



AESTHETIC
PRUNERS
ASSOCIATION

JULY 2021
NEWSLETTER



Photo: Greg Kitajima - APA Certified Aesthetic Pruner (*Leptospermum laevigatum*)
Send us your pruning photo and we may use it in the next newsletter!

President's Address

Hello APA Members! Welcome to the new newsletter of the Aesthetic Pruners Association! The Newsletter Committee has put this together to keep you, the members, apprised of the goings on of your organization. And there is so much going on! Read down and you will find news, pruning tips, and information about upcoming events.

Since my last president's newsletter, in November, the APA has become expert at running a Zoom meeting. With Diana Chamberlain at the helm as Education Chair, the Education Committee has put on 5 more Tree Talks and there are 3 more scheduled through February. These talks, and the ability to present them virtually, have brought us new members from around the country. Scroll down to see a list of all new members this year, and where they stem from.

Please feel free to send any feedback or ideas you may have for this newsletter to: apa@aestheticprunersassociation.org.

Dina Blackwell, APA President

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Upcoming Events

CAP Mentoring with Dina Blackwell & Eric King

Saturday, July 31st, 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm PDT

[sign up](#)



APA Tree Talk

Aesthetic Pruning and Firescaping with Katherine Randolph

Sunday, August 8th, 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm PDT

[sign up](#)



APA Member Picnic

Redwood Regional Park

Oakland, CA

Sunday, August 15th, 10:30 am to 2:30 pm PDT

[sign up](#)



APA Party and Potluck

Katherine Randolph's house in Mill Valley

Sunday, September 12th, 5:30 pm to 8:00 pm PDT

[sign up](#)

New Professionals

Panel Discussion

Sunday, October 17th, 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm PDT

save the date!



APA Tree Talk

Training a Young Pine, Part 3

with APA CAP Bill Castellon

Sunday, November 14th, 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm PDT

save the date!

Upcoming Events by Others

If you would like to submit an event for the next newsletter please email us at apa@aestheticprunersassociation.org

American Conifer Society

Western Region Meeting

Silverton OR, 8/20/21 - 8/22/21

www.confersociety.org

North American Japanese Garden Association (NAJGA)

International Japanese Garden Conference-

San Diego, CA, early November 2021

www.najga.org

APA Member Only Videos

Members can access video links to past APA Talks such as: Tree Talks, APA Annual Meeting talks, and Pruning Intensive talks. Links are available on the APA member page of the website. **You must be logged in to your account to see the "Members" page.**



Tree Talk- "Design in Trees"

Recognizing and using design principles in our pruning practice.

with APA CAP Maryann Lewis



Tree Talk- "A Look at Creativity"

How to recognize and develop creativity, and how it pertains to pruning.

with APA CAP Grant Foerster

[Link to all our APA member videos](#)

Pruning Wisdom from Members

"How are you taking the drought into consideration when you are pruning your clients' trees this year?"



Pete Churgel

We will all be hearing that we will be needing to cut back on our water usage, especially on the landscape. Many people's inclination will be to cut back on watering trees and continuing watering the flowers and flowering shrubs. This is the opposite of what is needed. The flowers and shrubs are easily replaceable, but the trees are not. There is a very large time investment in the trees which is not easily replaced. So, I am educating and actively advising all my clients that their non-native trees will need irrigation.

For those who haven't seen my pruning, I tend to thin trees so that their structure really shows. But with the changing climate, I worry that the inside of the trees will suffer during what looks to be a trend towards protracted hot, dry spells. So, I am thinning on the inside but leaving a denser exterior. This will give more protection from heat for the trees.

I have divided my clients and their gardens into two groups: those who irrigate their trees and those who don't. For those who irrigate, I am treating the trees mostly normally but not pruning hard. And I am waiting to see what the weather will bring before I do any pruning in the hot summer or fall. If the trees seem non-stressed, I will do normal winter reductions.

For those who don't irrigate, I am only doing minimal and necessary thinning until the weather gets hot, then I am curtailing all work until the winter, provided the trees are not stressed.



Jocelyn Cohen

1. Mulch, mulch, mulch. Think of each wood chip as a gold nugget and that is how much value wood chips are providing to your soil and all the microorganisms that are trying to live in the soil. This means a healthier garden, trees and shrubs. Deeply irrigate first, then apply mulch. The best mulch is arborist wood chips. Almost any are good, although of course, ones from your own garden are the best. Avoid Acacia because of seeds. Reputable arborists would not drop a load from trees infected with a known pathogen, but you can always ask what is in the mix. The mixture of sizes from a chipper are superior to the wood bark from nurseries. Do not use dyed wood chips, besides with dye being controversial, most of the chips are from wood pallets and provide little nutrient value. The mulch helps retain moisture, and cools the soil in summer. The organic matter breaks down quickly and adds nutrient value to the soil. Think of wood chips as the interface between the soil – to the plants – to the air. The science says 4"-6", but most clients freak at that amount, so better to say 3"-4". It is important to pull the chips back from the trunks of trees and shrubs a few inches, feather them out so it is a gentle slope with a pleasing look. Never pile mulch up against the trunks.

2. Deep water every two weeks. Remind clients who think they are doing the environment a favor by not watering their grass, when in fact, within the pool of lawn are also trees. I am seeing as the lawn dies, our trees suffer.

3. Don't plant new trees and shrubs until later fall, when there are cooler days and longer nights, less evaporation of water resources and the hope of rain.

4. Pruning in drought: In general, I am pruning less foliage from every plant; the trees and shrubs need all the energy from photosynthesis they can get to stay healthy and fight disease, both abiotic and biotic. In the West, we are in the longest drought for 1000 years! with a combination of both a shortage of rain and high temperatures, except coastal. That said, wind has been a drying factor in the coastal bay area. It is important to emphasize even though the trees withstood the previous drought(s) does not mean they are going to make it through this one. Drought is accumulative on the health of trees.



Chris Ingram

What I am doing this year is really a continuation of what I have been emphasizing for the past 6 or 7 years as the “dry” years continued and “normal” seemed gone for good. The huge majority of the trees I prune professionally are Japanese maples (*Acer palmatum*). Many of those are “Dissectums” with downturned branches. Both are highly susceptible to “bark burns” from excess sun overheating the sapwood and breaking cellular cohesion.

Each year I have progressively opted for a more foliated design, allowing more leaf cover across the crown and accepted more shadow below. Not as pleasing aesthetically, but safer from a health standpoint. As I explain to my clients, fried leaves may be unsightly, but they are temporary in any case. Bark burn is forever.

What I have discussed with my clients is:

1. the need for them to *increase* the amount of irrigation water and mulch supplied to their trees now and going forward, including during “winter”.
2. the need to consider their planted landscape trees as living beings, far from their homeland and completely dependent upon us for survival.

After a decade of mostly “dry” years, residual groundwater is now almost totally gone and our garden trees have no survival mechanism beyond our supplemental irrigation. No matter how much the water costs, cutting it off or reducing it is not a viable option for long term tree health. Just as one would not allow a pet to starve because the cost of food tripled, so, too, I try to explain that we all have an obligation to the beings that we take on for our pleasure.



Allison Levin

I'm a more conservative pruner with trees that are new to my care. That's because aesthetic pruning is most successful when it has information, information that takes time to gather. How healthy is the tree? How does it respond to pruning? What kind of care does it receive beyond my visits?

But in this drought year, especially when we've only had one "normal" year since the previous nine-year drought, every tree's situation is a "known unknown" (thanks, Rumsfeld!). So, I assume every tree is stressed. Stressed trees are more likely to be attacked by disease or pests. Stressed trees can die or lose limbs from aggressive pruning.

Still, in our customers' eyes, we're pruners first, tree doctors (horticulturists) second. We can't completely stop pruning until normal rains resume.

I check for dieback; I check for sap flow. Had the client been irrigating the tree during winter months? Is the tree depending on a lawn's irrigation for its needs? (Lawns are the first to be cut off with water restrictions.) Is the tree in the client's first tier of garden priorities, and will it receive appropriate irrigation when other parts of the garden might go dry? If the answers are worrisome, I put on the brakes.

Because most of us work on small trees, irrigation might replace most of what a drought takes away, but we still don't completely understand the full ramifications of severe, multi-year drought. So, I prune with a much lighter hand—avoiding large cuts, and embracing a lusher look over a dramatic effect—still giving the client a better looking tree. And I explain to the client that I want to see that tree last another one hundred and fifty years.

Here's some care basics I try to impress on my clients:

- * Do not fertilize, which will induce the tree to work harder

- * Do lay on the mulch to keep those roots cool!

Do not cultivate soil at the drip line, to protect fine roots.

To be clear, there are trees in my care I will hardly touch this year. I'll remove dieback, I'll balance reaction growth. And there are times when I say, let's give this tree the best chance for surviving this drought, with no pruning at all.

Welcome New APA Members!

as of January 1st, 2021

Associate Members

Anna August, Portland,
OR

Jose Bedoya, San Diego,
CA

James Card, Boring, OR

Andy Felix, Foxborough,
MA

Michael Goertz, San
Francisco, CA

Charles Hammer, Eugene,
OR

Ryan Harvey, Dorchester,
NH

Jacob Knapp, Grand
Rapids, MI

Giovanna Piumarta,
Aptos, CA

Desiree Meinardi, Blue
Lake, CA

David Rettig, Grand
Rapids, MI

Emily Sachs, Pittsburgh,
PA

Chet Schmitt, Brooklyn,
NY

Eric Wagner, Santa
Barbara, CA

Affiliate Members

Paul Ashby, Orinda, CA

Jeff Becerra, Oakland, CA

Anna Hand, Austin, TX

Dennis Hawkins,
Fremont, CA

Muriel Holzer, Orinda, CA

Sue Hughes, Gresham,
OR

Betty Jennings, San
Rafael, CA

Jacque Keller, Oakland,
CA

Caroline Koss, Foster
City, CA

Justin Loy, Glendale, CA

Katrina Ohstrom,
Asheville, NC

Marion Schmidt,
Piedmont, CA

Bruce Simonds, Guilford,
CT

Alan Webb, San
Geronimo, CA

Student Members

Cola Claret, Half Moon
Bay, CA

Cecilia Storm, Danville,
CA

Megan Swift, San Jose,
CA

Sarah Siebach, American
Fork, UT

Heather
Szafranski, Torrance, CA

APA Professional Forum Notes

Highlights from the Forum

The Forum has a great discussion about the Aesthetic Pruning of fruit trees- whether or not pruning for fruit production conflicts with aesthetic pruning principles, and if the two are indeed mutually exclusive. The question provoked many nuanced discussions from several pruners, provided many insights, and was all in all a very fruitful discussion. Check it out! March 2021 Message #[10163810](#).



All Forum users are eligible to win an APA Tote Bag!

Winner will be announced in the next APA Newsletter

Using the APA forum is a benefit of membership and is for active members only. Through the forum you can search for topics and read, post, or reply to any comment or topic. You will need to log into your account on the APA website and go to the forum page. You will want to subscribe to the forum so that you can receive notice of new topics that are discussed. It is very user friendly.

Committee Chair Reports

Craft Standards Committee - Interim Chair Randall Lee:

The Craft Standards Committee, consisting of Dina Blackwell, Grant Foerster, Walt Fuji, Maryann Lewis, Judy Thomas and Randall Lee, is meeting monthly. As part of our national outgrowth we are working on updating the 3 part CAP test so that it will be available nation wide. This will involve making changes to the written, oral and hands on portions of the test.

Presently we are editing the database of CAP test questions. Our goal is to present a new written test that, can be used nationally, to the board by August 2021. Our goal is to have a new CAP test approved, tested and ready to be used by January 2022.

Education Committee - Chair Diana Chamberlain:

The Education Committee meets monthly and is currently planning upcoming Tree Talks and New Professionals meetings. On the committee are: Jane Chua-Couzens, Judy Thomas, Evelyn Borchert, Joe Ehrmann, Lara Miranda, Dina Blackwell, and Grant Foerster.

Do you have any topics for Tree Talks or New Professionals? Or any questions that you would like answered at New Professionals talks? Please email Diana Chamberlain at chamberlaindianaalice@gmail.com.

Finance Committee - Chair Barbara Eaton:

Committee members: Dina Blackwell, Melissa Hyams, Randall Lee, Shivawn Layne, Accountant; Helga Mahlmann, former Accountant.

The Finance Committee most recently met on 6/29/2021, when we reviewed the first quarter (1/1/21–3/31/21) financials. The APA's income for the first quarter was primarily from membership dues and Tree Talk ticket fees. Our major expenses were legal fees for the trademark process, accountant fees, insurance (general liability, accident, fire), website, speaker fees, and promotions. We're enjoying working with our new accountant, Shivawn Layne, whom we hired late last year when Helga Mahlmann, who generously volunteered as our accountant for many years, retired.

National Growth and Outreach - Chair Maryann Lewis

Meets to work on creating APA chapters in other areas. The group discusses topics such as: Promotional materials needed, outreach ideas, APA website ideas to help those out-of-state, and other topics pertinent to building a new APA chapter. NGO committee members include: Jeff Harris, Dierdre Davis Eickhoff, Emily Fronckowiak, Nicole LaPlante, Matt Luks-Jurutka, Grant Foerster, Diana Chamberlain, Dina Blackwell.

Promotions Committee - Chair Melissa Hyams:

The APA promotions committee, newly chaired by Melissa Hyams, is coming out of its COVID hiatus. Our committee includes Dina Blackwell, Barb Eaton, Ann Owen, Michael Weber, Lara Miranda and Jane Chua-Couzens.. This summer we will work on making promotional merchandise available for sale to our members. In the near future we will begin planning in-person events (remember those?) which include a pruning intensive and a garden tour. We are looking forward to gathering together again.

Website Committee- Chair Denise Mason:

The Website Committee (Dina Blackwell, Barb Eaton, and Denise Mason) met on 6/1/2021. We discussed updates to the Home page and the Member page including:

- Updating videos with a thumbnail and subject titles to make them accessible to all members;
- Archiving low-interest or little used sections such as 'Featured Member' and 'News';
- Presenting features of interest to new members such as 'CAP mentoring' prominently and on the home page.
- These and several more were presented to and approved by the Board at the 6/10/2021 meeting.

Newsletter Committee- Chair Dina Blackwell

Members of the committee are Denise Mason and Lara Miranda. Have any ideas for us? Email us at apa@aestheticprunersassociation.org

APA News

The APA Sachiko Umehara Memorial Scholarship will begin accepting applications through the Peralta Colleges Foundation website in October 2021. <https://peraltafoundation.org/scholarships/> Students receiving the scholarship will be awarded \$500 to go toward horticulture and pruning classes at Merritt College. If you would like to donate to the fund there is a link on the APA homepage.

APA Trademark - The board is working with a lawyer to trademark 'APA Certified Aesthetic Pruner'. We are nearing the end of the one year process and will keep you updated on progress.

APA Membership App will allow you to access your APA account on your smartphone. Through the app you can update your profile, sign up for events, access the APA directory, and email fellow members. The app also gives you access to your APA membership card for use in receiving a discount at Hida Tool. The app is called 'Wild Apricot app for Members' and once downloaded to your phone you will enter your email address and APA password in order to log in.

CAP Mentoring - Eric King and Dina Blackwell have set up a mentoring group for APA members who are interested in pursuing certification. To join please contact them at apa@aestheticprunersassociation.org. The next meeting is on Saturday July 31st at 3:00 pm PDT.

www.aestheticprunersassociation.org

[Become a member!](#)
