



September 2023

# The Bent Twig

A monthly newsletter of the American Bonsai Association of Sacramento  
<https://www.abasbonsai.org/>

## Arboreal Abstractions

I love twigs. I have been working in horticulture professionally for over 12 years and my personal obsession with plants runs even deeper. I have a rabid tendency to hoard plants, to never let a plant go in the trash (including plants that belong in the trash). To be fair, they are living organisms and only a monster would indiscriminately toss plants in the rubbish bin.

I love propagation. I have to stick every cutting, collect seeds on every adventure, or survey every urban road median tree for the best spot to air layer. Propagation is a spark that gives me child-like wonder: imagine tender cotyledons emerging from a nascent embryo in suspended animation, against all odds. This is literally what my UC Davis application letter was about.

My dream for years has been to run a nursery. I want to propagate. I want to supply great pre-bonsai. And I really, really want to be a decent bonsai artist. So, more plants is better right? Surely I am fulfilling all of these dreams at once. Hint: nope!

Through a great deal of reflection, it's recently become clear to me that not only are these things not part of the same pursuit, they are at odds with each other most of the time. For now, while living in a suburban tract house, I am coming to terms with the fact that I shouldn't try to run a full-scale nursery out of my back yard. It is a distraction. Anything not related to developing excellent\* (I mean excellent in a subjective, not traditionalist way) bonsai is a distraction, if developing excellent bonsai is the goal. Each tree is its own project and the more developed they become, the more it is necessary to maintain a disciplined work schedule. More on this next month.

Foremost, we should grow what makes us happy. I am by no means arguing that every flawed tree is not worth our time. I will keep some of my worst subjects because they tell an important story to me. Yet, as we develop our technique, our eyes become better at recognizing the elements that make a tree that moves us. Inevitably, our definition of what makes a good tree evolves. We hear this wisdom constantly from more experienced artists, from the club, heck I have written it myself, but the process of discovery and developing taste is personal and most of us will have to figure this out at our own speed.

Let me be clear, there will still be a few flats of maple seedlings on my bench, but space is limited and the bar just got raised.

Ian Baker



Pardon me, said the tree.

## ABAS Annual Auction and Consignment Sale Tuesday September 26

Get ready for the ABAS consignment sale and auction on Tuesday September 26 during our regular meeting time. The auction preview and consignment sale begin at 6:00 PM and the auction begins at 6:30 PM.

This is an opportunity to score – or for you to sell – some new pre-bonsai material, a developed tree, pots, or anything bonsai adjacent. This sale is open to the public and we expect a good turn out. We have access to the entire garden center and have rearranged the sale area, so it should be a smoother and less cramped experience this year. The club will serve an assortment of soft and hard drinks. Please bring snacks to share with everyone.

You may obtain your bidder number at the door if you wish to buy from the auction or hold items from the consignment tables. ABAS members may enter up to 5 bonsai / bonsai related items in the auction. Bonsai trees need to be in a pot (not nursery pot) and beyond the pre-bonsai stage. If you plan to sell anything in the auction or consignment sale, contact [Bob Ricker](#) in advance for a seller number. Print and fill out the [consignment sales](#) and/or [auction sales](#) sheets prior to the event. Please be sure to follow the instructions carefully to ensure that consignees are paid fairly and that your items don't hold up the check-out process for everyone.

There will be space to hold items that you are committed to purchase. All consignment items being held must be paid for by 7:30 pm or they will be returned to the consignment tables. Contact [Dodie](#) for questions.



Scene from ABAS Sale 2021



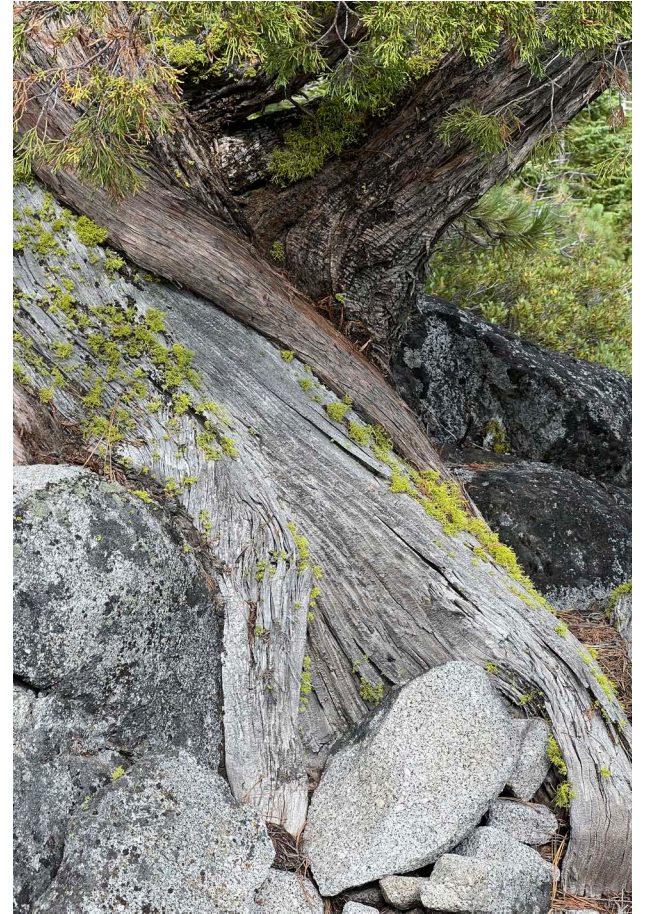


## Last Meeting - Don Dupras: Suiseki & Geology Tuesday August 22

Last month we had the pleasure of Don Dupras presenting on the subjects of suiseki and geology. Don is a retired mining geologist from the California Division of Mines & Geology, author, and devoted rockhound. He brought a fresh subject to the club with undeniable enthusiasm as he explained the geologic story of local rock formations of high interest to California rock collectors.

Don has an especially accessible way of explaining these complex topics to those of us who don't hold higher degrees in the science, while relating them back to the practical aspects of collecting. Topics for the night ranged from accretion of exotic terranes and subduction, to polishing and building stands for rock displays.

There were exquisite suiseki displays brought in for show & tell as well as plenty of "what rock is this?" questions; Don's contagious excitement and curiosity was on display for every example he touched.



Root, over rock

## What to work on - September

September is the month that we can work on just about everything.

White pines and other high mountain, single flush, pines, (lodgepole, mugo, ponderosa) should be shedding last year's needles. This is the sign that this year's new growth is mature and hardened. It is time to clean up, cut, thin, and wire. Also, this is a good time for heavy pruning and bending.

Black pines and red pines, if they were not decandled this summer, can be cut, wired and cleaned. If decandled, wait until November/December.

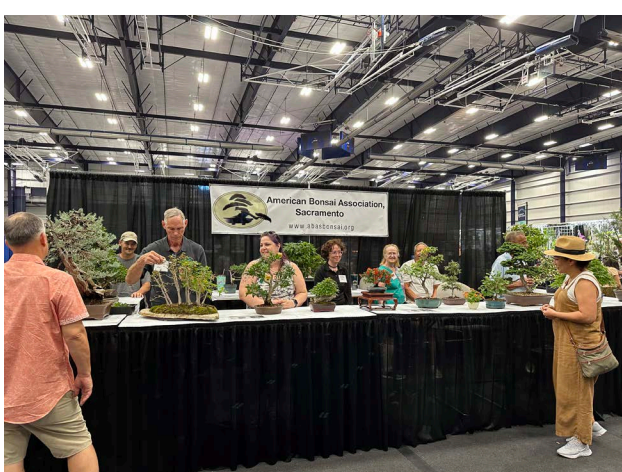
Junipers, cypress, cedars, and other conifers can be cut thinned and wired from now through winter. Heavy pruning and bending is best done after tree growth slows in November.

Broadleaf evergreens can be cut back and wired to continue development. For deciduous trees, we are reaching the end of the window for defoliation and strong cut back. It is OK to prune back long runners that were used for sacrifice to thicken if the branch has reached the desired thickness. Minimal work is needed from now to November when trees lose their leaves and enter winter dormancy.



## Home & Garden Show

ABAS participated in the Roseville Home & Garden Show again in a similar arrangement to last year. The show was August 18, 19, 20 and ABAS represented on Saturday August 19. This was a public outreach event where we had the opportunity to display bonsai, educate the public, and recruit membership.







## ABAS Seasonal Bonsai Series, August 2023

Our sixth video, August 2023, is posted to our ABAS YouTube channel. The major work for August was pruning, wiring and continued pad development on the more refined juniper. As Fall approaches, the trident growth is slowing and most work for this year has been done on the junipers. Carmen and Renee will monitor the trees and if there is something interesting to share this month, we will do a short video. Visit our ABAS YouTube channel to view previous videos in our Seasonal Bonsai Series as well as many other educational and informative programs.

This video is available on the [ABAS YouTube channel](#)

## Dig In, Chop In

The students from Dig In 5 are seen below hunting pre-bonsai treasures, getting ready to check out, and working on their trees.

Dig In classes are taught by Roger Steele to bring aspiring bonsai artists rapidly up to speed with assessing and working pre-bonsai material. The students spend time learning and observing demos before the group trip to a local nursery. After evaluating and purchasing material, the team returns back to the garden to work on their new trees. The students went away with new skills after a very successful and educational day. Watch the newsletter for dates for Dig In 6.

Chop In 1, which is a follow up class to expand on skills learned at Dig In and promote student independence, will be held October 21. This special class will be held at the GSBF Bonsai Rendezvous. Roger will be available on Friday Oct 20 to help students with selecting material or in any way he can. The Chop In 1 class will be held as scheduled at 9:00 Saturday, October 21. There is still room in the class for that day; contact [Roger](#) to sign up.



## Bonsai Q & A

We would like to remind club members that we set aside 6:00-6:30 PM each month for Bonsai Q & A prior to the night's presentation. Members are encouraged to bring in trees with bonsai related questions, styling, horticulture, or other problems. Questions will be answered by either the evening's guest presenter or a senior club member. If a presenter has a particular speciality, it makes sense to try to ask questions related to their focus, but this is not a requirement. It takes just one brave soul to step up and ask the seasonal care question everyone else is thinking!



## Reminder: People Like Snacks!

Club members are encouraged, as always, to bring snacks or soft drinks for each monthly meeting. The selection of available food depends on the generosity of each of us, so please step up and bring your favorite snack. You may also provide larger quantities of longer-lasting snacks to store at the garden center if you, for example, shop at Costco. Home made items are always deeply appreciated by all, but please consider portability and food safety (maybe the steak tartare should be saved for another night or at least warn us so we can eat it fast!)

You may leave your food items on the back table with Carol Greenfield at the meeting start. Thank you Carol for coordinating snacks and drinks! Mention the word "nibbles" for a chance for a free raffle ticket.



Scenes from the September member workshop





## Upcoming Events

### SGAAC Garden Clean Up:

Sunday, September 24 9:00 – Noon. Volunteers are needed for the annual courtyard garden cleanup on Sunday. Bring gloves, pruners, and anything else needed to maintain plants and remove weeds from this space. This is an annual ABAS tradition to maintain this shared space in a way we can be proud of.

### SGAAC Fall Sale October 7 & 8:

Join ABAS and other Shepard Garden and Art Center clubs to sell plants and horticulture adjacent items to the general public. We could use a couple more people to help staff the table. If interested in volunteering, contact Dodie. If you'd like to sell items via consignment, verify your seller number with Bob at (703) 945-0670 (call or text) or bricker918@gmail.com. You'll need to complete a new consignment inventory sheet which can be found on the event listings on the [ABAS website](#).

### GSBF Rendezvous Open Workshops:

Seats remain open for the workshops below. Pre-registration is preferred, but seats may be taken same day.

- Mel Ikeda - procumbens nana. 1 seat
- Lucy Sakaishi-Judd (Friday) - Kusumono - 17 seats
- David Nguy - BYOT - 2 seats
- Steve Valentine - Hashira-Kakushi (post hide) 10 seats
- Lucy Sakaishi-Judd (Saturday) - Kusumono - 1 seat
- Jason Chan - San Jose Junkiper - 3 seats
- Cary Sullivan - Washi Bake (Japanese Paper Boxes) 8 seats

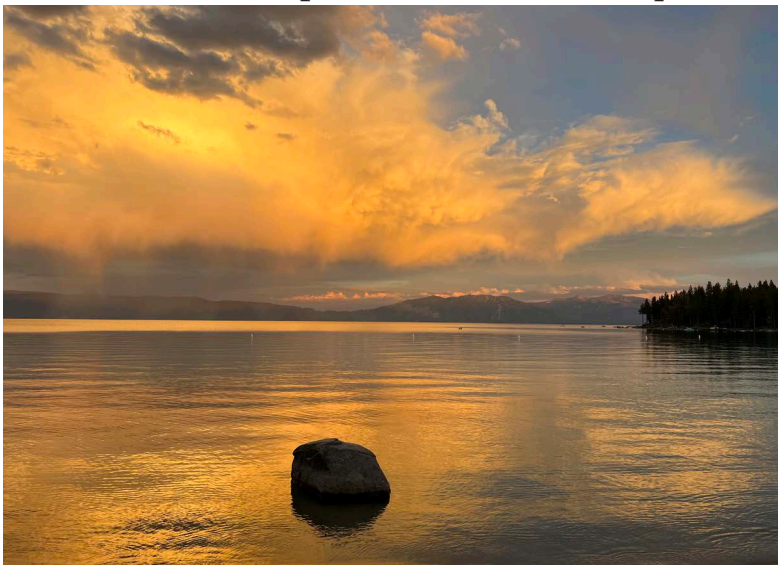
### Jennifer Price Workshop:

Slots are open for Jennifer Price's October 24th "Bring Your Own Tree" workshop. The workshop will be held from 9:00 – 2:30 with a lunch break. Please bring a sack lunch, 1 or 2 trees to work on, your tools, supplies, & wire. Seats are \$100; please sign up and prepay Bob Ricker at the next meeting to hold your spot.

## ABAS Support and Stewardship Program

The American Bonsai Association of Sacramento prides itself on its strong and caring community of bonsai enthusiasts. In that spirit, we would like to remind you of our Support and Stewardship Program which offers assistance in times of need to ABAS club members and other bonsai collectors.

The program aims to keep your valuable bonsai collection alive and healthy with support from the club's advanced bonsai artists if you are unable for any reason. We can arrange for short term support like watering or, if necessary, help with the sale of some or all of your collection. The reasonable rates for these services vary on the extent of services required and club membership. In addition, we can provide basic language for estate planning purposes. Now is a great time to discuss your collection, its value, and how to best preserve it with your loved ones. Please reach out to our club president [Dodie](#) for inquiries.



Sunset at a small, not very well known local lake

## Events Calendar

2023

Tuesday, September 26, ABAS Bonsai Auction & Member Consignment Sale [In-person](#)

Saturday - Sunday, October 7-8 Shepard Garden and Arts Center Fall Sale. Consignment Sale opportunities available. [In-person](#)

Saturday, October 14, Member Workshop [In-person](#)

Saturday, October 21, Chop In [In-person](#)

Friday - Sunday, October 20-22, GSBF Rendezvous, Santa Nella, CA Bjorn Bjorholm headliner, workshops, seminars, social hours, silent auction, vendors [In-person](#)

Tuesday, October 24, Enjoy an Evening with Bonsai Artist Jennifer Price [In-person + Zoom](#)

Monday, October 30 6:30 pm, GSBF Golden Zoom with Jonas Dupuich Topic: Pot Selection. [Zoom](#)

Saturday, November 11, Member Workshop [In-person](#)

Tuesday, November 28, Hands-On Fall Care with Renee and Carmen [In-person + Zoom](#)

Saturday, December 9, Member Workshop [In-person](#)

Friday, December 15, Holiday Party [In-person](#)



## Welcome New Members:

Douglas Dobbs, Enrique Lopez, and Lisa Wolff

New members are connected with their area liaison and will receive a welcome letter with a free pass to one of our member workshops. The mentors are listed on our website under 'Member Resources, Club Liaisons', with contact information.

