



# Bonsai Notebook

*www.austinbonsaisociety.com*

A Publication of the Austin Bonsai Society

June 2024 vol 165

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## Calendar of Events

### June 12, 2024

- ◆ Topic: Olive
- ◆ Presenter: Brandon B
- ◆ Time: 6:30pm (Social) 7:00pm (Meeting)
- ◆ Location: Zilker Botanical Garden

### June 18, 2024

- ◆ Board Meeting

### June 22, 2024

- ◆ Topic: Air Layer
- ◆ Time: 1 - 4pm
- ◆ Location: Eric B's residence

## 2024 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*  
*Gustavo R.*

*Tree Hosts*  
*Greg S.*

## President's Message

*By Jonathan W.*

Splendid show this year! The public was wonderful with their attendance, questions, and appreciation of our living bonsai art! I always get a kick out of seeing the excitement and smiles that light up the faces of visitors and their children when people see our living sculptures on full display! It is clear this show inspired many people to pursue or expand their participation in bonsai as a hobby or artistic horticultural form of expression.

The board and I are so very proud of the members of Austin Bonsai Society for putting together such a wonderful 2024 show here at Zilker Botanical Garden.. Along with the show team of Simon Tse and Eric Benson, Joey McCoy was our show chair this year and he did an excellent job organizing the volunteers and supporting the finishing touches on show setup and placement! Our hard-working Treasurer, Gloria, was nearby all weekend helping us keep track of raffle items donated by our generous membership. **Thank you, Thank you, Thanks, to all of our members who helped bring this together! You should be proud of your contributions to raising awareness of Bonsai art in Austin.** Quite a lot of work goes into preparing a tree and pot for display, delivery of show infrastructure, room setup, placement of bonsai with accents, take down and load out of the show supplies each year... we appreciate all of your contributions :-)

We are grateful to Zilker Botanical Garden and for the Botanical Garden staff who coordinated parking and multiple gate entrances for such a busy weekend of attendance. Also thanks to the Zilker Botanical Garden Conservancy and Austin Area Garden Council for their support of our clubs and educational programs.

This particular show featured trees from several new members!. So proud of their displays and taking the leap to accept the "My First Show Tree Challenge in 2023". I think I counted at least 7 members who displayed a tree for the first time, Way To GO!. For future years, let's continue to encourage newer member participation and also having long time members continue to pledge in February/March (or even the year before) to bring in a certain number of trees of various sizes so we don't miss the opportunity to fill up the room :-). For example, I estimate I could have 2 medium bonsai, 1 shohin, and 1 large bonsai ready for display in 2025 (if there is enough space in the show). The public loves seeing bonsai!

Our bonsai vendors were on hand to meet the enthusiasm of visitors looking for just the right tree to start or add to their collection. Hand crafted pots and kusamono planters were offered, viewing stones, and trees of all sizes and all stages of development were available for sale. Also to note was the popularity of the 2PM demo times. Enjoyed seeing our VP demo on the pixie bougainvelia

## President's Message

*By Jonathan W.*

planting! It was a delight for me to get to interact with the public while styling the special boxwood this year! – definitely a lot of curiosity about “How To” make a bonsai and it is fun to share tips and demonstrate how the sculpting of nursery stock material sets up a tree for rapid transformation!

\*\*\* As a club, let's be ready to extend a warm welcome to the visitors who are sure to join our ranks in June and July following their interest in the May show. We have an opportunity to welcome bonsai enthusiasts into our club as they visit after having their interests peaked by the show. Let's keep getting to know our visitors and make them feel welcome.

\*\*\*

### BONSAI QUOTE:

***“A bonsai is a living plant that cannot simply be possessed; it must be nurtured. Horticultural care must be provided before artistic methods are applied. ... A Bonsai asks the viewer to see through the physical plant to a world beyond. ... A quality bonsai is the result of well established artistic principles applied to produce a beautiful effect. A bonsai is not a scale model of a tree, perfect in every detail. It is really more of a suggestion, in which the artist simplifies or reduces some features (such as number of branches) and increases or emphasizes others (such as root spread, diameter of the base, and proportion of the trunk diameter to height) in order to create the intended impression. A bonsai will always be an incomplete, idealized, somewhat abstracted representation of a natural tree.” - from David De Groot's book, Principles of Bonsai Design (2022, pg 3)***

Happy Styling!

Jonathan Wood, Austin Bonsai Society President 2024

# Vice President's Message

*By Eric B.*

Greetings, my bonsai family, and a happy June to you! The word of the day - and the next 120 days or so - is heat. Protecting our trees from the high-heat, low-humidity environment of our summers is a real challenge. I put up my shade cloth on Memorial Day, and my smaller trees are already getting watered twice daily.

Our May was a very good month! The BYOT night went swimmingly. Everyone got expert advice on preparing and displaying their trees, and we all got to see each other's bonsai. Extra special thanks to Chuck Ware, Joey McCoy, and Roland Lopez for volunteering to run the "workshops" and share their knowledge and enthusiasm with the rest of us. I feel like I get better at bonsai every time we have one of these meetings.

Let us not forget the big event in May, the 53rd Annual Show and Sale! The show could not have gone better, and it showed in the relaxed atmosphere we presented to the public. A big part of that is thanks to our show Chair, Joey McCoy. Thanks, Joey, for supervising such a great show! The new layout worked exceptionally well. Thank you Jonathan Wood for measuring the room by hand and devising an excellent setup to make best use of limited space. The raffles went well, the vendors had good sales. It was all just great! And the MOST thanks for that go out to all of the volunteers who helped set up, worked during the show, and/or stayed around after the show to help clean up. It was organized chaos...and so much fun. It was a lot of work but so worth it, I can't wait until next year!

At this month's meeting we have Brandon Baldauf, working on an olive tree. Be sure to be there. The tree will be raffled off to a lucky winner at the end of the evening.

Later in June, on Saturday the 22nd, from 1 to 4 pm, we have a workshop on Basic Air Layering. If you've never done an air layer before, this is your chance to learn a method for obtaining more advanced bonsai material by making a branch grow roots while it's still attached to the tree. I know, it sounds like magic, but that's only because it totally is magic. The subject of the air layering will be some young cedar elms growing up from the roots of a large stump in my backyard (11807 North Oaks Dr., Austin, TX). They're not anything special, but they are great material for learning - or improving - this skill. Or, if you have a tree you would like to try doing an air layer on, bring it along. You can practice on the elms before trying your tree. Also, we will have several large boxwoods that belong to the club (to be used for workshops at the convention) that need pruning, so we will have them available to work on as well. Please consider helping out by doing an air layer or two on these boxwoods.

For our July meeting we are lucky to have guest artist Mike Lane joining us. He will do a demo on a tree that is - still- yet to be determined. If you've never met Mike or seen him work on a tree, I highly recommend attending this meeting. There is also a possibility that Mike will have trees for sale, at a time and pace to be determined. Stay tuned for more info.

July's workshop is Tropical Repotting, at MBP Bonsai Studio. The workshop will be on Saturday, July 27, 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. Bring in a tropical tree or two and get help repotting while you help others with their trees, too.

See you at the meeting!

## Get Connected!

Join our online  
discussion



## Official Website

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

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

# ABS Board Meeting Minutes

**Date: May21, 2024**

**Location: Virtual**

### Meeting Attendees:

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

### President:

- ◆ Jonathan kicks off the meeting at **7:32pm**
- ◆ Detailed discussions on our annual show
- ◆ Feedback, setup, raffles. Publicity and other related topics
- ◆ Discussions on Slack
- ◆ Programs details for June/July

### Vice President:

- ◆ Wonderful demo at the ABS show
- ◆ Thank you for the donations
- ◆ Prepping the materials for the rest of the calendar year

### Secretary:

- ◆ Last report was accepted without edits

### Treasurer:

- ◆ Provide financial updates and balances
- ◆ Annual show income was encouraging

Meeting adjourned at **8:54pm**



## ABS Annual Show 2024



Show walkthrough



## ABS Annual Show 2024 (After the Show)





In loving memory of Sheila Ward





## Bonsai Calendar – Looking Ahead

Date	Event Type	Artist / Presenter	Topic	Location	Approx Member Cost
WED 6/12/24	CLUB MEETING - Demo/ Presentation	<b>Brandon Baldauf</b> (ABS Club Member)	<b>Olive Bonsai Demo</b> – Learn all about this perfect species for bonsai! Small Leaves and often looks ancient in a short amount of time. Specially- acquired olive bonsai for this event!	Zilker Botanical Garden Center 2220 Barton Springs Rd Austin, TX	donation table items welcome
SAT 6/22/24	WORKSHOP	<b>Eric Benson</b> (ABS Club Member)	<b>Air-layering Part 1</b> -How to make fantastic pre-bonsai material! Bring your own tree, or practice and explore this special skill on provided Cedar Elms & Boxwood material. At Eric B.'s home 1:00PM - 4:00PM <b>RSVP for materials and headcount to:</b> <a href="mailto:Jebenson99@gmail.com">Jebenson99@gmail.com</a>	11807 North Oaks Dr., Austin (Please RSVP by email for headcount)	None
WED 7/10/24	CLUB MEETING - Presentation/ Demo	Guest Artist : <b>Mike Lane</b> , Florida <a href="https://mikelanesshohinstudio.wordpress.com/">https://mikelanesshohinstudio.wordpress.com/</a>  <a href="https://www.kitsunebonsai.com/">https://www.kitsunebonsai.com/</a>	<b>Bonsai Pro Mike Lane</b> is sure to bring a wealth of expert knowledge as he demonstrates bonsai techniques on a special tree that will be raffled.	Zilker Botanical Garden Center 2220 Barton Springs Rd Austin, TX	donation table items welcome
SAT 7/27/24	WORKSHOP	ABS Club members lead this workshop event	<b>BYOT Tropical Repotting and Styling Work - help</b> available for paid club members. 1:00PM-4:00PM <b>RSVP for materials and headcount to:</b> <a href="mailto:Jebenson99@gmail.com">Jebenson99@gmail.com</a>	MBP BONSAI STUDIO 601 Kay Ln Pflugerville, TX 78660	\$10 approx

## Bonsai Calendar – Looking Ahead

Date	Event Type	Artist / Presenter	Topic	Location	Approx Member Cost
WED 8/14/24	CLUB MEETING - Presentation/ Demo	Guest Artist : <b>David Whittaker</b>	Guest Artist program - Styling of 3 different cascade bonsai: Jade with wide trunk, Green Island Ficus, Shohin Pink Pixie Bougainvillea	Zilker Botanical Garden Center 2220 Barton Springs Rd Austin, TX	donation table items welcome
WED 8/24/24	WORKSHOP	<b>Eric Benson</b> (ABS Club Member)	<b>Air-layering Part 2 - See the results!</b> Air-layer removal, potting, aftercare TIME: TBD <b>RSVP for materials and headcount to:</b> <a href="mailto:Jebenson99@gmail.com">Jebenson99@gmail.com</a>	11807 North Oaks Dr., Austin (Please RSVP by email for headcount)	Bring Your Own Soil, pot, etc. for air layer transplanting.
WED 9/11/24	CLUB MEETING - Presentation/ Demo	Special Event <b>Details Coming Soon!</b>	<b>Program Details Coming Soon!</b>	Zilker Botanical Garden Center 2220 Barton Springs Rd Austin, TX	donation table items welcome
SAT 9/21/24	BONSAI AUCTION EVENT	Members donate bonsai, tools, supplies, pots, stands, books etc	<b>Fundraiser Auction for Austin Bonsai Society</b> - funds for Guest Artists /Lectures/ Demos etc Approx Time: 10:00AM , see future schedule for details	Anderson Mill Garden Club Center Approx 10:00AM 13974 FM2769, Volente, TX 78641	Auction items needed – Generous Bidding Appreciated! Thank you!!
WED 10/9/24	CLUB MEETING - WORKSHOP	Member Guided	BYO Tree - 3 stations around the room. Major styling, Refinement, and-Wiring assistance	Zilker Botanical Garden Center 2220 Barton Springs Rd Austin, TX	donation table items welcome

## Do We Seal Both Conifer and Deciduous Cuts?

*Permission to reprint by author*

Do We Seal Both Conifer and Deciduous Cuts?

My bonsai garden is a long-term experiment with tree technique. Often this is a conscious thing, sometimes it isn't.

For the most part over the last two decades I've sealed cuts on both conifer and deciduous. Occasionally I didn't seal, due to curiosity or forgetfulness or some other reason.

Here are a few observations.

The overall comment is that a sealant can be useful for both groups of plants, if your goal is to close the wound faster.

Then there's a divide. Disease is the big question mark.

Leaving jin and shari on junipers is unlikely to cause trouble with disease affecting the living tissue.

I've also yet to trace the life of a pine, or dead branch on it, to disease from an unsealed cut. It might happen, but I've not seen it. It's possible the pitch keeps most disease out.



A pine previously sealed with Kirikuchi, a liquid latex sealant. The wound is closing fast and well.





There's no evidence this cut was sealed. Non-sealed pine cuts do not seem to allow disease to enter, perhaps due to the pitch.



A beech pruning cut—a rough cut not carved out yet—sterilized and sealed due to concern a disease might come in. I've seen many instances with deciduous trees where disease enters through an unsealed cut. *Pseudomonas* on maple, fire-blight and botrytis on quince, the list is long. If sterilized and sealed, losses of branches or the whole deciduous tree are minimized.



Stewartia pruning cut fully closed, having used Kirikuchi sealant, after sterilizing. The concern is the high frequency of disease from open deciduous wounds as opposed to conifer.

I've written elsewhere about sealants that appear to close wounds at a fast rate, as in the chapter "Wound sealant is never useful in bonsai", on page 216 of *Bonsai Heresy*. Some sealants may have growth enhancers in them, like gibberellins, that can elongate cells.

If you're going to use sealant on a deciduous tree, sterilize the wound first, let it dry, then apply sealant. Arboriculturists talk about the possibility of locking in the pathogen. Isopropyl alcohol, hydrogen peroxide, or a 10% bleach solution are sterilizers.

Article originates from [here](#).

## June Bonsai

by John Miller

A subject brought up in an azalea workshop at the LSBF convention indicated that a lot of people do not really know what the growing conditions are in their back yards or what plants need. Or that it may depend on local mini-environments. I have a maple that was red in December in Dallas but now turns in November only 30 air miles away. You should know not only the general weather as reported on the news but, more importantly, the particular happenings in your back yard at the different times of day. Late afternoon may be more detrimental to bonsai than overhead sun (hotter, shining in low from the West & very low humidity).

Most plants in pots will not enjoy a full day of 90 plus sun. Partial shade should be provided. A shade cloth awning is the best as it will protect in the middle of the day. A vertical shade cloth on the WEST side may be needed to protect from the late afternoon sun. This is the worst sun as the temperature is already high and the drier air makes the rays more intense. A higher humidity on the coast may alleviate the problem some.

Leaf pruning should not be considered a yearly task. It usually should be done only as needed and only on very healthy trees. Broadleaf evergreens would not get it. I usually consider Memorial Day as the end of leaf pruning.

If you think you need to leaf prune, you probably can still do it but need to be careful, it could turn hot in a hurry. The tree needs time to replace the energy used to grow new foliage. I have done it on Shumard oaks successfully. Again never leaf prune the atropurpeum varieties of Japanese maples, they don't rebud very well.

When night temperatures stay above 60 degrees you can think about repotting some of the tropicals. I would wait another month though, for the buttonwood.

However, some tropicals can be leaf pruned all summer. The Ficus nerifolia especially benefits by leaf pruning and can be done more than once each summer. That will develop the heavy twiginess you see in the Ficus bonsai from the Far East.

As the summer progresses the growth of the deciduous trees will sometimes slow also. But you still need to keep an eye out for errant shoots. Keeping a clipper with you when watering would let you take care of most of them. Just like in the spring a shoot too long will thicken the twig too much. The major pruning chore is now transferred to the tropicals.

Tip pinching on some flowering species like the crape myrtle will result in fewer flowers but if you let it go they get out of shape. I prefer to try to balance the flower/design question by pinching early. This provides more growing tips to divide the energy and the resulting flower is shorter. It is less showy but more in scale.

Also If you have fruiting bonsai, you should reduce the number of fruit on the tree. The number one goal of the tree is to provide seeds for reproduction and it will starve itself in order to do so. Again, most fruit are too large to look good on a bonsai.

Some days may be relatively cool to you but the sun can still make the pot pretty hot. Not only does



this dry out the soil very fast but the tree roots do not like a hot soil. A temperature I have heard given is that 120 degrees will kill roots on most plants. I cannot give you a precise to-do list since your backyard is different from mine but you should be sure that the sun does not hit the pots directly. Notice especially where the hot afternoon sun, from 2pm to sundown, hits your bonsai area. If you use a cover of any kind be sure that the side of the pot is protected also. A loose weave cover is preferable to solid paper or foil. Chopped sphagnum moss spread on the soil surface will reduce evaporation and help keep the soil cooler.

Get to know your trees like your children. Which ones use more water and which ones stay moist between waterings. If some are difficult to keep happy you can try moving those to a cooler location (but be sure they get their sunlight). Another trick is to group these together so that you can hit them with a shot of water twice a day and not have to spent the time going thru all your trees.

Cool or damp weather is good for fungal diseases like black leaf spot. Hot and damp bring other fungals like mildew. Treat with potassium bicarbonate or sodium bicarbonate (baking soda). After the foliage is hardened a bit you can treat with a 1% hydrogen peroxide (1 part 3% peroxide to 2 parts water) weekly.

Also watch for signs of insect problems. The spider mite will always be near. Others to look for are scale of various forms, aphids, and mealy bugs. For scale you may need to go to a systemic insecticide. I use the organic foliar feed (1 Tablespoon each fish emulsion, liquid kelp, molasses and cider vinegar per gallon water) to control all these. You can use some of the other organic controls or a chemical according to label directions. Always read the label directions carefully and never apply oil based chemicals to buttonwoods. You should do controls on a regular basis. Also remember that most insecticides kill the insect but do not remove the evidence. (the scale shells, webs, etc)

If ants, or any other creature, are building nests in the soil, the tunnels and cavities will prevent proper watering and result in a loss of roots. After you get rid of the ants be sure to grab your chopsticks and work the soil down and eliminate any holes. You will probably need to add a little more soil on top.

The best way to fertilize bonsai is by using fertilizer cakes. The cakes provide a slow constant feeding each time you water. Cakes made with a cottonseed base will provide as acid ph when they break down which we need in any city water system I know of. Making your own is easy and much cheaper than buying them. I use chemical fertilizers such as Miracid or Peters a couple of times a month also. My main problem with chemicals is not knowing how many bad salts they have that may accumulate in the soil and also I know that each time I water I am washing most chemical fertilizers out on the ground.

## **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).

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

Avanish A.

Bret D.

Lynn and Bridget H.

Caleb P.

Wyatt S.

## 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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601 Kay Lane  
Pflugerville, TX 78660  
(call for directions)

# 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.

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

Email: [webmaster.austinbonsaisociety@gmail.com](mailto:webmaster.austinbonsaisociety@gmail.com)