

High Altitude Nature and Gardening (HANG)

Lords of the rings: our magnificent, ponderous pines

By Janet Sellers

“There is fairly robust evidence that plant cells can perceive and respond to pressure waves, like the kind that are generated by sound in the environment and touch—like, say someone walking up to a tree and hugging it.”—

Ask Sam, the NHPR report by Sam Evans-Brown.

Pine trees are smart engineers.

Pine trees make their life with “smart materials.” Their leaves are needles, letting in sunshine but making snow fall through to the ground. The pine needles on the ground let rain and snowmelt sift through them to the earth and keep the moisture in, weed competition out. The pine tree can disperse essential protective oils from its bark and needles. This envelops and protects the forest, the wildlife, and us from various pathogens. The pine needles have nutrients the tree needs and recycle themselves to feed the forest. Underground is the Wood Wide Web of the forest.

The ponderosa can grow 200 feet tall or more, with girths up to 3 to 4 feet across. It is named for its ponderous (heavy) wood and is a major lumber tree in the Southwest. They reach maturity at 150 years and live 200-400 years; some were found as old as 600 to 800 years old. The oldest recorded ponderosas are 900 years old in the Utah WahWah Mountains.

A truly giving tree

Pine tree soil is specially made by and for pine trees. If we plan for it, the pine tree is our garden friend. We need to make rich soil for our intended plants via compost of those crop materials. We can enrich our soil needs for our gardens, and the pine tree’s needles will still protect our plants as mulch and water protection.

Pine cones close in wet weather to protect the seeds but open and disperse seeds in dry weather, keeping out pathogens. We can use the wood from our forest landscape (fire mitigation efforts of “dog hair” fallen trees and branches) to heat our homes in winter.

The pine pollen is edible and filled with protein, other nutrients, and even testosterone. Some studies show pine pollen may stimulate the immune system, boost brain health, support detoxification, promote weight loss, alleviate pain, and prevent some forms of cancer. Many men who take pine pollen believe that it can offer benefits such as improved athletic performance, greater muscle mass, and enhanced personal function of increased energy and libido. So, when spring rolls around and that yellow pollen is all over, we can celebrate first, then dust it off.

Janet Sellers is an ethnoecology researcher, writer, photographer, designer, artist, and chronicler of life and landscapes. She is director of Janet Sellers Fine



Above: On ponderosa, even heavy snow will fall through the needles and not harm the tree in most cases. The bark of the tree can protect the ponderosa in a wildfire. Forest fires are most often touched off by lightning. According to Steve Hirst of the U.S. Forest Service, “lightning isn’t enough to finish off a ponderosa. When lightning hits one, “It flash-boils the sap, and it just blows the bark off. It doesn’t burn the tree.” *Photo by Janet Sellers.*

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Art Matters

Who buys art and why?



By Janet Sellers

People buy things they want. Collectors want inspiration. Artists, venues, and art lovers are glad to know art collectors buy art because they like it and want to be near it. Artists make imagination real in ways most could not on their own. Making something tangible from imagination brings ideas to physical form.

In a meeting with my art group, Sveva D’Antonio said she hungered for the vision that artists can give her besides the one she can see with her own eyes. This is always music to my heart!

Sometimes art collectors admit they long for the “one that got away” so they buy an artwork as soon as possible. They don’t want to regret not having something they know they love that provides personal value. Aarti Lohia, a global art collector who sits on the boards of philanthropies and museums, said in an Artnet interview that early in art collecting, she once let a favored watercolor get away. It was sold to someone else, and she was de-

termined never to repeat such a mistake.

Where do art collectors like to go for art? Lohia supports the gallery ecosystem, saying, “I really like engaging with galleries and gallerists and the fruitful conversations that can come about with them. Galleries are so vital to the arts ecosystem and, in an era with increasing premiums and pressures on galleries, it’s important that we do not forget what a tremendous deal of work they put into introducing and developing the careers of artists.”

Prosperous galleries work assiduously. They sell the artists’ works. They develop relationships on behalf of artists, curators, and collectors. When I worked at Far East Fine Arts in San Francisco, my boss, Mr. J.Y. Tsao, was constantly networking on the phone or traveling far away. His great love for art informed his business acumen for the artist, the artworks, and for himself.

Tsao knew when and how much the price of artworks increased as an asset. Once, another dealer kept precious works for several months. Tsao

knew the artworks had appreciated, but the sale was not complete. The dealer held out for months in order to sell high to his client, but this would cheat Far East Fine Arts of due profit. Tsao called him and vociferously informed the dealer their months-old agreement would be void sans immediate payment. Then he got off the phone, turned to me calmly, and cheerfully invited me to have a nice lunch.

His amazing self-control in business strength and kindness for us as staff taught me a powerful lesson: Be disciplined in business yet be kind at every opportunity. We had a wonderful lunch in Chinatown. Then we returned to the gallery. All afternoon, I joyfully continued my work of translating texts for an upcoming exhibition.

Janet Sellers is an award-winning artist, writer, creatives coach and public speaker. She enjoys making art and sharing art stories. Contact her at JanetSellers@OCN.me.

Snapshots of Our Community

TLWC to accept 2023 grant applications starting Jan. 15



Left; Eligible groups can start applying for grants from the Tri-Lakes Women’s Club (TLWC) on Jan. 15. Groups eligible to apply for grants up to \$2,000 include nonprofits, public service organizations, and public schools that serve the Tri-Lakes area. The TLWC grant program focuses on smaller organizations that typically don’t have the staffing or resources to pursue grants from major granting foundations. In the photo taken Oct. 1, Monument Warriors Team Coordinator Lisa Glen displays the new track uniforms and sound system purchased with a TLWC 2022 grant. *Photo by Sue Leggiro.*