BONSAI CLUB
OF SANTA BARBARA

OCT 2026 NEWSLETTER

SINCE 1971

BONSAI CLUB
OF SANTA BARBARA

P.O. BOX 3703
SANTA BARBARA, CA 93130

SANTABARBARABONSAI.ORG

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

OCT 5, 2026

IN THIS NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

CLUB NEWS:
REGISTRATION REMINDER

INFORMATION:
GARDEN DESIGN

UPCOMING MEETING:
SEBASTIAN FRAYE

UPCOMING WORKSHOP:
CLUB LED BYOT

BONSAI IN CALIFORNIA:
PBE EXPO 27

BCSB PROGRAMS
2026

HIGHLIGHTS:
CLUB SHOW PICS
FROM MARK

Dear BCSB members and friends,

October is here, but it sure doesn't feel like it. Despite the extended summer weather and the need to keep up with watering and chasing shade, this is definitely the time for autumn bonsai strategies and techniques that will prepare your trees for winter.

As the days shorten and [eventually] cool, trees slow their growth and some move into dormancy. The window for repotting trees has now closed until next January or February. While there is still time to maintain your normal fertilization routine, that will change when the temperatures finally drop. Depending on the species, reduce or stop fertilizing to avoid stimulating growth when the tree wants to go dormant.

This is also a good time to inspect the wire on your trees - particularly deciduous trees - and remove wire that is cutting into - or "biting" - the bark. If your trees grew vigorously over the summer, there is a good chance they have outgrown the wire. It's still safe to do some light pruning and shaping, and wiring of trees. Wait until deciduous trees lose their leaves and go dormant before cutting back branches to shape the tree. Deciduous trees can be wired, but be aware the branches lose flexibility with dormancy. Conversely, this is a good time to assess this year's candles on healthy pines and trim them to encourage new bundles to sprout in spring. Take time to clean out all the dead needles on conifers. If you won't be showing a fruiting tree this winter, consider removing the fruit or seed pods to redirect the tree's energy into the health of the tree.

When winter finally arrives and we hit a lull in bonsai care, we have more time for careful assessment of our trees to contemplate future design direction. I find creative inspiration from a number of sources. An easy step is to look in books and online for images of mature bonsai of the same species as young trees in my collection. My favorite source for a thorough refresher in bonsai styling is the book, Principles of Bonsai Design, by David De Groot, the former curator of the Pacific Rim Bonsai Collection. It is one of the most comprehensive books on bonsai design, and it will be my winter read, again and again. I also plan to attend the Pacific Bonsai Expo (PBE) in early February. There's nothing like looking at some of the best specimens in the west - and chatting with the artists - to get motivated.

We've also got three outstanding bonsai pros bringing their expertise to finish out BCSB's 2026 meeting and workshop schedule. Check out this newsletter's calendar and mark the dates - you won't want to miss any of them.

Looking forward to seeing you later this month!
Cheers and trees!
Gwen

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CLUB NEWS

FIND INSPIRATION AT PBE 27

The Pacific Bonsai Expo is a wonderful opportunity to see exceptional trees up close, find inspiration for your own bonsai, and connect with fellow enthusiasts. Seeing branch structure, fine details, and how pots, stands, and accents work together can deepen your understanding of tree development and display. Whether you're new to bonsai or have years of experience, there's plenty to learn and enjoy.

Tickets for the February 6–7, 2027 event are now on sale online—consider making plans with fellow club members to attend!

https://pacificbonsaiexpo.org/collections/tickets-and-merchandise

TIPS AND INFO:

BONSAI ONLINE

We regularly share seasonal bonsai care tips and reliable resources to help you build your knowledge and navigate the information available online. This month, I'm revisiting some of my favorite YouTube bonsai channels. I've shared these before, but wanted to highlight them again for our newer members and anyone who may have missed them.

Bonsai Youtube Channel Recommendations

- **RAKUYO's Deciduous Bonsai Channel**
  (**https://www.youtube.com/@rakuyobonsai**)
  Rakuyo Bonsai is a YouTube channel focused on the care, cultivation, and artistry of deciduous bonsai trees. It offers detailed guidance, demonstrations, and tips for bonsai enthusiasts of all levels, with a particular emphasis on seasonal maintenance and growth strategies. The channel provides educational content aimed at helping viewers improve their bonsai skills while also showcasing the beauty of these miniature trees.

- **Bonsaify**
  (**https://www.youtube.com/@Bonsaify**)
  Bonsaify is a YouTube channel dedicated to teaching bonsai cultivation and care, with a focus on making the art of bonsai accessible to a wider audience. The channel provides tutorials, expert tips, and insights on various bonsai styles and techniques. Content ranges from basic bonsai care to more advanced techniques aimed at helping enthusiasts refine their craft. Channel is run by Eric Shrader who one of the founding members of the Pacific Bonsai Expo coming up at the end of the month.

- **WABI CHANNEL**
  (**https://www.youtube.com/@WABICHANNEL-kf5xf**)
  WABI CHANNEL is a YouTube platform focused on bonsai and traditional Japanese aesthetics. It offers educational content on bonsai creation and care, with an emphasis on the concept of "wabi-sabi" — the beauty found in imperfection. The channel showcases detailed techniques and tutorials aimed at bonsai enthusiasts interested in refining their skills and appreciating the deeper cultural aspects of bonsai art.

- **Bonsai Harmony**
  (**https://www.youtube.com/@BonsaiHarmony**)
  Bonsai Harmony is the YouTube channel of Michael McTeague, a Canadian bonsai professional who trained for over six years under Keiichi Fujikawa at Kouka-en in Osaka, Japan. His videos offer a close-up look at bonsai work, with clear explanations covering topics such as pine pad design, wiring, and refinement. It's a great resource for seeing techniques in action and learning from his experience in a Japanese bonsai nursery.

THURSDAY, OCT 15TH MEETING

OAK DEVELOPMENT WITH SEBASTIAN FRAYE

This month, I'll be giving our meeting presentation and sharing my passion and focus in bonsai—oak development! Since joining our club in 2022, I've primarily focused my bonsai practice on California native oaks, with our Coast Live Oak being my personal favorite. After four years of working with this species, I've gained a good understanding of how it responds and how we can work with its natural growth habits to develop trees in the styles we enjoy.

I'd also like to touch on something Jeremiah mentioned during his visit last month: realism vs. idealism, and how those ideas come to life in bonsai creation. We'll explore how to approach raw nursery material with a particular style or design in mind, how to recognize its potential, and what to look for when selecting new material.

My passion for oak development has also led me to start a bonsai nursery this year! Oak Form Bonsai, located in the Santa Ynez Valley, focuses on California native oaks and will officially launch later this month.

Follow Sebastian's work and bonsai nursery on Instagram: @oakformbonsai

Thursday, October 15
Doors Open at 7:00 PM
Meeting Begins at 7:15 PM
Location: Bethany Congregational Church
556 N Hope Ave, Santa Barbara

Coast Live Oak from nursery after first styling, 2022

Same Coast Live Oak, 2024

SATURDAY, OCT 17TH WORKSHOP

CLUB LED WORKSHOP

Bring a tree and join us for a workshop led by fellow club members! Whether you're looking for styling advice, help with pruning or wiring, or time to remove wire as Gwen mentioned in her address, this is a great opportunity to work together, ask questions, and learn from one another. All experience levels are welcome.

Saturday, October 17

Workshop is Free:
Bring at least 2-4 trees if not more, your tools, and your questions.

Session Time:
Morning: 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

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

Wally Kunimoto giving tips to a club members

Jeff Sczechowski demonstrating to Anthony Ranii proper wiring techniques

BONSAI IN CALIFORNIA

PACIFIC BONSAI EXPO CALL FOR ENTRIES + TICKETS/MERCH

The Pacific Bonsai Expo is now preparing for its 2027 exhibition. Members interested in showing a tree should begin preparing their submissions and photographs.

Important Dates

Submissions open: October 15, 2026
Submission deadline: November 15, 2026
Selection results expected: December 5, 2026
Pacific Bonsai Expo: February 6–7, 2027

Who Can Enter?

Entry is open to professionals and hobbyists, and there is no fee to submit a tree for consideration. You may submit as many trees as you like, but each exhibitor may have no more than three entries accepted.

What You Will Need

Each submission must include:

- The tree's common and botanical names
- The tree's height
- The names of the pot and stand makers, if known
- A clear photograph of the front
- A photograph looking upward into the branch structure
- A leafless photograph for deciduous species
- Additional views when needed to show the tree clearly

Use a plain background, diffused lighting and a camera position approximately one-third of the way up the tree.

Selection Process

Entries will be reviewed anonymously by Bjorn Bjorholm, Ryan Neil, Andrew Robson, Suthin Sukosolvisit and Peter Tea.

If Your Tree Is Accepted

Exhibitors will pay a fee for each display and receive one exhibitor pass plus one weekend pass for a spouse or guest. Exhibitors are responsible for providing their own stands, accents and other display elements.

Tickets and merchandise

Tickets and merchandise for the 2027 Pacific Bonsai Expo are now on sale online! I'm excited to share that I (Sebastian Fraye) designed the shirts for this year's event, which are available to purchase alongside other PBE merchandise.

https://pacificbonsaiexpo.org/collections/tickets-and-merchandise

One of the shirts I designed for the 2027 Pacific Bonsai Expo

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

MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR
JOE BALDASSINI AND
CINDY DRAZYNSKI

SECRETARY
DANIEL OHLINGER

NEWSLETTER
SEBASTIAN FRAYE

WEBSITE
DANIEL MARTINEZ

WORKSHOP / PROGRAMS
MARK BRITTON

DATE	TIME	DESCRIPTION
SAT - AUG 8	9:00AM – 12:00 PM 1:00PM – 4:00PM	SUMMER POTLUCK
THURS - SEP 17	7:00PM – 9:00PM	MONTHLY MEETING: JEREMIAH LEE – REDWOODS PRESENTATION
SAT - SEP 19	9:00AM – 12:00 PM 1:00PM – 4:00PM	WORKSHOP: JEREMIAH LEE – BRING YOUR OWN TREE
THURS - OCT 15	7:00PM – 9:00PM	MONTHLY MEETING: SEBASTIAN FRAYE (OAK FORM BONSAI) PRESENTATION
SAT - OCT 17	9:00AM – 12:00PM 1:00PM – 4:00PM	WORKSHOPS: CLUB WORKSHOP – NO FEE
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
THURS - DEC 3	7:00PM – 9:00PM	MONTHLY MEETING: RYAN NEIL (MIRAI) – PRESENTATION
SAT - DEC 5	9:00AM – 12:00PM 1:00PM – 4:00PM	WORKSHOP: RYAN NEIL (MIRAI) – BRING YOUR OWN TREE
SAT - DEC 12	11:00AM – 3:00PM	HOLIDAY POTLUCK

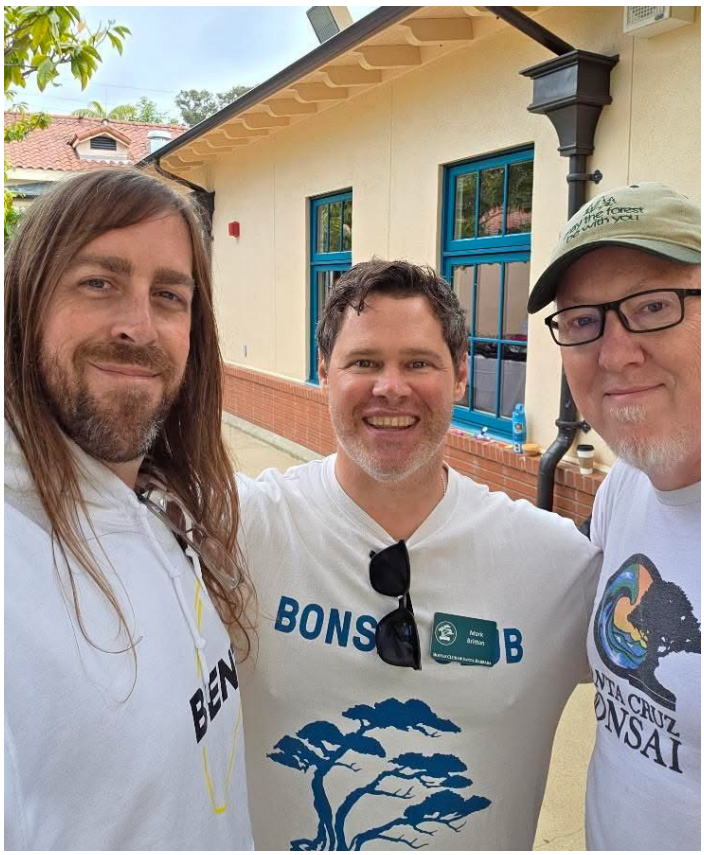
HIGHLIGHTS

A FEW PHOTOS FROM THIS YEAR'S CLUB SHOW, TAKEN BY OUR VICE PRESIDENT, MARK BRITTON.

Ernie the salesman trying to get someone to by his old tree at our club sales table

Wally explaing to another club memeber his thoughts and process to making his tree

Jonas Dupich giving a demo on a Japanese Maple



Mark with Bent Wire and Rough Cut Pottery vendors

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

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