

# NEWSLETTER



## Baikoen Bonsai Kenkyukai

**Tom Vuong**  
**October 16, 2025**  
**Juniper Styling**

### Bamboo Room

LA Arboretum  
301 North Baldwin Avenue  
Arcadia, CA 91007

Please bring something for the raffle

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## October Demonstrator – Tom Vuong



Tom is famous for his gigantic sized tree collection and for his ability to bend heavy branches, although we won't be able to see this at his demo in October, he will use similar techniques on a really old juniper from Lindsay Shiba. The trunk is about 3-4 inches across. After the demo, the tree will be maintained and raffled off at the Winter Silhouettes Exhibition on January 17, 2026.

No this is not the tree he will demo. You cannot lift it without heavy equipment, but the picture shows what Tom has in his garden

## September demonstration by Ryan Pitts



Ryan is a student of David Nguy, President of the Chino Bonsai Club and has been doing bonsai for about 8 years. He is a first-time demonstrator for Baikoen, so this demo was highly anticipated. He brought in an Itoigawa Shimpaku Juniper that he started from a cutting 6 years ago (May 20, 2019), obtained from Mr. Kim. He had wired the branches to put movement in the branches during that time and grown it in the ground. Ryan wired to put movement into the branches, removed the wire, several times over this time primarily to set the branch structure. His original goal was to let the tree grow till the trunk was about 4 inches wide, but he had to have a tree for the demo, so he used what he had.

He brought in three trees that he had worked on, see below, to show progression and his bonsai technique. Here Ryan discussed the type of juniper he is working on. The tree is a *Juniperus chinensis* 'Itoigawa Shimpaku'. The bark of Itoigawa has less red hue than Shimpaku. The foliage is very bright sea-green in color. It is naturally less compact by comparison, reverts to juvenile foliage after heavy pruning, which is slightly bluer, but still soft. Shoots are finer in texture of the three, yet they grow faster than Shimpaku. The Itoigawa variety is a stronger grower vs. Kishu, but Kishu is slower but denser. One other major difference is that Kishu is susceptible to spider mites, this is a major consideration.



This cascade he worked on styling for one year. Over time the tree has back budded well so he is able to begin branch development and ramification.





This tree is from nursery stock. He has been working on it for 2 years.

Ryan purchased this tree at the Rendezvous in 2023. It was styled by Robert Hoogveen (below) as part of the Joshua Roth Rising Stars competition 2023. Ryan had another vision of the tree and completely restyled the tree within the last two years.



You can see from this series of photos from Ryan, the tree development (above left to right) with the current tree on the far left. Incidentally Ryan will participate in this year's Joshua Roth Rising Stars competition in October.

Itoigawa. The mature scales are the smallest of the three and can become dense with regular pinching. Shoots are finest in texture of the three, yet they grow faster than Shimpaku. The Itoigawa variety is a strong grower vs. Kishu is slower but denser. One other major consideration is that Kishu is susceptible to spider mites. Ryan prefers the Itoigawa variety for its foliage, resistance to mites and more rapid growth (5x faster) as compared to other varieties of Shimpaku.



Left, from left to right, Itoigawa, Kishu and Shimpaku foliage.





The first thing that Ryan did was to look for the “front.” It is marked with a short piece of wire in the pot. The rest of the branches would be cut off. Look at the trunk taper, look for good movement, if there is lack of movement, then make jin. He tends not to worry about the nebari. The tree is too short for a literati style, and it looks like a regular tree so the style cannot be a cascade. The branches have good movement. It will most likely be shohin size.

He uses black lava and a little potting soil in his potting soil during the styling stage of growth. If bonsai soil mix is used, the roots tend to circle the pot. Itoigawa is easy to graft. The strength of the tree is in the foliage. He doesn't cut the tips. To create movement, he

wires twice a year twisting the branches as he works. Ryan uses granular fertilizer twice a year with low NPK (less than 10-10-10), spring and fall, and use anything but not organics because critters like to eat organics. His goal is to slow and compress growth. One way is to put the tree in a bonsai pot and change the soil to 50% akadama and 50% black lava, no pumice.



The branch tip on the far left is not as healthy as the branches in the photo on the right. You can tell by the color of the foliage and the leaf or scale arrangement. Any cutting taken from branches on the right photo would make good cuttings. And extensions as shown in the photo on the right show a healthy plant, the only time to begin styling a tree.



The following are a series of photos taken during his styling of the juniper.







The sequence of wiring: If you want to bend a branch downwards from the trunk make sure the wire comes from below. If you'd like to bend a branch upwards from the trunk, make sure the wire comes from above. Wire two branches with one piece of wire. Wire before bending the branch. Both branches should be about the

same thickness. The wire must be wrapped around the trunk at least twice for stability. Ryan prefers copper, but it is expensive and must be used with conifers for its holding power. Deciduous trees can be wired with aluminum wire. You can see from the sequence of pictures that he holds the branch with his right hand (for support of the branch and as a guide for spacing during the turns on the branch) while his left hand is guiding the wire down the branch. Bend



the branch where there is wire to support the bend, the wire goes on the outside of the bend (yes, I know it's hard to see in the pictures). The first branch is wired toward you, inviting welcoming you. Wiring starts from the front then toward the back of the tree.





The finished tree! Ryan will take the tree home and care for it till our Winter Silhouettes show where it will be auctioned off. Vic Skelton generously volunteered to make a pot for it per Ryan's specifications. This will be something to see!



Ray Blasingame generously donated a Zelkova planted from seed in 1980 and a Ginkgo. Kate Holloway won the Zelkova and Estebon Garcia won the Ginkgo!



## **Announcements**

**Refreshments will be provided by Peter Macasieb, Jeo Cazares and Sue Cook.**

**September 14, 2025, Larry Ragle Foundation Scholarship winners announced.**

Congratulations to the following people for each winning \$500 scholarships!

Mark Britton. Santa Barbara

Mark Szatkowski. Baikoen

Alex Jones. San Diego

Cindy Pecile. San Diego

**October 4, 2025 open 9am -5pm, October 5 2025 open 9am – 3:30pm, Chino Bonsai Club 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Bonsai Exhibit**, 261 S. Junipero Serra Dr., San Gabriel, CA. Bonsai Styling demos and sales, free admission. Workshop spaces may still be available. Please see flyer.

**Oct 11, 2025, 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM, Clark Bonsai Museum in Shinzen Gardens**, 114 W Audubon Dr, Fresno, CA 93720, USA. Come celebrate our ten-year anniversary of the Clark Bonsai Collection, being one of the three GSBF bonsai collections. Join us for a day of fun, art and community. Live demonstrations, free tours, activities for the kids. Open to the public

**October 24-26, 2025, GSBF Bonsai Rendezvous, 9:00 AM – 5pm, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM, Mission del Oro Hotel, 13070 CA-33, Santa Nella, CA 95322, USA**  
Biennial GSBF event. Headliners, Suthin Sukosolvisit and Mauro Stemberger will host BYT workshops on Friday. Multiple workshops will be held on Friday and Saturday. Vendors all three days. Free educational seminars and BYB hospitality hours. Live and silent auctions. For more information, [www.gsbfbonsai.org](http://www.gsbfbonsai.org)

**November 14-16, 2025, Kofu Bonsai Kai annual exhibit at the Bowers Museum in Santa Ana.**  
Set up is on Thursday November 13 setup and the show is the 14 - 16. Contact Carol Upston to show a tree.

**November 15, 2025, Fresno Bonsai Society Fall Sale and Auction, 10am – 4pm, the Clovis Senior Center**, 735 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Clovis, Ca, for more details search [www.freshnobonsaisociety.com](http://www.freshnobonsaisociety.com), please see flyer.

**December 6, 2025, Christmas Party at the home of Debbie and Lindsay Shiba, 1pm start.**  
Don't forget to RSVP to Debbie. Please see flyer.

**January 17 & 18, 2025, 61<sup>st</sup> Winter Silhouettes Exhibition, 10am-4:30pm, Baikoen Bonsai Kenkyukai**, LA Arboretum Ayres Hall, 301 North Baldwin Ave, Arcadia, CA 91007.

**New ZOOM Link. Baikoen meetings will continue to be recorded live and zoomed by Tom.**  
Here is a new link. We will be streaming our meetings live to everyone. However, it is not interactive. We encourage people to either watch the recording on YouTube or join us in person.  
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/8328571089?pwd=1Fqg0SeV9vFT5RaF5vf3pyeVUAIYoE.1>

**Tom's videos:** If you have missed any of the videos that Tom has produced, here is the link to view all of them. [https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=baikoen+bonsai+club](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=baikoen+bonsai+club)

### **Baikoen Demo Schedule – 2025**

October 16, 2025

Tom Vuong

November 20, 2025

Seth Nelson, CBS Artist

December 2025

No Meeting