BONSAI CLUB
OF SANTA BARBARA

JANUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER

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BONSAI CLUB
OF SANTA BARBARA

P.O. BOX 3703
SANTA BARBARA, CA 93130

SANTABARBARABONSAI.ORG

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

JANUARY 1, 2026

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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Dear BCSB members and friends,

The storms we had in the late months of 2025 were an over-abundance of gifts from Nature. Despite the hassles all that rain created, I am glad to see our community reservoirs filled. But too much rain on our bonsai trees can create problems, especially if the soil in which a tree is growing is not draining well in the first place. Bonsai want consistent, even watering and good drainage, so too much water can cause roots to rot. After these heavy rainfalls, you can place a block of wood or some other shim under one side of the pot to tilt it, and that will drain excess water out of the pot to prevent the roots from "sitting" in water.

I took advantage of the heavy rain by collecting it in garbage cans and storage bins, and now have nearly 300 gallons of rainwater to use in our dry season. Our domestic water, which is high in pH and soluble salts, can damage bonsai, particularly sensitive trees like Japanese maples, azaleas and black pines. If I had more room, I would have collected more. If you think this is something you would like to do but worry about mosquitoes, make sure you have a container with a very tight lid. You can also add mosquito fish to your stored water, and they will gobble up mosquito larvae. Mosquito fish are typically available at pet stores.

Inspect your trees after these heavy rainfalls to evaluate soil drainage as part of your overall assessment of whether or not a tree needs to be re-potted. The coming months of the new year are re-potting time, so now is time to plan. For those of you who ordered Japanese akadama and soil mixes through the club, we will have a delivery update for you in a couple of weeks. Due to vicissitudes in global markets we regret that we are unable to give you exact dates and exact costs, but we will keep you posted.

If you have questions about re-potting bonsai, you will want to attend our February 19th meeting when club member, 2025 Joshua Roth Rising Star bonsai competition winner and all-around super great guy, Danny Martinez will give us a tutorial on best practices for re-potting bonsai. He will demonstrate how to properly re-pot a tree and discuss when to re-pot, and what soils and other materials to use. The method for re-potting bonsai is very unique and unlike the way you would pot up a typical garden or house plant, so this is an essential program for all beginner bonsai practitioners and even those experienced members who could use a refresher. Like all science, we learn by experimentation and the sharing of information, such as our seasoned members' successes and failures in growing bonsai – this is the greatest benefit of being a member of BCSB.

We hope to see you at our first 2026 meeting on January 22nd for a demonstration by Sam Tan, with a follow-up workshop on January 24th. Don't forget that it is time to renew your membership - details on how to do that easily are included in this newsletter.

Happy new year!
Gwen

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BONSAI CLUB OF SANTA BARBARA

JANUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER

CLUB NEWS

NEW YEAR, NEW SCHEDULE

Welcome to a new year with the Santa Barbara Bonsai Club! We're excited for another season of learning, sharing, and enjoying time together around bonsai. We're also making a permanent schedule change: meetings will now be on **Thursday evenings** instead of Tuesdays, which will better accommodate visiting professionals and guest artists. As we get started, this is a good time to renew your membership. You can renew quickly using the QR code below, which links to Zelle for easy payment. We're glad you're part of the club and looking forward to the year ahead!

Scan for Zelle Payment to Renew:
bonsaiclubsb.treasurer@gmail.com
Bonsai Club SB (...5657)

TIPS AND INFO

SEASONAL PREP

We regularly share seasonal bonsai care tips to help you build your skills with trusted guidance—no need to rely on unreliable online sources!

This month, we're highlighting repotting season, which runs from now until early spring, before new growth begins. We've included insights from **Bonsai Tonight** blog by Jonas Dupuich on soil substrates and mixes, along with videos on container selection and working with nursery stock—ideal for beginners.

A great resource for techniques, soil options, and container selection is the **Bonsai Tonight** blog by Jonas Dupuich.

- **Repotting a trident maple (basic repotting steps)** (**https://bonsaitonight.com/2016/08/02/repotting-a-trident-maple-bonsai/**)
  Jonas Dupuich's article "Repotting a Trident Maple Bonsai" covers the steps of repotting, including removing the tree, cleaning the pot, and pruning the roots for health and stability. It stresses the importance of securing the tree in the pot with proper positioning, drainage, and care to help it adapt to its new environment.

- **Repotting nursery stock – sekka hinoki** (**https://bonsaitonight.com/2021/03/12/repotting-nursery-stock-sekka-hinoki/**)
  The article "Repotting Nursery Stock – Sekka Hinoki" by Jonas Dupuich details repotting a sekka hinoki bonsai. It covers removing old soil, trimming roots to fit a training pot, and securing the tree with fresh soil (80% akadama mix). The tree is placed in full sun with proper care, preparing it for pruning and wiring by fall.

- **Aligning containers with development goals** (**https://bonsaitonight.com/2021/02/27/aligning-containers-with-development-goals/**)
  The article "Aligning Containers with Development Goals" by Jonas Dupuich explains how to choose containers based on bonsai development stages. Anderson flats are ideal for root establishment, nursery pots for early growth, and perforated containers for trunk development. Terra-cotta pots are recommended as trees move toward refinement.

- **What kind of soil should I use for my bonsai?** (**https://bonsaitonight.com/2021/03/07/what-kind-of-soil-should-i-use-for-my-bonsai/**)
  In "What Kind of Soil Should I Use for My Bonsai?" Jonas Dupuich emphasizes the importance of well-draining soil for bonsai, recommending mixes of akadama, pumice, and lava rock. The ideal mix depends on the tree species and climate, promoting healthy root growth and preventing root rot.

- **How to secure bonsai in the pot** (**https://bonsaitonight.com/2016/12/27/secure-bonsai-pot/**)
  The article shows how and why to securely anchor a bonsai in its pot using tie-down wires so the tree stays stable during handling, repotting, and display.

THURSDAY, JAN 22ND MEETING

SAM TAN
DEMO AND PRESENTATION

We're thrilled to welcome Sam Tan back to Santa Barbara. Many of us still remember how engaging and insightful his last demo was, and we're excited to learn from him again. This time, Sam will focus on seasonally appropriate techniques that members can confidently practice on their own trees.

Sam is the past president of the Bonsai Society of San Francisco and a passionate enthusiast who enjoys creating bonsai from native North American species. He studied under Ryan Neil at Bonsai Mirai in 2019 and has exhibited at both the 2022 and 2024 Pacific Bonsai Expos, serving as a demonstrator in 2024. You can follow his work on Instagram at **@samtanbonsai.**

Don't miss the chance to learn from one of America's rising bonsai talents.

Thursday January 22
Doors Open at 7:00 PM
Meeting Begins at 7:15 PM

Location: Bethany Congregational Church
556 N Hope Ave, Santa Barbara

Pygmy cypress group planting on the left and Monterey Cypress on the right

Sam Tan working at last year's meeting on a Hinoki cypress.

SATURDAY, JAN 24TH WORKSHOP

SAM TAN
BYOT WORKSHOP

Sam Tan will be leading a hands-on workshop Saturday January 24th, giving members the opportunity to bring their own trees for personalized guidance and instruction. This is a great chance to work directly with one of America's rising bonsai professionals and get tailored feedback on your material. Whether you're refining structure, working on wiring, or exploring new styling ideas, Sam will offer practical tips and one-on-one support throughout the session. Spots may be limited, so be sure to sign up early and bring a tree you're ready to work on. Some examples of his before and after work.

Workshop Fee: $50 per person
All skill levels welcome! Bring at least 2-4 trees if not more, your tools, and your questions.

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

Location: Bethany Congregational Church
556 N Hope Ave, Santa Barbara

Reserve Your Spot:
Space is limited—please email **bonsaiclubsb.treasurer@gmail.com** to sign up ASAP!

Debra, Ben and Sam enjoying the workshop from last year

Sam Tan explaining reducing down to two branches for bifuraction

Debra, Ben and Sam enjoying the workshop

FEBRUARY 6-7, 2027

THE 2027 PACIFIC BONSAI EXPO

The next PBE has officially been announced!

The event will take place February 6–7, 2027, at the Alameda County Fairgrounds in Pleasanton, California. Exhibits and vendors will be located in Building A, programs in Building B, and the Saturday evening banquet in Building C. Setup will run February 3–5, with exhibit judging and a Friday evening reception on February 5.

The public exhibit will be open February 6–7, with docent tours offered each afternoon. Parking is $15 per entry, and shuttle service will be available between the venue and the event's official hotel, the Hyatt House Pleasanton. Plenty of nearby food, lodging, and shopping options make the area easy to navigate, and on-site food will also be available. Attendees are encouraged to visit the Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt in Oakland, which is open to the public throughout the week.

Tickets go on sale Spring 2027.
Call for Entries: TBD.

If you'd like to revisit the artistry of the last Expo, consider picking up the Pacific Bonsai Expo 2024 Commemorative Album, which features every tree from the show along with full exhibit photography and artist details. I had the pleasure of helping design and lay out the front section of the book, making it an especially meaningful project to share with our bonsai community.
https://pacificbonsaiexpo.org/products/2024-pacific-bonsai-expo-commemorative-album

FEBRUARY 28 TO MARCH 1, 2026

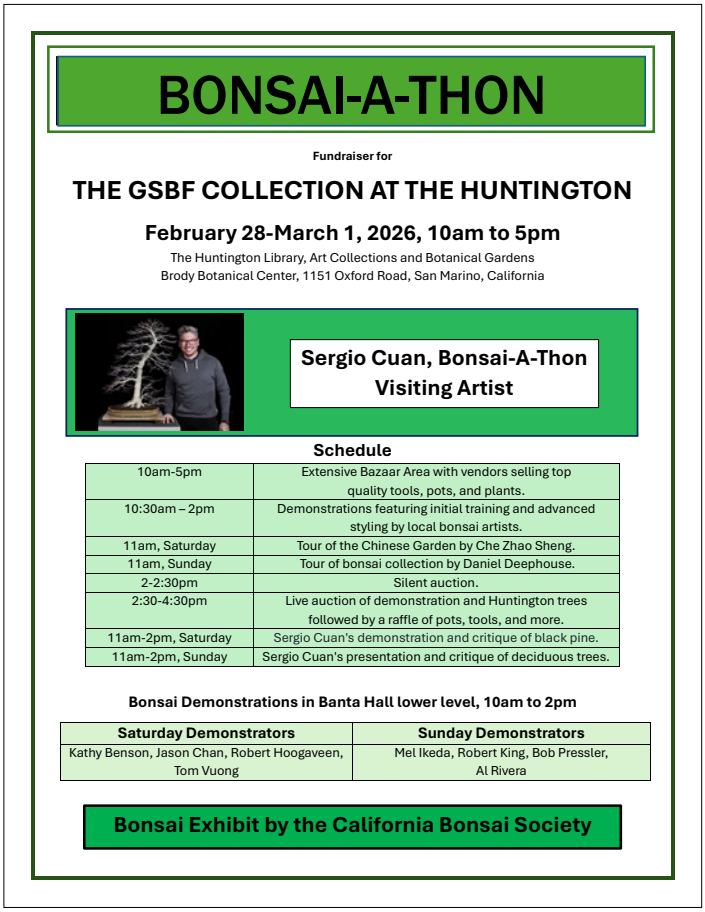
BONSAI-A-THON

RESERVE THE DATE: Bonsai-A-Thon

Date: February 28-March 1, 2026

Location: The Huntington
1151 Oxford Road
San Marino, CA 91108

Visiting Artist: Sergio Cuan



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 2026

MEETINGS + WORKSHOPS + EVENTS

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT
GWEN STAUFFER

VICE PRESIDENT
MARK BRITTON

TREASURER
ELIZABETH ROSAS

MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR
JOE BALDASSINI AND
CINDY DRAZYNSKI

SECRETARY
DANIEL OHLINGER

NEWSLETTER
SEBASTIAN FRAYE

WEBSITE
DANIEL MARTINEZ

WORKSHOP / PROGRAMS
MARK BRITTON

HONORARY SHOW CHAIR
ANN ERB

DATE	TIME	DESCRIPTION
THURS - JAN 22	7:00PM – 9:00PM	MEETING: SAM TAN PRESENTATION
SAT - JAN 24	9:00AM – 12:00 PM 1:00PM – 4:00PM	WORKSHOP: SAM TAN – BRING YOUR OWN TREE
THURS - FEB 19	7:00PM – 9:00PM	MEETING: DANNY MARTINEZ ON PROPER REPOTTING TECHNIQUES
SAT - FEB 21	9:00AM – 12:00 PM 1:00PM – 4:00PM	WORKSHOPS: CLUB WORKSHOP - NO FEE
THURS - MAR 19	7:00PM – 9:00PM	MEETING: JASON CHAN PRESENTATION
SAT - MAR 21	9:00AM – 12:00PM 1:00PM – 4:00PM	WORKSHOP: JASON CHAN – BRING YOUR OWN TREE
THURS - APR 16	7:00PM – 9:00PM	MEETING: MAY EXHIBITION PREPARATION
FRI - MAY 15	TBD	SHOW SETUP CLUB EXHIBITION
MAY 16-17	10:00AM – 4:00PM	BCSB 2026 CLUB EXHIBITION
SAT - MAY 30	9:00AM – 12:00 PM 1:00PM – 4:00PM	WORKSHOP: BEGINNERS WORKSHOP
THURS - JUN 18	9:00AM – 12:00 PM 1:00PM – 4:00PM	MEETING: TBD
SAT - JUN 20	7:00PM – 9:00PM	WORKSHOP: TBD
THURS - JUL 16	7:00PM – 9:00PM	MEETING: TBD
SAT - AUG 8	9:00AM – 12:00 PM 1:00PM – 4:00PM	SUMMER POTLUCK

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 2026

MEETINGS + WORKSHOPS + EVENTS

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GWEN STAUFFER

VICE PRESIDENT
MARK BRITTON

TREASURER
ELIZABETH ROSAS

MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR
JOE BALDASSINI AND
CINDY DRAZYNSKI

SECRETARY
DANIEL OHLINGER

NEWSLETTER
SEBASTIAN FRAYE

WEBSITE
DANIEL MARTINEZ

WORKSHOP / PROGRAMS
MARK BRITTON

HONORARY SHOW CHAIR
ANN ERB

DATE	TIME	DESCRIPTION
THURS - SEP	7:00PM – 9:00PM	MEETING: TBD
SAT - SEP	9:00AM – 12:00 PM 1:00PM – 4:00PM	WORKSHOP: TBD
THURS - OCT	7:00PM – 9:00PM	MEETING: TBD
SAT - OCT	9:00AM – 12:00PM 1:00PM – 4:00PM	WORKSHOP: TBD
THURS - NOV 12	7:00PM – 9:00PM	MONTHLY MEETING: TODD SCHLAFER PRESENTATION
SAT - NOV 14	9:00AM – 12:00PM 1:00PM – 4:00PM	WORKSHOP: TODD SCHLAFER – BRING YOUR OWN TREE
SAT - DEC 5	11:00AM – 3:00PM	HOLIDAY POTLUCK

HIGHLIGHTS

HOLIDAY POTLUCK 2025

All images courtesy of Danny Martinez.

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

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