonsai*



**DAI ICHI
BONSAI KAI**

第一分盆栽會
盆中平穩



THE DAI ICHI
GAITT

JULY 2015 | VOLUME 30, ISSUE 7

MEL IKEDA
REFINING A JUNIPER NANA RAFT

SHOW COVERAGE
MARINA BONSAI

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF DAI ICHI BONSAI KAI

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On the Cover | Mel Ikeda applying some "persuasion" to the Juniper Nana raft.
Inside Cover | Lloyd Garver's Juniper on display at the Marina Bonsai Show.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I want to thank Mel Ikeda for a great demo last month. He took an older raft-style juniper and refined the design. It was great to hear all of the opinions on the different design choices being considered, taller, no shorter... Check out the article about Mel's work later in this edition of the Dai Ichi Bonsai Kai Gazette.



This month we are giving a shout-out to the Marina Bonsai Club, on the West-side. It is a small but passionate club, with all levels of experience as shown in the photos of their recent bonsai exhibition. Some great old-guard sensei too!

Everything seems to be humming along nicely this time of year out in the yard. We've been meeting our water quota for the last two months with no real issues, so we should be able to get through the summer.

Travis Goldstein will return to the South Bay for our July demonstration. I admire his skill in bonsai along with his establishment and operation of the California Bonsai Studio out in the Valley. Come on down to see him and say Hi!

John van de Wouw

John van de Wouw
President
Dai Ichi Bonsai Kai



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!



This is another raft planting that Mel styled during a Kofu Bonsai Kai Demo. Here, you can see his pre-visualization of the finished piece. This allows him to better visualize the styling direction, as well as giving us a nice composition to look at — years before it is actually ready for it. After the demo, Mel removes the moss, stone and sand, then fills the grow box with free draining soil, allowing it to grow until further refinement is necessary.

Photo opportunity courtesy of Kofu Bonsai Kai.



MARINA BONSAI SHOW

JUNE 27, 2015

VENICE JAPANESE COMMUNITY CENTER • LOS ANGELES



One of the highlights of the Venice Japanese Community Center's Annual Summer Festival, is the bonsai show presented by teachers and students of Marina Bonsai. The exhibit showcased some fine examples of many different styles of bonsai. All who attended were impressed by the level of skill and artistry put into each, and every tree.

The festivities also included numerous food and game booths, as well as exhibitions by other VJCC clubs. Members of the *ikebana*, *sumi-e*, watercolor, and *shodo* classes, all displayed their finest creations. There was a plant sale area where many nursery species could be purchased. You could also find bargains in the garage sale area.

In all, this was a very fun community event. The strength and support of the community was clearly visible as families and friends came out to enjoy and support the VJCC.



Marina Bonsai was founded by John Naka over 50 years ago, and is currently taught by lifetime DIBK members, Shig Miya, Frank Goya, and Ben Oki.

This is a hands-on workshop club. Members/students bring their own trees, tools, and wire for shaping their bonsai. They are coached on the proper techniques required to transform raw nursery stock into majestic representations of trees one might find in rustic and rugged landscapes.

Marina Bonsai holds classes on the 2nd Friday, and the 4th Tuesday of each month.

For more information on how to join, please visit

www.vjcc.com/bonsai.





There was a nice selection of houseplants on sale.



sumi-e and watercolor exhibit.



The Ikebana club displayed their finest work.



Russell Kitagawa



The sushi was good!



The kids enjoyed the games.



John van de Wouw and Dean Miya kept watch over the event, assisting guests and directing traffic.

EASTERN LEAF

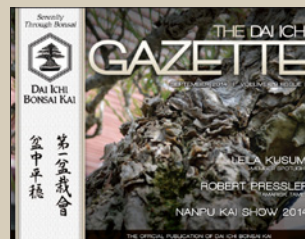
DIBK member Jason Chan owns Eastern Leaf, an online store selling everything from tools, and supplies, to pre and finished bonsai material.

The site is clean and easy to navigate, and features a knowledge center with an extensive collection of articles and videos that teach basic and advanced techniques to hobbyists and artists of all skill levels. You can visit Jason's site at:

Website | www.easternleaf.com/
 YouTube Channel | www.bit.ly/EasternLeaf



BACK ISSUES



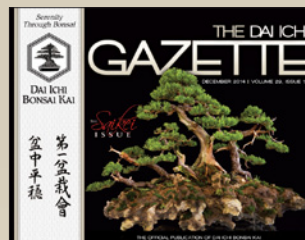
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 Robert Pressler Demo
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 Spotlight & Demo - Robert King
 John Naka - Reflections
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 Member Workshop • GSBF Convention
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 DIBK 30th Anniversary
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JULY DEMO TRAVIS GOLDSTEIN

Our presenter at the July meeting on July 17, will be Travis Goldstein. Travis has been involved in bonsai since he was 10 years old, but it was after traveling to Japan, that his passion for bonsai really grew. Travis began training with Mas and Gary Ishii, learning their way of styling and development.

Travis also owns California Bonsai Studio in Thousand Oaks, where he sells field grown, pre-bonsai and developed material as well as tools, soil, and pots.

Travis will be demonstrating carving techniques. Don't miss it!



EVENTS

August 22-23, 2015

Nanpu Kai

Annual Nisei Week Bonsai Exhibit

JACCC, 244 South San Pedro Street

Hours: 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Cultural exhibits, entertainment, food, games, arts and crafts. Little Tokyo Free Admission.

For information, call (213) 687-7193.

September 23-27, 2015

Kofu Bonsai Kai

2015 Bonsai Fest at the Bowers

Museum "The Bonsai Tradition: Cultural Arts of Japan"

John M. Lee Court, 2002 N. Main St

Hours: 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM daily

Featuring bonsai trees of the members of Kofu Bonsai Kai and special presentations by noted speakers. Free to Bowers Museum members or with paid museum admission. Final speaker and presentation schedules will be posted at www.bowers.org/ and www.kofukai.org/

Questions? Call the museum at (714) 567-3695 or email Michael Walsh at michaeljwalsh@outlook.com.

October 3-4, 2015

Conejo Valley Bonsai Society:

12th Annual Bonsai Exhibition

2001 Thousand Oaks Blvd.

Hours: 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Demonstrations at 11 AM (Saturday)

and 2 PM (Sunday) in the Bandstand.

Free Admission. For information, call Marj Branson at 805-373-1330 or visit our web site at www.cvbs-bonsai.org.

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

GRATITUDE

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

Benefit Drawing Contributors

Chuck & Elaine Pine, Doyle Saito,
Ruben Espinosa, Louis Carrillo

Refreshment Contributors

Jason Saito, Doyle Saito

Refreshment Signup for July

CJ & Mark, Doyle Saito

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

Special thanks to

Mel Ikeda, Kofu Bonsai Kai, Marina Bonsai - Ben Oki, Shig Miya, Frank Goya,
Lloyd Garver, Venice Japanese Community Center, and Jason Chan
for their contributions to this 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.

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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

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