

# The Collection-Connection

A newsletter from the Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt

Quarterly Newsletter

Volume IX, Issue 2 August 2011

Of Special Interest  
Assistant Curators: Redefined

Promote Membership by  
Helping Teach at BGLM 4<sup>th</sup>  
Sunday Program

Meet Assistant Curator:  
Andrea Burhoe

Redefining an Olive

Calendar of Events  
Volunteer Appreciation Day  
Rescheduled - October 15, 2011

March 24, 2012 Ryan Neil and  
the repotting of the convention  
tree! Keep watching for  
more information.



## Assistant Curators: Redefined

by Jerry Carpenter

Every once in a while a program needs to get an overhaul. The Assistant Curator Program recently underwent a major structural change at the behest of Curator, Kathy Shaner.

Some of you may ask: "You have an assistant curator program? Others may say, "who are they, what do they do, how do you become one, what do you work on," and so many other questions.

Those of us at the garden knew that specialists existed but many did not know what the range of responsibilities were, who to contact for tree assistance, which trees were cared for under each curator, what to do if a tree needed extra care, and so much more.

Assistant Curators are assigned the role by the Curator, Kathy Shaner, after an individual has shown exceptional understanding care of the

tree species in the garden under her leadership.

These individuals will lead teams of other approved volunteers with the care and tending of the trees in their categories. There are now 11 specific categories of trees at the Garden.

There are so many in order that the numerous trees could be split into groups of about 20 trees per assistant curator.

*"There are now 11 tree groups for assistant curators."*

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Pines (1)	<i>Split into 2 Sections based on similar care</i>	
	Black Pine, Red Pine	Andrea Burhoe
	Cork, Monterey, Ponderosa, Jeffery	Laurie Feetham
	Mugo, White Pine	Laurie Feetham
Collected Juniper (2)	Tosho, California, Sierra, Utah, Arizona	Janice Dilbeck
Domestic Juniper (3)	San Jose, Kishu, Procumbens, Prostrata, Femina, Itoigawa & Shimpaku	Gary Tom
Deciduous Trees (4)	<i>Split into 3 Groups</i>	
	Maples	Frances Noles
	Elms, Zelkova, Hackberry, Hornbeam	Linda Soliven
	Liquidambar, Gingko, Boston Ivy	TBD
Oaks (5)	Cork, Coast Live, Daimyo	Jerry Carpenter
Flowering Fruiting (6)	<i>Split into 3 groups</i>	
	Crabapple, Apple, Plum	TBD
	Hawthorn	TBD
Flowering	Wisteria, Japanese Quince, Ume, Dogwood, Myrtle, Cherry, & Winter Hazel	TBD
Fruiting	Chinese Quince, Persimmon, Beauty Berry, Pomegranate, Grape	TBD
Azalea (7)		Gordon Deeg & Jeanette Arnold

## Assistant Curators: Redefined (cont.)

Broad Leaf  
Evergreen (8)

*Split into 2 groups*

Evergreen: Olive, Silverberry, Boxwood, Eleagnus, Privet, Ivy Jerry Carpenter  
Evergreen (Flowering/Fruiting): Guava, Camellia, Firethorn & Orange Jerry Carpenter

Conifers (9)

Hinoki, Port Orford, Sawara Kathy Shaner  
Mendocino Cypress, Monterey Cypress Kathy Shaner  
Redwoods Kathy Shaner  
Ezo Spruce Kathy Shaner  
Cedars Kathy Shaner

Tropical/  
Semi-Tropical (10)

Ficus, Fig, Nerfolia, Bougainvillea, Gardenia *TBD*

Shohin (11)

*Jeanette Arnold*

Accent Plants (12)

*TBD*



*Liquidambar takes on some fall color.*

Curator, Kathy Shaner began a program in 2006 called The Foster Tree Program. Today the foster parents will be assigned by a curator or assistant curator after they have shown consistent dedicated care and understanding of the trees they have been working on. **Under Kathy's direct or indirect supervision, foster parents will also participate in pruning, wiring, restyling and repotting of the assigned trees.**

### *"We are looking for experienced workers in specific areas"*

You can see from the list above that there are some needs in the assistant curator list. We are actively seeking qualified individual volunteers to assist with the open categories of **trees noted by the "TBD"** in the list above. Open positions are leads for the Flowering/Fruiting, Tropical/Semi-Tropical, and Accent plant groups. We have volunteers who work with these trees currently and are actively learning the skills but leaders are being sought in those areas. There are a large number of flowering and fruiting trees that have need of specialized care.

If you are interested in any of these specific groups we ask you to contact Curator Kathy Shaner and discuss options with her. These positions require consistent, dedicated work and she will be looking to see if you are willing to put in the time and effort.



*Assistant Curators meeting—working hard around food and friends.*

# Promote Membership and Volunteers at Clubs

by Linda Soliven

The Bonsai Garden schedules a 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday Workshop for anyone interested in learning about the Art of Bonsai. During the months of January through November, visitors have the opportunity to sign up for the workshop by month. Basically, these visitors are curious about bonsai and want an introductory experience. These workshops are more casual and fun in that the presenter “talks and shows” from his/her perspective, expertise and passion what he/she wishes to share.

The presentation does not need to be a formal presentation. The presenter does not have to be an expert. After all, how many of

us in the bonsai world are experts? As soon as we learn, there is always more to learn, right? The participants are visitors from many places. Coming to the garden has “peaked” their interest about bonsai and they want to know a little more about it. While presenters enjoy “sharing their passion”, they also promote their club by inviting the attendees to join to begin to develop their own bonsai.

The time frame is 1PM-3PM every 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday except in December and February. If two hours is too long, you can shorten your presentation.

Some examples of what other presenters have done in past months are: John Nackley (East Bay Bonsai

Society): Produced a guideline of the “styles of bonsai” and talked about what a bonsai is. He brought the group out to the garden show trees as examples. Questions were welcomed and satisfied.

Jerry Carpenter (KBC, BABA, SBKK): Shared his passion for tropical bonsai trees. While he worked on his tree, he spoke about the “what and why” of his work. He shared aspects of raising a tropical as a bonsai. One participant brought her much neglected ficus bonsai given to her as a gift. Jerry, with great trepidation, did a restyling and repotting for this participant. She was delighted and encouraged to care for her precious gift.

Linda Soliven (REBS, BABA and EBBS): Focused on branch development of Maples. She presented the stages of development with samples of her own and brought the group around the

## *Looking for 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday educators—great opportunities to teach bonsai techniques to the public*

garden to see possible results of developing a maple bonsai throughout the years. Someone brought his tree and she helped him with the styling.

A presenter is needed for 2011-September, October, November and 2012, January, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October and November. Please contact Linda Soliven, 925-776-2342 or email: [bonsaigirl43@att.net](mailto:bonsaigirl43@att.net) for more information and/or to sign-up your club!

Please share this with your club’s membership. Could your club commit one presenter for a 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in the future? Promote your club and have some fun!





*Ginkgo begins to get its fall color in September*

- GSBF-BGLM:**  
**Board of Directors**  
**Gordon Deeg**  
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**Kathy Shaner**  
 Curator  
**Bob Gould**  
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 General Council  
**Janice Dilbeck**  
 At-Large  
**Bill Hashimoto**  
 Past Director  
**Seiji Shiba**  
 Past Director  
**Kora Dalager**  
 Librarian  
 Volunteer Coordinator – Open  
 Historian - Open  
**Abe Far**  
 GSBF Liaison

## Meet Assistant Curator: Andrea Burhoe

by Laurie Feetham

Andrea Burhoe, the Assistant Curator for Pines, began her bonsai career with one tree that she bought in a Marin Nursery. She says “I thought one little tree would look great in my garden and wouldn’t take up too much room.”

Formerly a travel agent, Andrea says she no longer has time to travel because of her volunteer work in the Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt. Besides being the treasurer for BGLM and generally keeping things together, as Assistant Curator for Pines for the past two years, she is responsible for Japanese Black Pines and Red Pines.

After obtaining her first bonsai from that Marin nursery, Andrea found a

newspaper article which led her to the San Francisco Bonsai Society where she remains a member. She has had the opportunity to study with Maz Imazumi, Dennis Makashima, and Kathy Shaner, and she continues to participate in a study group with Kathy Shaner. Other opportunities to increase her bonsai knowledge occur when Kathy Shaner is in the garden.

Andrea credits a fabulous Thursday group for helping her maintain the bonsai when Kathy is not in the area. Training is hands on with some theory while working on seasonal pine tasks. Seasonal tasks for pines includes candle cutting in July, thinning needles at various times throughout the year, wiring

and repotting at the appropriate times. When questions arise, Kathy is always available by telephone for support.

Recently, Andrea has focused her training on Monterey Pines with help from Kathy’s drawing and has been practicing on some trees. Having another Assistant Curator to focus on collected native pines such as Monterey Pines and Lodgepole Pines would be wonderful.

Of course, Andrea watches out for the health of the pines (and many other trees in the Garden) while keeping up her various duties. Her goal for the pines in the upcoming year is to get all of them on a

### *Landscape Pines as well as bonsai need work by our Assistant Curators*

regular schedule for care – including the landscape trees. Are you able to help? Join Andrea on any Thursday at the Garden.

*Photo on the right is of Andrea standing with her cork black pine on loan to the BGLM.*



# Director's Corner

by Gordon Deeg

The new date for the Volunteer Appreciation Day is Saturday October 15. A change from the August date was necessitated by my inability to make all the arrangements in a timely manner. We are going to change the awards program and I did not get all done that was needed.

So come to the event on Oct 15 and have some mimosas

and Brunch and be appreciated. We hope you will come and enjoy our new tokens of appreciation.

Our curator and a couple of our volunteers have had surgery recently. Kathy Shaner has had her right foot reconstructed and is laid up for 4 months. The surgery was a huge success and the doctors expect that she will now have full use of her foot. Phyllis Swanson had her knee worked on and is expecting a full recovery. Bob Gould has had cataract surgery and doing very well. We wish them all well.

This fall will see the garden undergoing several construction projects. Come by and see the changes. We plan on installing a new (personal entry gate), a new shohin bench, modify the tokomoma display area, install a storage shed in the upper reserve area, and build a small greenhouse.

The automatic watering system has undergone many changes thanks to Jeff Clarkson and is working the best it ever has. Thanks Jeff.

## TIPS

by Jeff Clarkson, PHD

Have you ever wondered why the foliage of collected Sierra junipers has a blue hue (some more than others)? In fact, Sierra junipers in the wild have foliage that is predominately green.

When a Sierra is brought in

from the mountains it produces a notable color change in the foliage. This can be anywhere from a blue haze to a distinct blue color.

A good way to keep the natural green foliage in your collected Sierra juniper and keep it healthier is to lower the pH of

your soil. To do this, granulated sulfur can be bought at your local garden center and worked into your bonsai soil. Do not use too much. A level Tablespoon is enough in a big pot for the period of at least one year. DO NOT OVERDO THIS. Better use less than more.

If you have acidic water this is not needed.

(Tips like these can be learned by working at the BGLM.)

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## An Olive Redefined

by Jerry Carpenter, Assistant Curator of Evergreen Trees and Oaks

On a warm September Saturday I entered the garden and toured around looking at the trees on my list. I came to this wonderful olive in our collection that we had let grow a bit too long. Number 175 is noted as a “Common Olive” (*Olea europaea*) donated by Pete and Amy Sugawara and trained since 1955. It is now on the list of trees I

need to work on regularly. I love olives and have 6 nice ones of my own so this will be a pleasure.

As you can see from the image on the left, the tree was over-grown with some long runners and very thick with foliage. Leaving an olive to run is sometimes a good thing if you need

to develop roots or thicken branches. If you wait too long to trim and clean up you are courting issues of long internodes, unsightly wounds, and even a myriad of pests. You can also start losing leaves and branches inside the tree where sunlight no longer reaches. When the old leaves start falling off you can

### *Every 3 years most olives shed their old leaves.*



develop holes in the design. So you have to keep after them.

First, I took pictures of the original condition of the tree and looked for problem areas. That was not hard to see. I began working in a section, one branch at time, removing old leaves and deciding whether to cut at the first or third leaf pair. Olives are most bud fertile at the first

or third leaf pair. I removed leaves going up and down along the branch and made the cuts. I know that I should make larger cuts before the stem **begins to “purple”** or harden off to prevent undesirable lumps or nodes. In some case, that could be done but in others the big cutters came out to cleanly cut larger new limbs. I work a tree like this in sections or

quadrants in order to ensure I get every branch worked on. It saves going back over the same territory twice.

While trimming, I encountered my favorite olive foe: the SCALE. I hate those things and when you let an olive grow too thick you get them. They were removed and then cleaned with an alcohol swab to kill the bugs under their hard shells.

### *Scale love Olives!*

There were also a large number of old yellowing leaves on inside branches. Those leaves were removed where possible. Such leaves are an indicator that not enough sun was making it through the mass of foliage.

In the picture above you can see the side view was not defined and very unattractive. I caution you in styling an olive;

go look at an olive in nature. They do not look like a juniper or even a soft maple. They have their own styles. If they are allowed to grow wild they will develop twisty muscular trunks and their limb growth pattern is similar to an oak. Perhaps that is why I like them so much. The point is that you may have the triangular design but you will need to ensure that you leave

branches going up and down and moving inside the tree. They usually have a complex internal branch structure that you can see through but they do not have the pads commonly seen in juniper styling. Why do I caution so? Because you should always be able to communicate that an olive is an olive and an oak is an oak. Sometimes in styling we lose track of that and start making

## An Olive Redefined (cont.)

every tree look the same.

I wanted to ensure that we could create space in the tree so that sun could pass through and communicate depth; in other words, you could see through it and know that the tree was full. Therefore, I cut away some branches growing straight up or down, of

which there were quite a few. In the section below I want to show the side-by-side comparison of the tree. It is important to see the foliage change and the branch structure. Before beginning to work on the tree, the viewer could not define many branches of the tree and it was pure darkness inside. After

trimming the individual branches of the tree, the structure is visible as is the taper of the trunk and movement of the branches. It looks older because you can see those wonderful thick-to thin branches.

This tree will still need to be wired and given a bit more definition. I suspect that Curator Kathy Shaner will even remove a few branches. I reserve that detail for her opinion and her guidance.

### *The transformation a tapered trunk and delicate branches*



Before styling: the Olive is too full and branches are running up, down and through the foliage. The sun cannot get inside the branches to keep it healthy and no visible branch structure can be seen.

Below you can now see the original side view of the tree.

Note the long runners that were left to grow. Many branches are crossing others and crowding the

view of the tree structure.



On the right is the new side view with a clear view through the tree.



After styling: Internal branches can be clearly seen. Sunlight streams into the inner branches to foster growth of new fine branches. The taper of the trunk is once again visible. Foliage has been reduced by 50% allowing a clear view through the tree.



Remember that you should view the tree from all sides. Our bonsai are viewed 360 degrees sometimes and we need to ensure that the design is pleasant from all views.

**GSBF Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt**

Located near the boathouse and Garden Center on Bellevue Ave at Lake Merritt, Oakland, California

**Phone**

Phone: 510.763.8409

**E-mail**

[bonsailakemerritt@gmail.com](mailto:bonsailakemerritt@gmail.com)

## Volunteer Appreciation Day Rescheduled!

by the BGLM Board of Directors

Volunteer Appreciation Day is rescheduled on Saturday October 15th at 10AM.

All volunteers are welcome and are encouraged attend this special event.

## About Our Organization

The GSBF Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt is the home to some of the finest bonsai in Northern California. BGLM is the only public bonsai garden staffed and maintained by volunteers and is supported entirely by donations.

This permanent collection assures that these precious trees by outstanding masters and collectors will be preserved for everyone's enjoyment. The display is changed regularly, so visit several times a year. Curator Kathy Shaner is

certified by the Professional Bonsai Grower's Association a branch of The Nippon Bonsai Kyokai. She is the only female certified by the association and the only non-Japanese citizen (until three years ago) to receive this certificate. She held that distinction for 15 years.

*Golden State Bonsai Federation  
Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt  
P.O. Box 16176  
Oakland, CA 94610-6176*



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and on **Facebook**