



Monthly Meeting

President Lowell T. led the August 18th Show and Tell discussion of the many trees brought by club members. Robert R. brought a Kishu Shimpaku juniper with which he was having issues. We were also treated to a power-point presentation of pictures that Lowell has collected of different tree styles. Club member Patty T. brought several bonsai pots that she made to resemble rocks of different shapes and sizes.

Robert and Patty were kind enough to submit an article and pictures for the newsletter.

Fake Rock Bonsai Pots

By Patty T.

I am a newbie when it comes to bonsai, but I believe this naivety helped me think outside the box, or pot in this case. While helping Mr. Tilley carry one of his root-over-rock bonsai into our February LBS meeting, I noticed how heavy it was. I said to myself, "there has to be a lighter rock alternative." So, to investigate I went on YouTube, my favorite go-to website for how-to. I was very surprised to find out there are a world of techniques and media used to create fake rock. Who knew! There's polyurethane, Styrofoam, plaster, cement, and resin rocks, plus combos thereof. Check it out for yourself.

But first, you need an idea of the direction you want to go in with your design before choosing the media. Do you want a rock as a part of your pot, or do you want the rock to serve as the pot itself? Do you want to plant one tree or two or more trees in it? Do you want to create a small scene or a large landscape such as forest or Penjing? Once again, I refer you to the internet for ideas. For instance, Google: show me images of bonsai planted in or on rocks. You will be amazed at what you see!

Having done that, I decided on a simple, one plant rock pot (as I call them) for my first one. I chose



what I thought was the easiest and cheapest media, polyurethane foam. I paid \$5 for a spray can of expandable foam at Home Depot (used

for filling in cracks and gaps). I emptied the whole can on wax paper and let it dry overnight (it takes time to expand and harden). Next, I hollowed out the hard PU with a utility knife and Dremel tool till it was functional as a pot in width and height. Once I finished my basic design, it was ready to be texturized and painted. There are many ways to add texture. That being accomplished, I coated my rock pot with a mixture of Mod Podge and acrylic paint. This serves to sturdy-up your structure so it will last. I have learned resins do an even better job of this, but they're very expensive. The Mod Podge must dry overnight. Next, I played with the paint (my favorite part) till I was satisfied. Lastly, I sprayed a coat of clear polyurethane spray to seal the paint. And don't forget to add weep holes at the bottom with a drill.



For my second design, I joined pieces of PU together to form the rock pot that looks like a bridge.

There are many types of glue, but I like to use my hot glue gun best.

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That's basically it, but I learn new techniques every day. Warning: it's addictive!



Plant-tone, Chicken Manure, Fish Emulsion and sprayed weekly with Bayer's 3 In 1.

I will try Ironite for a few months to see if there is a change in the color of the foliage. (Ironite is iron-based mineral supplements and fertilizers specially formulated to reduce pale color caused by nutrient deficiencies by feeding plants through their leaves and roots.)

Unusual Species to Bonsai

Excerpts from Lovemybonsai.com



Cannabis is a genus of flowering plants in the family Cannabaceae. This "medicinal" plant is turning heads as a bonsai. Let's ignore the fact that it can be

used a drug and focus on the bonsai aspects. Focusing on the plant, the leaves and trunk resemble a trident maple (which we already know makes for a great bonsai tree.) The key difference is the sheer density of the leaves. A few good branches can give you a remarkable canopy in a relatively short amount of time.

Make sure you grow one only in key states where that's legal.

My Ailing Kishu Shimpaku Juniper

By Robert R.

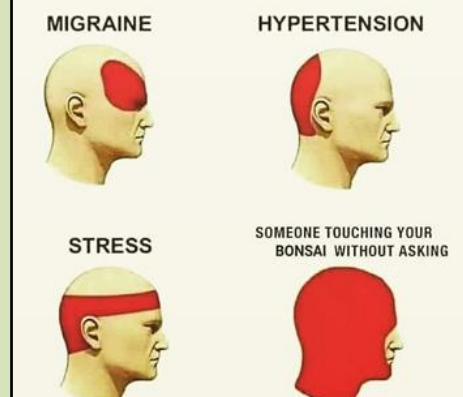
Shimpaku junipers grow in the mountains of Japan and China with dark green, soft, dense foliage and cinnamon bark which is flaky on the surface and smooth underneath.



At the last meeting, I brought in a Kishu Shimpaku juniper that I purchased several years ago. Lately I have noticed an issue with the color of the foliage which has turned from dark green

to light yellow color. The tree is healthy based on the growth of shoot extensions typically seen in junipers. As are all my junipers, the tree is in the full sun, fertilized monthly with an organic such as

Types of Headaches



Discolored Leaves - Chlorosis or . . .

By Dawn K.

Yellowing or faded leaves are often attributed to lack of micronutrients. Certainly, micronutrients play a role in some cases, but adding micronutrients won't fix some causes of "off color" and fading.



Normal Chlorosis

Chlorosis can be a lack of iron and/or magnesium. It is diagnosed by finding leaves that are yellowing the substance of the leaf but sparing the vascular structures.

So, you have a yellow leaf with the vascular structures still green, highlighting the leaf's "skeleton". Treating chlorosis can be as simple as adding micronutrients. Some fertilizers contain micronutrients, but you can also buy micronutrients in liquid form to treat without adding a lot of nitrogen if that is needed.

But here are some cases where just adding micronutrients doesn't always fix the issue. Some plants and bonsai with chlorosis are doing so because of "wet feet". A bonsai that is staying too wet will show these signs but won't respond well to treatment until the moisture issue is resolved.



Chlorosis in a rose from "wet feet"

If a plant cannot be repotted at the time due to the season, you can change your watering regime for that tree, or you can slightly up-pot the plant in coarse media to allow for more aeration.

The next example of yellowing or fading (loss of a nice deep green) that won't respond to adding micronutrients is the change in leaf color due to increased heat and sunlight in our brutal summers.

This not only causes a type of summer dormancy, but the leaves will almost look fall-like in color.

The reason for this is that chlorophyll, the pigment that gives us our beautiful greens, is not very heat tolerant or robust in strength. Think of artwork and paints. Some pigments are more lightfast than others. In leaves, we see a multitude of pigments, but the strong greens of the growing season predominate.



Japanese maple with heat related color change

As fall approaches, the chlorophyll fades away and the undertones of yellows and reds (making orange) start to show through. The same thing happens in the dead of summer. The increased light exposure and heat cause the chlorophyll to fade, allowing the yellow family colors to show through. It's not as pronounced as color changes in the fall, but it can cause some worry to bonsai peeps.

This type of color change **will not** respond to additional micronutrients. Ways to prevent this is to use shade cloth in the heat of the summer or reposition your affected trees so they get some midday protection from sun exposure.

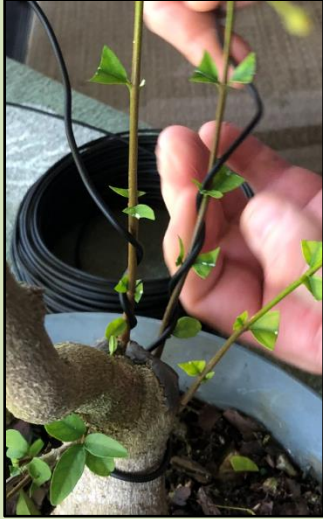


Elaeagnus "Silverberry" with summer light and heat related stress. Note the normal leaves that have grown since I provided noon and afternoon shade.

Some trees may partially defoliate affected leaves and have a fall spurt of foliar replacement. With this, we must protect our plants from early frosts until these leaves harden off - which is not hard in our locale!

Wigert's Bonsai Wiring Class

Marla T. and Robert R. attended the Zoom on-line wiring class presented by Wigert's Bonsai on August 22nd. I highly recommend their classes. The PowerPoint photos were helpful in clearly seeing the wiring detail, the speaker was knowledgeable, and he presented some valuable wiring techniques.



One such technique was using the 3-point anchor when you want to wire three branches. First loop the wire around the trunk without crossing over and wire 2 branches, one clockwise, the other counterclockwise.



Then anchor another wire to the 2nd branch about 1½-2 turns following the existing wire without crossing over it. Bring the wire over to the 3rd branch and wire in the direction opposite the anchor.



You now have all three secured together with no crossed wires.

A reminder that when bending branches always remember that the wire supports the outside of the curve and your fingers support the inside of the curve. The branch will almost always break if the wire is on the inside of the curve.



From the President

This is the time of year to check all your tropical bonsai to make sure they don't need repotting before winter. If the roots are filling up the pot, are not well distributed in the pot, or too many going round the bottom of the pot, they need to be repotted. If you repot now, they will have time to grow some new roots before cold weather.

Some people get obsessed with drainage and overdo it with big and/or too many stones or aggregate in their soil mix. Drainage is very important but too much is also bad. You want enough organic material mixed with the aggregate to hold the moisture (fertilizer) and distribute throughout the pot. I was given a hibiscus, which I slip potted it into a 10"x6"x2" oval pot last year. It was not looking very good so I added fertilizer and it helped but not as much as it should. So, I decided to repot it and found that it was in almost all big and small lava rocks. The lava rock didn't hold much water or nutrients, so the roots had all gone to the bottom of the pot trying to get nutrients and water. It had about an inch of thick matted roots at the bottom



that was interfering with drainage and all the fertilizer was being washed out the bottom of the pot. Without repotting, it would be all set for root rot this winter.

The mat of roots at the bottom of the pot

You want a soil that will hold moisture for at least 24 hours and let the excess water drain and let in air. A good set of bonsai roots will remove most of the excess water.

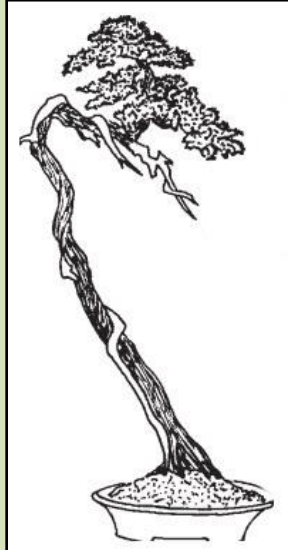
The hibiscus bonsai is shown here after repotting. I plan to bring it to the next bonsai meeting for "show and tell".



Literati or Bunjin Bonsai

By bonsailearningcenter.com Written by Randy Clark

Literati bonsai is an “approach” or “interpretation” within bonsai and not a specific style in and of itself. Consider the following comments by bonsai artist Harry Tomlinson: “Also called bunjin, this style of tree is often seen at the seashore or in areas where trees have grown up reaching for the light in competition with other trees that have since died or been felled. Characteristically, the trunk line flows or twists through several curves. Some trees grow this way with old age. The Scots pine naturally assumes this style in maturity. Most conifers can be recommended for growing as literati, and rugged deciduous trees such as flowering apricot and hawthorn.”



Difficult to define precisely, this style breaks many rules but nevertheless, the trees have an air of refined elegance. Curiously, the name literati (Latin, meaning “educated” or “literate people”) is used in the absence of an English equivalent for the Japanese bunjin, which in turn is a translation of the Chinese word wenjin, the name for Chinese scholars practiced in the arts. The slender trees in their paintings had an abstract, calligraphic quality that was the inspiration behind cultivating bonsai in this style.

Now consider the comments of American bonsai master, John Y. Naka: “The bunjin style of bonsai is so free that it seems to violate all the principles of bonsai form. The indefinite style has no specific form and is difficult to describe, however, its confirmation is simple, yet very expressive. No doubt its most obvious characteristic are those shapes formed by old age and extreme weather conditions.”

Trees pictured (in old master sumi paintings) with crossed trunks and branches would be messy and

confusing in any other bonsai style but is acceptable in a bunjin style. On a formal upright style, a branch that returns to the trunk and crosses it would be unacceptable, and such a violating arrangement would grate against the senses. However, on a bunjin style such a reversal can give an exciting dramatic tension and a freedom to the tree.

Literati Style and Approach

If one were to characterize the literati approach to bonsai design one might use words such as: elegant, simplistic, clean, tall, slender, or flowing.

In most cases all would be acceptable. A general bonsai cannon states that there is “symmetry in asymmetry” and “balance in unbalance.” If we accept this concept the literati approach to bonsai design becomes easier to understand.



A literati may assume the style of a cascade, semi-cascade, formal upright, informal upright or indeed any of the five basic styles. Its approach can likewise be expanded to include variations on the basic styles such as twin trunk, forest planting, multiple trunk, etc.

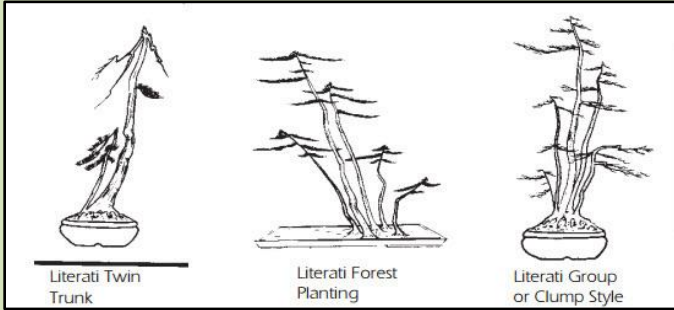
The very essence of good literati necessitates a departure or modification (if not a total break) with the traditional bonsai values regarding line, balance, and form. It then becomes necessary for the student to have a clear understanding of these concepts and how they work through all bonsai styles in order to find, identify, and exaggerate the elements in their material which will best lend themselves to the literati approach.

In a word... If it feels good... do it! But, be prepared to defend your choices on solid bonsai artistic grounds. Although bunjin sometimes reflects the bizarre and unusual, tying your tree in a knot is insufficient grounds for dubbing it a literati.

Suitable Materials

Literati generally focus on the line of the tree and less upon concepts such as mass and trunk taper. A

good many literati have very little taper at all, and most have few branches usually located near the top of the tree. Generally speaking, two-thirds of the total height of the tree is free from branches.



Movement of the trunk can be flowing or angular and you should look for some unusual aspect of the material to feature. Since a literati trunk usually features quite a bit of movement, Junipers (because of their elasticity) make excellent bonsai subjects. Pine also work well as do a large number of other evergreens. Deciduous species do not work as well because of their tendency to break and for foliage to always assume an upward growing path. This does not mean they won't work, just that they are more difficult. Don't be afraid to try. You may be the one to open a new frontier in bonsai design. Remember that the true excitement in a literati design is in the innovative way that it contradicts traditional values. Find the unusual or exotic in your tree and use it to good advantage.

Containers

Because of the movement, single trunk literati usually are planted in a shallow round or oval container. Trays are also acceptable and can be used in conjunction with rock or stone. In the case of ovals or trays, the trees are usually something other than uprights and should be planted somewhat off center. Remembering the rule that literati design should be simple... overly ornate or heavy glazed containers are generally avoided.

Care and Maintenance

Literati bonsai require the same kinds of care as do all bonsai with two small additions. First, because of their "tall" design they tend to be top heavy. In a good wind they can easily blow off a bench. You may want to tie them in place. Second, foliage should be kept relatively sparse. The general elegance of literati design prohibits heavy top foliage on a slender trunk with little taper.

A Clean Bonsai Is A Happy Bonsai: Using Brushes Properly

From bonsaioutlet.com



There are plenty of Bonsai tools out there which not everyone will need but are of great help to those who are serious about Bonsai cultivation and want the best for their tree. Bonsai brushes are a great example of this. Sure, in real life, there's no one out there brushing the redwoods and pines of the world... but in a Bonsai setting, a tree can be greatly enhanced with the right brushing every now and then. A good Bonsai brush or two is a very multi-purpose item, and it can be especially helpful for those seeking more complicated\difficult tree styles, such as ones incorporating deliberate deadwood. Bonsai brushes generally come in two varieties: Nylon-based brushes with softer bristles, and metal brushes with harder bristles. Which you use depends on the application.

There are two main uses for brushes that are applicable to almost any form of Bonsai cultivation:

1 - Exposing the roots

One element of traditional Bonsai display is to have exposed roots above the soil layer, which are ideally about as wide as the tree's canopy is on top. However, over the months and years, it's easy for soil to build up over the roots. So, a softer brush can be used to sweep dirt away from the upper roots, making them more prominent without damaging them in any way.

2 - Lightening the trunk and major branches

Over time, the trunk and branches of a Bonsai tree will accumulate layers of dirt and grime, just like any tree. For some, this is desirable, especially if they're shooting for a naturalistic feel. However, for a more pristine-looking Bonsai, a harder brush can be used to clean off the layer of dirt, which also makes the exposed surfaces look less dark.

This could also be used to enhance "windswept" styles. If you want the appearance of a Bonsai that's constantly experiencing winds from a certain direction, don't brush the windward side. Just brush the leeward surfaces, to realistically suggest they have far less dirt sticking to them.

Many advanced Bonsai styles deliberately incorporate deadwood, as exposed broken branches (jin), hollows from broken-off branches (uro), or deadwood attached to the trunk (shari). The issue here is that, of course, deadwood will partially rot. It creates a brittle, cork-like oxidized substance which can detract from the look of the tree, as well as preventing it from having treatments applied that preserve the wood. In these cases, a strong metal brush can be used to clean out the oxidized materials. Power tools can be used, but it's not always a good idea since it becomes easy to start scratching up the wood you're looking to preserve. Brushing by hand with a stiff metal brush will allow you to remove the "cork" without unnecessary damage to the solid deadwood beneath.

Then utilize a product such as lime sulfur-based jin seal to coat the deadwood you wish to preserve. This is generally done with a nylon brush. Just be certain you wash the brush very thoroughly afterwards as lime sulfur is highly alkaline and corrosive to organic materials, like eyes and fingers. Always use protective gloves and goggles when working with lime sulfur.

LBS Road Trip

By Lowell T.

I am thinking of doing a couple of road trips soon. I talked to Joe Day in Mobile who has some Japanese trident maples for sale at \$150 and up. Joe Day and Randy Bennett are two people that know more about growing Japanese maple bonsai in our climate than anybody I know. It will be worth the trip just to see Joe Day's bonsai collection and listen to what he will tell us about growing Japanese maples.

The other trip is to visit Rick Berrigan. He has some miniature crape myrtles that he has spent 10 years developing for sale for only \$300. They are

worth two or three times that amount. He has other pre-bonsai at lower prices.

I talked to Joe Day and **Saturday, Sept. 19** is a good day for him, so I plan to leave my house about 6:00 AM and get there between 9:00 and 10:00. We can carpool, caravan, or other. I can take three people, so please contact me and we finalize our plans.

Workshop Opportunity from Underhill Bonsai

By Evan P.

I am doing a short documentary type film on Byron Myrick about his life as a bonsai potter. It will air **September 17th** on our Facebook page and then later, on our YouTube channel.

There will be a **Build Your Own Bonsai Pot Workshop Saturday October 17th 10 a.m.- 5 p.m.** Students will be able to make up to a 16" pot, shape of their choice. Byron will fire the pieces and then glaze them with the glaze of the student's choice as well. Price for the workshop will be a flat \$200, plus a lunch fee (if the student would like food from a local restaurant that will be delivered to the facility we will be working out of). The facility will be the local **community center in Folsom** that has 7000 square feet so everyone can comfortably spread out and we all can be safe. Byron and I will be there to assist students. It is highly recommended that you bring a tree that you want to make a pot for!

Coming Events

September 15 **7-9 pm Monthly Meeting, Show and Tell-Bring trees and any giveaways**
7950 Independence Blvd, BR
Garden Center **Wear a Mask**

September 19 **Proposed Day Trip to Mobile To Joe Day's Garden-Make plans with Lowell to Caravan or Carpool (Leave BR at 6:00 a.m.)**
Bring Masks