



# Bonsai Notebook

*www.austinbonsaisociety.com*

A Publication of the Austin Bonsai Society

December 2023 vol 159

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## Calendar of Events

### January 10, 2024

- ◆ Topic: Itoigawa Juniper
- ◆ Artist: Todd Schlafer
- ◆ Time: 6:30pm (Social) 7:00pm (Meeting)
- ◆ Location: Zilker Botanical Garden

### January 11, 2024

- ◆ Topic: Member led workshop
- ◆ Advice on styling, pruning and improvements on pines
- ◆ Other conifers and evergreens are welcome
- ◆ Time: 6:00 - 6:30 (Start time)
- ◆ Location: MBP at Pflugerville
- ◆ Suggested donation: \$7 - \$10

## 2023 Board of Directors

**Jonathan W.**  
President

**Eric B.**  
Vice President

**Simon T.**  
Secretary

**Gloria N.**  
Treasurer

**Dashiell C.**  
Member-At-Large

**Judy G.**  
Member-At-Large

**Ever V.**  
Member-At-Large

## Volunteers

*Refreshments*  
*John H.*  
*Debbie H.*

*Tree Hosts*  
*John H.*  
*Debbie H.*

# President's Message

*By Jonathan W.*

What a great year we have had at Austin Bonsai Society! Excellent annual show attendance and volunteer participation, excellent presenters throughout the year, and an eager group of new club members joining in the bonsai adventure! 2023 has been on the up and up for our Bonsai Club! Couldn't have done it without such a dedicated board and active club membership! Special thanks to the board members rotating off: Roland for his many years of service to the board and recently as our outgoing Vice President, and Jacob for his time as member at large.

Can't wait to see what the 2024 Board has planned for our club! The Board is working diligently on early planning and is meeting on Zoom this December 19th to help plan the new year with our incoming Vice President, Eric Benson. Welcome also, Judith Giandalone and Dashiell Collins to our Board. We are looking forward to your contributions in 2024 :-)

It was heartwarming to be a part of the club nominating long time members Alisan Clarke and Michael and Candy Hansen to be honorary Lifetime Members of Austin Bonsai Society. This is a tremendous honor, and was unanimously voted upon by the membership at the November 2023 Holiday Party club meeting. Alisan Clarke was even part of starting this honor in the 1990s, and was able to receive it in 2023. We shared photos of Mike and Candy Hansen from Back in 1986 sharing the bonsai art with our club members at Zilker Botanical Garden.

Thank you to everyone who brought pot-luck dishes to our scrumptious holiday party! The food was excellent and quite a selection for vegetarians and the gluten-free crowd! Also, so much fun with the gift exchange! Thank you, Eric Benson, for taking the lead to help us exchange around 25 gifts! Our holiday party got me thinking about Christmas festivities ahead and inspired me to get some shopping done early this year so I can enjoy the holiday a bit more.

See the special December 2023 Looking Ahead calendar for details about (1) January 11, 2024: club Member will lead a Bring Your Own Tree Workshop with focus on Black Pine and other pine species, but you are welcome to bring a conifer or similar evergreen if you don't have a pine to work on. (2) March 14, 2024: An optional private workshop with artist Evan Pardue... details on this workshop will be coming soon ... (as in the old days) the March 14, 2024 visiting artist workshop will require pre-payment and RSVP to attend as there is limited space for the visiting artist workshop.

Please, Please Please ... remember to register early and reserve your hotel room early for the April 2024 Convention in Houston. Details are on the Looking Ahead events list and workshops have already begun filling up. Looking forward to a great 2024, and getting to know so many new members looking to learn and grow their bonsai craft in 2024 with participation in our Austin Bonsai Society.

Happy Styling!  
Jonathan Wood

## President's Message

*By Jonathan W.*

### Bonsai Quote:

"For the past few years, the subject of 'naturalistic' bonsai has been discussed in bonsai circles... So what is the concept? It comes from something John Naka said: 'Don't make your tree look like a bonsai. Rather, try to make your bonsai look like a tree.' ... look at some natural trees. A traditional bonsai is ideal; it is abstract. A naturalistic bonsai is realistic, but never totally realistic. There is always a certain degree of abstraction. But never going as far as many modern bonsai, which are very groomed, very refined, and often look almost unreal...'Naturalistic' means that the end result, the finished tree in a pot, conveys the feeling of an impressive natural tree that has not been touched by man. It does not matter how this is achieved, but in most cases it is done very artificially - not by nature!... Naturalistic is not an excuse for lazy people. It is not about untidy looking trees. It is not a shortcut. I think it is even more labor intensive than traditional styling....Try making a decision based on what the material tells you...Naturalistic styling is just another styling option. It is perfectly okay not to like the whole idea or the end result presented here." -- Walter Pall, pgs. 44-45 Bonsai Today #104

# Vice President's Message

*By Roland L.*

Hello Austin Bonsai Society,

Please be safe and enjoy your time with family and friends this holiday season.

Don't forget to protect those tropicals and your other trees if the temperature dips down really low. Use our Slack community for any questions regarding winter care.

Back off on watering as it gets colder and take this time to "rest" your bonsai muscles.

Take care and we'll see you in January!

Happy holidays,

Roland

## Reminder for club membership and advertisement

### 2024 membership fee

Individual	\$35.00
Family	\$40.00
Newsletter monthly advertisements:	\$35.00
Directory advertisement:	\$11.00

You may contact [payments.austinbonsaisociety@gmail.com](mailto:payments.austinbonsaisociety@gmail.com) for convenient electronic payment options (processing fee will be added).

## Get Connected!

Join our online  
discussion



## Official Website

Visit our website at  
[austinbonsaisociety.com](https://austinbonsaisociety.com)

## Facebook



Like our Facebook page  
AustinBonsaiSociety

## Twitter



Follow us on Twitter  
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## Instagram



Follow us on Instagram  
@austinbonsaisociety

## ABS Library

<https://abslibrary.libib.com/>

## YouTube



[https://www.youtube.com/  
channel/  
UCLSkNbNLd3EOYwjkjNlneA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLSkNbNLd3EOYwjkjNlneA)

# ABS Board Meeting Minutes

## Austin Bonsai Society Board Meeting Minutes, November 28, 2023

### Meeting Attendees:

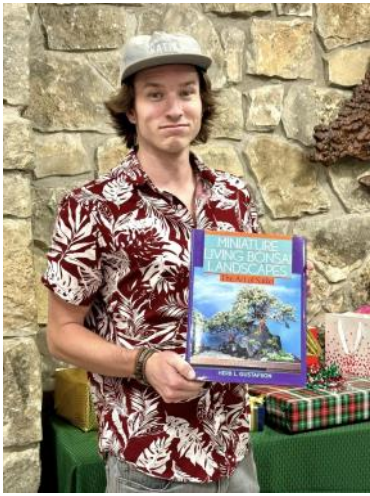
Jonathan W.  
Roland L.  
Gloria N.  
Eric B.  
Dashiell C.  
Everardo V.  
Judy G.

1. Meeting called to order at 7:30 PM.
2. **Secretary's Report** for October Board meeting reviewed and approved.
3. **Treasurer's Report** reviewed and approved. Discussion of budget surplus, future funding of club activities, 2026 convention, etc.
4. **LSBF Delegate Report:** Eric B. to continue as LSBF delegate. Simon T. as second delegate and Secretary for LSBF.
6. **TTSBE Announcements:** Our annual seminar was a success! Looking forward to next year!
7. **Future Items:** Discussion of 2024 Calendar: artists, demo/workshop fees, per diem for food/lodging. Discussion of more beginner-oriented content.
8. Meeting closed at 9:13 PM.

## Bonsai Calendar – Looking Ahead

Date	Day of Week	Event Type	Artist	Topic	Location	Approx Member Cost
1/10/24	WED	Club Night - Demo / Lecture	Todd Schlafer <a href="https://www.firstbranchbonsai.com/about">https://www.firstbranchbonsai.com/about</a>  <a href="https://www.podbean.com/ew/pb-bsqg5-12960f9">https://www.podbean.com/ew/pb-bsqg5-12960f9</a>	Itoigawa Juniper : Styling and chance to win the demo tree!	Zilker Botanical Garden Center 2220 Barton Springs Rd, Austin, TX	Raffle Table Items/Donations Welcome
1/11/24	THURS	Workshop	Club Member Led – Join us for guidance , pruning help, and styling improvements on Pines. (Other conifers and evergreens welcome)	Bring your own Tree to Work on: Pine focus, Conifer, Evergreens welcome Approx start time: 6:00PM - 6:30PM *see January Newsletter for Confirmation of start time	MBP BONSAI STUDIO 601 Kay Ln Pflugerville, TX 78660 <a href="tel:(512)202-3403">(512) 202-3403</a>	\$7 to \$10 suggested donation
2/14/24	WED	Club Night - Demo / Lecture	Club Member Led - Demonstration and discussion of techniques – not a workshop	All about how to re-pot bonsai! Trimming roots, securing tree in pot, suggested soil types	Zilker Botanical Garden Center 2220 Barton Springs Rd, Austin, TX	Raffle Table Items/Donations Welcome
3/13/24	WED	Club Night - Demo / Lecture	Evan Pardue <a href="https://underhillbonsai.com/evan-pardue/">https://underhillbonsai.com/evan-pardue/</a>	Yaupon Holly - Bonsai Styling and Demonstration	Zilker Botanical Garden Center 2220 Barton Spring	Raffle Table Items/Donations Welcome
3/14/24	THURS	Workshop	Visiting Bonsai Artist: Evan Pardue leads this workshop	Make your own bonsai with material purchased from Artist's bonsai nursery in Louisiana - Approx Start Time: 6:00-6:30PM (TBD)	MBP BONSAI STUDIO 601 Kay Ln Pflugerville, TX 78660	Cost TBD - (Price of Material + Cost of Workshop Time)
4/25/24 4/26/24 4/27/24 4/28/24	THUR FRI SAT SUN	Convention Bonsai Workshops, Demos, Sales, Vendors, Banquet, Public Display	Bjorn Bjorholm,  Sergio Cuan,  Min Hsuan Lo	Bonsai On the Bayou 2024 Convention - LSBF + Bonsai Clubs International – Host: Houston Bonsai Society – Registration underway! First-class exciting international bonsai weekend” <a href="https://www.facebook.com/HoustonBonsai">https://www.facebook.com/HoustonBonsai</a>	Houston Marriott Westchase (800) 452-5110 2900 Briarpark Dr, Houston, TX 77042	RSVP room reservations, workshops, and registration EARLY before it sells out – Registration Begins on Nov 4, 2023**

## Holiday Celebrations!!



## December Bonsai

by John Miller

The big thing this month is to make sure that the bonsai do not dry out and to protect the roots from freezing. Do not leave them up on their benches. Know which species should be left outdoors. They may be set on the ground. Add a dense mulch to the pot rim and then add a looser mulch on top. Water in a minute crack or chip can freeze and bust the pot.

Evergreen types especially and deciduous to a lesser extend should not have the root ball subjected to alternate freezing and thawing. That process tends to tear and damage the roots. Placing the trees on the ground and using a mulch will minimize this problem.

Deciduous trees should not be placed where they receive winter sun. After a period of dormancy, the heating of the tree could possibly cause it to break dormancy prematurely. If that happened you would need to keep it above freezing the rest of the winter. After they go dormant they have no need for any sunshine.

While they are dormant examine the twigs, branches, and trunks carefully for scale insects. Scale are sucking insects that usually cover themselves with a hard impervious shell that is very resistant to insecticides. Some are pretty small and look like specks. You might want to search online for something like 'scale insect bonsai' and get some pictures. Horticultural oils (available at garden stores) work good by filling their pores and smothering them. Oils can be applied now and you get a more thorough coverage while the trees are dormant. The only other way is to use a systemic insecticide (make sure it is labeled for scale) during the growing season.

Since the trees are not using as much water during dormancy it is easy to overlook checking on them. The low humidity usually found during winter helps dry the soil. Winter sun can be pretty hot and if it shines directly on the pot it will hasten the drying process. Winter will usually also be more windy. Therefore, however you bed down the trees, you need to check the dryness often. The same trees that needed more water last summer will also need to be checked more often during the winter. I think that more trees are lost during the winter by having the soil dry out than from the actual cold.

Especially watch the plants that will need repotting next spring. Pots full of circling roots do not have much soil to hold water but those that had a lot of organic matter in the soil mix may be soggy. Organic matter that has composted during the summer will be very fine textured and hold on to the water a long time and may also interfere with drainage.

Plants have different degrees of hardiness for their top growth and their roots. The reason being that the ground acts a large reservoir of heat and here in Texas seldom freezes more than an inch or two down. Therefore, plants like the pomegranate and crepe myrtle which are at the northern extent of their range outside will only be hardy to 32 degrees in pots.

Any plant that you are unsure of should be protected from freezing. This can be a problem because if they are not kept cool after they go dormant they will break dormancy and start to grow too soon. Growing without sufficient light causes long spindly growth which you cannot control. My best solution for this when I lived in town was to have a long platform with two wheels that I pulled into the garage on nights where freezing was forecast and kept outside at all other times.

The cold weather will keep any insect problems under control outside. You should use a dormant oil spray to kill over-wintering insets and eggs. A dilute spray of lime-sulfur can be used on deciduous trees if they have no green at all which will also control fungal spores but be sure to follow label directions carefully. You should watch for damage from rodent types, rabbits, squirrel, and rats. They will seriously prune branches and strip bark in short order..

A caution on lime sulfur--the same stuff we use on jin and shari. The liquid lime sulfur is pretty caustic so should be used with caution. If used as a dormant spray application should only be made to fully dormant plants, deciduous trees with tight winter buds, not on very warm days, and only when diluted as directed on the bottle.

Bonsai in greenhouses or indoor bonsai will need to be watched for the normal indoor problems. Low humidity, spider mites and scales are the biggest problems here. Trying to keep the humidity up by placing you trees on a humidity tray can possibly give you some soil problems, root rot or some other fungal disease. I basically use the same controls in the greenhouse that I use outside all year.

You can take advantage of the winter slowdown by getting pots ready for spring, clean and sharpen your tools, study what changes you would like to make on your trees and so forth. Making notes about what needs to be done on an individual tree is great but if you are like me the notes and trees are usually a long way apart. If you place a colored stake or ribbon on the tree you will see instantly which one needs what done. For example, I am using red for needs repotting, purple-needs a new pot, yellow-serious pruning, orange-should be restyled, etc. These can be put on during the year if you make that kind of decision as you are doing general routine work.

Try to find some good material for enhancing your collection. It is hard to find decent material in a landscape nursery. If the club has a dig scheduled, be a part of it. There are many places where you can find one or two specimen to dig, in town as well as in the country. The problem is in finding a place with enough material to warrant taking the whole club. If you know of a possible location or have a friend with some land (it doesn't have to be very close) tell one of the officers about it. This comes under the heading of 'be an active member'. The rest of the group especially your program chairman will appreciate it.

Reminder: 2023 CLUB MEMBERSHIP FEE AMOUNT INCREASE

Beginning in January 2023, ABS will charge an annual membership fee of \$35 for an individual and \$40/couple pursuant to the vote taken by the ABS Board on May 17, 2022, the discussion by attendees at the June 22 ABS meeting, the newsletter announcement dated June and July, 2022 and the regular meeting vote taken on July 13, 2022. Fees for electronic payments will be added to those amounts.

Memberships are annual and need to be renewed each year by the end of February in order to receive a copy of the 2023 Directory.

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## New/Renewed Members

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Brandon R.

## Recruiting Authors

With a nod of respect to John Miller, who has been diligently writing monthly columns for our newsletter, we would also like to take this time to invite interested members with knowledge and experiences of local Austin conditions to write articles for beginners and potential aspirants keen on raising bonsai. The Bonsai Notebook is looking for a new voice to author a column providing helpful reminders and tips dedicated to caring for bonsai. Be it a monthly routine or winter procedures, we'd like to welcome new perspectives and experiences to be shared in this newsletter. If interested, please contact: [webmaster.austinbonsaisociety@gmail.com](mailto:webmaster.austinbonsaisociety@gmail.com).

A warm thank you to John Miller for writing the latest columns. Even I, as the editor, may have taken these last months for granted and have been reminded that life is a charming companion that deserves to be appreciated every day. Thank you for your helpful words!

## Advertisements



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Owner: Troy Smith

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ph: 512-202-3403  
-mail: mbpbonsai@suddenlink.net  
601 Kay Lane  
Pflugerville, TX 78660  
(call for directions)



**Hawk Eye**  
*Bonsai*

# Bonsai Notebook

Austin Bonsai Society  
P.O. Box 340474  
Austin, Texas 78734



## Austin Bonsai Society

P.O. Box 340474  
Austin, TX 78734



## About Us

The Austin Bonsai Society is a nonprofit organization which exists to help in providing guidance and education for individuals in their desire to learn and expand their knowledge and skill in the arts of bonsai.

The Society holds regular meetings, twelve months a year, on the second Wednesday of each month. Our social period begins at 7:00 pm, followed by our program at 7:30 pm. Normally, unless announced otherwise, these meetings are held in the Zilker Garden Center building, located on Barton Springs Road in Zilker Park, Austin, Texas. We offer a monthly program of interest to the general membership.

The cost of membership is presently only \$32.50 for an individual and \$37.50 for a family membership. For additional information, contact the Austin Bonsai Society at P.O. Box 340474, Austin, TX 78734.