

Look closely at the pictures that accompany this article. The three people you see are the curator of Weyerhaeuser's Pacific Rim Bonsai Collection, the curator of the GSBF Bonsai Collection North, and the founder of the International Bonsai Arboretum in Rochester who is also the publisher of Bonsai International magazine. They are building a Shohin display, discussing the merits of each bonsai tree and the aspects of placement given the selection of bonsai available. The setting for this discussion was informal with energetic information exchange between the audience and the experts. The session lasted almost 2 hours.

Three of the most respected bonsai masters in the United States, Dave DeGroot, Kathy Shaner and Bill Valavanis donated their time and expertise at the biennial California Shohin Seminar in 2012.



Biennial...yup the time for the next Seminar is almost here! Every two years a Shohin Seminar is held in Santa Nella, California. Mark your calendars: the weekend of January 31st through February 2nd 2014 bonsai masters, teachers, students and general enthusiasts from all over the country will gather in the very small town of Gustine off Inter-State 5. It's a picturesque place, with ...ahem...occasionally fragrant air! Its all just part of the Shohin Seminar's mystique.

The goal of the Seminar is two-fold: to provide a low-cost, learning-rich environment for those who want to learn more about Shohin Bonsai and to raise money for the Golden State Bonsai Federation's Bonsai Collection. Added bonus - lots of good bonsai friends from all the country get together and party.

The GSBF Bonsai Collection is split into two parts. One part is on display in the South at the Huntington Gardens in San Marino. The other group of trees resides in the North at the Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt, Oakland. The Shohin Seminar is a major source of funding for care and evolution of the bonsai collection.

Lowest Possible Cost

To make the Shohin Seminar work, everyone pays their own way. Headliners, workshop instructors, the folks presenting demonstrations, vendors, all of the chair-persons that make the Seminar such a wonderful event, EVERYONE volunteers their services, pays their own transportation, hotel, and registration costs. It's an extraordinary act of giving for the benefit of the greater Bonsai community. The Shohin Seminar is considered to be one of the best, if not the best, opportunity in the US to learn about Shohin. Thanks to the generosity of all who participate, it is an exceptional value for the cost.

The 2014 Shohin Seminar will include an Exhibit of Shohin Bonsai and Suiseki. The schedule is starting to come together. ALL PARTICIPANTS are invited to bring a treasured Shohin for the Exhibit. Please bring bonsai, stands, any companion plantings or scrolls to the Exhibit room Friday between 10am and noon. The display of Suiseki is also encouraged!

Please plan on picking up your trees *after* noon on Sunday since the Exhibit is open to the public until noon. To help the tired puppies taking down the exhibit and stowing the Seminar paraphernalia for another 2 years, please take delivery of your trees between noon and 1:30pm.



We have all sorts of events planned ! In addition to the Exhibit, as of this writing, Bob Hilvers will give a demonstration using Shohin sized California Juniper, Pauline Muth will focus on Land and Water Penjing. Bill Valavanis will work with Japanese Quince and with Chinese Elm. Scott Chadd is planning on building us a Kingsville Boxwood Forest. Kathy Shaner will discuss techniques for transplanting Shohin Bonsai.

We'll have four Exhibit Critique sessions thanks to Kathy Shaner, Ted Matson, Bill Valavanis, and a new voice at the Seminar this time: Sean Smith. We will have two rooms full of vendors. February is the perfect time to acquire the bonsai material and supplies you'll need for the coming spring, as well as gifts for those loved ones unable to attend.

Saturday is the day for workshops followed by a dinner buffet during which we'll hold the Benefit Drawing and Auction. The workshop line-up is looking good! The following experts have signed up to help lead workshops: Sean Smith, Fred Miyahara, Ted Matson, Frank Mihalic, Bill Valavanis, Bob Shimon, Pauline Muth, John Thompson, Steve DaSilva, Sam Adina, Scott Chadd, Darren and Laura Wong, Kathy Shaner, Bob Hilvers, Kenji Miyata, Vince Owyong, Gary Ishii, and Jim Gremel. How is that for an all-star list!? Many of these folks have donated their time repeatedly and are an integral part of why the Shohin Seminar is so successful and so much fun. There may be a few changes to the schedule but whatever these guys come up with, you can be assured they will put their heart into the offering.

I should mention for those who have not yet attended the Shohin Seminar: Many of the workshops are held next to each other in the main banquet hall. This allows Registrants who are not participating in a workshop to listen in on as many workshops as they choose. The workshop rooms and the vendor area are on the ground floor of the hotel and in close proximity to each other making this venue one of the easiest ones to navigate. In 2014 the Bonsai Exhibit will be on the second floor above the hotel front desk. It is serviced by both stairs and an elevator and the room has more space and better lighting than the location used in previous years.

Workshop participation is decided by a Lottery

Because we are not paying the teachers anything, the cost of the workshops is simply the cost of the bonsai material you will be working on. This makes workshop seats a highly sought after commodity. To give everyone an equal chance, workshop participation is completely 100% decided by lottery. Here is how it works:

On the registration form, please list your choices in order of preference. Choose more than one! Choose as many as pique your interest. That way if your first choice of workshop is already filled by the time your name is pulled during the lottery, we can slot you in to a next choice on your list.

During the Lottery, the names of all full seminar registrants who wish to participate in the workshops are put into a basket. Names are pulled one by one from the basket. As each name is pulled, we match open workshop seats against the choice list for that name. Once all full registrants have been matched with one workshop, the process is repeated for people who wish to attend a second workshop.

This double pass process is then repeated for all DayPass registrants. We give preference to full seminar registrants because the facilities costs are predicated on occupying hotel rooms. Full registrants are helping us meet that quota.

When you make your hotel reservations, please mention that you are a participant in the Shohin Seminar. The hotel has a reduced room rate for us.

Any workshop seats that remain available after the lottery and any seats that become available due to emergency cancellations will be posted on a marker board at the registrar's desk during the Seminar.

Some years we have hit the seating limit for The Hotel Mission de Oro Banquet Hall so the Saturday dinner is limited to full registrants. Postal Date Stamp is used to determine order of precedence if we get close to maximum attendance. Please note: in 2014 we are switching to Buffet style delivery for all meals to keep the food costs down and to make things easier for the hotel staff.

To make registration as equal opportunity as possible, on November 1st 2013 Registration form will be posted on our website <http://calshohin.org/> and will be available in paper format at the Golden State Annual Bonsai Convention. We also try to mail a copy of the registration form to people who participated in prior years, although the delivery date on those is not guaranteed!

Our hardworking Coordinators for the 2014 Shohin Seminar are Gary Judd and Lucy Sakaishi-Judd. If you have questions please contact them at juddbonsai@att.net

If you are a vendor who would like to participate, please contact our Vendor chairperson Bob Shimon. shimon@mcn.org

If you have questions about registration please contact me, Randi Keppeler at calshohin@yahoo.com

More information is posted on our website <http://calshohin.org>