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# THE BONSAI GAKUSEI

*Newsletter of the Modesto Bonsai Club*  
MAY 2006

## PROGRAM

**Date:** Saturday, May 20, 2006

**Location:** Blue Oak Nursery, 784 Albers Road.

### Program Schedule:

- 9:00a Executive Board Meeting
- 10:00a Members Arrive/Set-Up
- 11:00a Beginning/Intermediate Program – Sam Adina
- 12:30p Lunch Break/Business Meeting: Bring a brown bag lunch. Drinks/snacks available.
- 1:00p - ? Janet Walters Azalea Demonstration

**REMINDER:** Each member is responsible for cleaning his/her work area/table before leaving.

### A Message from your President...

Our April 15<sup>th</sup> meeting had a light member turnout, perhaps anticipating rain. Our numbers were increased by the arrival of two groups from San Jose clubs: the Midori Club, and John Thompson's Study Group.

We will have the final financial report from the Spring Show at the May meeting. The show was successful due to all the hard work of our Show Chairperson, Pam Grassmidt and our enthusiastic club members. Thanks to everyone! The bonsai display was spectacular, sales, raffles, and advisors were great. The demonstrations were wonderful and it seemed that all enjoyed the presentation.

So many positive comments are being generated by those visiting the Aqua Shi restaurant where the club's trees are on display. It is time to rotate April's trees to their homes and exchange them for the trees of new volunteers. Please sign up for a care group and select a few of your bonsai to display.

It is not too early to begin thinking about the fall field trip. We will rent a bus and spend the day being chauffeured around to bonsai nurseries. Some suggestions are: Placerville's Lotus

Nursery and El Dorado Nursery; Santa Rosa's Sumigawa and Lone Pine Gardens; or Bay Area nurseries. We will consider location based on interest. This is always a fun trip with socializing and great savings.

The club will be ordering aprons, pins, badges, and carry-all bags with our club logo imprinted on them. Please place your order with Faye Nunes at the next club meeting.

Our club sponsored Beginning Bonsai class has graduated its four students who are now all club members. Congratulations Floyd, David, Paul, and Mark. Sam has agreed to teach a combination beginning/intermediate class in October.

Please sign up for the monthly hospitality potluck. The roster is next to the attendance sheet on the information table in front of the library.

A carpool is forming for a summer outing at Darlene and George's home in Twain Harte. A tentative date for the BBQ/potluck is June 24<sup>th</sup>. Please give your suggestions at the next meeting so we can confirm with Darlene and George.

Our April guest lecturer came to us from San Jose's Midori Bonsai Club.

Doug Philips, (aka Olive Head) started learning the art of Bonsai in 1986 and has advanced to GSBF teacher. He not only demonstrates with his Midori Club and others but holds study groups at his home and is a presenter at GSBF conventions.

When he tried to learn about olives he found little information. Experimentation has taught him most of his accumulated knowledge that he shares with so many.

Doug enjoys collecting olives – usually from along railroad tracks and vacant lots. He views these cost-effective volunteers as gifts from Spain. He theorizes that the Spanish missionaries in California imported and grew the olives, and then the birds dispersed the seeds to many areas, spreading the blessings of those like Father Junipero Serra.

Collecting the holy olives has become a study in efficiency for Doug. He takes about five minutes to harvest each tree. He digs around the tree cutting off the lateral roots next to the base and then severs the tap root. He leaves about 18" to 24" of the trunk(s) to use as a lever and when the tree is free of earth he wraps the roots in wet fabric. He recently collected 29 trees in one day. He says if you feel conspicuous while parked roadside you could jack up your car and take off a tire. Or you could go out at night wearing camouflage and paint your face to match.

Once harvested, the olive stump can survive up to 30 days in a dark wind-free area if the base is kept damp. It is important to wrap the olive as its skin is thin and will tear easily.

The nebari shape Mr. Philips enjoys most is a flaring from trunk to earth that would seem to follow a French curve out to infinity. To achieve this flare study the root ball and its relationship to the trunk. Work at eye level using a circumferential chalk mark to plan your cut on the base. Avoid "shoulders" on this flare. Once you've determined your level a short arm chain saw or sharp hand saw is used. Camellia oil can be frequently rubbed on the saw to remove the sap while cutting. Again, pad the trunk and root to avoid tearing the thin bark. Spray the base frequently with water.

This flat cutting technique can be used with any tree that can root from a cutting, i.e.: elms, ficus, cypress, pomegranates; etc.

The edge of the flat cut base is chamfered at a 45 to 60 degree angle inward to the cambium layer where the new roots will emerge. Carve in the contour of the base with variations in attitude. Make all defects into effects. Spray the cut edges and quickly screw on your predrilled and precut wooden board and get the tree into a container of soil. The board is usually plywood about 3/4" thick and 3/4" wider than the outline of the base. The board is to direct the rootage horizontally from the tree. Several sheet rock screws about 2" long will fix the board to the center of the base. The board thickness and screw length must be sized appropriately so the cambium layer growth doesn't dislodge this base plate. The board will be removed and re-affixed several time over the following 2-3 years to check root development.

When the tree is placed into the soil a long screw is driven into the top of the trunk. Wires are used to secure the tree in the wide pot by wiring through the rim of the plastic tub, wrapped around the screw and then secured to the rim on the opposite side of the first tie. Several of these wire stays are used to keep the tree from wiggling and damaging the nutrient transferring hair roots. The cut top of the trunk should be sealed with black sealant (made by Tanglefoot).

If you have twin trunks one should be subordinate to the larger. Here the Japanese five-to-seven ratio is employed. The smaller trunk should be five parts to the seven parts of the dominate trunk. Later the show pot you select will be five parts deep to seven parts wide. Chinese pots are constructed using a different ratio. The trunks will be cut at an angle, remembering that the initial cuts affect the whole life of the tree. "High drama" is achieved with an exaggerated cut. The large scar should be to the back side of the tree. Don't let the trunks "divide the eye" in competing for your attention. Balance visual and horticultural aspects. In evaluating the relationship of the trunk(s) to the nebari you must balance the future needs of the tree with basic styling. Information about branches is given by "bumps" on the trunk indicating budding that will "pop out." Some will be prolific – others will not.

The styling of the tree will be influenced by the tree itself. Two general styles are: classical triangular shape with downward sloping branches, and natural with branching given by the tree. Doug prefers "stumpy, grumpy" trees. Not too tall with flaring nebari, thick trunks, and short branches.

Olives seldom grow true to the parent plant. The leaves may be anywhere in the range of blue-green to yellow and somewhere between boat-shaped and heart shaped. Sometimes the leaves may start out small with close internodes.

Branches and angles of the trunk are spaced using the five-to-seven ratio that decreases the distance from the first to second branch placement.

Root development is watched carefully. They should develop circumferentially from the chamfered edge and extend horizontally. When the roots have matured you will remove alternating fine ones and leave the coarse ones. After checking on the roots, repot your tree in the growing pot or bed with the smaller roots toward the sun's arc to thicken them.

With all bonsai remember, we may not live to see them fully developed. Enjoy the process day to day. All we bonsai artists are is initiators, persuaders, not abusers of our trees. We work through incremental changes, getting our satisfaction out of making the adjustments to styling. Our goal is to grow "A-grade trees" not "B-grade". We want to leave good trees not ones that make later viewers question our judgment.

Your President, Richard McKinstry



Doug Philips At Our April Meeting

## CLUB INFORMATION

### Welcome To Our New Members!

Mark de St Jeor  
Paul Byrne  
Dave Olson

Audrey & Andy Poulo signed up for the hospitality table for our May meeting. **Thank You!** Everybody's encouraged to share their favorite recipes or snacks.

**Foster Trees** will be available this month. All of the donated plants still left at Blue Oak Nursery will need to be cared for until our next spring show. Just like in November, pick out as many trees as you can care for and be sure to let Janet or Richard know which ones you took. They will need to be potted and styled at the appropriate times and then returned to the club for raffle or sales at next Aprils Show.

**Club Logo Tote Bags** in green on blue color will be \$15 for pre-paid orders this month.

### Instructor

Sam Adina

### Board of Directors

#### **President**

Richard McKinstry

#### **Vice President**

Pam Grassmidt

#### **Treasurer**

Janet Wakefield

#### **Secretary**

Faye Nunes

#### **Members-at-Large**

Bill Hawley  
Mary Miller  
Spencer Tope

#### **Past President/ Membership Chair**

Doris Gaberel  
209-524-2730

### Other Support

#### **Club Wire Supply**

Spencer Tope

#### **Hostess**

Hanna McKinstry

#### **Librarian**

Betty Bennett

#### **Newsletter Editor**

Mary Miller  
mary.k.miller@sbcglobal.net  
523-6942

\*gakusei (gok-say) noun a student or scholar

## UPCOMING SHOWS AND EVENTS

### May 20-21 Sacramento, CA

Satsuki Aikokai of Sac. Annual Show at Sac. Garden and Arts Center, 3330 McKinley Blvd. Hours are Sat. 10AM-5PM and Sun. 10AM-4PM. Demonstrations both days at 1:30.

### June 3-4 Oakland, CA

Bay Area Satsuki Aikokai 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Show at the Lakeside Park Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Ave. Hours are Sat. 10AM-5PM and Sun. 10AM-4PM. Demonstrations both days at 1:30.

### June 17-18 Oakland, CA

California Suiseki Society 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Exhibition. "The Japanese Art of Stone Appreciation", at the Lakeside Park Garden Center. Hours are 10AM-5PM both days. Free admission.

For much more subscribe to Golden Statements at [www.gsbf-bonsai.org](http://www.gsbf-bonsai.org)

## 2006 MEETING SCHEDULE

May20: Janet Walters – Satsuki Azaleas

June17: Sam and Mentors discuss:

1. Air-layering
2. Trimming Maples
3. Trimming Azaleas
4. How to Buy

July15 and August19: Member Workshop 10AM-1PM

September16: Johnny Uchida-Topic TBA

October21: Ruben Guzman – Juniper

November18: Pick trees for 2007 Show, work on styling.

December: Holiday Social



## BLUE OAK NURSERY NEWS

### SPECIAL

### 20% Off Satsuki Azaleas at May club meeting!

Plenty of pots to choose from and soil for your repotting needs.

## MEMBER TIP OF THE MONTH

### Post Flower Pruning For Azaleas

After the bloom, pluck each flower and pistil back to the base. Do this all at once to insure a simultaneous bloom the following year.

Fertilize lightly and wait 10-12 days to start pruning. There should be four new shoots growing from the flower area. Cut off the upper and lower shoots back to the base and trim the side shoots back to the first or second node, depending on how you want to shape the tree. (Note: it may take a few days longer for the new shoots to grow)

Also, repotting and root pruning on azaleas is done after the bloom. Take care not to wire too tightly during the growing season or it will cut in. Wiring is best done in October or November.

*- Bill Hawley*

Directions to Meeting Site: The **Blue Oak Nursery** is on the east side of Albers Road, 1 mile north of Hwy. 132 (Yosemite Blvd.). Watch for the big blue sign with the blue oak silhouette. Turn into the gravel lane and follow it to the end. Park in designated areas.

Mailing Address: Modesto Bonsai Club  
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