

GOLDEN NEWS

NEWS FROM AROUND THE WESTERN US BONSAI COMMUNITY

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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

The Bonsai Rendezvous 2025 is in the record books!

What an amazing event!

A HUGE THANK YOU to the generous support for all that attended, to those that conducted workshops and educational seminars, to the volunteers that donated huge amounts of their time, to those that donated material for workshops and to our raffle and consignment fund raisers and finally... especially to those that provided direct material support and monetary sponsorships! **From the bottom of our hearts, you all made this event the success that it is... you all ROCK!** I am extremely happy to report that we broke all our Rendezvous records for the past several years. The paid registration was right at 425 attendees vs. about 347 from 2023, and the net earnings are up well over 30% from 2023 as well.

What does all this success mean?

It means that the biennial Bonsai Rendezvous has generated more than \$40,000 to fund the Golden State Bonsai Federation's (GSBF) **Give Back** Program for the 2026-2027 period—up significantly from just under \$30,000 in 2024-2025.

Be sure to read the committee Chair article for more important details on how your club can be a part of this 2-year program... Good luck!

Looking forward to the January – March quarter... there are two annual Legacy Collection fund raising events that will be great opportunities for the community to learn from great visiting artists and acquire bonsai related material. **The first is the Bonsai-A-Thon from February 28th – March 1st, held at the Huntington Botanical Gardens in San Marino.** This event features the **California Bonsai Society's annual club exhib-**

it, demos by local artists with a live auction of their work, educational seminars with visiting bonsai artist Sergio Quan, a huge raffle / silent auction, and over a dozen vendors.

On March 7th & 8th, the Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt will hold its annual Mammoth Auction. This is one of the finest opportunities in the Bay area to find high quality bonsai material and pots at very affordable prices.

Both of these events are exceptional opportunities for the community to support our community legacy collections, with all proceeds being used to support the gardens and their volunteer programs.

As always, for all of the latest news and updates on the next educational Golden Zoom and to stay current with GSBF **'Give Back'** program opportunities, plus the upcoming club events in your area, please follow us at the GSBF website <https://www.gsbfbonsai.org>, Facebook and Instagram.

*Michael Roberts,
Chair, Golden State Bonsai Federation*

UP COMING EVENTS

- Jan 17 & 18 - Baikoen Winter Silhouette Show
- January 17 & 18 - Bay Area Bonsai Show
- Jan 26 at 6:30 - Golden Zoom with Tom Finsel
- Feb 28 & Mar 1- Huntington Museum 'Bonsai-A-Thon'
- Mar 7 & 8 - BGLM Mammoth Auction & Sale

GSBF GIVE BACK CAMPAIGN

The GSBF Give Back Program supports and strengthens bonsai throughout California using proceeds from the Rendezvous Convention. Grants are awarded quarterly through applications or random, weighted drawings.

Due to the GSBF RENDEZVOUS Golden State Bonsai Federation's '**GIVE BACK**' program has increased to over \$40,000 for the 2026-2027 period... that's up from just under \$30,000 for the 2024-2025 period.

First Quarter – Demonstration Material Grant
5 grants at \$400 each
Supports purchase of bonsai material for demonstrations
Weighted drawing on February 15

Second Quarter – Bonsai Show Grant
5 grants at \$500 each
Supports club related expenses for bonsai shows
Application deadline May 15

Third Quarter – Special Project Grant
5 grants at \$500 each
Funds projects that grow, enhance, or promote bonsai
Application deadline August 15

Fourth Quarter – Demonstrator Grant
5 grants at \$400 each
Supports payment for bonsai demonstrators
Random/weighted drawing on November 15

Continuing Education Grants
4 grants at \$500 each
Available throughout the year
Details to be announced!

GSBF GIVE BACK REPORT

Orange County Bonsai Society was granted \$500.00 in 2024 to plan and hold its first show in six years. OCBS being a club with mostly members new to the art, many of our members had limited skills in getting a tree ready for a show. We are fortunate to have

several well seasoned artists as well as guest speakers to bring our new members along.

The club decided to have a more novice section of our show with kusamono, suiseki, and kokedama. The club invested in several guest speakers and workshops in these beautiful Japanese art forms as well. Some of our newer members also showed trees!

The OCBS show was once scheduled in June of 2025, but due to the facility's change of availability we had to move out of the Downtown Anaheim Community Center venue and into the Cool Japan Center in Irvine, CA in August 2025.

After months of preparation, the Orange County Bonsai Society's show was held at the Cool Japan Center (CJC) on August 23-24, 2025. We had a demonstration each day as well as a workshop area for guests to explore Saikei and Bonkei. The show was well attended both days and we received great feedback! The staff of CJC was hospitable, friendly, and encouraging. They have already invited us back for another show in 2026.

As a club we learned that we need to get permits to have our own tables outside the venue for workshops and information as well as larger signs within the outdoor shopping center. The second day we managed by using two of the outdoor seating area tables/chairs without impacting the other businesses.

Due to the generous grant by Golden State Bonsai Federation, OCBS now has a successful show under its belt and our members have invaluable experience of what is expected for next year. We had 100% participation of our club (all active members) and we are excited to get started preparing for next year's show.



JASON CHAN PRESENTING AT OCBS

GOLDEN ZOOM PRESENTATION

Wouldn't you like your black pines to truly thrive?

There is a method for developing black pines that many bonsai artists have never been shown, one that can dramatically accelerate progress compared to traditional approaches.

**January 26 @ 6:30 PM on zoom
(Link to be sent the week before) join Tom Fincel of Eugene, Oregon for a special Golden Zoom presentation and discover why the familiar "cut the bottom and hope for the best" repotting method can quietly set your bonsai back for years.**

Drawing from his experience working with legendary field grown material from Telperion Farms, and techniques learned under plant physiologist Gary Wood, Tom developed a smarter, more strategic approach known as Top Down Repotting. This method keeps trees vigorous while correcting root problems over time, instead of shocking them into survival mode.

In this presentation, Tom will show you:

- Why removing the strongest roots can stall development
- How "sacrifice roots" can completely change your repotting strategy
- A step by step Top Down process for field grown and nursery stock
- How to transition a tree into a bonsai pot with 100 percent bonsai soil without losing years of progress
- How this approach can move your tree to the show table much sooner

Packed with detailed photos and real world examples, this is a must see program for anyone working with pines or valuable pre bonsai material.

If you care about long term health, faster refinement, and not undoing years of potential with a single repot, this is a presentation you do not want to miss.



TOM FINCEL

Tom Fincel is a long-time bonsai hobbyist from Eugene, OR. Tom, and his wife Karen, were lucky to have been good friends with Chris and Lisa Kirk, who founded and owned Telperion Farms in Oregon. Under the direction of plant physiologist Gary Wood, Telperion grew thousands of pre-bonsai trees in grow bags in their fields. With techniques developed by Gary, they were able to grow trees of large trunk diameter in 8 to 12 years. Tom learned the benefits of sacrifice leaders and branches from Gary, and this gave Tom the idea of using 'sacrifice roots', which is the basis of Tom's Top Down Repotting technique.



BONSAI

RENDEZVOUS 2025

2025 RENDEZVOUS WRAP- UP

WE'D LOVE TO HEAR YOUR IDEAS!

We've come a long way since 2021, when GSBF introduced the Bonsai Rendezvous after a Covid-era hiatus. Our return to in-person fundraising began simply – vendors, silent auctions, consignment sales, Mel Ikeda's Tomodachi gatherings, and demonstrations. Bonsai enthusiasts and clubs were eager to reconnect, and that first event raised the critical funds that helped launch the GSBF Give Back Program. To avoid competing with the Bonsai Pacific Expo, GSBF now hosts the Bonsai Rendezvous every other year.

Over the last four years, the Rendezvous Planning Committees have steadily expanded educational opportunities with hands-on workshops, seminars, and exhibit critiques. We've also welcomed exceptional headliners – first Bjorn Bjorholm, and this year Suthin Sukosolvisit and Mauro Stemberger.

We'd love to hear your suggestions for headliner(s) for Bonsai Rendezvous 2027!

Please send your ideas to: gsbonsaifed@gmail.com

RENDEZVOUS BY THE NUMBERS....

A Record-Breaking Year!

After 12+ months of planning, The 2025 Rendezvous is officially in the books – and it shattered records across the board!

Highlights at a glance:

- 425 attendees – the most heavily attended GSBF event in decades
- 26 workshops – the most ever offered at a Rendezvous
- 9 educational seminars – another record
- 4 exhibit critiques
- First-ever All-Club Exhibit with 26 clubs represented
- Attendees from 8 states: CA (397), OR (14), WA (5), AZ (5), WI (2), NV (1), VA (1)
- 30% growth in financial support – allowing increased funding for the GSBF Give Back Program

Post-Event Survey Snapshot (Scale: 1 = Poor, 5 = Excellent)

- 104 Total Respondents
- Overall Experience – 4.65
- Ease of Online Registration – 4.43
- Navigation & Signage at Hotel Mission de Oro – 4.54
- Joshua Roth Competition Engagement – 4.30
- Silent Auction Variety & Quality – 3.82
- Workshops (Value) – 4.63
- Educational Seminars (Knowledgeable Instructors) – 4.81

CONGRATULATIONS!

Doug Dobbs is the winner of the \$100 Stone Lantern gift card for completing the RENDEZVOUS survey – thank you to all who participated!

Special thanks to Stone Lantern for donating the gift card!

GSBF ALL CLUB EXHIBIT



AWARD WINNING SHORE JUNIPER



AWARD-WINNING SILVERBERRY

Our very inaugural All Club Exhibit was a huge success, and we couldn't be happier with how it turned out! Twenty-six clubs came together to share their love of bonsai, and the room was filled with beautiful, creative, and inspiring displays. A big thank-you to the American Bonsai Association Sacramento (ABAS) for lending us their backdrops and table coverings—they really helped make everything look fantastic.

We'd also like to thank Cheryl Manning for creating the name tags, and Paul Holtzen and his team for setting up the Isabella Room so thoughtfully. The tree arrangements were both striking and elegant. And of course, thanks to Paul Newman, who photographed every tree with great care and a wonderful artistic eye.

To all the exhibitors: thank you for the time, effort, and attention you put into your displays. You truly made the event special. We're already looking forward to hosting many more All Club Exhibits at future Rendezvous gatherings!

Our judges, Suthin Sukosolvisit and Mauro Stemberger, selected winners in four categories: Best Deciduous, Best Conifer, Best Broadleaf Evergreen, and Best Shohin. Thanks to our generous sponsors, GSBF awarded each winning club \$500.

GSBF ALL CLUB Award Winners



AWARD WINNING CEDAR ELM

Best Deciduous — sponsored by San Diego Bonsai Club

- California Bonsai Society
- Cedar Elm
- Robert Pressler

Best Conifer — sponsored by Cheryl Manning

- East Bay Bonsai Society
- Shore Juniper
- Rick Trumm

Best Broadleaf Evergreen — sponsored by David & June Nguy

- Orange County Bonsai Society
- Silverberry
- Ryan Pitts

Best Shohin Display — sponsored by Pacific Bonsai Expo

- Baikoen Bonsai Kenkyukai
- Japanese Black Pine, Mikawa, Burt Davyi, Zelkova Elm Broom, Olive, Pyracantha
- Peter Macaseib

JOSHUA ROTH RISING STARS COMPETITION



Rising Stars Matthew Gelacio, Ryan Pitts, Daniel Martinez, Ian Baker, Addison Galambos and Julius Clado

The Joshua Roth Rising Stars Competition highlights the talent and dedication of emerging bonsai artists with 10 years or less of experience. Competitors were challenged to transform a medium-sized, field-grown Itoigawa juniper into a beautifully styled bonsai in just six hours.

Six participants from GSBF member clubs took on the challenge: Ian Baker, Julius Clado, Addison Galambos, Matthew Gelacio, Daniel Martinez, and Ryan Pitts. Each competitor came well prepared, skillfully working their tree as Rendezvous attendees observed the process and asked questions throughout the day.

The finished bonsai were later offered in a live auction at the Saturday night banquet.

Judges Mauro Stemberger and Suthin Sukosolvisit selected Daniel Martinez as the winner of the Joshua Roth Rising Stars Competition. The \$1,000 top prize was generously sponsored by John Kim and Michele Hong of Joshua Roth.

Congratulations to all participants—your future in bonsai is GOLDEN!



John Kim, owner of Joshua Roth (right), awarded Rising Star winner, Daniel Martinez (left)



BOB HILVERS RECEIVING THE CIRCLE OF SENSEI AWARD

GSBF AWARDS: CIRCLE OF SENSEI AND PRESIDENT'S GOLD AWARD

Since 2001, GSBF has honored individuals who have dedicated themselves to passing bonsai knowledge on to others. The Circle of Sensei is GSBF's most prestigious award—a golden medallion—and has been presented to just 27 individuals to date. During the Saturday night dinner, Bob Hilvers was deservedly awarded this highest honor.

Bob began his bonsai journey nearly 40 years ago as a backyard hobby. Following his retirement a few years later, that hobby quickly evolved into a second career. In 2002, Bob accepted—albeit with some trepidation—the founding curator position for what would become the Clark Bonsai Museum. In 2015, the collection relocated from Hanford, California, to the Shinzen Friendship Garden in Fresno, with Bob continuing at the helm. Last October, the Clark Bonsai Museum will celebrate its 10th anniversary at Shinzen, along with its recognition as the 8th best public bonsai collection in the United States. This remarkable achievement stands as Bob's enduring legacy.

GSBF and its member clubs rely heavily on dedicated volunteers to help promote the art of bonsai. Most volunteers generously donate their time and energy with no expectation of recognition. During the banquet, Doyle Saito and Bob Shimon were pleasantly surprised to receive this special award. Both men have donated decades of service, time, and energy in support of bonsai and the GSBF community

2025 BONASAI RENDEZVOUS PHOTO RECAP



FRED MIYAHARA



BOB HILVERS



CAITLIN ELM WORKSHOP WITH STEVE VALENTINE



OLIVE CLUMP



SEMI-CASCADE JUNIPER



OLIVE RAFT



SEMI-CASCADE GRAFTED CALIFORNINA JUNIPER



SEMI-CASCADE JUNIPER



CORK OAK



AWARD WINNING SHOHIN DISPLAY



FOEMINA FOREST



VOLUNTEERS ADMIRING PEPPER TREE



BOB SHIMAN RECEIVING
PRESIDENTS AWARD



DOYLE SAITO RECIEVING PRESIDENTS
AWARD PRESENTED BY BOB PRESSLER



JONAS DUPUICH EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR **11**



MEL IKEDA



FRED MIYAHARA AND BILL GRAHAM



ADDISON GALAMBOS FOCUSED



SAM TAN EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR

CESAR ORDONEZ



PAUL VORENIS AND MAURO STEMBERGER



SUTHIN SUKOSOLVISIT

WORKSHOP AND DEMOS BY HEADLINER SUTHIN SUKOSOLVISIT

WINNING JOSHUA ROTH 'RISING STARS' TREE BY DANIEL MARTINEZ



PETER TEA
EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR

HEADLINERS MAURO STEMBERGER AND
SUTHIN SUKOSOLVISIT

