



August 2026

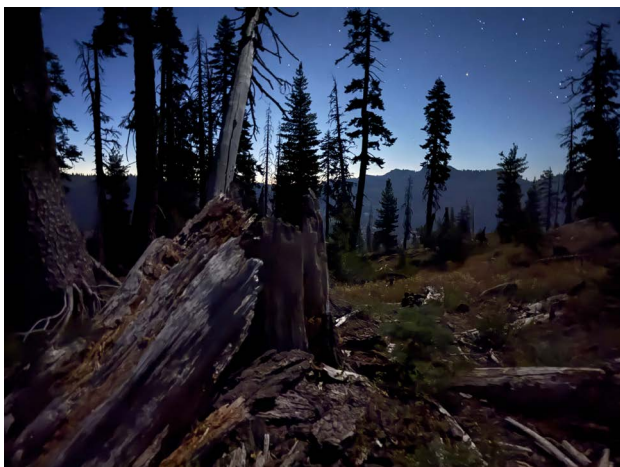
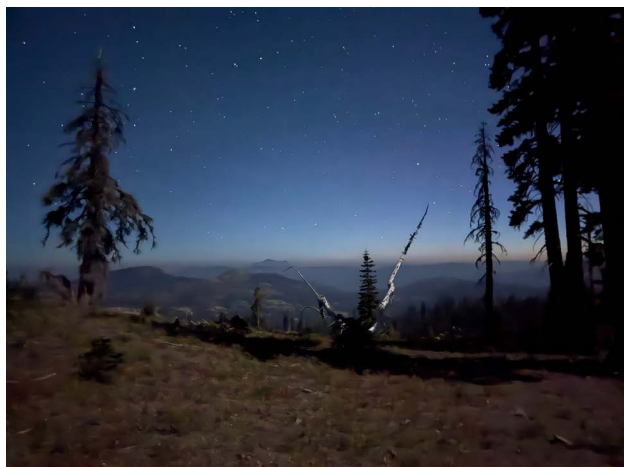
The Bent Twig

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

Arboreal Abstractions

Ian Baker

I left my house at 3 AM midweek to hike to a favorite lake from my childhood, which happens to be up a road that I now live directly across from at the eastern end of highway 20. Picking my way over roots lit only by the light of the quarter moon was a surprisingly easy rhythmic exercise; just lift your feet high enough to not fall face first. It is a magical experience watching the world welcome another day in a place like this, the bats still out in large numbers dive-bombing insects as the morning birds sing in the new day. But my favorite part of being in the High Sierra is spending time with the bonsai of the natural world. Up here, trees survive with roots forcing their way through cracks in the granite, against prevailing winds and punishing winter snow. The actions of nature that cause stunted trees with interesting movement, deadwood, and all the other attributes we favor are the inspiration for the actions we take. When we introduce pruners and copper wire, we are in effect replicating the forces of nature that prevent a tree from growing tall and erect. In nature, all of the styles are present. It is easier to pick out the chokkan (formal upright), moyogi (informal upright), fukinagashi (windswept), kengai (cascade) trees and every variation in between, and understand how they become. This is a great inspiration for me, providing context when I come back to my bonsai workshop and make decisions about how to style my trees. I hope I can bring some of this inspiration back to share.



Above: High Sierra granite, stars, and trees



Next Meeting

Bonsai Design and
Progression w/ Sam Tan

This month's meeting will feature a presentation from Sam Tan, a professional bonsai artist based in the San Francisco Bay Area, for our August meeting. Sam is active in both the Bonsai Society of San Francisco and East Bay Bonsai Society, and his work, including several striking coast redwood specimens, has been exhibited at the Pacific Bonsai Expo. He's built a reputation for California native species, particularly redwoods and junipers, and travels to bonsai clubs around the state for live demonstrations and workshops.

We are excited to welcome Sam back following last year's excellent presentation on redwoods. This time, he'll be shifting focus from a single species to a broader discussion of bonsai design methodology and walking us through bonsai progression case studies from his own collection to illustrate his approach to styling and development. He'll also be bringing several of his own trees, and members are welcome to bring a tree of their own for a brief design critique.



Above: Sam Tan working his redwood





What to Work on August

As we move from the end of August into September, our trees will give their final push of growth before beginning the transition to winter dormancy at the end of October, but much of our work remains the same. Deciduous and broadleaf evergreens may need additional pruning, pinching, wiring if there is a push of new growth. Conifers (cypress, junipers, cedars, and redwoods) can be pruned, thinned, and wired. It is too late for de-candeling Japanese black pines and red pines (double flush) however fall work, cleaning and pulling old needles, may begin. September is the month to begin work on single flush pines (white pines, Scots pine, lodgepole pine, etc).

Checklist:

- Check to make sure wire is not cutting in on deciduous/broadleaf evergreens
- Stay vigilant monitoring for pests and disease - refer to the [pest control chart](#) and rotate active ingredients.
- Adjust watering as temperatures change. Pay close attention!
- Fertilize as necessary, (see yearly care sheet on [ABAS website](#))
- Provide shade for sensitive species and trees undergoing sensitive procedures like grafting



Above, right: Scenes from the 2026 Summer Splash

Wire Recycling

Reminder that ABAS has a wire recycling program every month, so remember to bring in your sorted and debris-free aluminum and copper wire to be collected by Debbie and Steve Ballanti. Mention the word resources for a free raffle ticket. The wire is recycling and all money earned goes back to the club.

Last Meeting: Summer Splash!

Summer Splash is an annual social event with roots in one of ABAS's long-standing traditions. Originally known as the Luau, it was the meeting at which members elected the board for the coming year.

In the early days, voting was conducted in person, and the process could take considerable time. As electronic voting became the norm, the need for an in-person election meeting diminished, and the Luau evolved into the more relaxed, social event we now know as Summer Splash.

Today, Summer Splash combines bonsai with good food and fellowship. After introducing the board members for the coming year, four members style trees that are raffled off to attendees, making the event both educational and fun. Members also contribute hors d'oeuvres to a potluck, creating an opportunity to enjoy one another's company while celebrating our shared enthusiasm for bonsai.

This year's demonstrations featured Dodie Newman styling an olive, Paul Holtzen styling a boxwood, Timm Johnson styling a Blue Atlas cedar, and Gage Marchini styling a Chinese juniper. All four demonstration trees were high-quality specimens that made excellent raffle prizes after they were styled.

The lucky winners were Mats Hagstrom, Chris Kregoski, and Ted Hermanson. Ted, a new member who joined ABAS that very evening, was especially fortunate—he won two of the demonstration trees! What a wonderful way to begin his bonsai collection.

Attending members were very generous with their contributions to the hors d'oeuvres potluck making this year a great success. Summer Splash is a wonderful example of how ABAS traditions have evolved with the times while preserving the camaraderie and sense of community that have always been at the heart of the club.





Welcome New Members: Nathan Hart, Ted Hermanson, Stacy Wise

New members are connected with their area liaison and will receive a welcome letter with a free pass to one of our member workshops. Liaisons are listed on our website under '[Member Resources, Club Liaisons](#)'.

Member Workshop - September 12

Member workshops serve members of all levels - beginner to advanced!

The next member workshop is Saturday, September 12. Contact Renee Seely, breadcrust@comcast.net to reserve a spot for the August workshop. Please specify morning, 8:30 am - 12:30 pm or afternoon 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Each workshop session is \$20 payable to ABAS. Reminder that the club owns a set of tools for more advanced work like tools for grafting, wood carving, and heavier bending.

The Fall Auction and Consignment Sale

The Fall Sale is just around the corner on Saturday September 19 from 1:00 to 4:00 PM. We are seeking volunteers starting now so please contact [Gina Chaput](#) if you are able to assist with checking-in, running auction trees, staffing the hold table, etc. A sign-up sheet with specific volunteer positions will be posted at upcoming meetings on the back table. Volunteers are able to select an item from the consignment tables for purchase prior to the opening of the sale. Beginning with the 2026 Fall Sale, the ABAS Board has elected to limit each seller to a total of 30 items in consignment.

Donate to the Raffle Table and Support ABAS

All members are encouraged to consider donating quality tree material, tools, books, magazines, or anything bonsai related to the monthly raffle table. The donation of these items encourages folks to buy raffle tickets, which in turn supports our coffers. This is a good way to pass on items of value to new members and make space in your collection, while supporting the club. Bring items in at the beginning of the meeting and place them on the raffle table. Please include species and variety names on plant material and bundle items of lower value like magazines together.



Above: Scenes from the August member workshop



2026 Events Calendar

Tuesday, August 25, Bonsai Design w/ Sam Tan [In-person & Zoom](#)

Saturday, September 12, Member Workshop [In-person](#)

Saturday, September 19, 1:00 - 4:00 pm, ABAS Annual Live Auction and Consignment Sale [In-person](#)

Saturday, October 10, Member Workshop [In-person](#)

Tuesday, October 27, Shohin Pines w/ Adam Toth [In-person & Zoom](#)

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

Tuesday, November 24, Mugo Pines w/ Roger Steel [In-person & Zoom](#)

Saturday, December 12, Member Workshop [In-person](#)

Wednesday, December 16, Holiday Party [In-person](#)



In Memoriam: Pam Gallego

The ABAS community mourns the passing of member and Sacramento Bonsai Club treasurer, Pam Gallego. She remained a trooper and a positive, gracious lady throughout her battle with cancer this past year. Pam passed away quietly at 6:30 pm on August 15, surrounded by her family.



Featuring sales of:

- pre-bonsai
- finished bonsai
- pots

SATURDAY
SEPT
19

AMERICAN BONSAI ASSOCIATION SACRAMENTO
**LIVE AUCTION &
CONSIGNMENT SALE**

Saturday, September 19, 2026
1 pm - 4 pm

Join us for our annual live auction and consignment sale

- 1:00 pm - Start of consignment Sale and Preview of Live Auction Items
- 1:30 pm - Live Auction begins
- Open to the public

Shepard Garden and Arts Center
3330 McKinley Blvd, Sacramento