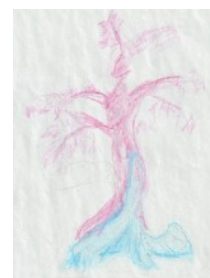


<p>LOOKING BACK: Visitors Draw their Favorite Bonsai</p>



Visitors to the bonsai garden are invited to draw their favorite bonsai, which is frequently the majestic bald cypress. (Pictured far left in its rust colored fall foliage.) While their artistic interpretations vary, its very distinctive trunk is always the star feature.



BONSAI TOMODACHI

THE CLARK BONSAI COLLECTION NEWSLETTER

CURATOR'S MESSAGE



Greetings all,

As we wind down our 9th year at the Shinzen Friendship Gardens and the 21st year since our beginning at the Clark Center for Japanese Art and Culture it seems timely that I recount for you all the many accomplishments that the ceaseless efforts of our dedicated volunteers and the support our faithful donors have achieved. Indeed, it is with great pride that I share with you that the Clark Bonsai Collection is has been recognized as one of the top ten public bonsai collections in the nation and that the generosity of our donors has allowed us the capacity to retain a professional bonsai practitioner on staff.

However, it also seems appropriate to draw your attention to the object of all the hard work and financial support – the bonsai.

If you haven't been to the Clark Bonsai Collection in a while, I invite you back to see for yourself why we are among the top ten bonsai collections in the country. When next you visit, look for, or ask one of our friendly and knowledgeable docents to show you, some of our most iconic bonsai. Look for a California Juniper that is believed to be more than 1200 years old. That indeed seems old but let me provide some perspective on just how really old that is. When this tree was 900 years old the Declaration of Independence would not be signed for another 50 years. When this tree was 600 years old Columbus had not yet "discovered" the New World and when this tree was already 200 years old a group of Norse explorers led by Leif Ericson had just established a small settlement in a coastal meadow of what will become Newfoundland on the north American continent.

Continued on Page 2

EVENTS:

Shogatsu Celebration Decor
Dec 27-Jan 7

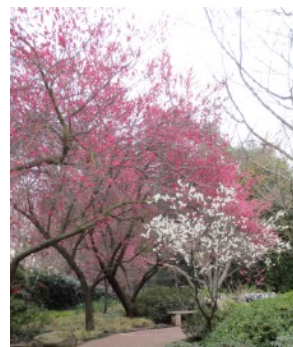
Ume (Plum Blossom) in Bloom
Late Jan-Early Feb

The Clark Bonsai Celebrates the Lunar New Year at the Chaffee Zoo. Feb 10

Four Seasons Exhibition
Closes March 16

New & Renewed Bonsai Exhibition (See page 2)
Opens March 23

World Bonsai Day May 11



Ume in Bloom



Curator’s Message

Continued from page 1

Find the Domoto Maple (now undergoing extensive restoration), one of a handful of documented pre-WWII bonsai known to exist that was created by a Japanese American family and not destroyed during the internment. Check out a Bald Cypress nicknamed the “Swamp Monster” due to its very large size for a bonsai; considered by many to be the finest example of a Bald Cypress bonsai in existence. Marvel at the impressive “mystery Juniper” that enthralled visitors at a recent Statewide Bonsai Exhibition. These, and many more like them are waiting to inspire, delight and captivate you with their stories of perseverance, their creation, sense of timelessness and connection to our environment.

Whether it is the image of an ancient, scarred and battered Juniper’s determination to survive the unrelenting fury of a savage environment, or the mesmerizing allure of an exquisitely formed Maple lovingly tended by deft hands for the entirety of its fifty-year life span, the art of Bonsai represents nature’s astonishing beauty and unforgiving harshness through the medium of a tiny tree. Come, immerse yourself where nature and art are blended and rediscover the fascination and joy of walking among Bonsai.



This Variegated Chinese Elm donated recently by Bob Wright will soon fully display its small green and white mottled leaves.

The New & Renewed Exhibition will also feature a number of Shohin (bonsai less than 12 inches tall displayed in custom metal shelves created for the Clark Bonsai Collection. This is a root-over-rock trident maple created by Bob Hilvers.



NEW AND RENEWED EXHIBITION

Whether it be the opportunity for visitors to see deciduous trees change from Fall color to Winter silhouette and then vibrant Spring leaves, or an examination of “age,” or a discussion on one of the many techniques used to create a bonsai, each “Exhibition” of the Clark Bonsai Collection examines some aspect of the art of Bonsai. The “New and Renewed Exhibition” will offer our visitors the opportunity to see Bonsai recently added to the Collection, permitting them to experience these bonsai never presented for display before. Along with the “new,” we will be presenting “renewed” Bonsai. As with all living things, Bonsai are subject to the laws of nature. They grow, suffer mishap, are attacked by insect and disease. and as a result they are changed. Often bonsai are simply allowed



Japanese Red Maple recently donated by Chuck Nelson



The Sierra Juniper after a major transplantation into a new pot.

to experience unrestricted growth to permit them to build strength and stamina. This also changes them. When these things happen, Bonsai are renewed by having their aesthetic qualities restored. The result of a renewed bonsai is that its quality is often improved and sometimes the image that it presents is entirely different from the original.

We invite our visitors to experience and enjoy more of our New and Renewed Bonsai beginning March 23.



Another new addition to the Collection: a Flowering Quince donated by Jack Reynolds

BONSAI OF THE MONTH:



CBCS 075

Artist/ Maker: Richard Ramirez

Common Name: Olive

Botanical Name: Oleo Europa

Date Acquired: 4/15/10

Age: Estimated age 90 years

Evergreen:

Style: Kabudachi / Clump In the clump style, three or more 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: Bill Clark

Bill Clark acquired this Imperial sized bonsai to serve as a three-dimensional marquee outside of the newly designed bonsai garden at the Clark Center for Japanese Art and Culture in Hanford in 2010. The tallest of bonsai sizes with a range of 60-80 inches, the Imperial category, is so-named from the Japanese imperial gardens, where many bonsai of this size reside.

MOVING THE BIG OLIVE

One of the many challenging jobs of being a Clark Bonsai Collection volunteer, is moving bonsai, sometimes very large ones. On this day in 2015, the team was tasked with moving the largest in the Collection from the Clark Center in Hanford to the new bonsai garden in Shinzen. This job required the use of a crane to get the Olive onto the truck and then from the truck to its new location in Shinzen.(Thank you Steve Dasilva for the photos.)



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.

MEET TWO NEW VOLUNTEERS

JAY LOUIE

Jay Louie has very deep roots in Fresno. He grew up in South West Fresno on a small farm helping his family to raise Asian crops. Growing extra bean sprouts became a side business which expanded into manufacturing Chinese noodles and selling restaurant supplies which became known as Louie Foods.

Jay graduated from Fresno High School, attended college at UC Santa Barbara and UC Berkeley earning a degree in Economics. He graduated with a law degree from the University of Loyola in Los Angeles, where he practiced law until 1985 when he moved his family back to Fresno. When his father became ill, he helped run the family business, eventually taking over and seeing the company through many changes in the business.

Jay also maintained a presence in the Chinese community. In 1990 he became a board member of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association in Fresno, a Chinese family and fraternal organization. As of 2024, he is the current President.



After selling the business in 2023, Jay retired and found himself with the opportunity to explore his many other interests, such as exercising and playing tennis, both recreationally and competitively.

One of his father's hobbies was Bonsai, so as Jay looked forward to his retirement he started to explore the art form by joining the Fresno Bonsai Society eventually becoming vice president and in 2025, president of the club. He has also become a member of the curatorial team at the Clark Bonsai Collection where he feels he has increased his knowledge of the art from other staff members, working alongside more experienced bonsai practitioners. Observing and receiving instructions from visiting bonsai masters also aid his education into Bonsai Art, an ongoing process. Jay has always enjoyed working with his hands, creating and building projects both at work and at home. He finds that Art of Bonsai requires a lot of knowledge about the care and upkeep of plants which he can apply to his own garden at home.



Jay closely observes Professional Bonsai Consultant Julian Tsai working on a Monterey Pine.

SAAM NOONSUK

Saam Noonsuk came to the Clark Bonsai Collection through the efforts of Rick Dyck, long-time supporter of the Collection dating back to the Clark Center days. This is what he shared about Saam by way of introduction:

“Saam came to Japan this summer on a Japan Foundation grant to visit pottery kilns. He teaches art history at CSUFresno and recently received tenure. Saam did his Ph.D. at Cornell in archeology and art history on a fellowship from the Thai Royal Family. His life work is to trace ceramic arts in Asia. I was able to attend his farewell lecture at the Japan Foundation in Tokyo where he absolutely charmed the audience with his description of the connections of Japanese ceramics with ceramics in China and Southeast Asia. Saam is not only an energetic scholar, but a talented teacher. We are very lucky to have him in Fresno, and I want to link him with CBC.”

Rick's wish was soon fulfilled when Saam arranged to come to the bonsai garden with his family in August and shared his enthusiasm for educating the public about Asian art and culture. He immediately signed up to become a docent. He manages to volunteer at least once a month. Despite his very busy schedule as a Professor in the Art Department, he is also Vice President of Programs for the Fresno County Archaeology Society. When the Fresno Chaffee Zoo was developing their new Kingdoms of Asia exhibit, they called on Saam as the cultural adviser to insure the accuracy and authenticity of the design. It was through this connection that the Clark Bonsai Collection was invited to participate in the Zoo's Lunar New Year Celebration .



Saam will be giving a lecture on “Sunkoroku: The Edo-Period Ceramics from Japan and Southeast Asia” at the Fresno Art Museum at 2pm on March 2 as part of their current exhibition of Japanese Woodblock Prints of the period.

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.

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 163,000) to learn about and appreciate the cultural history and beauty of the fascinating art of bonsai.



2023 PATRONS

**Continuing the Legacy and
Investing in the future.**

Don & Lisa Asperger
Octavia Diener & Henry Barkett
Rich & Dwayne Berrett Families
James & Yuko Brumm
Martin Burnham
Lotus Bonsai Nursery
Bill & Kathy Coit
Mike Saul & Marilyn DiFuria
Rick Dyck
Jack Emerian
Karon Fenn
Amy Hilvers
Joy Huckle
Dale & Deborah Ikeda
Susan Kai & Jonathan Hirabayashi
Helen Kawaguchi
Kelly Long
Sue McCombs
Chuck Nelson
Vincent & Katherine Owyong
Sally Ramage
Sumiko Safreno
Kimiko Sasaki-Schock
Judy Shehadey
Roger & Karen Tsuruda
John & Carol Wright

IN MEMORY OF HOWARD LATIMER

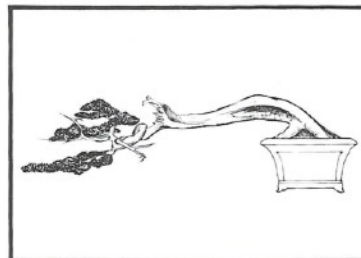
The Clark Bonsai Collection and the art of bonsai lost a true friend and supporter with the passing of Howard Latimer. Howard is fondly remembered by all who knew him, including the students he taught as a professor of Botany, specifically Genetics and Plant Ecology, for over 35 years at CSUFresno. Howard was one of the founders of the Fresno Bonsai Society where he shared his knowledge and experience as a dedicated bonsai collector and practitioner. Howard was also a supporter of the Clark Bonsai Collection from its beginning days. He donated fine bonsai from his personal collection; two of them becoming signature bonsai that have been featured in Ryan Neil's Bonsai Mirai live streaming shows as well as traveling to be admired in special exhibitions. Howard and his wife Mary Ann were regular visitors to the bonsai garden, always making sure to see new exhibitions. He will be missed, but he will be fondly remembered each time we see one of his bonsai.



Howard checking in on his Cedar of Lebanon. It was about 20 years old when he acquired it from nursery stock at the Henderson Experimental Garden in 1971. In 2017 Howard donated the now 65 year old bonsai to the Clark Bonsai Collection in Shinzen. It has attracted the admiration and attentions of internationally known bonsai masters: Ryan Neil transplanted and styled the bonsai in 2018. In 2019, Will Baddeley, bonsai deadwood carving artist from Great Britain, refined the prominent dead branch and iins.



Howard on the day he donated this California Juniper to the Clark Collection. Howard collected this juniper with John Naka ("The Father of American Bonsai") in 1978 from Sand Canyon in the Tehachapi mountains at an elevation of about 4500 feet. It subsequently appeared in John Naka's seminal work, *Bonsai Techniques II* with Naka's sketches of it before and after styling as well as a long term plan. The Clark Collection along with its Visiting Bonsai Masters made it their goal to realize the long term vision. This bonsai attracted much attention at the John Naka Memorial Bonsai Exhibition during Asia Week in Los Angeles and at the 2023 Golden State Bonsai Federation Rendezvous Exhibition.



You can read more about Howard in his obituary: <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/fresnobee/name/howard-latimer-obituary?id=54422747> There will be a Memorial at a later date. In lieu of flowers, the family requests contributions to Sierra Foothill Conservancy (sirrafoothill.org) and GSBF Clark Bonsai Collection in Shinzen Garden (gsbfclarkbonsaicollection.org) or another charity of your choice.

A GALLERY OF CLARK BONSAI COLLECTION EVENTS



The Clark Bonsai Collection celebrates Shogatsu—Japanese New Year—displaying a shimekazari on the gate welcoming the year of the dragon. Visitors enjoy traditional Japanese New Year’s games and activities.



Curator Bob Hilvers and members of the Curatorial Team give bonsai-making classes to a CPA company as part of their team building activities.



The Clark Bonsai Collection participated in the Chaffee Zoo’s celebration of the Lunar New Year with three signature bonsai and bonsai demonstrations. We learned that it is difficult to compete with three adorable otters frolicking on a warm rock next to the window.



A new bonsai cat has taken up residence in the bonsai garden charming volunteers and visitors alike. The Curatorial Team calls her Koi.



THE CURATORIAL TEAM AT WORK



One of Visiting Bonsai Master Todd Schafer's tasks on his most recent visit was to repot the 300 year old Sierra Juniper. You can see the result on page 2 in the article about the upcoming New & Renewed Bonsai Exhibition in which it will be featured.



Transplanting is an essential part of maintaining bonsai health and a major focus of the Curatorial Team's work in the winter. Two full days were devoted to this work during Professional Consultant Julian Tsai's visit, which included health and aesthetic assessment of the Collection.



These are long days filled with challenging, gritty work, but there is also time to sit down together for a hearty lunch and some friendly chat and laughter.