



Bonsai Notebook

www.austinbonsaisociety.com

A Publication of the Austin Bonsai Society

October 2025 vol 181

Our News

President's and Vice President's Message
page 2 - 3

ABS Board Meeting Minutes
page 4

ABS Meeting
page 5 - 6

Using Birds in Bonsai Display
page 7 - 13

New Members/Recruiting Authors/
Advertisements
page 14 - 16

Calendar of Events

October 8, 2025

- ◆ Topic: Carving with Adam
- ◆ Artist: Adam Lavigne. (LSBF touring artist)
- ◆ Material: Tiger bark ficus (TTSBE specimen)
- ◆ Location: Zilker Botanical Garden
- ◆ Time: 6:30pm (Mingling), 7:00pm (Meeting)

November 7-9, 2025

- ◆ Annual TTSBE Seminar
- ◆ Artist: Suthin Sukosolvisit
- ◆ Topic: Wiring to Create Fluid Lines in Our Bonsai
- ◆ Location: Anderson Mill Garden Club
- ◆ Friday workshop, Saturday/Sunday seminar

November 12, 2025

- ◆ Annual ABS Holiday Celebration
- ◆ Location: Zilker Botanical Garden

2024 Board of Directors

Eric B.
President

Sachin A.
Vice President

Simon T.
Secretary

Jonathan W.
Treasurer

Jorge M.
Member-At-Large

Ross C.
Member-At-Large

Ben M.
Member-At-Large

Volunteers

Refreshments
Ross C.
Sachin A.

Tree Hosts
Gloria N.

President's Message

By Eric B.

Greetings bonsai friends! We've been enjoying a bit of cooler weather lately, which both my trees and I are enjoying. You know you live in Texas when temperatures drop to the lower 90s and you say, "Man, this cool front sure is nice!" Even though it is still hot, it's time to start thinking about winter care for our trees. Now that the sun's summer harshness is waning, we can give deciduous trees more sun. This will help them prepare for winter, and make their fall leaf colors brighter. No more heavy pruning now, only minor trimming if needed. Save major work for the winter dormancy period. Cooler temps can also mean a return of pests like spider mites, so be vigilant for that. Starting now, slowly reduce the amount of fertilizer deciduous trees are given, and stop fertilizing completely once the leaves drop.

At the September meeting we had a demo/presentation by **Joey McCoy**, on **Bonsai Tools, Use and Care**. I was unable to attend this meeting, but I have heard that it went very well. Once again, ABS is in debt to Joey for donating his time and knowledge to provide an informative presentation and demonstration. Thanks again, Joey!

The club auction in September went very well. There were about 30 people in attendance, and we sold all of the items we had. I don't have the exact numbers, but we made a good amount at the auction, about as well as we've done in the past. All of it is thanks to the generosity of our members who donated items to be sold, and/or volunteered to help run the event. Thank you all, you help keep ABS going!

The **Lone Star Bonsai Federation's Annual Convention** was last month. I was unable to attend, but I know that at least one ABS member went. The Board voted to select **Abby Brewer** as this year's recipient of ABS's scholarship awarded to a new member who has shown promise and enthusiasm. The scholarship covers the cost of the convention registration fee for the full event. Congratulations Abby, I hope you had a great time, learned a lot, and have some good stories to share!

The October meeting features LSBF touring artist Adam Lavigne, who will be working on a large Tiger Bark Ficus (*ficus microcarpa*), which recently was part of the Texas State Bonsai Exhibit's collection. Come on out and see a master bonsai artist work on this magnificent specimen, and buy plenty of tickets for the raffle to win the tree at the end of the night!

Thanks for reading, see you all in October!

Eric

Vice President's Message

By Sachin A.

Dear Austin Bonsai Society Members,

As we welcome October and the shift into cooler weather, it's also time to wrap up our regular meetings for the year. It's been a fantastic season of learning, sharing, and growing together—and I want to thank each of you for being part of it.

We're closing out the year's programming with a real highlight: **Adam Lavigne** from Florida will be joining us on **Wednesday, October 8th at 6:30 PM** at **Zilker Botanical Garden** for an exciting live demonstration. Adam is a talented bonsai artist known for his energetic, hands-on approach, craving artistry, and passion for teaching.

For this demo, Adam will be styling a **spectacular Tiger Bark Ficus**, generously donated to **The Texas State Bonsai Exhibit (TTSBE)** by **Andy Graham**. This tree not only has excellent structure and potential—it also carries meaningful history. After the demo, it will be **given away in a raffle drawing**, so don't miss your chance to win a professionally styled bonsai with a unique legacy!

I also want to extend a **huge thank you** to everyone who donated to and participated in our **September auction**. Your generosity helps support our programs and keeps our community strong.

While October is our **final program meeting of the year**, we'll come together again in **November** for our **annual potluck dinner**—a time to relax, share good food, and celebrate another wonderful year of bonsai. Details will be shared soon.

Thank you all for your support and enthusiasm this year. I look forward to seeing you on October 8th!

Warm regards,
Sachin Attavar

Reminder for club membership and advertisement

2025 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).

Gift certificate for memberships is also available, please send inquiry to payments.austinbonsaisociety@gmail.com

ABS Board Meeting Minutes

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Date: September 16, 2025

Location: Virtual

Meeting Attendees:

- ◆ Eric (President)
- ◆ Sachin (Vice President)
- ◆ Simon (Secretary)
- ◆ Jonathan (Treasurer)
- ◆ Ross
- ◆ Caleb

President:

- ◆ Conducted a review of the annual club auction and addressed additional pertinent topics.
- ◆ Convention details were reviewed thoroughly.
- ◆ Preparations for upcoming Holiday Celebration in November.
 - ◆ eVite
 - ◆ Gift exchange
 - ◆ Volunteer sheets for side items and extras

Vice President:

- ◆ September: Tool showcase was well received by attendees.
- ◆ October: Preparations underway for Adam's visit.

Secretary:

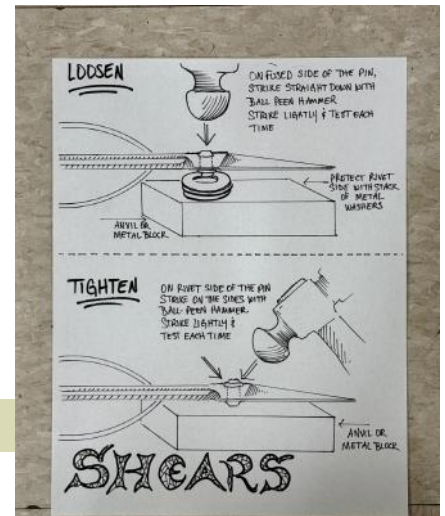
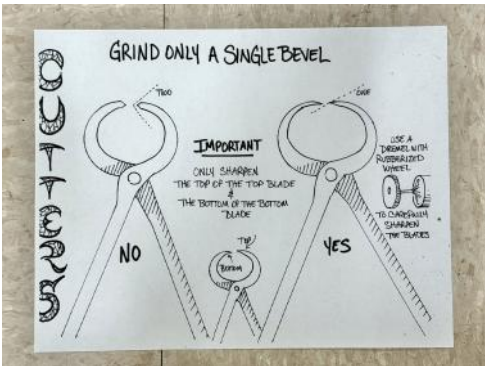
- ◆ The meeting commenced at **7:35pm**.
- ◆ The latest report was approved as submitted, with no amendments necessary.

Treasurer:

- ◆ The credit card application was unanimously approved, following a motion by Eric and a second by Sachin.
- ◆ Appreciation was expressed for the advertising efforts led by Ross and Simon.
- ◆ Membership status and updates were reviewed.
- ◆ Preparations for the upcoming auction were discussed.

Meeting adjourned at **8:41 pm**

ABS Meeting Tools Demonstration



ABS Meeting
Members' Bonsai Display



Using Birds in Bonsai Display

by Michael Hagedorn (Permission to repost)

Birds are often used in traditional bonsai display to give a suggestion of where the tree is.

Is the bonsai in a field? In a swamp? By the ocean? On a mountain?

Usually we use an accent to fulfill this need. An aster to suggest a field. A sundew for a bog.

Birds offer the same utility.

In Japan a common bird to use in display is the cormorant, a year-round resident of large bodies of water. If you see a cormorant, you know you're not on a mountaintop.



Bronze of a Cormorant by Henk Fresen.

Using Birds in Bonsai Display



Here's a winter display in Mr. Shinji Suzuki's tokonoma, with a deer on the scroll. Swap that deer out for a bird and you have a unique opportunity.

Birds not only inhabit unique habitats, but also seasons. They are a powerful evocation of seasonality, which is a key element of bonsai display. Not just where the tree is, but when.

Using Birds in Bonsai Display



American Robin. Image courtesy L. Karney, USFWS Digital Library.

Some birds are ubiquitous, like the American Robin. I've been amazed to find them not only where we expect them, tugging at a worm in a lawn, but also on a bare mountaintop, hopping along a coastal dune, or on top a 200-foot Doug Fir.

This makes the Robin useless as a suggestion of place. But in many areas the Robin migrates, which makes them great for seasonal suggestion—much like a flowering accent.

There are times of the year, often only a couple months, when migratory birds are present, gobbling up caterpillars or sand fleas to fuel up and fly on. At other times you don't see them.

For display seasonality, it hardly gets better than a migrating bird. 75% of birds in temperate climates migrate to some degree. Northern hemisphere birds fly south in the fall and north in the spring, the reverse in the Southern Hemisphere. And then some fly between hemispheres.

Using Birds in Bonsai Display



This Bar-tailed Godwit is a migration athlete—18,000 miles round trip, annually, from Alaska to New Zealand—which makes human snowbirds look like amateurs.



Bronze by Henk Fresen of Long-tailed Tits, which are non-migratory, year-round residents of Europe; a bird to pair with a hawthorn or other shrubby hedgerow plant, which is the bird's habitat.

Using Birds in Bonsai Display



Wilson's Warblers travel not only for nesting sites and to reduce competition, but for food. Being insect eaters, they are only at their northern nesting sites when it's warm and insects are around.

Using Birds in Bonsai Display



The Violet-green Swallow is another migratory insect-eater. In cooler climates you would only see them in the warm months. And, they are usually seen near water. A bird where you'd get both place and seasonality in a display. (Several of these photos are mine, Instagram: @michael_hagedorn_biotics)

Migratory bird options are great for a display when these birds are passing through or breeding in your area. The caveat of course is finding a scroll or object with such specificity.

Some painters might make an image specific to your display desires. Also consider tasteful photos. In Australia I saw several photographs in the convention display instead of a scroll, which made me think twice about their use.

Using Birds in Bonsai Display



So there are two main uses for birds in display: season and place. If you employ a friend to paint a Western Meadowlark, above, it means your tree is in a field somewhere. Not by an oceanside or in a rocky canyon.

Using birds in display is an opportunity to study the timing and habitat intersection of birds and trees. Of course at a show we may well get the eye-roll and the comment, “Well, who will know?” But you will know. And if you share about your display, then others will know.

Though maybe the best reason is that it’s fun.

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 for 2025

May and Simon T.

Matt S.

Phina & Marlon C.

Lizzle and Nathan G.

Jonathan W.

John M. and Blake S.

Eric and Leigh B.

Ross C.

Ruby C.

Alisan C., and Lynn H.

Mike and Candy H.

Julia and Betty D.

Quoc H.

Debbie and John H.

Hunter J.

Jacob K.

Roland L. and Krystal W.

Joey M.

Andrew M.

Michael and Gloria N.

Lyon O.

Corbin C.

Wyatt S.

Spindel, Abraham, and Kelly S.

Jorge V.

Chuck and Pat W.

Janelle W.

Fred w.

Elaine W.

Shawn and Chris W.

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!

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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 6:30 pm, followed by our program at 7:00 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