

THANKFUL FOR A SPECTACULAR DISPLAY OF FALL COLOR



*** As you read the newsletter, look for our new feature: Comments from visitors in the bonsai garden guest book.**



BONSAI TOMODACHI
THE CLARK BONSAI COLLECTION NEWSLETTER

CURATOR'S MESSAGE

Greetings my friends,



As we draw near the end of another year, our eighth at the Shinzen Friendship Gardens, our twentieth since Bill Clark asked me, "What would it take to have a bonsai collection at the Clark Center," we have much to be thankful for. A recent appraisal of the value of the Clark Bonsai Collection confirmed our own expectations of a half-million dollars. Eight years ago, when the Collection was transferred from the old Clark Center for Japanese Art and Culture to the Golden State Bonsai Federation to be located at the Shinzen Friendship Garden, it was valued at one hundred thousand dollars. We have made similar progress in other areas.

The many programs established by the CBCS speak of value greater than monetary. Our Host/Docent Program is innovative, effective and the model other public bonsai collections strive to achieve. Our well-trained, engaging and informative Host/Docent staff provide our visitors with the "why's" and "how's" and "is it real?" answers and a thousand more, that make the Clark Bonsai Collection an enjoyable, memorable and relevant experience for young and old. In following our museum heritage, we continue to offer rotating "themed" bonsai exhibitions that present visitors with something new to see and do upon each visit. Something that only now other public bonsai collections are starting to offer. A recent grant has allowed us to enhance and upgrade our *Didactics* (museum speak for exhibit information placards) giving visitors an even greater ability to learn more about bonsai. The Curatorial Team Program provides the opportunity for interested persons to obtain hands-on learning in the art of bonsai. The team has grown in numbers, skills and abilities. making it possible for us to maintain 140 museum quality bonsai. A primary reason the Collection has increased in value.

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

Four Seasons Exhibition of Deciduous Bonsai
 October 23, 2022—February 26, 2023

Volunteer Holiday Celebration
 Dec. 10

Shogatsu: Entrance Gate New Year's Decor
 Dec 28, 2022-Jan 4, 2023

Commemoration of the Day of Remembrance of Japanese Internment
 February

CBCS Exhibition Theme/Title TBD (See page 6 for Exhibition Sponsorship Opportunity).
 March 4-Jun 25



Curator's Message

Continued from page 1

Our Visiting Master Program, wherein selected bonsai professionals visit the CBCS to work on a specific asset or provide a specific lesson in the art of bonsai has long offered enthusiasts and the uninitiated alike the opportunity to learn from famous bonsai artists. As of this year, due to support from a donor, the Professional Advisor Program was added. Starting in 2023 we will see a professional bonsai practitioner provide regularly scheduled multi-day visits to the CBCS to provide consistent, measured development of the Curatorial Team members and the quality of the Collection assets. (See page 4.)



Julian Tsai with Curatorial Team members and their "project" trees of field grown material that will, in a 3–5-year period, be developed into completed Bonsai.

As we emerged from the difficulties of Covid, we learned by serendipity that we could create a funding stream by engaging in *Enterprising* (sale of goods). There was a huge pent-up demand created by the austerity of quarantined life to get back outside and reconnect with nature. People wanted to try growing a bonsai themselves. Thus, we found ourselves struggling to keep up with the demand for small easily maintained and inexpensive bonsai. We have parlayed that demand into a small but steady source of income to help fund ourselves.



In addition to the ambitious endeavors of maintaining the programs mentioned above, as we move into the new year, we will launch new programs and initiatives. We have been working with California State University, Fresno to initiate an Intern Program with their Plant Sciences Dept. in the spring of 2023 and later in the year an Intern Program with their Museum Studies Dept. We are developing the "Bonsai Roadshow" concept wherein a small exhibition of bonsai will be offered at selected sites, such as Botanical Gardens and Art Museums remote from the CBCS.

As you can see, we have plans and dreams for the Clark Bonsai Collection to expand our reach and enhance the quality of our assets and public offerings. Many of those plans and dreams are not yet fully funded. Some remain unfunded. If we are to be successful in attaining our ambitions, we must learn to develop new sources of income and new community partners. Please consider supporting us as a donor or volunteer.

The Curator's Donation-Matching Challenge

We have big dreams and plans for the CBCS we haven't paid for yet. Although we had anticipated the budget year 2022 to end up with a deficit, it looks as though we might end up just about even for the year. Our little *enterprise* operation has served us well...but we have gotten about as far with that as we can. In order to continue with the programs we have planned for the coming year, we're going to have to up our game in creating funding.

To that end, I am issuing a challenge: I will match, up to \$100, any donation received between now and January 1st of 2023. Please consider supporting one of the finest public Bonsai Collections in the nation. Help us become **the** finest Bonsai Collection in the nation.

Clark Bonsai Collection Curator, Bob Hilvers

Make your your donation on the CBCS website:

**[gsbfclarkbonsaicollection.org/
get-involved.html#donate](https://gsbfclarkbonsaicollection.org/get-involved.html#donate)**

OR

**Make your check payable to
GSBF-Clark Bonsai Collection and
Mail to**

**GSBF Clark Bonsai Collection
PO Box 5382
Fresno, CA 93755**

*** KATIE & BRANDON OF SACRAMENTO: "REMINDS US OF OUR TIME IN TOKYO."**

Whether you are already a bonsai practitioner or are interested in becoming one, you can learn about the art of bonsai while you are helping to maintain the exceptional Clark Bonsai Collection in the beautiful Shinzen Japanese Garden. Visit our website to find out more about volunteering.

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

BONSAI OF THE MONTH:**CBCS 013**

Artist/Maker: Ray Thieme

Common Name: Ginkgo.

Botanical Name: Ginkgo Biloba 'Chi-Chi' (also known as 'Tschì-Tschì')

Deciduous

Acquired: 3/10/21.

Estimated age: 40 years

Style: Kabudachi/ Clump In the clump style, three or more (should be an odd number) trunks grow from a single point. The natural equivalent might be a group of trees that have sprouted from a single cone, or a collection of mature suckers springing from the base of a single tree.

Donor: Bob Hilvers (Bob Hilvers acquired this bonsai from Ray Thieme who made it in 1972 from a cutting he got from Kahn Komai, a well-known, long-time bonsai artist from southern California.)

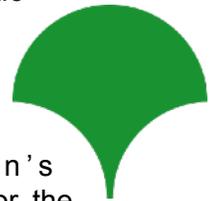
A LIVING FOSSIL

This bonsai is a dwarf variety of ginkgo known as 'Chi-Chi Icho'. Ginkgo biloba is *dioecious*, reproducing with separate male and female sexes. The 'Chi-Chi' is a clone propagated from a cutting from a male tree.

Ginkgo biloba is the sole survivor of an ancient group of trees that date back to before dinosaurs roamed the Earth – creatures that lived between 245 and 66 million years ago. It's so ancient, the species is known as a 'living fossil.' Fossils of Ginkgo leaves have been discovered that date back more than 200 million years. Although they once were widespread throughout the world, its range shrank and by two million years ago, it was restricted to a small area of China.



The distinctive fan-shaped leaf of the ginkgo is featured in many Japanese artistic designs and has long been a symbol (*Shinboru*) of Tokyo, Japan's capital city. It is much admired for the beauty of its golden yellow fall color.



Though its medicinal value is a matter for debate in modern times, Ginkgo has been used in traditional Chinese medicine since at least the 11th century. Ginkgo seeds, leaves, and nuts have traditionally been used to treat various ailments.

You can support the Clark Bonsai Collection and its many world class bonsai such as this one currently on exhibit in the bonsai garden by becoming a sponsor. Please visit www.gsbfcclarkbonsaicollection.org/adopt-a-tree.html to find out about the benefits of becoming a bonsai sponsor.

** Ana Lopez of Anaheim. "Itemoso lugar lleno de paz y tranquilidad." (Beautiful place full of peace and tranquility.)*

MEET JULIAN TSAI, CBCS'S PROFESSIONAL BONSAI ADVISOR

Interview with Maria Ontiveros-Kidd

When and how did you first become interested in bonsai?



I began my interest in bonsai at the end of high school, but I can trace its start to several hobbies I had in the past. I was actually briefly exposed to bonsai around 12 years old when my parents bought a Chinese elm, but I had neither the appreciation nor attention span to see value in the art.

During high school I worked part time for a collectors' kitchen knife cutlery dealer. Many of these expensive knives had intricate and highly figured wood handles. It piqued my interest as to where such pieces of wood originated from. As I later found, they were from tree burls—cancerous, grotesque lumps of wood with dense and figured growth patterns. I developed a habit of looking for burls on trees, which later led me to the broader appreciation of the entire tree form.

In tangent to this habit of studying trees, I also had an interest in "suiseki." But perhaps not that refined. As my senpai once said, good suiseki is in the eye of the beholder and the depth of my interest was merely a rock I thought was cool. While surf fishing at Will Rogers State Beach, I found a large stone which resembled a cliff. I immediately envisioned a model scale, with small trees emanating off the stone. That night, I googled how to put a tree on a rock. I found bonsai and was instantly hooked.

What is it about bonsai that has led to your making it your life's work?

This is a hard question because I have constantly teetered between pursuing bonsai as a full-time profession and maintaining it as a hobby/side hustle. It was this anxiety, along with stressful life circumstances that led to leaving Japan at the start of covid. Initially post apprenticeship I worked in a career related to my college degree while doing bonsai every weekend. Only since last July did I decide to commit to doing bonsai full time

Bonsai for me is an obsession. A constant pursuit of the highest ideal. To always improve and elevate my skill. Bonsai is very philosophical in the sense that we can parallel almost all aspect of growing trees to the human life. That in consideration with this aspect of time in bonsai somehow resonated with me deeply, to the extent that I want to pursue it to my highest ability.

Could you tell us a little about yourself?

I am 26 years old. My father is an immigrant from Taiwan and my mother was born in the US. I was born in San Mateo, CA but spent a few years living in China and soon after in Southern California where I have lived most of my life. Outside of bonsai, I have a background in Material Science and Engineering graduating with a BS from UCR. I am an avid hiker and photographer, and former cyclist although these days my bike sees little pavement.

How did you first become aware of and interested in the Clark Bonsai Collection?

I began working in the Fresno area upon invitation from Steve DaSilva to do private work as well as workshops at his place. We visited the CBC collection during one of my visits. Although the collection is on the small side, I was very impressed with the health of the trees and the apparent attention to detail as a result of Bob and the curatorial team. Trees require consistency and proper care to thrive—I respected the fact that while not the highest \$ collection, the mindset of the team was great and the collection had lots of potential.

What do you see as your role as the professional advisor to the Collection?

The biggest thing is establishing a good routine with consistent care and strong horticultural practices. Health of trees is the absolute most important aspect of bonsai, and if you can't keep your trees healthy, it is hard to refine them. I intend to rigorously seek out aspects of care that can be improved, systemize some management if possible, and diagnose any health issues that impede collection development.

Second is of course the craft and aesthetic aspect. In respect to the craft aspect of bonsai, nothing is arbitrary. We always need to consider the implications of the work we do, to understand how trees respond, and to apply techniques to produce the desired results. The aesthetic aspect is secondary and will apply to wiring and styling, while bearing in mind that aesthetic only is realized after good horticulture and craft.



** Jeff Ward of Sacramento. "Magical energy. I could feel the energy within each bonsai tree. Awesome."*

A GALLERY OF FALL ACTIVITIES



Docent Linda Jacobsen explains the art and science of bonsai to Professor Ron Nishitani's CSUF Horticulture class. Oct 25



Families enjoy coloring bonsai during the Fall Festival. Oct 23



Bonsai enthusiasts check out the silent auction table at the Fresno Bonsai Society's Fall Sale in the Clovis Botanical Garden on November 5.



Curator Bob Hilvers & Treasurer Sally Ramage process Silent Auction bids and sales.



Maria Oltiveros-Kidd with her silverberry bonsai and the team members who helped her create it.



A family takes advantage of a beautiful Thanksgiving Day in the bonsai garden to make a photo memory.



A visitor stops to read the information on one of the newly installed information plaques.



Docent Pat Simth chatting with a visitor and potential volunteer.

BECOME AN EXHIBITION THEME SPONSOR

It is the 8th year of the GSBF Clark Bonsai Collection in Shinzen. Planning is underway for 2023 and we continue to focus on engaging with the visitors and supporters of our living museum of world class bonsai. In keeping with our museum philosophy, each year the Curatorial Team and Museum Coordinator plan the themes for the changing exhibitions. This year we are launching a new component of our Museum Programs: We are inviting supporters and bonsai enthusiasts to become Exhibition Sponsors. For a \$1000 tax-deductible contribution, sponsors will have the opportunity to participate in the selection of the theme and bonsai for an exhibition. Visit the CBCS website at gsbfclarkbonsaicollection.org/getinvolved for more information. **Please use the CBCS website email or call CBCS Treasurer Sally Ramage at (559)341-6921 for clarification or questions.** We appreciate all of the many supporters and donors to the GSBF Clark Bonsai Collection in Shinzen! Please consider this opportunity to invest in our future! Thank you!



Our sincere gratitude goes out to our many donors whose support allows us to continue to maintain the serene beauty of the bonsai garden and improve the quality of the Clark Bonsai Collection. Through their generosity and the dedication of our volunteers, we provide the opportunity for our guests (now over 125,000) to learn about and appreciate the cultural history and beauty of the fascinating art of bonsai.

SOME POSSIBLE THEMES

Famous, Rare, and Unusual

The Clark bonsai Collection is home to several world famous bonsai as well as some of the rarest Bonsai in existence and a few that are just down right unusual. This Exhibition would allow visitors the opportunity to experience some of the most esteemed Bonsai in the Clark Collection but also some of the more unusual Bonsai found anywhere.

Forest Bonsai: The Enduring Appeal.

Forest, or group style bonsai, are among the most popular of all bonsai styles with our visitors. Indeed, the first tree acquired for the Clark Bonsai Collection was a Needle Juniper Forest and Bill Clark's favorite bonsai. People see, in these miniature representations, the nature they are familiar with, trees growing together in small groups or in continuous stands.

On the Spectrum

An examination of the range of interpretation and execution of the images on the Bonsai Spectrum. From depictions of miniature trees plucked from a cliff side to fastidiously groomed formulaic interpretations of trees seemingly removed from any connection to nature.

Yamadori

The origin of bonsai. Trees collected from nature, telling the story of their unique environments and struggles to endure.

The Art in Bonsai

The art of bonsai is more than creating a miniature tree. It involves designing a three dimensional composition which finds its inspiration in nature and culture, but is expressed through all the elements of the visual arts.

The American Bonsai Association of Sacramento

Mr. & Mrs. Don Asperger

Mr & Mrs. Alan Barber

Dwayne & Rich Barrett

The Bernadette Brott Fund Trust

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Ellen & Clarence Peterson Foundation

Joachim Schirmacher

Kimiko Sasaki-Schock

Todd Schlafer

Judy Shehady

Judith Swick

Roger & Karen Tsuruda

Ron Woodson

** Dustin Reed of Fresno, "The most gorgeous views in the city"*