

# NEWS NOTES

Newsletter of the Tucson Bonsai Society

Founded 1972

David Meyer, Editor

Jan.-Feb.-March 2014

## Words from Ray's Woodshed...

We're running late with our first newsletter of the New Year, and I do hope you had a very enjoyable holiday season.

I would like to review with you the results of the elections for our club that was held at our regular meeting. **Wayne Blankenship** is our new vice president and **Brenda Bollard** is our treasurer. **Tokiko Engleman** and **Dee Telesco** were both reelected with **Dave Meyer** elected once again to the board. All positions are for a two year term. We should all thank the above board members for their willingness to serve and try to make our club the best it can be. If any of you members have any suggestions please talk to any of us board members because we look forward to take action on any ideas you generate for our organization.

The 18th and 19<sup>th</sup> of January were two days of workshop and demonstration with **Ted Matson**. Everyone I talked to was very glad they attended because Ted always brings a wealth of knowledge under a relaxed and fun circumstance.

Please welcome **Tokiko Engleman** who has been given a full mentor position by vote of the executive board. She now will have her own table to serve you along with **David Meyer**, **Paul Vasquez**, **Gay Lynn Goetzkye**, and myself. **Randy McLean** and **Larry Lawson** are very capable assistant mentors whom have been helping out for several years also. I have had a request from the mentors that you continue

bringing in your trees so we can continue refining our bonsai and learning how to care for the trees via their growth and health. Keep in

mind that if you bring a bonsai or not to work on by a mentor you can observe what the mentors are doing and talking about to the owner and glean knowledge, especially if it is not a species you have tried to grow before which may induce you to try a new type of tree to your growing collection. Also we would like to encourage anyone who is interested in becoming an assistant mentor to please contact one of the mentors because we need people in training for the future health of our group.

**Don't miss our program on Sunday, March 16----**

**Our speaker will be Eric Clark, Civano Nursery Horticulturist. His topic will be "Exotic and Unusual Dry Land Plants for Bonsai"**

**Bring those trees for the workshop!**

Remember that next to the lecture during the regular meeting the mentor program can have a very large impact on the success of your bonsai education and your plants will slowly become bonsai; you can be happy with the results of bringing your specimens in for help and assistance from a very willing group with years of experience.

The next bonsai master that we will have visit us is **Dennis Makishima** who is also a past President of Golden State Bonsai Federation as was **Ted Matson**. Dennis visited us two years ago and is

(Continued on next page)

## Ray's Column, continued...

back due to the great reviews when he was with us last. Saturday, March 29 will be a day of teaching how to teach beginning bonsai to potential teachers or mentors or mentors to be. The second day will be an all day workshop at my house. Applications and information will

be sent out on our website-----  
[tucsonbonsaisociety.org](http://tucsonbonsaisociety.org).

Check out our member access website :  
[tucsonbonsaisociety.org/members\\_only](http://tucsonbonsaisociety.org/members_only). **Brenda Bollard, Wayne Blankenship, Steve Willis** have put in a lot of hours getting this website up and running. We are planning to get a lot of great things on the site. **Brenda Bollard** has really taken over and allowed us to get some super pictures and video of club activities . We now have a great site comparable to any in the country. Look at these sites on a regular basis, because when there is something important for you to be aware of, this will be the primary means that will be used to get the information to you in a timely fashion.

**Ray Noseck**

## Some Boxwood Basics....

"If you cut back a long branch, there's a 50/50 chance it will die; big cuts will take decades to heal. Do not shorten many branches in length, rather thin and shorten secondaries.

"Leave undesirable branches on for the short term, to conserve energy. Use oversize aluminum wire on boxwood, due to brittleness of wood. Use flatter pots or boxes for training, to develop lateral roots and a flat rootball.

"It's okay to cross branches (1) small wire *over* large wire, tertiary branches close together actually serves to anchor small wire in place, (2) reduction in branch size to smaller terminis – run small wire *over* end of big wire, not under, to anchor.

"When trimming boxwood, remove leaves and shorten tertiaries – *leave terminals*.

"Boxwoods in a pot are slow growers; leave in ground or box for vigorous growth.

"Boxwoods like a finer soil mix, more duff on top. Avoid too much exposure to Nebari in full sun."

--**David DeGroot at GSBF Convention Nov. 2013**



## David's blog...

I'm back! Still all wobbly, but here we are back in print, for better or worse. January and February are pretty much behind us, without cold, and spring is just about sprung. Or is it? Keep on eye on those forecasts, 'cause old Jack Frost may still give us a surprise!

Still, we have to roll with the punches, and observe what our trees are trying to tell us. Those deciduous plants are leafing out, so we're too late to get them potted, but it's a great time to repot juniper and pine (careful not to rootprune too much, as the heat will be coming), and those broadleaf evergreens, such as sage, holly, others; let's wait, though, for warmer days and nights to prune or repot tropical and sub-tropicals, to avoid dieback. March is probably our last month to repot junipers, and I'm not talking about a drastic repotting from nursery can to bonsai pot - too late for that! We can, however, do a "pot flop" from one container to another. Give plenty of misting for recovery, as our dewpoint has dropped through the floor. We can prune back those junipers now, as we're getting new growth; remember not to pinch tips out, but trim back to secondary branches to encourage back budding.

Check out the article by Paul Vasquez reviewing the rock planting demo that he and chief Amigo Hector did at the last meeting. Careful, do not attempt this now that we're into March, unless you have a pre-worked juniper with a small rootball that will fit right into your rock openings. You can begin to select material for using tropical or desert material, such as sage, for those rock plantings, but they should look

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## David's blog, continued...

natural, not look like you stuck a plant into a rock. This is where our art comes in, not just mechanics.

As our days and night warm, we will be visited by critters of varying kinds. Newly emerging leaves are cherished by aphid (as on roses), and the best treatment is a strong blast from the hose. With dry, warm winds in March, those dreaded spider mites will swarm, and they may be hard to spot. Look for a "dusty foliage" appearance, and tiny webs that may show up when wet, in the shady spots. Again, a strong hosing helps a lot; a safe treatment is an all-weather oil spray.

Fertilizing may be resumed now, if you haven't started already. I usually wait until early April, and then provide a good boost with 20-20-20. This early, nitrogen from Urea is not a problem, as our rootballs are still cool. April may be even better, since our rootballs need warmth to really get going with new growth. Organics are good, but they need even more warmth in the soil, and they are effective longer, as are time release granules. Of course, our plants will need minerals and trace elements, especially iron, to replenish them after their dormancy. Stay low with your nitrogen, however, for those deciduous species, as you want to restrain that internodal growth and budding, and avoid large leaves. I wait on those, such as elm or maple, until later in April, as some of the growth will harden off by then. I will present a program at our June meeting as a pre-monsoon review of plant selection, design, and summer maintenance on desert species, as well as bougainvillea, natal plum, elephant food, etc. You will be invited to bring in your own plants, already potted for us to see, and material for the workshop to follow.

Don't fail to attend **Dennis Makishima's** programs for new ideas!

---David Meyer

## **Our guest sensei in March: Dennis Makishima**

Dennis was the first to introduce aesthetic pruning in the United States. His tree work

combines horticultural science, bonsai aesthetics, communication with clients and creative interpretation of small trees in urban situations. To date, Dennis has successfully pruned over 10,000 trees, conducted 200 pruning projects, and taught 500 workshops and classes across the U.S. and abroad. He has consulted at arboretums, large public gardens, and significant private estates. Most rewarding of all, he has apprenticed with over 50 professional aesthetic tree pruners since 1989, and cherishes his role as teacher to others.



***Dennis and Grace share some "touchy-feely" time with black pine needles***

Having worked on thousands of trees over the years has helped him understand trees as the living entities they are, to be cared for and respected. Though basically self taught, his training was enhanced by his association with Merritt College in Oakland, California. (Merritt Gardens is now the site of the GSBF bonsai collection North, curated by Kathy Shaner). He first attended Merritt College as a student, and later became an instructor in the Horticulture Department.

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## **Dennis Makishima, Cont'd**

To better understand tree aesthetics, Dennis took his first bonsai lesson in 1982; he had the wonderful opportunity to learn from leading bonsai pioneers in California. Their teachings

combined the styling and caring of trees with the traditions and philosophy of the art form. The respect for nature, the trees on which he worked, and the creative process of fellow practitioners was always emphasized. To date, his collection numbers over 500 bonsai, many of which were featured in the 2002 edition of the Sunset publications Bonsai Book, now out of print.



***Dennis discusses Hector's tree before the group meeting at Ray's house***

His career achievements include:

- Created the Merritt College aesthetic tree pruning program
- Served as president of the Golden States Bonsai Federation
- Organized a network of professional aesthetic tree pruners
- Authored "The Bonsai Teacher Development Guide" and "Bonsai Basics" course, both of which are being used nationally
- Trained for 18 months as a bonsai apprentice in Toyohashi, Japan under the tutelage of Bonsai Master Yasuo Mitsuya
- Received Horticulture Certificate from Merritt College in 2001



***Dennis assists Dee Telesco with Japanese black pine in workshop***

- ***Honored with the Circle of Sensei award by GSBF***

On Saturday, March 29, his focus will be on teaching methods of bonsai instruction, intended for those who now teach, or would like to teach. On Sunday, club members are invited to bring trees in for workshop design and styling. You will receive registration forms by email.

We hope to see you there! (Photos by David)

## **February program a first for TBS - bonsai in the rocks!**

Paul Vasquez stepped up to give our program last month, on short notice, with "Teamwork". He presented a program asking for assistance from beginners, intermediate, and advanced talent in bonsai, to help put on the program. First of all, a mini-show was put together with 15 trees, all planted on or in rocks, with many variations. These three categories of bonsai artists within our club then proceeded to talk about their displays.

Dixie and Dave Irwin spoke as beginners, about their experience with their tree on a rock. They started by purchasing a kit with an elephant tree, a pot, potting mix, and a pumice stone sculpted for planting the tree. During a workshop, they received assistance in potting

the tree. Four months later, the tree looks very healthy. Wayne Blankenship followed as the intermediate artist, with his presentation. Using a different approach, he created a cavity, into which he planted an elm, by cutting his pumice stone horizontally, like a grapefruit, rather than vertically down the center of the stone. After creating the cavity, he glued the two halves together. To complete his presentation, Wayne then placed the bonsai into a tray containing water. Into the same tray, he added a smaller pumice stone, to create a tray landscape, Saikei. In this manner, the stones draw water from the tray. Nice work, Wayne!

Six months ago, Paul began sculpting a large pumice stone, 12" tall and 52" around at the center. Six small craters, coffee cup size, were chiseled out of the stone. Two drainage shafts were drilled down the center and into each of the craters, to allow for proper drainage. Sixteen individual holes, #2 wire size, were then drilled through the stone, to provide for the tiedown wires. At the same time, Paul was "downsizing" and wiring seven one-gallon procumbens "nana" junipers, to plant into the stone.



Enter Hector Espinosa, who selected the front of the stone. At this time it is well to remember the guidelines we learned as beginner: front, left, right, apex, etc. He selected the appropriate tree by style (informal upright, cascade, etc.) to be placed in the stone. Only 6

of the 7 trees were tucked into the stone and wired into place.



The incomplete project, returned to Ajo, where more work was performed. The sprinkling of mycorrhizae fungi was done around the base of each tree, to aid in the growth of roots and the health of the tree. In addition, sphagnum moss was packed around the base of each juniper, for additional water retention, as well as to assist in growing roots near the surface.



In a hothouse, the rock planting is protected from drying winds, and is misted 3-4 times a day. The "Trees in/over Rock" program generated so much enthusiasm, Paul proposed a workshop for one of our coming months. 32 pumice stones were ordered before Paul returned to Ajo. The stones will be delivered at the March meeting. The program would not have been a success without Hector, Dixie and David, and Wayne.

(photos by Ray Noseck)

**Your TBS Resources**

Any questions pertaining to our club activities, please contact the following:

#### **Officers**

President - Ray Noseck (760-0128)  
Vice President - Wayne Blankenship (907-0412)  
Secretary - Steve Willis (749-0965)  
Treasurer - Brenda Bollard (743-4978)

#### **Board Members**

Tokiko Engleman (498-0423)  
Dee Telesco (299-3405)  
Ric Guzman (744-2840)  
Paul Vasquez (520-387-7126)  
David Meyer (749-4155)

If you have questions about your plants, please contact the following:

#### **Mentors**

Ray Noseck  
Paul Vasquez  
Gay Lynn Goetzke (886-8712)  
David Meyer  
Tokiko Engleman

#### **Teaching Assistants**

Larry Lawson (742-2591)  
Randy McLean (461-7457)

Our regular meetings begin at 12 noon at the Catalina United Methodist Church, 2700 E. Speedway, Bldg. H - Room 230. Special events may be held at the homes of members, as indicated.

**March 18, Sun., 12:00:** "Exotic and Unusual Dry Land Plants for Bonsai" by Eric Clark, Horticulturist from Civano Nursery. Bring trees for the workshop - win one in our raffle!

**April 27, Sun., 12:00:** "Cleaning and Prepping Trees" by Gay Lynn Goetzke. Lots of great tips on how to "clean out the detritus" and prepare your trees for a workshop or showing. Don't forget our workshop and raffle.

**May 18, Sun., 12:00:** "Basic Understanding of Soils and Their Components", by Ray Noseck. Find out more about how soils work, using drainage, organics, moisture retention materials. Workshop and raffle to follow.

**June 22 (skip Father's Day), Sun., 12:00:** "Bonsai favorites for the Monsoon Season" by David Meyer. Mini-showing of bougainvillea, natal plum, Texas Ranger, myrtle, others. What to look for when we shop, how to care for them. Workshop on these species to follow.



**Our Calendar of Events...**