

## **October Meeting Highlights:** **Sandro Morero**

The financial report was presented to the membership showing a very good year.

New board members were voted on and accepted by the club members in attendance.

The tree of the month was a Maple, in color. Several trees were presented, all getting a free raffle ticket.

A maple tree was donated to the raffle by Kurt Smith of The Flower Market in Dundee.

The Flower Market has a vast collection of indoor tropical trees and outdoor trees, pots, soil and tools.

Our Guest Speaker was Aaron Wiley

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## **October Program Re-Cap**

### **FERTILIZING by Aaron Wiley**

- Fundamental of fertilizer  
 Fertilizer is not food, the food for a tree is the photosynthesis. Fertilizer is a supplement that is going to help the growth and the health of the tree. There are two kinds of fertilizer: chemical and organic.
- Fertilizer Basics: N-P-K these stand for the basic elements needed for the growth and the health of a tree:
  - N (Nitrogen): Promotes vegetative growth of the tree, most are water soluble and stay in the soil for 4-6 weeks.
  - P (phosphorus): A major component in the plant's DNA, it is important for flowering and fruiting.
  - K (potassium): Supports the plant's ability to withstand extreme cold and hot temperatures. It increases water use efficiency and transforms sugar to starch.

These 3 are the basic elements but it is also important to not discredit the trace elements.

- Chemical fertilizer advantages:
  - very water soluble
  - relatively inexpensive
  - animals are not attracted
  - easily absorbed into the soil
- Organic fertilizers: a plant could never grow at its best in a pot without organic fertilizer.
- Some of us use Chemical fertilizer as the main ingredient and Organic fertilizer as a side dish.
- Others use Organic as the main and Chemical as a side dish.

Fertilization application will be dictated by the various growing stages of the tree and by the type of tree.

**The goal of fertilizing is to maximize the strength of the tree by creating excessive foliage growth.**

- Three Different growth states of the plant need different types of fertilization
  - 1. Health state:** straight from the wild, a nursery or from a friend - the main goal should be to create a healthy root system. For this state the need is organic fertilizer. By using organics there will be less of a chance of burning roots than with the utilization of chemical fertilizer which could be high in salts.
  - 2. Development stage:** begins with the creation of the plant's structure and ends when that structure shows the tree's silhouette. Primary, secondary and tertiary branches have to be created. The goal of this stage is to stimulate positive back-budding and increasing the flow of energy within the branches of the tree. Heavy application of organic fertilizer with secondary feedings of liquid fish emollition is called for in this stage. Possible secondary feedings of chemical fertilizing should also be considered.
  - 3. Refinement stage:** primary, secondary and tertiary branching are now in place. At this stage a common practice is the pinching of foliage to maintain the silhouette and reallocate energy to the weaker areas of the branches.

The goal is to have smaller foliage and shorter internodes. At this stage there is a lighter application of granular fertilizer or not fertilizing during specific growing periods. Liquid fish emollition is no longer used, but there is a higher usage of chemical fertilizer.

**Further discussion touched on the Mycorrhizae.**

Mycorrhizae are fungi that colonize the root system of a plant, providing increased water and nutrient absorption capabilities. Mycorrhizae increases the surface area of the roots and protect them from fungal disease and pest issues.

Mycorrhizae are only just now being studied and discovered as an agent in the root absorption of Potassium and Phosphorous.

The meeting ended with discussion still going on. Aaron Wiley is a great speaker. So much more information was given and discussed then is possible to write in this short summary. Attending these meetings is where you will learn so much and gain friendships. Attend all the meetings you can.

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***Tree of the Month – Maple***

- 1) Gingko biloba Not a maple - but great color



Paper Bark Maple. No color yet. Oak looking leaf.



Nice color Shohin Maple:



Another maple starting to color:



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### **UP FOR DEBATE:**

#### ***Leaves of Gold***

***Aaron J. Binns***

Bonsai enthusiasts are generally more concerned with preserving nature and the general health of the environment than most. I think it is fair to say that we are also more likely to be avid gardeners beyond bonsai culture. Given these two assumptions you will have to forgive me for writing an article that addresses a general gardening technique rather than concentrating on a specific bonsai topic.

I live in a heavily wooded area and for the first time in my life I have had to decide what to do with an avalanche of leaves. This common problem has several solutions but it took me a long time to decide which solution I wanted to apply to my little slice of Eden. The first solution, which may not be a bad one, is to push the leaves to the curb and rely on the municipality you live in to pick up and dispose of them. This generally requires you to rake and then bag the leaves for easy removal. This is no small effort depending on how many large mature trees you

have around your home. If you are in the country and don't have a leaf pick up service the predominant method to remove the leaves is burning and there are many who love the smell of burning leaves in the fall.

I watched many of my neighbors burn leaves and got a sick feeling in the pit of my stomach. Bonsai enthusiasts are intimately familiar with the energy that a tree expends to produce leaves. We treasure them and strive all year to ensure our trees are healthy and produce as many leaves as possible. Watching piles of these food producing life giving wonders of nature go up in smoke makes me sick. Burning leaves is technically "carbon neutral". When you burn efficiently you get water and carbon dioxide. Carbon dioxide is of course a greenhouse gas. However, people argue that the tree that produced the leaves will once again use the carbon dioxide from the air to produce next year's flush of leaves. I think that the chemistry involved is too complex to really produce a carbon neutral cycle. Beyond that, the natural biological recycling of leaves is broken when you burn the leaves. The soil around the trees is not being enriched by layers of rot like you would find in a natural forested area. Burning seems to me to be a waste of a perfectly good source of organic fertilizer.

There is still curb side leaf collection. This is a better alternative than burning but only if these leaves are taken to a central location to be composted. If the municipality that you live in burns the leaves then there is really no benefit to doing this. More insulting is that if your community composts leaves or gives them to a company that does then next year there is a real chance that someone will be selling you organic fertilizer based on composted leaves that you paid them through taxes or association dues to take from your yard. In the end we rake away all the organic fertilizer that nature provides, haul it away, and then buy and haul supplemental fertilizer back to our yards. How is that efficient or fair?

So what is the solution? If you don't have many large leaf producing trees why not just mulch with your lawn mower? Your yard will thank you later. If, like me, you have so many leaves they would do real damage to your lawn if left in place then you have a wonderful opportunity to compost the leaves yourself, which is the choice I made this year. Leaves take a while to break down. So, I have started two compost piles that will contain nothing but leaves. My

research tells me that leaf compost is among the best organic fertilizers you can get, so the season or two it will take for them to break down is supposed to be worth it. Further, rotting leaves should smell like the forest floor which won't make your yuppie neighbors feel better but will prevent any of your reasonable neighbors from complaining.

A picture of what I did is below. I created two compost heaps by screwing together some old pallets I came across. Remember compost is supposed to be cheap so don't use expensive material. Also, rot proof material may have chemicals that can leach into your compost so if you want to be strictly organic learn to live with the need to repair or reconstruct your bin every few years and use untreated wood. Technically all you really need is a pile of leaves, walls are strictly speaking unnecessary. I built these because it was convenient and keeps the leaves in one place. The pallets were a no brainer and took only about 5 minutes to put together. I also shredded the leaves. This does two things. First, it is supposed to speed up the compost process. Second it allows you to get a lot of leaves in a small volume. The two heaps I have created contain all of the leaves from a  $\frac{3}{4}$  acre area surrounded by a forest of mature oaks. Neither heap is full. It is my plan to consolidate as material begins to rot down.



I think a shredder is worth it. I have a large chipper shredder that is overkill for leaves. I originally purchased it to chip large branches when I was clearing a build site. You don't need something massive and can find electric shredders starting at about a hundred dollars. I have no idea how well they work so do your research before buying. These machines are dangerous. If you buy one wear gloves, eye protection, and ear protection. Always. No exceptions. Also if the machine clogs (and it will)

unplug electric models or pull the spark plug connector on gas versions before reaching into the machine. Again, no exceptions to this safety rule.

Although shredding sounds time consuming I'm not sure it takes more time than standing around waiting for smoldering leaves to burn out. It is more labor intensive dropping leaves into the machine but there was a certain amount of satisfaction watching all the little guys get shredded and blown out the other end. I will also make the recommendation to do this with dry leaves. I shredded over a couple of days. My first experience was with dry leaves. Don't overload the machine and the dry leaves go right through. The second day was different. Wet leaves clump and clog the machines which made the process much more difficult. Again, slow and steady was the trick. It is my intent to update everyone on this little experiment next year. Maybe I will even have my own home grown compost to sprinkle on my trees. In the meantime this month's debate question is "What do you do with all of your fall leaves?"

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## **AABS Year Ending 2016**

### **Ron Milostan**

Another Year of Bonsai fun has come and gone. We had many great speakers, demos and classes this year. Our Bonsai show was very successful mainly because of all the volunteers who helped the Show Chair and the great trees that members brought in for display. The auction, another successful event, had 14 sellers and lots of buyers who were able to purchase trees and pots and tools for incredible prices. Both of these events generated money for our club so we can continue to bring in world famous speakers. If you haven't volunteered for one of these events, consider helping out next year – it will give you twice the reward - once by helping and then by attending.

I also want to encourage our membership to speak up - on Facebook, at meetings, to our board members or by contributing articles to the newsletter. We value your input and opinions. It can be lonely at the top when we don't know what you like or don't like.

Next year's schedule will be posted on the web page soon. Jay has selected interesting speakers and workshops as always. A good example was Aaron Wiley's talk on fertilizers. Certainly gave me a new perspective on how

and when to add extras like trace elements. We so often assume that the fertilizer we use gives our trees everything it needs in one shot. Not really. In the wild trees get all they need but in our sterile media we need to add all the extras.

As members you need to communicate all year long with your board members to let them know what you want and are interested in. Start early letting us know so we can adjust and prepare for 2017 and also look ahead to 2018.

### **Board Members for 2017**

<b>President:</b>	<b>Ron Milostan</b>
<b>Treasurer:</b>	<b>Tamara Milostan</b>
<b>Vice President/Program Chair:</b>	<b>Jay Sinclair</b>
<b>Recording Secretary:</b>	<b>Sandro Morero</b>
<b>Corresponding Secretary:</b>	<b>Bob Bauer</b>
<b>Publicity Chairperson:</b>	<b>Mark Hanner</b>
<b>Web Page/ Newsletter:</b>	<b>Don Wenzel</b>
<b>Director:</b>	<b>Aaron Binns</b>
<b>Director:</b>	<b>Peggy and Barry Kubitz</b>

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## **FOR SALE OR WANTED:**

**Ads in the Newsletter:** All members can offer for sale any bonsai and bonsai related materials in the newsletter or at the monthly meeting with no sales fee. AABS Society Members' ads are free to publish in the Newsletter. Deadline for submissions to the Newsletter is the 5th of the month.

**Prizes for the Raffle:** We are soliciting donations suitable for prizes to be raffled during each general meeting, and, for the Annual Bonsai Show Raffle. If you have a tree, bonsai pot, tool or anything else bonsai related, that you do not use anymore and is still in good condition, consider donating it to the Society. Please see Bill Struhar at any meeting, email Bill at [wm.struhar@mail.com](mailto:wm.struhar@mail.com) or call (586) 468-7169.

**Club Logo Now Available:** we will embroider the club logo on your garment for \$12 (plus modest additional charge for lined garments).

The logo comes in two forms; light green tree on dark green background, or dark green tree on light green background, with a border on both combinations and AABS lettering and

Chinese characters with appropriate contrasting color depending upon the garment color.

Bring your garment in a clear plastic bag to a meeting, select your colors, pre-pay Bill Struhar, and your garment will be ready one or two meetings later. (The vendor may require a minimum of five garments per order)

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## 2016 EXECUTIVE BOARD

President ..... **Ron Milostan**  
Immediate Past President ..... **Jay Sinclair**  
VP/Program Planner ..... **Jay Sinclair**  
Recording Secretary ..... **Sandro Morero**  
Corresponding Secretary ..... **Bob Bauer**  
Treasurer ..... **Tam Milostan**  
Show Chair ..... **Kurt Smith**  
Publicity Chair ..... **Mark Hanner**  
Directors 2016 ..... **Peggy & Barry Kubitz**  
Director 2016-2017 ..... **Aaron Binns**

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## AABS AD-HOC COMMITTEES

The AABS President is an ex-officio member of all committees with the exception of the Nomination Committee.

**Fund Raising:** William Struhar

**Web Administration:** Don Wenzel

**Nomination Committee:**

**Show Committee:** Ron Milostan and Paul Kulesa

**Annual Auction:** Paul Kulesa

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Membership dues are \$25. Please pay by check, written to Ann Arbor Bonsai Society or bring your credit card to the meeting and pay! AABS now accepts credit cards for membership fees and other AABS activities. Please talk with the Treasurer at the next meeting.

Tamara Milostan – Treasurer AABS  
4228 Highcrest Dr.  
Brighton, Michigan 48116

[AABonsaiSociety@gmail.com](mailto:AABonsaiSociety@gmail.com)

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The Ann Arbor Bonsai Society is affiliated with the American Bonsai Society: <http://absbonsai.org> and the Mid-American Bonsai Alliance: <http://mababonsai.org>

Ann Arbor Bonsai Society  
1800 North Dixboro Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48105-9741

### Visit us on the Web:

<http://www.annarborbonsaisociety.org>

### Support Local Bonsai Vendors

Hours: Wed., Thurs. & Fri.; 11:00 am to 6:00 pm Sat., 1:30pm to 5:00pm  
CLOSED: Sunday, Monday & Tuesday  
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