



Bonsai Notebook

www.austinbonsaisociety.com

A Publication of the Austin Bonsai Society

February 2024 vol 161

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Calendar of Events

February 14, 2024

- ◆ Topic: Member led repotting presentation
- ◆ Artist: Jonathan W., Joey M., Greg S.
- ◆ Time: 6:30pm (Social) 7:00pm (Meeting)
- ◆ Location: Zilker Botanical Garden

February 17, 2024

- ◆ Topic: Member led workshop
- ◆ Advice on wiring
- ◆ Time: 6:00pm - 9:00pm
- ◆ Location: MBP at Pflugerville
- ◆ Suggested donation: \$10

February 24-25, 2024

- ◆ Club dig sponsored by The Texas State Bonsai Exhibit (TTSBE)

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
Dashiell C.
Quoc H.

Tree Hosts
Gerrit C.

President's Message

By Jonathan W.

Welcome to our new members who have joined recently... we're looking forward to sharing our knowledge and getting to know you! Reach out and say hi to us at our meetings. Reminder also to secure your spot for workshops and special events by pre-paying and reserving your seat – it is not uncommon to need to make a reservation a month or two prior to special bonsai workshops so trees, venue and logistics of guest artists can be organized.

ANNOUNCING ONE (1) FREE APRIL 2024 BONSAI CONVENTION SCHOLARSHIP FOR A NEW CLUB MEMBER WHO JOINED ABS IN YEAR 2023!!

(BY APPLICATION ONLY) General Requirements to be eligible: **(1)** Must have become a NEW Austin Bonsai Club member for the first time in the year 2023. **(2)** Must be relatively new to the bonsai art. **(3)** Must be willing to pre-pay for the APRIL 25-28 2024 Convention in Houston, TX and then be reimbursed by Austin Bonsai Society for the approximate \$295.00 cost of event Registration (paid workshops and hotel lodging are not eligible for reimbursement with the \$295.00 Scholarship). **(4)** Must apply by sending a simple email application of interest to the Bonsai Society Board/Scholarship Committee via **JONATHAN.WOODJS@GMAIL.COM** outlining some reasons Austin Bonsai Society should consider you for the scholarship, how long you have been studying bonsai, whether or not you have registered yet for the Bonsai on The Bayou Convention in Houston, which workshops or special convention events you plan to participate in, and what day you plan to arrive and depart from the Convention (it is approx 3 and ½ days in Houston, TX ... April 25 thru 28th, 2024). NOTE: This scholarship is part of Austin Bonsai Society's non-profit commitment to support and promote both bonsai education and to help provide educational opportunities to emerging bonsai artists in the Central Texas / Greater Austin area.

Continuing the President's message, I am most happy Spring is around the corner and one of my favorite times of the year is underway... dormant buds on deciduous bonsai are preparing to put on their magnificent spring-time show. As a maple enthusiast, I eagerly await springtime each year! It is mesmerizing to see the silhouette of maple bonsai begin to emerge with life and a spectacular array of colorful leaves.

A word about February weather in Central Texas... we have to be on the lookout for early budding and waking of dormant trees, only to potentially have them exposed to a hard freeze or frost some years. 2024 is forecast to be a mild February but in years' past, we have occasionally had ice and snow around mid-to-late February. Conversely, watch out for warm temps that could potentially roast plants in greenhouses on warmer days (we may be seeing close to high 70s soon!) Be on the look out to protect varieties during a potential roller coaster climate if you're new to the region or to bonsai.

The ABS Board is working diligently to bring an excellent variety of programs to 2024 Looking forward to the wonderful programs our Vice President (and Programs coordinator), Eric Benson has in store for us! I know he cares so much for our learning and enjoyment and puts a lot into bringing us wonderful presentations and workshops.

President's Message

By Jonathan W.

Volunteer help is continuously needed (and appreciated) in our club... at each meeting we can use help sweeping and wiping down tables at Zilker or workshop venues, for anyone who can pitch in an extra couple of minutes.. Thank you to all who have helped in the past and can help out in the future :-)

"Happy Styling",
Jonathan Wood, ABS President

Bonsai quote:

"One of the things I learned from John (Naka)...and it's one of his proverbs that he would say...I heard him say it again and again and again, 'a live donkey is better than a dead doctor'. The meaning of that is that when you're working on bonsai, it's better if your bonsai is kind of like that live donkey. It's got to be alive. ...You have to do the techniques that you are doing to create a masterpiece...if those techniques are going to kill the tree...it's better to have a lesser tree that's green than this masterpiece that's dead. And he (John Naka) was always, always sensitive to the life blood in the tree, and that fact that it needs to be healthy and vibrant. That's more important than being artistically perfect. " -- Cheryl Manning <http://bonsaificusretusa.com/cheryl-manning-bonsai-artist-interview/>

Vice President's Message

By Eric B.

Greetings everyone!

What a great visit we had with Todd Schlafer! He did a great job styling the Itoigawa Shimpaku Juniper (*Juniperis chinensis* Itoigawa), while providing a wealth of information in his answers to all of our questions. I certainly hope we get a chance to have him back again, and next time we'll try to set up a workshop, too.

Coming up at the February meeting we have a member-led presentation on Repotting, where Jonathan Wood, Joey McCoy, and Greg Setter will repot some of their trees. They will demonstrate and answer questions about all aspects of repotting a bonsai. This is the perfect time of year for such a demonstration, so please plan to attend as it should be quite informative, especially for those who may be newer to the art.

Our workshop for February concerns Wiring, covering basic wiring techniques. The workshop will be held at MBP Bonsai Studio (601 Kay Ln., Pflugerville, TX 78660). The \$10 fee covers attendance, and wire for one small nursery stock tree provided by ABS. (Please note that the trees used in the workshop will be offered in the raffle at future club meetings. If you attend the meeting and want to keep the tree you wired, you can purchase it for the club's cost plus an additional fee.) Bring a tree of your own to wire too, but we do ask that you wire at least one stock tree, and that you use your own wire on your personal tree. MBP does have wire for sale, if you need to pick some up.

Our next visiting artist is Evan Pardue, traveling from Underhill Bonsai in Folsom, Louisiana. Evan will be working on a Water Elm, which will be available in the raffle at the end of the meeting. I'm excited to see this tree and what Evan does with it.

Evan will also lead a workshop the following evening, Thursday, March 14, from 6:30 pm to 9 pm, at MBP Bonsai Studio. The workshop fee is \$55, plus the cost of a tree and other materials. Evan will have trees (water elms, and others) available for purchase, at a variety of prices. There are only 4 slots left, so sign up at the next meeting! Evan is also offering private study, for \$75 per hour, or \$450 for a full day. Evan is a great artist and teacher, so consider an hour or two of private study with him to make some good progress on a tree or two.

In April we have a demonstration on Making Bonsai with Saplings, led by our own Dashiell Collins. Dash conceived of this program, and garnered a generous donation of 30 seedlings from Treefolks. The donated seedlings are 10 bald cypress, 10 box elders, and 10 lacey oaks. Dash will use 10 of them in the meeting demonstration. The other 20 trees will be used in April's workshop, on Saturday the 20th, 1-4 pm, at MBP Bonsai Studio.

I've gone on long enough! See you all at the February meeting!

Happy trees = Happy life

Get Connected!

Join our online
discussion



Official Website

Visit our website at
austinbonsaisociety.com

Facebook



Like our Facebook page
AustinBonsaiSociety

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Follow us on Twitter
@ATXBonsai

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YouTube



[https://www.youtube.com/
channel/
UCLSkNbNLd3EOYwikjNlneA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLSkNbNLd3EOYwikjNlneA)

ABS Board Meeting Minutes

Date: January 16, 2024

Location: Virtual

Meeting Attendees:

- ◆ Jonathan (President)
- ◆ Eric (Vice President)
- ◆ Simon (Secretary)
- ◆ Gloria (Treasurer)
- ◆ Members-At-Large
 - Dash
 - Ever
 - Judy

President:

- ◆ Jonathan kicks off the meeting at **7:32pm**
- ◆ Talked about many aspects of the program, survey, rooms for improvement and more

Vice President:

- ◆ Discussed the format for the next meeting
- ◆ Finalized candidates for the demonstration
- ◆ Will shop for trees for February workshop
- ◆ Touched on all upcoming programs/workshops

Secretary:

- ◆ Last report was accepted without edits

Treasurer:

- ◆ Provide financial updates and balances
- ◆ The treasurer would like to remind the announcer at the podium to utilize the microphone to project clear communication to the audience at the back of the room

Meeting adjourned at **9:05pm**

Bonsai on the Bayou (Houston Convention 2024)

Register link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/bonsai-on-the-bayou-2024-tickets-684270350037?>



Our Headline Artists

[View full bios](#)



Bjorn Bjorholm



Sergio Cuan



Min Hsuan Lo



Sean Smith

Bonsai Calendar – Looking Ahead

Date	Event Type	Artist	Topic	Location	Approx Member Cost
WED 2/14/24	Club Night - Demo / Lecture	ABS Club Members - Greg Setter, Joey McCoy, Jonathan Wood	How to re-pot bonsai! Trimming roots, securing wobbly tree in pots, suggested soil types, tips, special root graft and more! – (demo only, not a workshop for member trees)	Zilker Botanical Garden Center 2220 Barton Springs Rd, Austin, TX	Raffle Table Items/Donations Welcome
SAT 2/17/24	Workshop	Wiring Workshop - Club Member Guided Practice wiring techniques on club-provided tree material.	From structural wiring to refinement – great event for beginners to advanced bonsai artists 1:00PM - 4:00PM RSVP to: Jebenson99@gmail.com	MBP BONSAI STUDIO 601 Kay Ln Pflugerville, TX 78660 (512) 202-3403	\$10 to ABS for venue and supplies
SAT 2/24/24	Club Dig	Club Member dig - Organized by Simon Tse	Dig trees with Bonsai friends in South Texas for future Bonsai Material . RSVP to: simonitse@gmail.com	South Texas: To Be Provided with RSVP	\$ TBD
SUN 3/10/24	Bonsai Meet-up: Shohin Society	Organized by: Club Member - May Lau	Shohin Society of Texas meet-up with lots of tiny trees! 1:00 - 4:00PM ***Daylight Savings time change applies*** RSVP to maychanlau@gmail.com	Spicewood Springs Public Library 8637 Spicewood Springs Rd, Austin, TX 78759	\$ TBD
WED 3/13/24	Club Night - Demo / Lecture	Evan Pardue https://underhillbonsai.com/evan-pardue/	Water Elm - Bonsai Styling and Demonstration	Zilker Botanical Garden Center 2220 Barton Springs Rd Austin, TX	Raffle Table Items/Donations Welcome
THURS 3/14/24	Workshop	Visiting Bonsai Artist: Evan Pardue leads this workshop https://underhillbonsai.com/evan-pardue/	Make your own bonsai w/ material sourced/purchased from Artist's Louisiana nursery 6:30-9:00PM RSVP to: jebenson99@gmail.com	MBP BONSAI STUDIO 601 Kay Ln Pflugerville, TX 78660	\$55 workshop fee + \$ cost of tree purchased from Vendor
WED 4/10/24	Club Night - Demo / Lecture	Dashiell Collins (ABS club member), Seedlings donated by TreeFolks https://www.treefolks.org/ready-set-plant/#overview	Demonstration: Turning young seedlings into amazing bonsai projects – various species and a variety of special techniques	Zilker Botanical Garden Center 2220 Barton Springs Rd Austin, TX	donation table items welcome
SAT 4/20/24	Workshop	Dashiell Collins (ABS club member)	Workshop: Working with seedlings as pre-bonsai material RSVP to: dashiellcollins@gmail.com	MBP BONSAI STUDIO 601 Kay Ln Pflugerville, TX 78660	\$ TBD
THURS to SUN 4/25/24 4/26/24 4/27/24 4/28/24	Convention- Bonsai Workshops, Demos, Sales, Vendors, Banquet, Public Display	Bjorn Bjorholm, Sergio Cuan, Min Hsuan Lo **Registration underway! First-class, exciting, international bonsai weekend**	Bonsai On the Bayou 2024 Convention - LSBF + Bonsai Clubs International Houston Bonsai Society https://www.facebook.com/HoustonBonsai	Houston Marriott Westchase (800) 452-5110 2900 Briarpark Dr, Houston, TX 77042	RSVP room reservations, workshops, and registration EARLY before it sells out!

January Meeting



February Bonsai

by John Miller

Bonsai tasks in February sometime pile up on each other. Generally repotting is not finished before some species need to have their trimming started. And watering, feeding, and pathogen control must be attended to. Check your work and family schedules and see if there may be conflicts arising. You may need to make adjustments such as doing the repotting at an earlier time than is optimum or twig pruning instead of watching tv.

Usually the first part of the month requires you to continue the winter care. Check the watering, make sure no varmints are doing their thing, watch for signs of new growth. The sun gets pretty hot on some February days. Do not let your trees get too much heat and break their dormancy. If they do you will need to provide frost and/or freeze protection for them and you will need to get their repotting done fast. New foliage will require some wind protection also.

The optimum time to do repotting on cold hardy plants is when the buds are just beginning to swell. It should be finished by the time the new green is starting to show. One exception is the dwarf yaupon holly. It may be held and repotted a little later as it grows best when the temperature is nice and warm. Juniper may be done a little later also, it is hard to determine when growth starts. Do the pines when the buds begin to elongate. As a rule this will put your repotting from the middle of February to the end of March. Again if your schedule is uncertain it is better to repot early. Note: Do not handle trees by their trunks, that will damage the bark and make it look like reverse taper.

The critical thing to have excellent bonsai is to do the trimming of the new growth correctly. This is what develops the ramification, twiginess and small leaves you desire. This trimming is where the real work of keeping your bonsai as bonsai is. Basically there are three types of growth on your trees, opposite leaves, alternate leaves, and the adult juniper growth. The best example of opposite growth is the maples, of alternate would be the elms and oak.

When pruning for development, that is growing the branches you need and developing the secondary branches you will allow the new growth to elongate and thicken the base of the branch. Be sure to wire it in order to have the proper angle where it originates. When it is thick enough you will cut it back and grow another tip. This develops taper and motion in your branch.

After the tree is styled you will prune to develop the twigs and small leaves which give the tree the look of age. Not done correctly, the twigs will be too fat and heavy and the leaves larger than they need be.

On alternate growing type of plants, let the new growth grow to 4-5 leaves. Then cut it back to 2 or 3 leaves. Decide on which direction you wish the new leader to go and cut to the leaf on that side. A new shoot is also emerge from the leaves behind that one. Keep this up as long as the tree is putting out new shoots.

Watch the new growth of alternately leafed tree closely. You will see the bud opening with two new leaves spreading apart. Between the two new leaves a new growing tip will be seen. The sooner this tip is removed, the shorter will be the internodes. If it not removed, the stalk behind the leaves will continue to grow. This stalk becomes the internode when the twig continues to grow. On maples especially, the proper tool to use is tweezers that have a fairly sharp point. You must clip the tip behind its leaf node. Sometimes you will need to gently open the new leaves to get the tip in time. This is also true for doing oaks.

Everyone uses the term pinch when describing how to trim junipers however that is not a good term. When working on scale foliage you do not want to use scissors because they will cut across the scale and create brown tips on your branches. The proper technique is to pluck the tips by holding the new foliage between the fleshy parts of your thumb and finger. Never use the nails which would bruise the scale foliage. I do this also on the bald cypress although it is possible to cut with scissors without cutting their needles.

On the subject of pruning, you can still do styling work. It can be done until the sap begins as evidenced by the buds swelling. Check last years wiring especially at the base of the branch. Remove it if necessary. Branches will swell when growth begins.

Spring flowering plants have their buds set. Wiring and other work could damage them. Would be best to leave them until after they bloom. If the azaleas have too many buds you should remove some. The flowers should have enough room to open without being unduly crowded. Wisteria blooms on new growth. The new growth should be left to get long enough to have flowers. (American wisteria, *wisteria frutescens*, will bloom on very young plants and will re-bloom several times if new growth is pruned after it blooms.)

While you get your trees out of winter storage, look for candidates for showing in your club events. Put them where you will give them more TLC. Keep their grooming right up to snuff from the beginning, don't wait and try to do a last minute trim. If the pots are clean a light coating of Leaf-Shine will help keep them that way and make any last minute touchup easy.

Aphids will show up about as soon as new foliage. The new foliage can be tender so be careful of sprays. Spider mites and scale will be in any warm locale on evergreens and in the greenhouse. The organic spray (one tablespoon each of liquid kelp, fish emulsion, 5% apple cider vinegar, and molasses in one gallon water) works well for me. If you use chemical sprays be sure to read the label closely. If you get moss on the bark of your trees, try isopropyl alcohol. After the moss is killed pick it off carefully so as to not pull the bark away.

Take advantage of any collecting trips you can go on. They make it easy to have a 50 or 100 yr old tree within your life time.

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 for convenient electronic payment options (processing fee will be added).

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.

New/Renewed Members

Simon & May	Gloria & Michael	Eric & Leigh	Angie & Patrick
Ian & David	Maddy & Lauren	Roland	Michael W.
Gerrit	Sal	Andrew	Ben
John P.	Nilda	Jonathan	Joey
Justin C,	Chris	Emil	

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.

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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ph: 512-202-3403
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(call for directions)

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P.O. Box 340474
Austin, Texas 78734



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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.

For additional information, contact the Austin Bonsai Society at P.O. Box 340474, Austin, TX 78734 or

Email: webmaster.austinbonsaisociety@gmail.com