

LOOKING BACK: In the Bonsai Garden Last June



Gakko Summer School learning to make bonsai



Summer Exhibition



A Mike Baldwin bonsai "Glamor" photoshoot



BONSAI TOMODACHI

THE CLARK BONSAI COLLECTION NEWSLETTER

UPCOMING EVENTS:

CBBS 2nd SATURDAY VOLUNTEER DAY
June 8 Orientation and Training 9am-12pm

CONIFER CURATORIAL TOUR June 8

CONIFER EXHIBITION June 8-Sept. 22

GAKKO SUMMER SCHOOL BONSAI CLASS
June 25 9am-12pm

RYAN NEIL, BONSAI MASTER VISIT
June 29-30

KOCHI SISTER CITY DELEGATION VISIT
July 16-17

TORO NAGASHI Aug. 10 7pm

CURATOR'S MESSAGE

As we prepare for June we can't help but think about the glorious May we just experienced. Official records will tell us it was the wettest May on record for Fresno. For those of us used to much warmer temperatures, this May has afforded us luxuriously cooler weather and we'll take what we can get while the getting is good. We know that June will bring us back to reality. Mid to

high 90's are predicted for the first two weeks of June and we know the "Dragon" of summer is just waiting to pounce.

Our work for June is to continue with our conifer foliage management. Black Pine de-candling is due right away and we can expect the junipers to continue offering growth flushes throughout June and into July. We can also lay down our final feeding before the summer break. We will also continue to deal with dead-wood cleaning and preservation and last but not least, all residual wire applied last year needs to be checked. Most of it is ready to be removed and this must be done before the heavy growth flushes of the coming summer.

Continued on page 2



Bob Hilvers and Bob Wright double-teaming Sam Kawaguchi's juniper cascade.

CURATOR'S MESSAGE continued from page 1

We have a new Exhibition coming up and Ryan Neil will be at the CBC at the end of June but before we get into the nuts and bolts of those events we have two new additions to the Collection that I would like to tell you about. Howard Latimer, long time member of the Fresno Bonsai Society and retired Professor of Botany at Fresno State University has donated two very important bonsai to the Clark Bonsai Collection: a California Juniper and an Interior Live Oak. Each of these bonsai represents significant additions to the Collection. The Interior Live Oak was collected from the wild in 1972 at a location near Bass Lake. Interior Live Oaks are rare as bonsai due to growth habits that don't offer much opportunity to collect smaller examples useful as bonsai. The California Juniper was collected in the Sand Canyon area of the Tehachapi Mountains by Howard and John Naka. Indeed this Juniper is the very tree depicted in John Naka's book *Bonsai Techniques II* on pages 8-10. Included on these pages are several photographs of the tree after collection and a sketch by John Naka of his expectation of the future look of the tree after styling. It is our intention to restore this tree to John Naka's vision and document the process. Come by the Collection and check out this historic bonsai and keep tabs on its periodic progress as we return this tree to its former glory.

As mentioned we will open our new exhibition - "*Conifers*" in June. We will use the first week in June to remove the current Exhibition and place the new trees in their assigned display positions. The "*Conifers*" exhibition opens June 8th.

Ryan Neil will be at the CBCS for two days on June 29-30. He will be conducting a Juniper foliage management clinic using CBCS assets. Those of you who have had the opportunity to see and hear Ryan up close and personal know that there is no better way to learn the art of bonsai. If you have not had this chance, don't miss the opportunity to be immersed in bonsai knowledge. As always observers are welcome. The fee for non-CBCS volunteers is \$30 per day. Interested parties should contact Bob Hilvers at 559-909-1051 or bonsaiguai@comcast.net.

June Curatorial Team Work Days

Wed., June 5 Change out exhibitions & continue foliage management

Fri., June 7 Finish Exhibition change out

Sat., June 8 Conifer Exhibition opens

Curatorial Tour at 11am/Volunteer Day

Wed., June 12 Conifer foliage management.

Fri., June 14 Conifer foliage management

Wed., June 19 Conifer foliage management

Fri., June 21 Conifer foliage management

Wed. June 26 Prep for Ryan's Visit

Fri., June 28 **No scheduled work day**

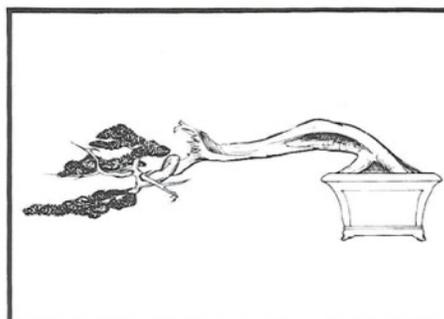
Sat., June 29 **RYAN NEIL**

Sun., June 30 **RYAN NEIL**



Left: Howard Latimer with the California Juniper he collected with John Naka in the Tehachapi Mountains

Below: John Naka's sketch from *Bonsai Techniques II* of its planned future look after styling.



CONIFER EXHIBITION INTRODUCTION

BY BOB HILVERS

When the term Conifer is mentioned, the image that comes to mind for most folks is of pine trees in the pointy-top Christmas tree shape. In reality a Conifer is any variety of plant with needle-like or scale-like foliage that produces “cones” to protect and distribute their seeds. Pines, cedars, firs, cypresses, junipers, larches, hemlocks, redwoods, spruces and yews are all “Conifers” and most of these have their own distinctive shapes other than the pointed drooping branch forms we are most familiar with.

In fact it is the myriad of tree-forms represented by Conifers that make them the ideal subjects for bonsai artists. The quintessential California bonsai uses our native California Juniper to depict images of ancient trees with twisted trunks battered by wind, bleached white by harsh desert sun and ravaged by marauding insects. Coast Redwood stumps can be used to create images reminiscent of once mighty trunks broken and shattered yet regenerating new growth. Bristlecone Pines, the oldest trees on earth, don't look like pines at all. Rather they resemble buttressed and spired fortresses formed to withstand the ravages of time itself. Indeed it has been documented that some Bristlecone Pines existing in the White Mountains of California today sprouted as the Great Pyramids of Egypt were under construction.

An incredible variety of Cypress tree forms inspire a host of dynamic and intriguing bonsai. The Bald Cypresses, denizens of the swamps and bayous of the south, are tall and stately with iconic “knees” at the base of their trunks. Bald Cypresses are also one of the few Conifers that seasonally shed their foliage, like deciduous trees, revealing bare branches in the winter. The mature form of Monterey Cypresses consists of tall gracefully curving trunks, topped by foliage pads flattened and elongated in the direction of prevailing winds. “Pygmy Cypress”, one of the rarest Cypresses in existence, are often referred to as “natural bonsai” as they can reach full maturity at two feet in height. Mature Cedars of Lebanon more resemble spreading Oaks or Chestnuts rather than the Conifer forms we normally associate with Cedars.

Junipers in their infinite variety offer an unlimited source of forms real and imagined for bonsai artists to use as inspiration. From gently curving trunks that seem to sway in unison with some silent lilting song to ancient snags of ruinous old age living out a precarious existence on a panicle of rock, to an expression of modern design that has only a remote connection to a living thing.

You are invited to experience for yourself why Conifers offer such inspiration for the art of bonsai. Take a stroll among the Conifers of the Clark Bonsai Collection exhibit. Consider each bonsai. See its history written in the language of age and the influence of the elements. Listen to its silent song, hear its quiet poetry, learn the story of its life.



California Juniper styled by Ryan Neil, inspired by the look of the bristlecone pine, the oldest species of tree in the world. Planted on a granite slab.



“The Old Snag” San Jose Juniper in a literati, root-on-rock style created by Bob Hilvers, is displayed in a shallow tray of water.



Pygmy Cypress endemic to certain coastal terraces and coastal mountain ranges of Mendocino and Sonoma Counties, naturally stunted by poor, acidic, nutrient-starved soils.

BONSAI OF THE MONTH**CBCS 051 LEGACY COLLECTION**

This unusual “pagoda top” cascade was Sam Kawaguchi’s signature bonsai.

Artist/ Maker: Sam Kawaguchi

Common Name: Prostrata juniper

Botanical Name: Juniperus prostrata

Date Acquired: 10/10/12

Age: Estimated to be 40 years +

Evergreen

Style: Cascade/Kengai: Modeled after trees that grow from banks over water or down the side of a mountain. The apex of a full cascade style falls below the base of the pot. To give scope for its shape, this style often appears in a tall, slender container not used elsewhere in bonsai.

Donor: Helen Kawaguchi

**FEATURED ARTIST:
SAM KAWAGUCHI
1933-2003**

Sam Kawaguchi was born and educated in Utah. After his required stint in the US Army and getting his engineering degree from the University of Utah, Sam began his career in the aerospace industry in Seattle, WA. Following his years of work on various rocket launches on both the east and the west coasts, he and his family moved to Santa Maria, CA where his styling and collection of bonsai began in the mid-70s. His interest was sparked by a class taught by Harry Koga at Allan Hancock College, the local community college.

Sam joined the local bonsai club, continued to take classes from Harry and participated in workshops at state and national conventions. He was an admirer and avid student of John Naka, to whom he credited much of his bonsai knowledge and expertise. Sam enjoyed sharing his knowledge of bonsai. He gave many demonstrations on style and techniques at local area clubs and events, including the Santa Barbara County Fair.

The Clark Bonsai Collection is honored to have nine of Sam’s bonsai in its Legacy Collection, including the lovely Prostrata Cascade, the Bonsai of the Month. Several more of his fine conifers will be on display in the upcoming exhibition.



THE CLARK BONSAI COLLECTION NEEDS YOU!

As an all volunteer organization, the Clark Collection is dependent on its dedicated volunteers to maintain the bonsai and the bonsai garden and to make them available to an increasing number of appreciative visitors. Please volunteer if you can and encourage your friends and acquaintances to consider volunteering too. Review the attached Volunteer Opportunity Brochure. Join us on Saturday, June 8 for Volunteer Day.

MEET DOCENT DAVID BROWN

My wife and I retired to Fresno nine years ago. We've never before lived in the same place for so long. After 40+ years as American diplomats, Tuyet and I figured we'd seen enough bright lights. We like the easygoing lifestyle and reasonable cost of living here, and have adapted our gardening skills to the Central Valley climate.

We still travel frequently, especially to Vietnam, Tuyet's native land, but also often to Japan, another nation we know well. Years ago, we were in intensive Japanese language study, and then worked for another six years at the US Embassy in Tokyo..

The Japanese put a lot of effort into maintaining traditions that make them, well, uniquely Japanese. When Tuyet and I had a long weekend, an invitation or other good opportunity, we joined in. To us, Japan was most fascinating because the foundations of its society and the interactions of everyday life are attractive and yet so distinctly different. A deep dive into Japanese culture (and into a few other cultures as well) caused us to reflect upon and more deeply appreciate our own American way of life.

I think that if the Brown family had taken root in one place, I might have become a bonsai hobbyist, channeling my dad's love affair with American hollies. A life can be only so full, however. Second best now is volunteering once or twice a month at the Clark Collection as a docent. I've gotten acquainted there with the marvelous works of living art that have been created by several generations of Central Valley bonsai masters, and I greatly enjoy sharing what I have learned with visitors to this very special garden.



Ann weeding the Sawara Cypress forest in the bonsai exhibit.

MEET GARDEN GUARDIAN: ANN MCGOWAN

I came to really get to know and love the Shinzen Garden while working as Executive Director for the Valley Cultural Coalition. Sally Ramage [former Shinzen Board President and instrumental in bringing the Clark Collection to Shinzen] would regularly attend our meetings and always send me information on upcoming events. I knew it was a place I wanted to volunteer as soon as I had the time. That came in 2018. I had visited the bonsai collection in Hanford and was so excited when it moved to Fresno. Bob Hilvers has done such an awesome job with the collection. I was happy to be told that I could come on Wednesday mornings and help. I cheerily joined a fun, interesting, welcoming group of volunteers. I love watching them do their magic with the trees. I'm slowly learning the art of bonsai but for the most part enjoy working in the garden. I'm glad to do what I can to make it a beautiful place to visit.

CBCS Trees Head to Oregon

by Bob Hilvers

Those of you familiar with the Clark Bonsai Collection in Shinzen are aware that Ryan Neil, student of Masahiko Kimura, and supremely accomplished bonsai artist and teacher, is a frequent visitor to the CBCS.

As a result of Ryan's many visits, he has developed an admiration for the diverse and unique nature of the Collection and a definite affinity for several of our trees. Some months ago Ryan expressed an interest in using some of the CBCS bonsai as subject material for his Mirai Live programs on the art of bonsai. We resolved to work out the logistics to get the trees up to Bonsai Mirai in Oregon, and back; easier said than done, that. In addition to the transportation issues for moving four large bonsai, the real challenges come as a result of the safeguards in place to protect California agriculture, a mega-million dollar industry, from insect pests and pathogens that arrive on fruit, vegetables and plants from outside of California. So...getting the bonsai to Mirai studios in Oregon for producing the broadcast programs is not the trick, getting them through the agricultural inspection stations and back into California is.

We are very pleased that we have completed all necessary steps to comply with local and state regulations to transport CBCS bonsai to Ryan's Mirai Live studios in Oregon, and more importantly back into California. We'll be sending the beloved Monterey Pine, the Cedar of Lebanon, and two of our California Junipers – one of those being a recent addition to the Collection that was featured in John Naka's book: *Bonsai Techniques II*. (See pictures on page 2.)



Ryan Neil working on the Cedar of Lebanon in December, 2018.

Ryan working on the Monterey Pine and its most recent "glamor" shot below.



MIRAI
AMERICAN BONSAI

<https://live.bonsaimirai.com/>