



# THE KAI WIRE



SANSUI-KAI OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

## As I See It

*From Russell Benson  
President*

Thank you to all for helping make the Annual Sansui-Kai BBQ a great success. It was very well attended and I believe everyone came away having had a good-ol-time.

A special thanks to Don & Ieene Berkus for the use of their lovely home. It could not have been a success without the continued help of all members. New and long timers all brought items for eating and auctioning.

The two trophy plants in the auction were an Oak fiercely bid on by Hank and Elliott. The latter ended up with the beautiful aged tree. And yours truly made the winning bid on the Prostrata juniper styled by Marco Invernizzi last December in his Sansui-Kai demonstration.

The money raised by the auction is crucial to the continued success of our club. Even in these economic times the well-versed instructors and excellent stock we acquire is comparable to past years.

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## The Juniper Project

*By Ted Matson*

For the past two years, I've been working on an old Prostrata juniper in a series of demonstrations designed to take a tree from raw material to a finished bonsai.

The concept was intended to offer more than the same initial styling demo that is typical in most bonsai club demos, and to give people more of an idea of the long term sequence of the development and refinement toward a bonsai.

The material is an older tree that had been worked on as a bonsai at one time, and might even have been a show tree. When I acquired it, it had been neglected for many years and, while it retained some of its initial shape, it was terribly overgrown and out of proportion.

In addition, the tree was in some very old soil.

The first program was to introduce this tree, along with several others, with a styling plan. The club members picked this Prostrata juniper to be the one to work on going forward. So, the first evening's work was a hard cut back to eliminate the heavy growth on the tips.

The second styling (a year later) was to take the new growth that had emerged and start positioning that with wire.

Part of the issue was that the old tree had gotten leggy and the branches, being old, were quite brittle. It meant that we couldn't put the kind of interesting movement into the old branches that we wanted. So, as a result, we had to re-grow some of that structure so we could give it the proper character of movement and taper.

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**Juniper Project** *continued from page 1*

Last December, we trimmed the tree again and transplanted it into a training pot. I was careful at the time not to remove too much of the old soil.

The idea was to allow new roots to grow in fresh soil, and later we will go back in to remove more of the old soil and replace it with a more granular mix. This will be a step to complete next spring.

Since last year, I've left the tree to grow,

and haven't been pinching so as to promote lots of new healthy roots. For this coming session, we'll be further refining the new branching and twig structures.

Also, since I've lived with the tree, I've seen some additional components of the design that I think we'll eliminate this time. That should set the stage to build the foliage masses that will really bring the tree to a point of completion.

--Ted Matson



**Ted Matson is one of the premier bonsai artist / teachers in California and the US. He currently is president of the Golden State Bonsai Federation and travels across the country lecturing, consulting, giving demonstrations and workshops in the bonsai art form.**

***Ted studied under most of the greats: John Naka, Melba Tucker, Shig and Roy Nagatoshi, and Warren Hill. His seven tree Foemina juniper forest is in a photographic display in the 1999 JAL World Bonsai Contest, and in 2000 was featured in the Bonsai Shunju, the publication of the Nippon Bonsai Association. Ted's sensibility as a bonsai artist lies in choosing good material and paying close attention to proportion, refinement and detail.***

--Jack Reynolds



*On Wednesday, September 2, after two years and three progressive stylings, Ted Matson will demonstrate his next approach to the club's Prostrata juniper design. The club chose the tree in August 2007 as a five-year demonstration project.*

*Photos by Michael Jonas*



## *Naka Notes* by Jack G Reynolds

September is much like August where bonsai care is concerned. It is generally hot, particularly in the first part of the month so care must be taken in watering but since most trees have finished their branch growth they will not require as much water as in the spring. Strike a balance between the amount of water given and the needs of the tree in the heat. One way to do this is to check the top quarter or half inch of soil, if it is damp a quarter to half an inch down then you don't need to water if it is dry then water until water runs out of the bottom of the pot. Small trees may need to be checked twice a day.

Trees that may become sunburned should be placed in the shade. This will start the tree into dormancy and inhibit sprouting of new growth too late in the year, such late growth usually freezes off or burns off in the fall and winter winds.

Trimming should be reduced at this time of year. Don't remove growth until it has matured. If in doubt leave it for spring pruning.

Light feeding, particularly of trees that are still showing new growth is permitted at this season. Deciduous flowering and fruiting species may benefit from a low nitrogen high phosphorous high potassium fertilizer (0-10-10 such as Liquinox Bloom) to promote fruit development and strong roots.

Pines and junipers may be transplanted this month, particularly toward the end of the month. No sever root pruning should be done however so you should only be moving trees from one pot to another of about equal or larger size. If the weather remains hot, wait until October to repot. Willows, tamarix, olive and bougainvillea can be repotted or even started as cuttings at this season.

### *As I See It*

**From Russell Benson** (continued from page 1)

If you have an extra pair of tools, or a plant you wish to off-load, we are reintroducing a member's sale table at monthly meetings. A suggested donation of 20% of the sale price will both help the club and be a tax deduction. Also, please continue to donate to the raffle table. This also is a great way for the club to live long and prosper.

On the last Sunday of the month we are organizing informal gatherings at Balboa Park, where members work on their trees in public to promote Sansui-Kai. Contact Frank Cuva, the event chair, or myself.

The club's demonstrations and special day long workshops with visiting bonsai masters in the coming year further the club's mission to share the bonsai art form. This Fall, I encourage club members to consider taking classes with one of the area's Bonsai teachers. This is the best way to develop and expand experience.

We look forward to seeing everyone at the monthly meetings. If you can come early, help out in the Japanese Garden Bonsai Collection prior to the meeting while we still have daylight. Until then, garden, grow and stay healthy.

## Events of Interest

### Walter Pall

Walter Pall, who is listed among the top five bonsai artists in Europe, is making Sansui-Kai a stop on his West Coast December visit. Program Chair Jack Reynolds snagged this big fish following a lead by Elliot and a well-timed invitation. Mark your calendar, as the visit may include a workshop.

See <http://walter-pall.de/00gallery/index.html> for more information on Walter Pall and his work.

### Sundays in the Park with Russell

Work on your trees in Balboa Park from noon to 2 pm the fourth Sunday of each month as part of an initiative to show our stuff to the public and attract new members in the process. Contact Russell or Frank Cuva for more information.

### Clear The Clutter

Bring your castoffs for the members sale table and get a 20 percent tax deduction from the club's share of the sale. Another way to share your wealth is to bring items for the monthly club raffle.

### Tree Clinic

In October, in lieu of a demonstration, members will bring their own trees for the first regularly scheduled "Members' Tree Clinic." Members will discuss and work on their own trees for the entire evening.

### Remember the Permanent Collection

While daylight still accommodates, there is time before meetings to give our attention to the Permanent Bonsai Collection in the Japanese Garden. Contact Curator Denny Roche to see how you can help.

## SANSUI-KAI Administration

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### WEBSITE

[www.sansui-kai.com](http://www.sansui-kai.com)

## What's Ahead

Wednesday  
September 2

### 7:30 PM MEETING

**Demonstration:** Ted Matson  
Resident Juniper Revisited  
**Refreshments:** Sonja Kobler  
June Matthews, Mary Tatro,  
Jack Reynolds  
**Niche:** Russell Benson

Wednesday  
October 7

### 7:30 PM MEETING

Members' Tree Clinic

Wednesday  
November 4

TBA

Wednesday  
December 2

### 7:30 PM MEETING

Walter Pall

### MEMBERSHIP

*Sansui-Kai is dedicated to the learning, use and teaching of the horticulture techniques and artistic principles needed to grow, design and care for bonsai. Regular membership is \$22. Family membership is \$27. Corresponding membership is \$7 limited to any previous club member now living outside a 50-mile radius of the meeting place.*