BONSAI CLUB
OF SANTA BARBARA

SEPT 2025 NEWSLETTER

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BONSAI CLUB
OF SANTA BARBARA

P.O. BOX 3703
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SANTABARBARABONSAI.ORG

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

SEPTEMBER 1, 2025

IN THIS NEWSLETTER:

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

CLUB NEWS:
LOOKING FOR A TREASURER

UPCOMING MEETING:
GUARDIAN TREE
WORKSHOP MEETING

UPCOMING WORKSHOP:
2ND NEW MEMBERS
BEGINNERS WORKSHOP

PREVIOUS:
CLUB POTLUCK AND AUCTION

UPCOMING EVENTS
IN CALIFORNIA

BCSB PROGRAMS
2025

HIGHLIGHTS:
JOHN NAKA SHOW

Dear BCSB members and friends,

Having started bonsai in earnest only a few years ago, I am beyond grateful to BCSB for providing access to training by some of the west's best bonsai artists, and to the seasoned members of the club who are always willing to share their knowledge and experience. While I have learned volumes in this relatively short time, my acquired knowledge has ironically revealed how little I know. As Todd Schlafer, the professional bonsai artist leading our meeting and workshop in November, told me, "We're all students." Even the pros have something to learn.

This seems obvious. After all, each bonsai tree is unique - a singular individual with its own character and needs. This is evident in all of the research I do about bonsai, where general instructions are carefully explained and then typically concluded with warnings of the possible exceptions. Is the devil in those details? I think so. There are basic techniques of bonsai that apply to all trees, but there are so many more techniques, some of which I am certain I do not yet know, that may be appropriate - even necessary - given the particular specimen of tree in front of me.

Michael Hagedorn, who led our club in a Zoom discussion last month, wrote a book titled *Bonsai Heresy*, in which he attempts to dispel long-held myths about bonsai culture - some of them deep-seated ideas of "best practice" for bonsai. I'm only a couple of chapters into his book, but in the early pages he explains that the Japanese masters passed down a tradition of bonsai based on anecdotal information - shared stories about what worked and what didn't - and not on the scientific method of hypothesis, experiment, conclusion and replication. While there is certainly some science to bonsai, he reasons that through the process of "trial and error" over centuries, Japanese bonsai masters acquired knowledge of the best techniques, tools and products, whether intentional or accidental. That success was passed around, shared, and soon became the standard or tradition of bonsai.

Michael advocates for the scientific approach to bonsai, but enthusiastically embraces the anecdotal approach, noting that some standards work for some, but not for others. "We're all students," echoes in my head. The process of trial and error continues!

The purpose of BCSB, as written by our founder in our constitution, is to promote friendship and fellowship among those who have a mutual interest in bonsai, and to encourage and maintain the culture of bonsai as a hobby and art form through the study and appreciation of bonsai as inspired by nature. Perhaps our founder was especially wise to place the concept of friendship and fellowship at the front of the club's purpose, because the more time we spend with BCSB members and others in the greater bonsai community, the more opportunity we have to learn each other's secrets to success. Through our bonsai peers and friends we truly learn what works and what doesn't, and share the joy of it.

I look forward to seeing you at future meetings and workshops for the enlightenment and the fun.

Cheers,
Gwen

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CLUB NEWS

WE'RE LOOKING FOR A NEW TREASURER

The Bonsai Club of Santa Barbara is seeking a volunteer to step into the role of **Treasurer**. This is a vital position that helps keep our club thriving and our activities running smoothly.

The Treasurer is responsible for:

- Managing the club's finances
- Keeping simple and clear records of income and expenses
- Providing brief financial updates at meetings
- Working with the board to ensure our club remains financially healthy

Accounting experience is a plus but not required. Just someone who is organized, reliable, and enthusiastic about supporting our bonsai community. Training and support will be provided by the outgoing Treasurer to make the transition smooth.

If you'd like to get more involved and help our club continue to grow, please reach out to **bonsaiclubsantabarbara@gmail.com**

Your support makes all the difference!

TIPS + INFO + INSPO

BONSAI INSPIRATION

We share seasonal bonsai care tips, inspiration from fellow club members, and fascinating bonsai history to help you grow your skills and ignite creativity.

Recently, club members Joe Olson, Mark Britton, and Sebastian Fraye participated in the juried John Naka Memorial Show, held at the JACCC during Nisei Week in Los Angeles. The event featured 30 outstanding trees from artists across California and was truly a celebration of high-quality bonsai.

You can see some of the highlights in our photo section, and we encourage you to also watch this video featuring event coordinator Julian Tsai, who walks through several of the trees, including those from our very own members.

Events like these play a vital role in the broader bonsai community, helping to inspire, connect, and elevate our shared appreciation of the art form.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=77Ma5CfsGTc

Joe Olson's Olive on display at the Naka Show which was a crowd favorite

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TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9TH MEETING

GUARDIAN TREE WORKSHOP MEETING

At this month's club meeting, we'll be working on our guardian trees for the second time as we prepare them for sale at Lotusland. If you have a guardian tree, please bring it along with your tools and any supplies you'll need.

Time: Doors Open at 7:00 PM
Location: Bethany Congregational Church
556 N Hope Ave, Santa Barbara

Jeff Sczechowski demonstrating to Anthony Ranii proper wiring techniques

As a reminder, BCSB has been creating and selling bonsai trees through the Lotusland gift shop and at our Annual Show. These sales are vital for raising funds to support our club. The proceeds enable us to subsidize workshops, host presentations by professional bonsai artists, and fund other club activities that enhance the experience for all members.

This past year has been particularly successful! We sold several trees at our Annual Show, and the bonsai at Lotusland have been incredibly popular, selling quickly and consistently. To ensure we're prepared for the coming years, we need to start producing more trees to sell in 2025 and 2026. Your participation in this effort is invaluable—it helps secure the financial health of our club while also improving your own bonsai techniques.

Please bring your tools and wire to the meeting if you have them. The key tools you'll need include shears, wire cutters, and pruners. If you don't have wire, the club will provide aluminum wire from its supply. For our more experienced bonsai practitioners, we encourage you to bring any extra tools, such as old cutters, pruners, or shears, to lend to new members who may not yet have their own. To avoid any mix-ups, please make sure to label or tag your tools clearly so they can be easily returned to you at the end of the evening.

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SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20TH

2ND NEW MEMBERS BEGINNERS WORKSHOP

We're thrilled to share that 42 new members signed up during our show last weekend—an incredible response and a true embarrassment of riches for the club!

Our second Beginner's Bonsai Workshop is scheduled for Saturday, September 20th, and will be held in two sessions:

Morning: 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM (8 Spots Available)
Afternoon: 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM (8 Spots Available)

We currently have 16 participants registered, and we'll have at least two helpers per session to ensure plenty of hands-on support.

What to Expect at a Beginner's Bonsai Workshop
(with Material Supplied*)

*Please bring your own basic tools if you have them: such as pruners, scissors, or bonsai shears.
A limited number of loaner tools will be available.

🌱 Welcome and Introduction

- Warm welcome from the instructor and host.
- Overview of workshop goals and schedule.
- Brief introduction to bonsai history, philosophy, and basic styles.

🌳 Understanding the Material

- Participants receive a pre-bonsai tree nursery-grown starter.
- Explanation of the species and its growth characteristics.
- Overview of the tools and supplies provided.

✂️ Hands-On Instruction

- Learn basic pruning techniques to shape the tree.
- Introduction to wiring fundamentals to guide branch placement.
- Step-by-step instruction with one-on-one assistance.

🌲 Styling

- Guidance on styling your tree and selecting a pot.
- Each participant will style their own bonsai.

💧 Aftercare Guidance

- Tips on watering, light requirements, fertilizing, and seasonal care.
- What to expect as your tree grows and develops.

🗣️ Q&A and Wrap-Up

- Open floor for questions and discussion.
- Everyone will leave with their own styled bonsai and a deeper appreciation for this living art!

Reach out to **bonsaiclubsantabarbara@gmail.com** if you have any question.

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Mark Britton as lead auctioneer with Danny Martinez's juniper up for auction

Ben Trosky and others in attendance

Sebastian Fraye and Mark Britton as auctioneers

PREVIOUS

CLUB POTLUCK AND AUCTION

A heartfelt thank you to all of our members who joined us for the August Potluck and Auction. It was a fantastic afternoon of delicious food, great company, and spirited bidding!

Your generosity and enthusiasm made the event a big success. Not only did we enjoy time together as a community, but the auction also helped raise valuable funds to support our club's programs and future events.

We are so grateful for everyone who brought a dish to share, donated items, and participated in the auction. Events like this remind us what a special and supportive group we have here in the Bonsai Club of Santa Barbara.

A big thank you to Mark for doing a fantastic job leading the auction, and to Gwen for her hard work in organizing, supplying, and setting up the event. We truly appreciate the effort that made the day such a success!

Looking ahead, we plan to form a committee to help coordinate future club potlucks and auctions. Stay tuned for more information on how you can get involved.

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OCTOBER 24-26, 2025

GSBF BONSAI RENDEZVOUS 2025

Mark your calendars for October 24–26, 2025 and head to Santa Nella, CA for one of the biggest bonsai events in the state! The GSBF Bonsai Rendezvous brings together enthusiasts from across California for a weekend full of learning, inspiration, and community.

When & Where:
October 24 at 9 AM – October 26 at 1 PM
13070 CA-33, Santa Nella, CA
More info: **gsbfbonsai.org**

- Workshops with world-renowned bonsai artists Suthin Sukosolvisit and Mauro Stemberger
- Additional hands-on sessions throughout Friday and Saturday
- A bustling vendor marketplace with pots, tools, trees, and more
- Free seminars on a variety of bonsai topics
- Bring Your Own Tree (BYOT) workshops
- Exciting auctions featuring quality material
- Hospitality hours for socializing and networking

We're proud to share that our very own Danny Martinez will be representing the Bonsai Club of Santa Barbara in the Joshua Roth "Rising Stars" Contest at Rendezvous 2025! The contest will be held on Saturday, so if you're attending, be sure to cheer him on and show your support.

This is a wonderful opportunity to connect with the wider bonsai community, learn from masters, and celebrate the art we all love. Don't miss it!

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BONSAI CLUB OF SANTA BARBARA

CLUB MEETINGS

LOCATION:
BETHANY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
556 N HOPE AVE,
SANTA BARBARA, CA 93110

TIME:
7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

CALENDAR

BCSB PROGRAMS 2025

MEETINGS + WORKSHOPS + EVENTS

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT
GWEN STAUFFER

VICE PRESIDENT
MARK BRITTON

TREASURER
DIANA BOYDSTUN

MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR
JOE BALDASSINI AND
CINDY DRAZYNSKI

SECRETARY
DANIEL OHLINGER

HONORARY SHOW CHAIR
ANN ERB

NEWSLETTER
SEBASTIAN FRAYE

WEBSITE
DANIEL MARTINEZ

WORKSHOP / PROGRAMS
MARK BRITTON

DATE	TIME	DESCRIPTION
SAT - AUG 9	11:30AM – 3:00PM	ANNUAL BCSB SUMMER POTLUCK BETHANY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
TUES - AUG 12	7:00PM – 9:00PM	MICHAEL HAGADORN ZOOM: CONCEPT DESIGN OF BONSAI
TUES - SEP 9	7:00PM – 9:00PM	MONTHLY MEETING: GUARDIAN TREE CLUB WORKSHOP
SAT - SEP 20	9:00AM – 12:00 PM 1:00PM – 4:00PM	WORKSHOP: 2ND BEGINNER WORKSHOP
THURS - OCT 9	7:00PM – 9:00PM	JONAS DUPUICH PRESENTATION: BONSAI DISPLAY
SAT - OCT 11	9:00AM – 12:00PM 1:00PM – 4:00PM	WORKSHOP: JONAS DUPUICH – BRING YOUR OWN TREE
THURS - NOV 13	7:00PM – 9:00PM	MONTHLY MEETING: TODD SCHLAFER – DEMO AND PRESENTATION
SAT - NOV 15	9:00AM – 12:00PM 1:00PM – 4:00PM	WORKSHOP: TODD SCHLAFER – BRING YOUR OWN TREE
SAT - DEC 6	11:00AM – 3:00PM	HOLIDAY POTLUCK

FOLLOW AND TAG US ON SOCIAL MEDIA FOR A CHANCE TO BE FEATURED

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HIGHLIGHTS

SOME AMAZING TREES FROM THE NAKA SHOW

FOLLOW AND TAG US ON SOCIAL MEDIA FOR A CHANCE TO BE FEATURED

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