BONSAI CLUB
OF SANTA BARBARA

FEBRUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER

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BONSAI CLUB
OF SANTA BARBARA

P.O. BOX 3703
SANTA BARBARA, CA 93130

SANTABARBARABONSAI.ORG

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

FEBRUARY 2, 2026

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Dear BCSB members and friends,

Despite the cool and wet start to our winter season, we just finished an incredibly warm January. February is typically the beginning of re-potting season for bonsai, but the warm weather is pushing plants to break dormancy early, so the pressure is on to get bonsai re-potted.

Before you start, do some research about the best re-potting times for the species of bonsai you have in your collection. John Naka's definitive book, Bonsai Techniques, which is in our club library and owned by many club members, includes a chart for transplanting and changing soil with a comprehensive list of species and the month to re-pot for each. His book also includes an equally comprehensive chart for recommended soil mixtures by species.

While John Naka's recommendations are a great place to start, the needs of your trees will be specific to the growing conditions of your particular site (quantity of sun and shade) and the watering regimen you use. Members of our club who have been practicing bonsai for some time have valuable, practical advice about these things, based on their personal experiences, (i.e. trial and error). The single greatest benefit of being a member of the club is to pick the brains of our seasoned members to find out what soil mix they use and why; when they re-pot their trees and why. Each experienced club member has reasons for what they use and what they do, and they are happy to share this information. Sometimes their answers vary, but their successes (and failures) are lessons for others and may be particularly applicable to you.

Besides timing and soil mix, the other critical aspect of re-potting is the "how". It wasn't until I participated in Jeff Sczechowski's re-potting workshop that I realized how badly I was executing this most critical task. (Maybe that's why I lost a few trees at the beginning of my bonsai journey.) Re-potting bonsai trees is nothing like the re-potting of a houseplant or container plant. There are very important steps and techniques that cannot be skipped.

If you missed January's meeting when Sam Tan demonstrated the re-potting of a mature and pot-bond bonsai, you have another chance to see a re-potting demonstration by our very own Danny Martinez at our meeting on Thursday, February 19th, and then practice re-potting during our free club workshop on Saturday, February 21st. If you have a tree that needs re-potting, bring it, your soil and wire, and we'll guide you through the steps. Even if you don't have a tree, come anyway to watch and learn, and help us re-pot guardian trees that need it.

Looking forward to seeing you!
Gwen

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CLUB NEWS

WINTER SILHOUETTE SHOW

Congrats to club President and members Gwen Stauffer and Joe Olson for showing trees in the 61st Baikoen Winter Silhouette Show on January 17, 2026. This long-running show highlights deciduous bonsai in winter silhouette, when branch structure and ramification are fully on display.

It is great to see our members represented at a public exhibition like this. We encourage more club members to consider entering regional shows when possible. Showing your work is a great way to compare your trees with others, gain experience, and practice the important skills of show prep and presentation that are a big part of bonsai.

Nice work, Gwen and Joe! Photos in the Highlights!

TIPS AND INFO

REPOTTING SEASON

We regularly share seasonal bonsai care tips to help you build your skills with trusted guidance.

This month, we continue highlighting repotting season, which runs from now through early spring before new growth begins. This week, we will be sharing educational content from **MIRAI** by Ryan Neil. With several of our members, Danny, Jeff, and Mark, currently studying at Mirai, it felt especially fitting to highlight Ryan's in-depth education platform and the approach they are learning from.

I would highly recommend that anyone interested in taking their bonsai practice further explore the educational content on the **MIRAI** platform by Ryan Neil. It covers all levels of work across a wide range of species, presented at the highest level with clear, consistent, and well-delivered instruction.

The platform has personally helped my own practice tremendously, and I have heard the same from club members who are current students, many of whom say it has transformed both their skills and their appreciation of the art. Several of the professionals we have been fortunate to host, including Todd Schlafer and, most recently, Sam Tan, are also former Mirai students, which creates a strong consistency of best practices, especially around critical techniques like repotting. With our club member Danny Martinez being a long-time Mirai student, there is no one better to help us dial in the fundamentals and details of this important and delicate process. Links to website and videos below:

- **Bonsai Education**
  (**https://bonsaimirai.com/education**)
  Mirai is your source for bonsai education and inspiration. We provide in-person classes, an online educational platform, and a mobile app to guide your bonsai journey, regardless of your skill level. Our mission is to enhance your bonsai practice and deepen your connection to the natural world.

- **Bonsai Tree Care**
  (**https://bonsaimirai.com/species-care**)
  Every bonsai tree can thrive in its containerized environment with the proper horticultural techniques and aesthetics. Our species care pages offer fundamental guidance to help you excel, keep your trees vibrant, and advance your bonsai skills.

- **Bonsai Beginner Series - Soil**
  (**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o03RRw_Msjo**)
  Soil is an integral part of bonsai: different species have different requirements to be successful in the containerized environment. When beginning your bonsai practice, choosing your soil elements can be a daunting task–in this video, we break down the different soil components of bonsai, their purpose, and how they should be used.

- **Bonsai Detail Wiring**
  (**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2n2MIkkUISE**)
  As a sample of our Bonsai Fundamentals series available on Mirai Live, we expand with a focus on secondary/tertiary wiring. Ryan shares the details of pairing branches, applying wire, handling branch tips, and using wire to define pad formation.

THURSDAY, FEB 19TH MEETING

DANNY MARTINEZ
REPOTTING DEMO AND PRESENTATION

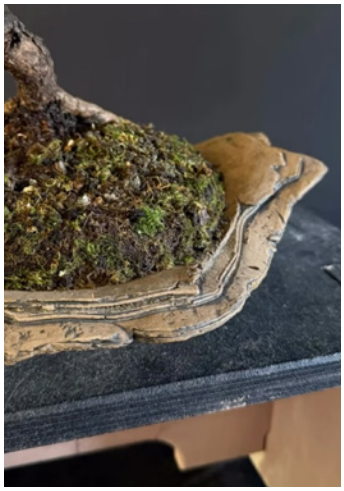
As our president, Gwen Stauffer, mentioned, if you missed January's meeting where Sam Tan demonstrated the repotting of a mature, pot-bound bonsai, you'll have another chance to go deeper into repotting at our meeting on Thursday, February 19.

Club member Danny Martinez will be sharing the Bonsai Mirai repotting process in detail, walking through the thinking behind each step and how it supports long-term tree health and refinement.

Danny recently won the Rising Star competition at the Bonsai Rendezvous, and this demonstration will reflect the level of care, technique, and decision-making that goes into high-quality repotting work.

Thursday February 19
Doors Open at 7:00 PM
Meeting Begins at 7:15 PM

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



A recent repotting Danny shared on his IG (@mybonsaijourney)

Danny at the Joshua Roth Rising Stars Competition

SATURDAY, FEB 21ST WORKSHOP

FREE REPOTTING WORKSHOP

We'll also be hosting a free, club member–led repotting workshop on Saturday, February 21, where members can practice repotting in a hands-on setting. If you have a tree that needs repotting, bring it along with your soil and wire, and we'll help guide you through the process step by step.

Please bring your own supplies if you have them, including soil, wire, chopsticks, scissors for root pruning (they will get dirty), root pruners, and any other specialty repotting tools you use. Even if you don't have a tree ready, you're still encouraged to come watch, learn, and help repot guardian trees that need attention.

You can also get guidance on what to bring for a specific tree during our Thursday night meeting.

Free Workshop!

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 still limited due to tables and space size — please email **bonsaiclubsb.treasurer@gmail.com** to sign up ASAP!

Members repotting during previous workshops

My setup from a previous repotting 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.

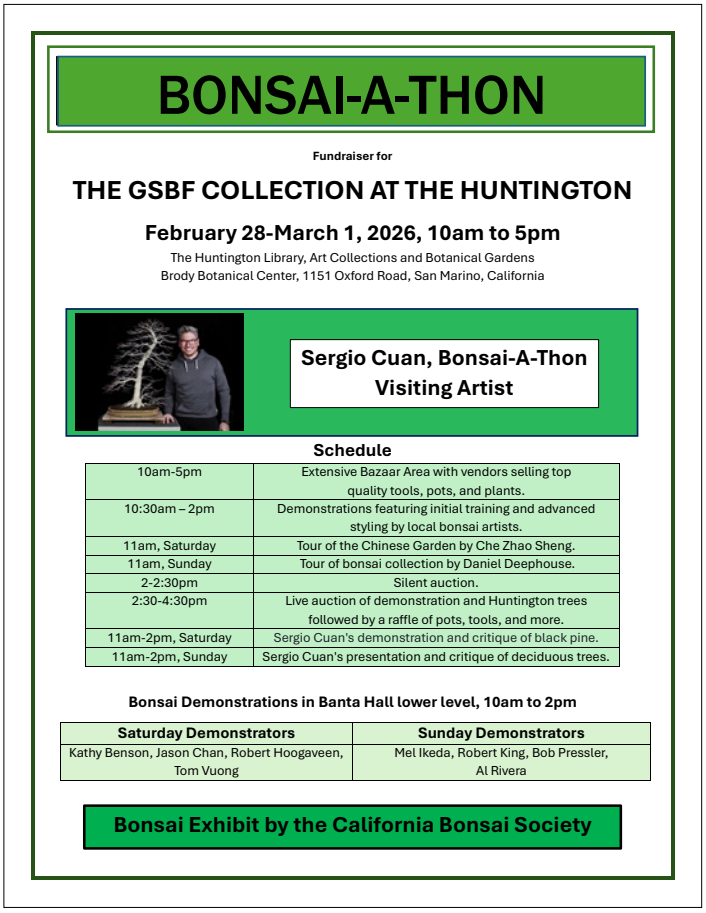
If you'd like to revisit the artistry of the last Expo, consider picking up the Pacific Bonsai Expo 2024 Commemorative Album, which features every tree from the show along with full exhibit photography and artist details. I had the pleasure of helping design and lay out the front section of the book, 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

Please join us for two days filled with beautiful bonsai. The California Bonsai Society will hold their annual exhibit at the Bonsai-A-Thon. Demonstrations on both days by local and visiting artist, Sergio Cuan, with raffles, live and silent auctions and vendor sales. See details below. Plans for our club are still TBD but looking at leaving early to attend Saturday.

Date: February 28-March 1, 2026
Location: The Huntington
1151 Oxford Road
San Marino, CA 91108



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
DIANA BOYDSTUN

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

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TREASURER
DIANA BOYDSTUN

MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR
JOE BALDASSINI AND
CINDY DRAZYNSKI

SECRETARY
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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

BAIKOEN 61ST WINTER SILHOUETTE SHOW 2026

European Oak - Joe Olson

Hackberry - Gwen Stauffer

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

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