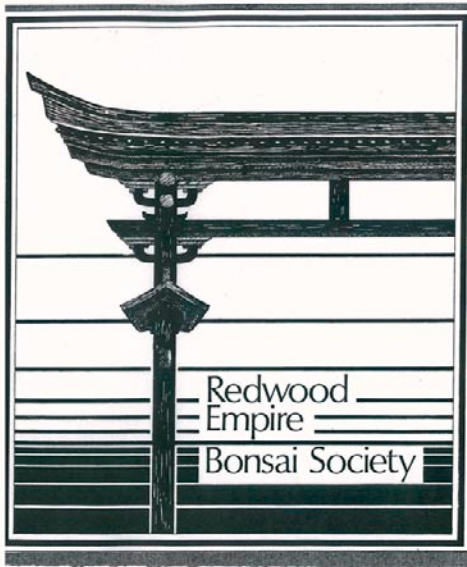


# Redwood Empire Bonsai Society



## REBS NEWSLETTER

Volume 28, Issue 6

June 2011

### President's Message: The Harmony of Bonsai

Friends:

I have been speaking, in my messages, about the community of bonsai. Here's a little something about me and how bonsai has expanded my family.

As we come into June, the 'hip' section of Sonoma County puts on the "Harmony Festival" on the second weekend of June. Now it is in it's 33rd year. About seven years ago some staff members put out a call for volunteers and one thing they were looking for was people with plants. I answered the call; that the plants were mostly bonsai was a huge bonus.

I have been involved in American social movements since I was 16 years old: civil rights, ending segregation, nuclear disarmament, tragedy of the Vietnam War, and then the counter-culture and the advent of "communes". I came to

an appreciation of the "Aquarian Dawn" and the idea of a spirituality that embraces all religions and sees humanity as one world family. This futuristic belief system favors higher consciousness and human intelligence over obedience.

The Harmony Festival helps foster this ethic so I was enchanted to be able to contribute the element of bonsai to the mix of cultural offerings.

*Continued on 2*



*Bonsai trees add an organic presence for yoga in the Harmony Festival's large geodesic dome.*



REBS President Arty Kopecky

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# Redwood Empire Bonsai Society

## A Remembrance



Dear friends in REBS,

The Board has approved a \$500 donation from our treasury to the Japanese tsunami relief effort through the Japanese American Citizens League.

May our prayers and thoughts occasionally include our friends in Japan in this time of disaster.

Respectfully,

— Art Kopecky



*Continued from 1*

Bonsai is a quiet, meditative art that is respectful, even worshipful, of nature. Bonsai honors the Chinese and Japanese cultures. Bonsai honors the plant kingdom and demonstrates an understanding of keeping plants alive. Also there is a relation to the oriental concept of Zen. So bonsai is a very good fit in helping manifest the Meditation Garden and Central Altar of the Harmony Festival. I bring the plants, but it is other team members who create the displays with me sometimes giving advice. It is significant to me to watch these folks so respectfully handle the

plants which they normally don't come in contact with.

As bonsai has contributed to many members' lives, it has given me



*Modern goddesses enjoy the special ambiance living trees add to their harmonious rituals.*

something tangible I can offer, and brought me into the Harmony family. I didn't start with this object in mind, but it came as a gift after I had some better looking trees.

So friends, I hope that bonsai contributes to your lives. I know that for many of you it has. Bonsai brings us closer to plants but also they bring us closer to our community of people.

— Arty



## Upcoming Bonsai Events

*June 4-5*

*San Mateo, CA*

**Sei Boku Bonsai Kai: 28th Annual Show** at the San Mateo Garden Center, 605 Parkside Way, next to Beresford Park. Hours are 10 am - 4 pm, with demonstrations from 1-3pm both days. Saturday demonstration will be by Steve Jang, and Sunday by John Thompson (JT). Door prizes, vendor sales, and member plant sales will be featured. There will also be Dr. Bonsai to answer questions regarding bonsai care. Admission is free. For more information contact [khaley57@gmail.com](mailto:khaley57@gmail.com).

*June 5*

*Seaside, CA*

**Monterey Bonsai Club 48th Annual Exhibition** at the Monterey Buddhist Temple in Seaside at 1150 Noche Buena. Show hours are 11am - 4 pm. Demonstration at 1:30 pm by Katsumi Kinoshita. Sales area will include bonsai, pots and plants. For more information, email [Joe Byrd](mailto:Joe.Byrd).

*Jun 10-11*

*Oakland, CA*

**Bay Area Satsuki Aikokai: Annual Satsuki Azalea Show** at the Lakeside Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Avenue. Hours are Saturday, 10 am -5 pm, and Sunday, 10 am - 4pm. Demonstrations at 1:30 pm, featuring Rick Garcia on Saturday, and Johnny Uchida on Sunday. Sales area and benefit drawings. Free admission to the show. For more information contact Ron Reid, 925-831-2500.

*June 11*

*Grass Valley, CA*

**Nevada County Bonsai Club: Third Annual Spring Show and Sale** at the Grass Valley Veteran's Memorial Auditorium, 255 South Auburn Street. Show hours are 11 am - 4 pm, and will feature a bonsai display and demonstrations throughout the day. There will also be raffles of bonsai and accessories, and sales of bonsai, pots, tools, and other bonsai related items. Refreshments, ample free parking and free Admission. For more information call Leo Martinez at 530-273-2628.



## Redwood Empire Bonsai Society

### Bonsai on the Big Island of Hawai'i

**B**ruce Winter had been interested in the Far East ever since he was a teenager. Bonsai came into his life in the early '80s when he wandered into a small clubhouse at a park in Santa Rosa and met Kay Urbanski, Mas Imazumi, Ron Kelley and Ian Price, who were talking about starting a bonsai club. Shortly afterwards, John Naka gave a public bonsai demo at the Vets' Hall and he was a goner. Bruce soon joined the Redwood Empire Bonsai Society and each year it got better and better. Bruce says he will always be grateful for the teachings of Mas Imazumi; "deep gasho", he says. Later on, he joined the Marin Bonsai Club and he and Ron Kelley would ride together to meetings. Until moving to Hawai'i, Bruce had no idea how fortunate he was to be part of such vital bonsai clubs. Now, 30 years later, he is still creating beautiful bonsai on the Big Island of Hawai'i.

Collected trees were always Bruce's forte. Living in the Glen Ellen area, Bruce hiked many miles in the open spaces of the North Bay, looking for yamadori, especially Coast Live Oaks. He remembers bringing home more deer ticks than bonsai, but these collecting trips gave him good practice for what he does now in Hawai'i.

In the early '90s, Bruce moved to the town of Volcano, just 10 minutes from Volcanoes National Park. The principle tree in this area is the `ohi'a (Metrosideros polymorpha),



Bruce Winter with one of his `Ohi'a bonsai trees that he collects the hard way, right off the lava flow.

a flowering evergreen in the myrtle family. The `ohi'a's flower is called the lehua, which is the "flower of the island of Hawai'i" and can be either red or yellow. In the high rain forest of the town of Volcano, the `ohi'a thrives and grows very tall and wide. But in the dryer parts of the island, the `ohi'a is one of the

few plants that can survive. Here, the `ohi'a has an amazing amount of character and has adapted very well to the harsh environment. After a lava flow, often the first plant you see is an `ohi'a. There is one on the 1991 Kalapana lava flow that is over eight feet tall and, apart from a few grasses, is the only living thing there.

Bruce has been studying the `ohi'a since he moved to Volcano and although the tree is a very difficult species to work with, he has learned how to turn them into beautiful bonsai. The `ohi'a of the Hawaiian lava desert would seem to be the perfect bonsai subject. Here the `ohi'a grows very slowly. For about every inch of trunk width at the surface, the tree is about 100 years old. Most of Bruce's collected `ohi'a are between three and six inches.



A wonderful array of Bruce's collected `Ohi'a bonsai. How many collective years of growth could be reckoned by this group, do you think?

*Continued on p. 4*

## ‘Ohi`a and Lehua — A Lava Love Story

*Continued from p. 4*

This is where Bruce’s California yamadori experience has helped him. During the cool months, Bruce hikes into the southern part of the island, looks at the smaller ‘ohi`as and tags potential prospects for



‘Ohi`a and Lehua share an eternal embrace.

collection. Bruce has become quite picky with what to collect as what may look great in the ground doesn’t necessarily look great once potted and at eye level. Bruce collects these trees by ‘ground layering’. This is the same thing as air layering, but at ground level. So he gets down on his belly, right on the rough pahoehoe lava, and does the surgery. He paints the cut with ‘Dip N Grow’, a rooting hormone. At this point, a heavy foil is laid around the base. This is packed with sphagnum moss and Hydrosorb, which keeps the moss moist. Then this is wrapped in more foil and then Bruce creates a berm made of lava rocks, wood, sand, anything Bruce can find. None of the shiny foil can

show or the Nene goose (state bird of Hawai‘i) will peck at it.

Every two weeks or so, Bruce visits his potential bonsais and opens the top of the foil and waters the moss. When roots begin to mature he feeds them with a weak fertilizer/humic solution. After three to five months Bruce saws the trunk off at ground level and holds it up with great satisfaction. He then brings his new bonsai home, plops it in a pot and the ‘ohi`a begins its life as a bonsai.

The result of all this work is an incredible collection of yamadori bonsai in all shapes and sizes. In April of 2011, my wife and I visited Bruce and saw his collection. What a thrill it was to see these beautiful bonsai. There are all shapes and sizes. They all have amazing deadwood; the kind of deadwood that can only be created by nature. The bark is rough and makes the trees look very old (which they are!). Some of the trunks are very wide and others very narrow and twisted...fantastic bunjin. Some have lehua blossoms on them. Like our own California and Sierra junipers, these ‘ohi`a tell a story of the struggle to survive in their harsh

environment. And isn’t this exactly what we are trying to show with our bonsai?

Working with these ancient ‘ohi`a trees over the last 20 years, Bruce has gained great respect for their rugged, diverse nature and their tenacity in surviving their harsh environment.

An old Hawaiian legend tells of ‘Ohi`a and Lehua, who were two young lovers. Pele, the volcano goddess, fell in love with the handsome ‘ohi`a and approached him. But he was not swayed by Pele’s charms as he was deeply in love with Lehua. In a jealous rage, Pele turned ‘ohi`a into an ugly, twisted old tree. Lehua was very sad over this transformation and out of pity for her the other gods turned her into a flower and placed her on the ‘ohi`a tree. From then on, the lehua flower has always blossomed on the ‘ohi`a tree and the lovers are never separated. It is said that if you pluck a lehua from an ‘ohi`a tree, rain falls. The rain is the tears of Lehua, as she cannot bear to be separated from her true love.

If you’d like to contact Bruce, his email is [akamatsu1@yahoo.com](mailto:akamatsu1@yahoo.com).

— Story by Craig Thompson  
— Photos by Bruce Winter  
and Craig Thompson



# Redwood Empire Bonsai Society

## Soil, Water and Fertilizer – The JT Way

For the May 24th meeting, REBS hosted John Thompson (JT) as guest bonsai artist and instructor. JT brought with him a cork bark oak (*Quercus suber*) as demo tree. In addition, he brought a whole lot of soil, water and fertilizer information and presented the members in attendance with various samples of soil and fertilizer products commonly used with bonsai.

JT said because of the late spring and weather conditions he did not want to style the demo tree. He indicated that the new vigorous growth should be allowed to harden off before any heavy pruning. He said he wanted the runners to grow out more and help with the overall flow of branch development. In three to four weeks, pruning and wiring would be fine. The demo tree would be raffled off at the conclusion and JT will also provide the winner a workshop for styling the tree at a later date.

JT answered numerous questions from the members. In general, the cork oak is evergreen and suitable for broom style bonsai, as the cork oak tends to grow upward. Main branches show movement over time. It's the quick grown spurts that create the cork bark effect. When new growth is present, the energy of the tree is at its best. JT suggested letting the runners grow eight to 10 inches long before pruning. He also said the new tree growth should harden off before transplanting and pruning, and



John Thompson gives the low down on soil, water and fertilizer science for optimal bonsai performance.

he discussed the need to seal cut wounds after pruning branches.

JT said compaction of soil decreases aerability and drainage, causes sogginess and leads to root rot and death of the bonsai. Soil mix must address moisture problems of growing bonsai. Water must drain well. Good soil mix also retains necessary nutrients. Soil mixes must be sifted to size and to remove fines (fine particles). Pore size and size of particles are keys to delivery of water, air, nutrients, and root anchorage.

JT talked about watering needs of bonsai. In order to prevent permanent wilting point, soil moisture conditions must be managed well. Water is lost to

the tree first by gravity as it flows through the soil, then “evapo-transpiration” occurs, which is evaporation from the soil and transpiration from the plant. Heat and wind add to the speed of water loss.

JT then discussed the requirements of a fertilizer regimen for bonsai. He recommends fertilizing on a regular schedule from February through November with organic fertilizers, and monthly supplements of a liquid fertilizer. In summary, JT covered the requirements of successful bonsai through the management of light, air, water, and all essential nutrients.

A raffle for the demo tree and JT workshop was conducted and member Paul Wycoff won.



An excellent display of soil and nutritive substances illustrates JT's very informative presentation.

— Story by George Haas  
— Photos by CA





Michael Murtaugh's azalea shows a mix of colorful blossoms.



A gorgeous Green Atlas cedar from Jim Gremel's collection.



Craig Thompson's Coast live oak sits sweetly on its redwood slab.



Brian Underwood's delightful little redwood trees on his hand-made slabs.



Arty arranged a lovely selection of rose and azalea shohin, with buddha.



A beautiful grafted shimpaku juniper, also from Jim Gremel, on an ornate Chinese stand.



This bunjin style rosemary by Craig Thompson is an unusual specimen, well displayed here.



This root-over-rock Blue Moon azalea by Michael Murtaugh is really dreamy.

# Redwood Empire Bonsai Society

## Directory 2011

Art Kopecky President	(707) 829-5670	artsankopecky@msn.com
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Yvonne Batcheller Treasurer		ybforms@sonic.net
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Bob Shimon Board Member	(707) 884-4126	shimon@mcn.org
James Whitfield Board Member	(707) 538-1077	jawhit6@yahoo.com
Jim McGlashan Past President	(707) 942-6316	
Kathy Shaner Sensei/Accredited Bonsai Master	(408) 226-6625	
<i>(Open)</i> Membership Chair		
<i>(Open)</i> Magazine & Video		
James Whitfield Book Librarian	(707) 539-4253	jawhit6@yahoo.com
Celestia Amberstone Webmaster/Editor du jour	(707) 527-6292	rebsweb@earthlink.com

### Help Needed!

The directory at right shows several positions *open* and in need of your support.

The club needs to fill these open positions as soon as possible. The new year is a busy time and lots of club activities are taking shape, including getting our Annual Show ready for prime time.

If you can help please contact Arty Kopecky (707.829.5670) or any board member.

What are  
you  
waiting  
for?



Calendar Of Events

June 2011

- 16 Intermediate I Workshop, Thursday, VA Memorial Bldg, Santa Rosa, with Richard Hoskins and Ivan Lukrich.
  - 17 Intermediate II Workshop, Friday, Frank Bardella's Bonsai Studio, with Frank Bardella and Gene Lynch.
  - 23 Kathy Shaner Advanced Workshop, Thursday (6.1 & 3.1).
  - 24 Kathy Shaner Advanced Workshop, Friday (6.2).
  - 25 Kathy Shaner Advanced Workshop, Saturday (6.3).
  - 28 General Meeting and Demonstration, 4th Tuesday, 7:30-10:00 PM, VA Memorial Bldg, Santa Rosa. Sensei Kathy Shaner will do demo.
- No Board meeting this month.



Visit the web site of GSBF for complete monthly events and/or revised dates at:  
[www.gsbf-bonsai.org](http://www.gsbf-bonsai.org)

Annual Show 2011

It's June, but where is our summer weather? Cooler temps mean we can conserve water and there's little danger of heat prostration—for our trees or ourselves—which may be a good thing; but what are our poor tomatoes going to do without hot summer rays to ripen 'em up? We're just sayin'...

Meanwhile, only two+ months until our Annual Big Show!

**REBS 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Bonsai Show**

Saturday · August 27th · 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
Sunday · August 28th · 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

One of the largest and best bonsai shows in the United States

Daily demos by renowned Bonsai Master Kathy Shaner  
1:00 - 3:30 both days

Santa Rosa Veterans Memorial Building  
1351 Maple Avenue, Santa Rosa

For information contact: Bob Shimon  
707-884-4126 · [shimon@mcn.org](mailto:shimon@mcn.org)

Official REBS Newsletter is published monthly.

## Redwood Empire Bonsai Society



Veterans' Memorial Building,  
Santa Rosa, California

REBS was founded in 1981 for bonsai enthusiasts. Our club meets every fourth Tuesday of the month (except in July and December). The monthly meeting and demonstration is held at the Veterans' Memorial Building (across from the Sonoma County Fairgrounds) at 1351 Maple Ave., Santa Rosa, in the Lodge Room. Open to the public. Please refer to our calendar of events for specific time, date and guest demonstrator.

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**We're on the web:**  
**[www.rebsbonsai.org](http://www.rebsbonsai.org)**

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Redwood Empire Bonsai Society  
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Santa Rosa CA 95405-2872

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