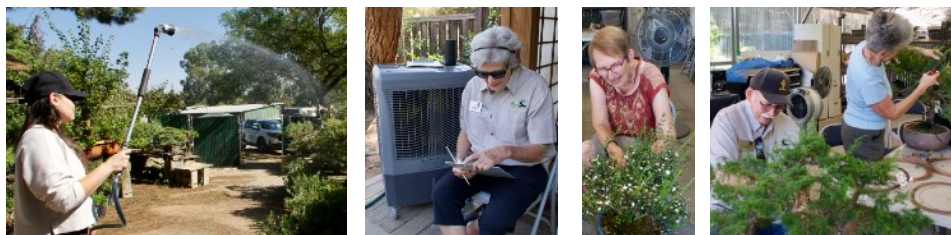


LOOKING BACK: A LONG, HOT SUMMER

# Of 100°+ Days	26
# Of 105°+ Days	17
# Of 110°+ Days	7
100°+ in a Row	15 Days



These are the temperature stats for the Central Valley from July 6-Aug 4. Our main job has been keeping the bonsai and the volunteers hydrated and healthy using lots of water and fans and limiting our hours to mornings

SPECIAL THANKS TO TOM BOHIGIAN FOR DONATING THE EVAPORATIVE COOLER THAT HELPED OUR DOCENTS MAKE IT THROUGH THE HOTTEST DAYS OF SUMMER!



BONSAI TOMODACHI

THE CLARK BONSAI MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

MANAGING CURATOR'S MESSAGE

Greetings to all,

The centerpiece of our operations since the inception of the Clark Bonsai Collection (now the Clark Bonsai Museum) is the changing rotation of exhibitions, some forty of them and counting, since our arrival at the Shinzen Friendship Garden. Each exhibition is titled and has a specific theme focusing on some aspect of the art of Bonsai. That we offer frequently rotating exhibitions is one of the reasons our relatively small and somewhat obscure Bonsai Museum has been recognized as one of the best in the nation.

Initially we presented four Bonsai Exhibitions a year, with differing themes, to mirror the rotation of the art exhibits in the museum gallery of the old Clark Center for Japanese Art and Culture, our original home. When the Clark Bonsai Collection moved to Shinzen, we continued the exhibition schedule for a while, but soon two of our exhibitions became such favorites with visitors, the Fall Color and Winter Silhouettes, that we began to offer them on an annual basis. We were initially a bit surprised yet delighted that visitors were expressing preferences for a particular exhibition.

As the foliage color pageant presented by our deciduous trees comes to an end and is followed by their transformation into wondrous examples of nature's engineering by revealing the beautiful tracery of branch and twig, it wasn't much of a reach for us to combine this seasonal change into a single exhibition as they are seasonal siblings. Thus, an exhibit tradition was established. We now offer the Four Seasons Exhibition each year to showcase our deciduous bonsai as they change from their summer cloaks of green leaves to their colorful autumn attire, then reveal their winter silhouettes, and finally present swelling buds of new leaves in spring.



Bob pruning a maple for exhibition.

EVENTS:

The Dramatic Deadwood Exhibition: The Silent Poetry of Age in Bonsai June 29-Oct19 [See pages 2 & 4]

Bonsai Making Class Sat. Sept 7 10am and every first Saturday of the month.
<https://clarkbonsaicollection.org/activities/>
See page 8 for more info

Julian Tsai 2-day Workshops Sept 18-19
At the Clark Bonsai Museum 830am-330pm

Museum Day Fresno Art Museum Sept 21
10am-2pm

Julian Tsai 2-day Workshops Oct 9-10
At the Clark Bonsai Museum 830am-330pm

Four Seasons Exhibition of Deciduous Bonsai Oct 26-March 15

Pacific Bonsai Expo in Oakland
Oct. 26-27

Julian Tsai 2-day Workshops Nov 6-7
At the Clark Bonsai Museum 830am-330pm

Fresno Bonsai Society Fall Sale Nov 16
10am-4pm Clovis Senior Activity Center

SINCERE THANKS TO THE ELITE LANDSCAPING CONSTRUCTION TEAM FOR DONATING THEIR SERVICES TO LOCATE AND REPAIR A SERIOUS BUT ELUSIVE BREAK IN AN IRRIGATION LINE THIS SUMMER.

Managing Curator's Message Continued from page 1

In discussing our exhibition rotations, a word or two about just what it takes to mount an exhibition seems to be in order. Developing an exhibit theme, researching and creating the appropriate didactics (museum speak for the information offered with each asset on display), and present them in interesting, educationally engaging, and visually appealing ways...ain't easy. Factors such as season and asset availability must be considered. Only some of the 130 bonsai in the Collection will tolerate full sun and heat exposure. Other bonsai must be used at different times of the year. The springtime exhibitions offer us the best chance to showcase the widest variety of bonsai. At any given time, some bonsai will be undergoing restoration and not



Volunteers moving bonsai onto display.



Spring Tokonoma Display

aesthetically appropriate for display at all. The nature of the exhibition "theme" will ultimately dictate what bonsai will be used to support a given exhibition, further impacting which bonsai may be used. The overall nature of the species in our Collection limits our choice of "themes" for exhibitions. For example, our Collection contains no frost sensitive tropical species of bonsai making such an exhibition impossible. Our dedicated and friendly docents must be trained on the special aspects of each new exhibition so they can offer knowledgeable commentary to visitors to enhance their

experience. Each new exhibition requires a new illustrated, informative exhibition book for both docents and visitors, as well as a new Scavenger Hunt activity. The featured bonsai require careful pruning to refine their design as well as cleaned and oiled pots. An irrigation harness with both drip and spray lines needs to be installed. When appropriate, moss is applied to the soil surface. The sheer physical effort required to change out exhibitions offers challenges. Some bonsai are large and heavy, others astronomically valuable. Extreme care must be taken to ensure the safety of our staff and the assets during the move, requiring careful planning and specialized techniques and equipment.



Volunteers cleaning and oiling pots for exhibition.

On your next visit to the Clark Bonsai Museum, please enjoy the exhibition and immerse yourself in the theme, with perhaps some small appreciation for the effort required to present it.

Dramatic Deadwood, The Silent Poetry of Age in Bonsai

By Bob Hilvers

Broken branches and swathes of sun-bleached trunks seem so commonplace on bonsai that we accept these features as part of the art, which indeed they are. In fact, we seem to expect that all bonsai must feature "deadwood" in some form or another. Yet, understanding "deadwood" as a part of Bonsai is as complex and enigmatic as the art itself. For example, not all bonsai include "deadwood" as part of their design. A great many have none. So why then is "deadwood" such a ubiquitous aspect of Bonsai? "Deadwood" is most often seen on coniferous bonsai, specifically on junipers, cypresses and pines. This group of species are common in locations with dynamic environments that result in the kinds of natural ravages that produce "deadwood" and are the most widely distributed trees on the planet, making them also a common species for use as bonsai.

Perhaps some discussion about just what "deadwood" on bonsai is, and what it represents is in order. Some nomenclature will be helpful for this discussion. A branch, or limb that has died and all the bark weathered away, revealing the sun-bleached remnant is referred to as a *Jin*. A



swath of trunk, or even the entire trunk itself, that has died and the bark long since shed revealing native wood is referred to as *Shari*. A hollow in a trunk or large branch is referred to as an *Uro*. As representations of their full-sized cousins, bonsai must reflect a convincing image of a tree. Using *Jin's*, *Shari*, and *Uro's* as evidence of exposure to the elements during a long and storied life contributes to the image. Whether the result of wind, lightning strike, drought, insect infestation, decrepit old age or any of a multitude of mishaps inflicted upon them by the passage of time; or whether intentionally created by the hand of a Bonsai practitioner, "deadwood" represents the silent poetry of age in the life of a bonsai.

Continued on page 4

BONSAI OF THE MONTH**A PAIR OF JAPANESE BLACK PINES**

This intake snapshot doesn't really do them justice. We look forward to sharing our signature "glamor shots" of them after their repotting this winter.

CBCS 072 (right) and 074 (left)

Artist/ Maker: Unknown

Common Name: Japanese Black Pine

Botanical Name: Pinus thumbergii

Date Acquired: 5/1/24 Age: Est. 160+ years

Evergreen:

072 (right) Style: Shakan / Slanting In nature a result of the wind blowing in one dominant direction or when a tree grows in shadow and must bend toward the sun, the tree will lean in one direction. The slant style trunk emerges from the soil at an angle, and the apex of the bonsai is located to the left or right of the root base.

074 (left) Style: Kengai / Cascade A tree living in nature on a steep cliff can bend downward as a result of heavy snow or falling rocks. With Bonsai it can be difficult to maintain a downward-growing tree because the direction of growth opposes the tree's natural tendency to grow upright. 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.

On Permanent Loan from the GSBF Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt



**The Japanese Pavilion
1915 Panama-Pacific World Fair**

<https://calisphere.org/item/89832751ff0196b504265471ceb3282d/>

The Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt recently transferred to the Clark Bonsai Collection in Shinzen on permanent loan two very old Japanese Black Pine bonsai reported to have been sent from Japan for display in the Japanese Pavilion at the Panama Pacific Exposition in 1915. This world's fair was held in San Francisco to celebrate the American completion of the Panama Canal, but also to demonstrate that the city had recovered from the massive 1906 earthquake.

At this time, a Japanese artist would not have even considered a bonsai for exhibition if it had not been "in training" for at least 50 years, which makes over 160 years a conservative estimate of their age today.

We are honored to be entrusted with these historically significant bonsai. Special thanks go to Gordon Deeg for facilitating their care and transfer.

You can support the Clark Bonsai Museum and its many world class bonsai such as these by becoming a sponsor. Please visit www.clarkbonsaimuseum.org/adopt-a-tree.html to find out about the benefits of becoming a bonsai sponsor.

DRAMATIC DEADWOOD...

Continued from page 2

All bonsai are compositions, meaning they combine several visual elements to arrive at the final image: trunk line and inclination, the foliage and how it is arranged, a container carefully chosen for size, shape and color all combine in poetic harmony to present a unique image. Dramatically emphatic or deceptively subtle, “deadwood” provides meaning and punctuation to the composition. Among all the aesthetic aspects of Bonsai, “deadwood” is the most visible and readily interpreted as a record of past events in the life of a bonsai. The presence of “Deadwood” offers us one way to understand the wordless poetry and voiceless songs of Bonsai.



A stately fir with a silent white spire and connecting scar running down the trunk to the soil speaks of a lightning strike in the distant past. Remnants of broken and shattered branches of a coastal cypress bear silent witness to a forgotten storm. The dead scaffolding of an entire trunk of a desert juniper supporting a struggling vestige of foliage attests to rugged perseverance in the face of a harsh and unrelenting environment. The hollowed-out trunk

of a venerable monarch of an ancient oak forest is evidence of a life lived to ruinous old age. These and countless other images of “deadwood” allow us to imagine the events in the life of a bonsai, giving us insight into the story of its existence and its age.

Considering that the art of Bonsai involves the intentional manipulation of the tree to achieve an aesthetic end, it is manifest that not all “deadwood” is created equal. Many of these age-images can be created artificially. Bark can be stripped from branch and trunk, chemicals that bleach and preserve the wood mimic



the effects of wind and sun. Specialized tools can be employed to carve and shape wood to appear old. The suggestion of age is not the only purpose for the use of “deadwood” in Bonsai. The visual impact of the silvery-white wood in contrast to verdant green foliage and shades of reddish-brown bark present a rich color pallet for Bonsai artists to render their vision. We can delve even deeper into the use of “deadwood.” Sun-bleached branches or trunks representing the skeletal remains of dead parts of the tree set against vibrant green foliage, eloquent of life, present some bonsai as a metaphor for the “yin and yang” of life itself.



Yet, some “deadwood” in Bonsai is the product of a natural process that surpasses any artificial process used by a Bonsai artist in the depiction of age. Desert junipers of extreme age, among other plants, can be collected from the wild and trained as bonsai. These ancient trees display “deadwood” that records

episode upon episode of die back and rejuvenation spanning hundreds, in some cases thousands, of years that cannot be duplicated by technique. They are living time capsules that allow us to look back into the life history of the tree and, if we “listen” to the poetry of age in Bonsai, we are privileged to be in the presence of a life much older than our own.

When next you visit the Clark Bonsai Museum, take some time to “listen” with your eyes and carefully decipher many stories told by the “deadwood” and perhaps you will begin to “hear” the silent songs and wordless poetry of Bonsai.



MEET JOSEPHINA FREGOSO NEW DOCENT AND GARDEN GUARDIAN

I am originally from Eureka California, Redwood country and home to Humboldt Bay. I received my Bachelor of Arts degree from Dominican University of California, and I built a career working in Human Resources and Office management. My specialty has been working with the monolingual Spanish speaking workforce and bridging the gap(s) between Spanish speaking and monolingual English-speaking workforces. My husband and I have one son who recently graduated from Georgia Institute of Technology with a degree in Architecture. At the moment my interests lie in living a well-balanced life that includes outdoor activities, good healthy eating, and daily learning, all sprinkled with fun and gratitude.

I first became aware of the Clark Bonsai Collection on my first visit to the Shinzen Friendship Garden. I recently moved to the Fresno area and in an effort to find great places to go on nearby nature walks, I stumbled upon the gardens. My love of learning attracted me to Shinzen and learning about the art of Japanese gardens and Bonsai. I am a person who seeks beauty in nature, and I certainly found myself in love with the Clark Bonsai Collection.



Josephina trimming the pomegranate bonsai

A volunteer responded to my enthusiasm and shared a flyer about joining the Fresno Bonsai Society. At my first class, I realized there was a lot to learn about the art of bonsai care. One of my classmates suggested volunteering as a way to learn about the art and care of a bonsai.



Josephina watering the bonsai sale cart

I took his advice, and I find my volunteer time in the Clark Bonsai Museum to be very rewarding. I always walk away in a good mood. In addition, I find I am starting to see and appreciate the natural world in a whole new light. Time spent at the garden has taught me so much about stillness and patience. I tend to be wired--to live life being busy, multi-tasking, working at a fast pace. Learning patience, stillness, and quiet contemplation is meaningfully enhancing my life.

Aside from being a beautiful place to be, I find it rewarding to see families taking time to take a group photo, maybe to document a graduation, an engagement, the end of the year Christmas card. The gardens provide a stunning backdrop for memorializing a moment in our lives. Just in this simple gesture it gives us pause, a moment of reflection, a moment of gratitude. Another important benefit of note is the historical significance of the Clark Bonsai Collection. I am so thankful to the Clark family and the many volunteers over the years for having the foresight and commitment to share this gift with the public.

Whether you are already a bonsai practitioner or are interested in becoming one, you can learn about the art of bonsai and share what you have learned with our many visitors. Visit our website to find out more about volunteering.

<https://gsbfclarkbonsaicollection.org/get-involved.html>

A LETTER TO OUR READERS

August 30, 2024

Dear Friends:

We have exciting news to share about the Clark Bonsai Collection and its future. In collaboration with the Golden State Bonsai Federation, we have become the Bonsai Foundation of the Central Valley. And with this change in name comes a change in status. We are now a 501(C)(3), and regional Community Benefit Organization, a change that will both enhance our standing in the community and our ability to secure funding, sponsorships, and grants. In keeping with these changes, we have also renamed our beautiful bonsai exhibit space in Shinzen. It is now the Clark Bonsai Museum. These changes represent a logical next step in our growth as an organization.

In 2015 the Golden State Bonsai Federation accepted the gift of the Clark Bonsai Collection and established a new public bonsai collection in Shinzen Friendship Garden in Fresno. Over these past nine years a team of committed volunteers and many generous donors have dedicated themselves to building a first rate public bonsai collection and continuing the legacy of the Clark Center for Japanese Art and Culture and its founders, Bill and Libby Clark. This considerable investment of time, effort, skill and funding has resulted in The Clark Bonsai Collection being recognized as one of the top ten public bonsai collections in the country, serving over 35,000 visitors this past year alone. As our tenth anniversary approaches, we are ready to continue our proud legacy.

We thank you for your generous past support and patronage and for helping us become not only a local favorite of Fresno area families, but a destination location for visitors from all over the world. And we invite you to join us as we continue our evolution from the first-rate volunteer-managed public Clark Bonsai Collection to a professionally managed, world-class Clark Bonsai Museum, and a continued source of education, delight, and wonder for generations to come.

Our future is waiting for us, together we will achieve it.

We look forward to seeing many of you in the coming months and will celebrate the Bonsai Foundation of the Central Valley and our Clark Bonsai Museum in 2025, our 10th year! Our thanks again for your support and we welcome your investment in our future! Please feel free to contact us at any time.

Kind Regards,

Marc Stamper
President
Bonsai Foundation of Central Valley

Kind Regards,

Bob Hilvers
Managing Curator
Clark Bonsai Museum

A SUMMER PHOTO GALLERY



One of the pleasures of summer, seeing the crepe myrtle bonsai in bloom



This Sawara Cypress Forest will be our entry for the judged exhibition at the big Pacific Bonsai Expo in Oakland in October



The liriope are in bloom again at last!



University High School students come for an end-of-year fun day out touring the gardens.



Pat Smith provides care instructions to new bonsai owners.



.John Wright, Bob Wright, and Dwayne Berrett prepare the Camphor Peace Tree Forest (made from seedlings collected from a tree that survived the atomic bombing of Hiroshima) for display during the annual Commemoration Ceremony.



During the summer, we feature a suiseki (viewing stone) in the tokonoma instead of a bonsai because the bonsai require frequent daily watering throughout the hot weather. This summer display includes a hanging scroll painting of a kingfisher which is associated with summer as well as good fortune and harmony. The accent plant is a hardy succulent Wood Hyacinth. Come in October to see what the fall display will be.



Our summer visitors seek out the shady areas to draw their favorite bonsai. We may have fewer visitors, but they are just as appreciative of our bonsai .

Fascinated by the art of bonsai? Want to learn how to make your own?



SIGN UP FOR OUR BONSAI MAKING CLASS!

- **When: First Saturday of each month at 1000am**
- **Where: In the Clark Museum Bonsai Garden in Shinzen Japanese Garden**
- **Taught by members of the Clark Bonsai Museum's Curatorial Team**
- **For \$60 you will leave with the bonsai you made yourself and the knowledge you need to care for it and make another!**
- **All materials and tools are provided.**

Register and Pay online at

<https://gsbfcbc.wufoo.com/forms/zkmtyx315iz9tn/>

Enter Item "Bonsai Class"

Date (First Saturday i.e. 9/7, 10/5 etc.)

Amount "\$60.00"

**Or a docent can help you register and pay in
the bonsai garden.**