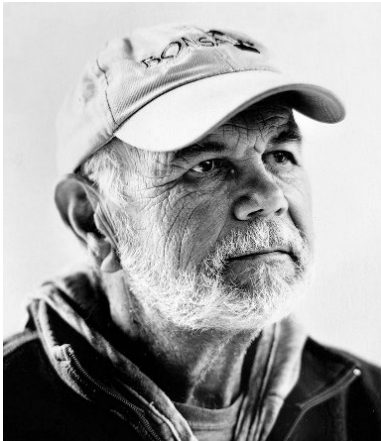




THE GOLDEN STATE BONSAI FEDERATION COLLECTION AT THE HUNTINGTON NEWSLETTER

November 2024

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON



Ted Matson has been curator of the bonsai collection at The Huntington, for the past fifteen years. His dedication, artistic talent, and foresight has evolved into training volunteers to care for the bonsai and has elevated The Huntington bonsai to a world-class collection status. His official retirement date is December 31, 2024.

Ted started his bonsai journey forty-five years ago in San Francisco. After moving to Los Angeles in 1980, he took classes from leading Masters in Southern California, including Roy Nagatoshi, Melba Tucker, Warren Hill, and John Naka. In 1988, Ted began offering classes at his home in Pasadena. For more than three decades, he has been an in-demand demonstrator for clubs and study groups throughout California and across the United States. He was also active in Golden State Bonsai Federation for many years, including one

term as President.

His collection includes trees of all sizes, styles, and species. They are admired for their proportion, refinement, and detail. Ted's tiniest tree is a fig that he cultivated in a thimble-sized white pot for approximately 30 years. Perhaps his most iconic bonsai is a seven-tree foemina juniper grove on a granite slab that he began designing in 1980. It was selected for photographic display in the 1999 JAL World Bonsai contest and featured in the Japanese bonsai magazine *Bonsai Shunju*. In 2015, this forest was featured at the inaugural Artisan's Cup. Ted generously donated his beloved slab planting to The Huntington for visitors from all over the world to enjoy.



In addition to his artistry with trees, Ted is an incredible teacher. Ten years ago, he started *Bonsai Gakko*, a weekend-long course to introduce students to the art of bonsai. Upon completion of the class, many students chose to become volunteers in the bonsai nursery and hone their skills under Ted's watchful eye. He also presides over *Bonsai Builders* where children could create their own bonsai. He's been active with the Bonsai-A-Thon since it began in 1996 and we are happy to report that he will continue as our auctioneer extraordinaire.



Ted leaves behind a legacy at The Huntington and throughout California for his artistry, inspiration, and mentorship. Fortunately, he's not going to fade away. As Ted steps out of his curator shoes, he will transition to volunteer boots at The Huntington where he will greet visitors in the bonsai courtyard.

Thank you, Ted, for your commitment to the art of bonsai and for all that you've shared with us. We are forever grateful.

Respectfully, Cheryl Manning, Chair

Pacific Bonsai Expo 2024

The Pacific Bonsai Expo 2024 was a celebration of extraordinary bonsai. It was at the Henry J. Kaiser Center for the Arts in Oakland on October 26 & 27, 2024. Seventy-four of the best trees in the country were dramatically displayed against black backdrops. There was also a huge sales area where fifty-one vendors sold trees, pots, stones, scrolls, books, etc. Between the exhibition and vendors stood a single coast redwood bonsai by Eric Schrader, framed within an intricate structure of wooden beams with traditional Japanese wood joinery that Eric designed and constructed.

The GSBF Collection at The Huntington was fortunate to participate in the exhibit when our huge bald cypress was accepted by the selection committee. It took a village to prepare and transport this tree to Northern California. Thanks go out to Kathy Benson, Manuel Dizon, Ellen Keneshea, and Mitch Matsey for preparing the tree. Thanks to Andrew Mitchell for creating a slab to display the tree, and to Michael Roberts who drove our bald cypress to Oakland. Finally, thanks to all the strong men (including Joe Galgoul) who moved the tree at The Huntington and at the venue in Oakland because it took four people to lift this heavy beast.



The bald cypress with four buttresses is planted in a handmade Chinese pot. It sits on a slab created for this exhibition by Andrew Mitchell, who sourced the wood from a blue cedar that fell during a severe windstorm that hit The Huntington several years ago. This slab complements the tree's rustic nature. The companion piece, by Cheryl Manning, is meant to evoke wetland plants along the banks of the swamp – the natural habitat of bald cypress.

This tree was collected in the mid-1970s by Tom Chen when he joined Gary Marchal and Mel Ikeda in the swamp adjacent to New Orleans. Tom did the initial styling before Thu Cao acquired it. In 2002, the cypress was donated to the GSBF Collection at The Huntington, where it is cared for by bonsai curator Ted Matson. It is often displayed at the

entrance to the lower bonsai courtyard to welcome visitors to the art of bonsai.

The Pacific Bonsai Expo was populated with trees from across the United States. In addition to our bald cypress, Southern California was also represented with a cedar elm by Robert Pressler, a cork bark elm and cork bark oak by Michael Roberts, and Lindsay Shiba's Korean hornbeam. The most colorful tree in the show was Bill Crichlow's crabapple with a few very colorful leaves competing for attention from the huge mass of fruit hanging from the branches. A few award winners included Janet Nelson's shohin collection, Jeffrey Stern's medium display of Shimpaku and Corkbark Elm, and Christopher Rumery's California juniper grafted with Kishu Shimpaku.



Jonas Dupuich, Andrew Robson, and Eric Schrader founded the Pacific Bonsai Expo to promote learning and encourage bonsai practice and display at a high level. The overwhelmingly positive comments from participants, vendors, and visitors during this exhibition shows how successful they were. Looking forward to the Pacific Bonsai Expo 2026.



Large Conifer Christopher Rumery's California juniper grafted with Shimpaku.



Best Shohin Janet Nelson



Best Medium Display Jeffrey Stern, Shimpaku & Corkbark Elm



BONSAI-A-THON

SAVE THE DATE!

THE GSBF COLLECTION AT THE HUNTINGTON

February 22 & 23, 2025, 10am to 5pm

The Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens Brody
Botanical Center, 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino, California

Jonas Dupuich, Visiting Artist

**Demonstrators – Vendors
Live Auction – Silent
Auction**



CURATOR'S REPORT



Since my April 2024 report, the collections have received some important new gifts. They include:

- six pieces from Al Nelson of Orange County, including a crape myrtle, a *Podocarpus macrophyllus*, pomegranate, grape, a rabbit's foot fern and a contorted quince.
- a deodar cedar from a volunteer, Edgardo Eugenio.
- two succulents, a *Commiphora monstrosa* and an *Operculicarya decaryi* from UC Irvine Professor Joe Stead.

- three pieces from the late Frank Goya donated by his son, Robert: a boxwood, a California juniper and a saikei featuring juniper *procumbens nana* as the material. Frank was known as a saikei master, and it was nice that we got one of his pieces.

- two pieces on permanent loan from GSBF, including a large pond cypress from Gordon Deeg of Atherton, CA, and a large Japanese black pine from the GSBF Bonsai Museum at Lake Merritt. The pine is very significant in that it was first shown as a bonsai in the US at the 1915 Pan Pacific Exposition in San Francisco. That means its training was probably started sometime in the 1800's, which makes it one of the oldest bonsai in the United States.

I taught the Bonsai Gakko course over two weekends in June and early October. In both classes, many of the students requested to join the bonsai volunteer team. The June class was processed quickly and have been working for a couple of months now. The October class was just submitted for processing.

The GSBF Committee also staged another "Bonsai Builders" workshop for kids through the Huntington Education Department, this time featuring bougainvillea in a tropicals workshop in mid-summer.

I've hosted two design classes from USC in the spring and fall semesters. The latest group will be presenting proposals for projects at a November meeting.

I also conducted a few group tours with local garden clubs this summer.

Respectfully submitted, Ted Matson, Curator