

GETTING BONSAI READY FOR SHOW

By Charlie Mosse, February 2020

Remove moss from the trunk and surface roots. Use a soft brush like a tooth brush. Squirt area with water and gently scrub. This can also remove water deposits but at times diluted vinegar is needed.

Pull weeds and trim excess flowering structures off the moss.

Trim tree just to be sure silhouette is clear.

Remove visible wires particularly from the trunk and primary branches.

After all surface work is done, add fresh soil where needed and press in with a soil tamper.

If no moss is growing naturally on the surface, add it now. Do not cover surface roots or nebari as these features add to the look of maturity and stability.

Clean the pot of stains etc. Do not scrub too hard as this can remove the sought after patina. Oil pot preferably with camellia, olive, walnut or mineral oil. Vegetable oils can be used but get sticky. Be sure to remove excess oil for an even finish.

Select a stand or slab for the tree. These should compliment the tree and pot but should never visually overpower the tree and pot.

Select an accent plant. This should also compliment the tree, should be seasonal e.g. for spring use a flowering plant, freshly emerging foliage from a green plant or use together.

Sources: SDBC experienced members and SDBC website, <http://www.sandiegobonsaiclub.com/>, at top of page go to Resources and click on Photos to view past shows and exhibits. Individually study the trees, the tree base, soil surface, pot, stand/slab and accent plant, then look at them collectively. Also see Kokufu ten and Taiken ten shows, Noelanders Trophy, U.S. National Bonsai Exhibition. <https://bonsaitonight.com/?s=display> for photos of exhibits/shows.