



The Ann Arbor Bonsai Society meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at the U-M-Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N. Dixboro Road, Ann Arbor. Please join us at 6:30 PM to meet friends and members. Program starts at 7:00 PM.

<http://www.annarborbonsaisociety.org>
AABonsaiSociety@gmail.com

April 2017
Volume 14 Issue 2

NEXT CLUB MEETING:

April 26, 2017

Reminder - Win a spot in a workshop!

NEW FOR 2017 - One space in each workshop will be filled by means of a drawing. The drawing will take place during the meeting the month before the workshop. Anyone present at that meeting may put their name in the 'hat' for a free spot at the workshop. If the name drawn has already paid for the workshop, their fee will be refunded and their space will become available.

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PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE:

Ron Milostan

Wow, we had a great turn out at our last meeting. More chairs, more chairs was heard all evening. I hope you were there, if not, Sandro, our secretary, has a review of Jack's talk and some nice pictures in his minutes of the meeting.

The microphone continues to be a problem. I am testing a different one now, but we might have to get a new system that better fits our needs. Any suggestions for our volume control and sound distribution would be appreciated.

It's here, spring 2017. Our Purple Martins have returned. The last couple days of south winds brought them north along with geese and Buffleheads, a diver duck. We even had a Loon on the lake this spring.

I have taken my trees out and I'm cleaning them up. I usually remove the top ½ inch of soil and replace with new soil on all of my trees, unless I'm planning to repot. I will only be repotting 3 trees this years. Out of 50 that's not so much work. I would like to see a repotting frequency discussion on our Facebook page. What do you do? How often? How vigorously? Why now? Spring, of course, but why now based on your tree.

See you all at our next meeting.

March MEETING Notes by Sandro Morero

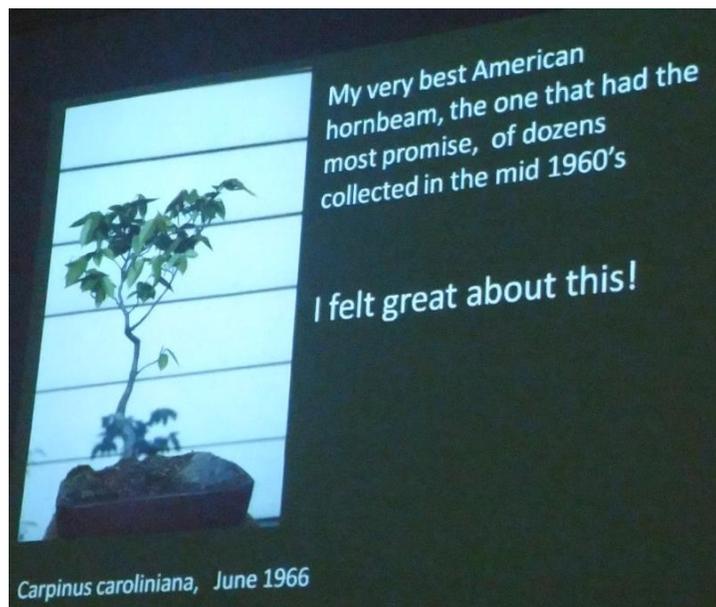
- Meeting attendance: 59 people, 8 visitors
- Workshop with David DeGroot winner: Joan Overmire

Jack Wikle: Things I didn't know as a bonsai beginner 50 years ago

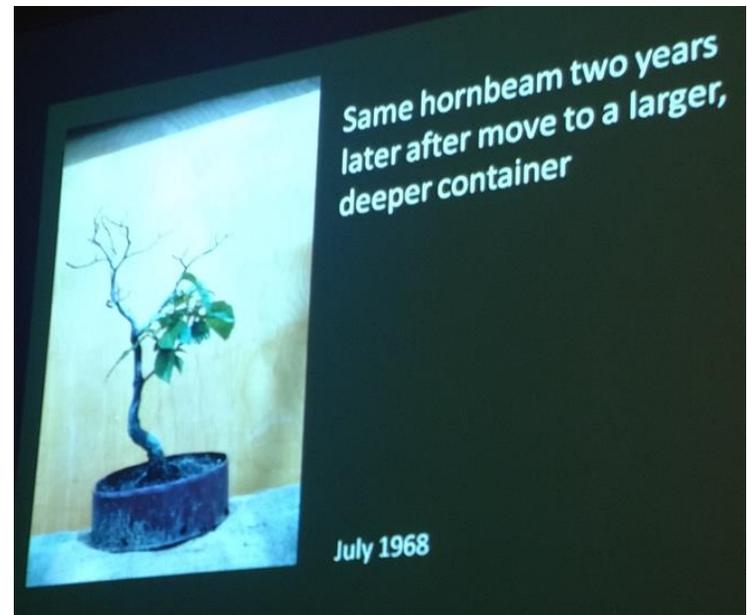
Jack was introduced to bonsai in July 1956, in Japan, when he attended an exhibition. His first thought was that he would never be able to do something like that.

How can beginners start bonsai? The first thing that Jack suggests is to read books that about bonsai and then start to practice by using some expendable trees and experiment.

In this picture is one of Jack's first trees, and he started to experiment.

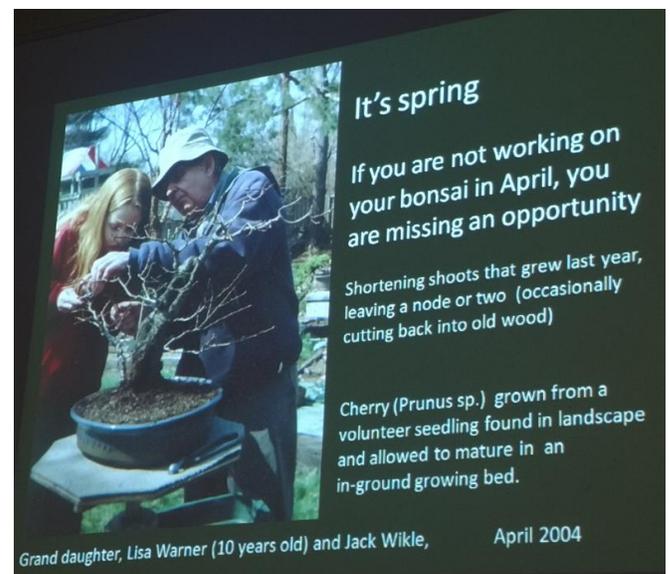


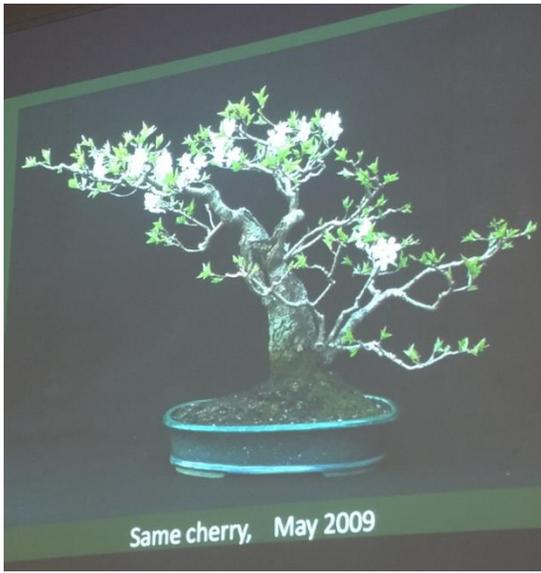
Here is the same tree two years later after moving to a larger and deeper pot:



Jack continues growing, experimenting and documenting his trees even now.

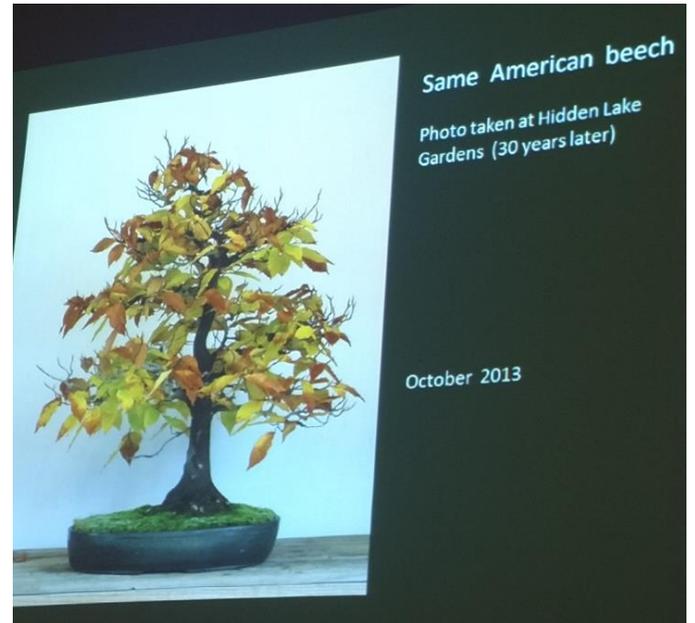
Cherry (*Prunus* sp.)





Same cherry, May 2009

American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*)



Same American beech
Photo taken at Hidden Lake
Gardens (30 years later)

October 2013

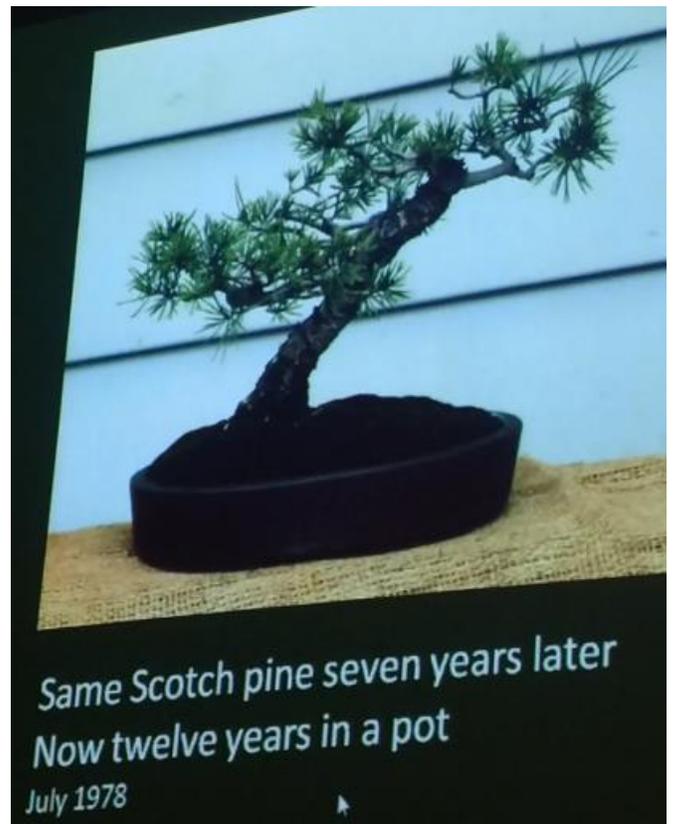
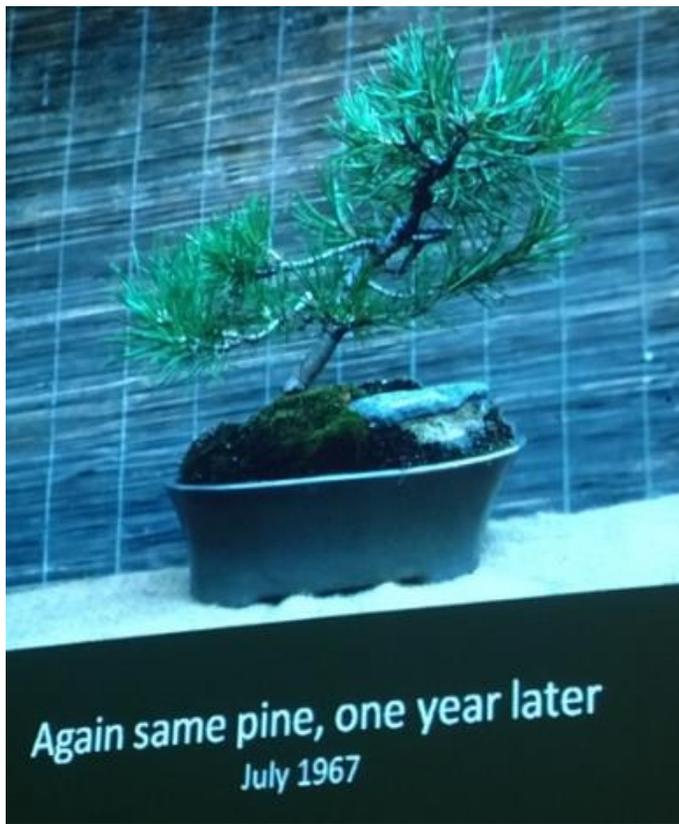
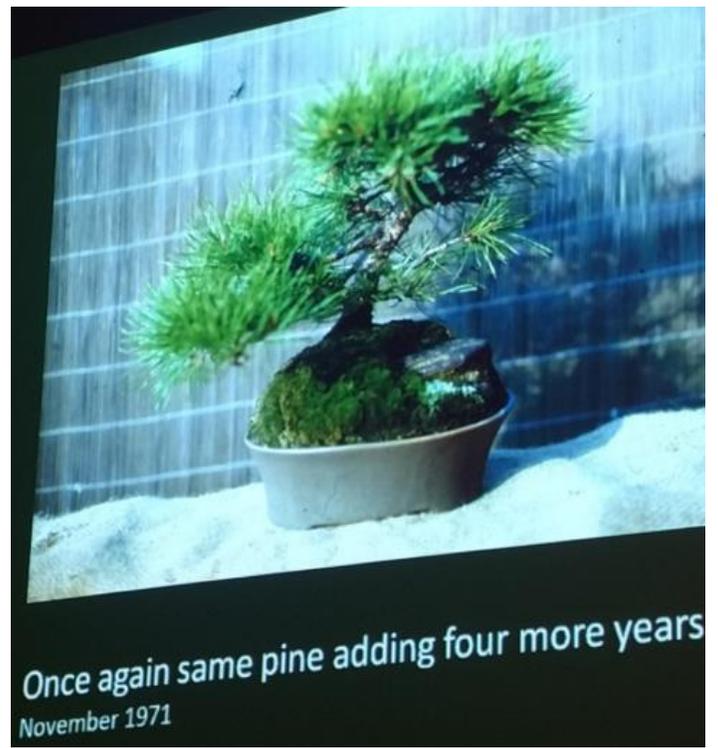
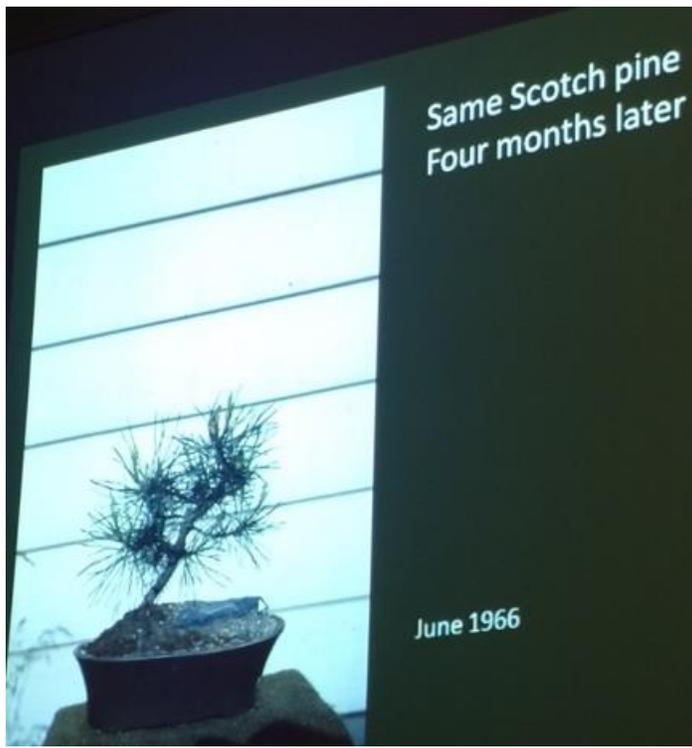
Scotch Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*)

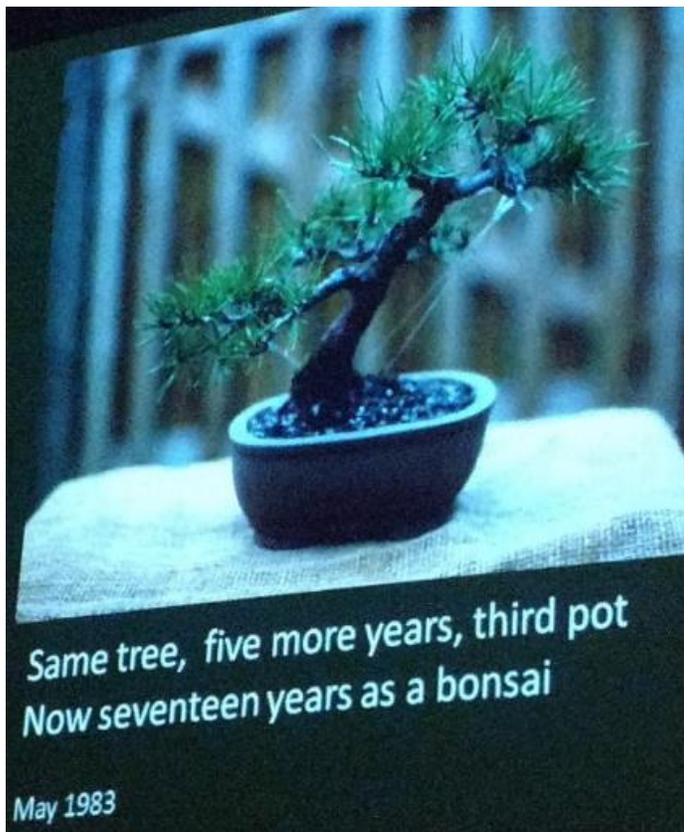


American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) on display
at Hidden Lake Gardens (17 years later)
Spring 1983



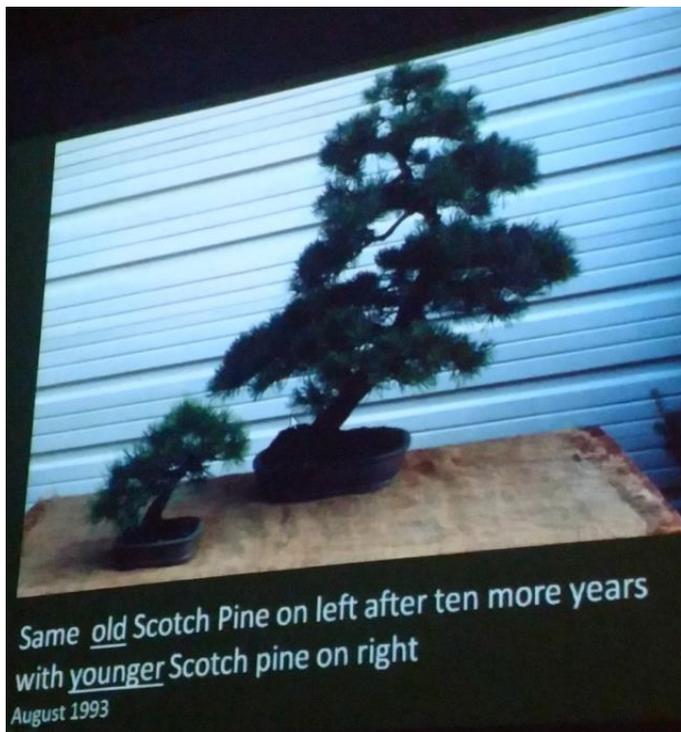
Scotch pine (*Pinus sylvestris*)
February 1966





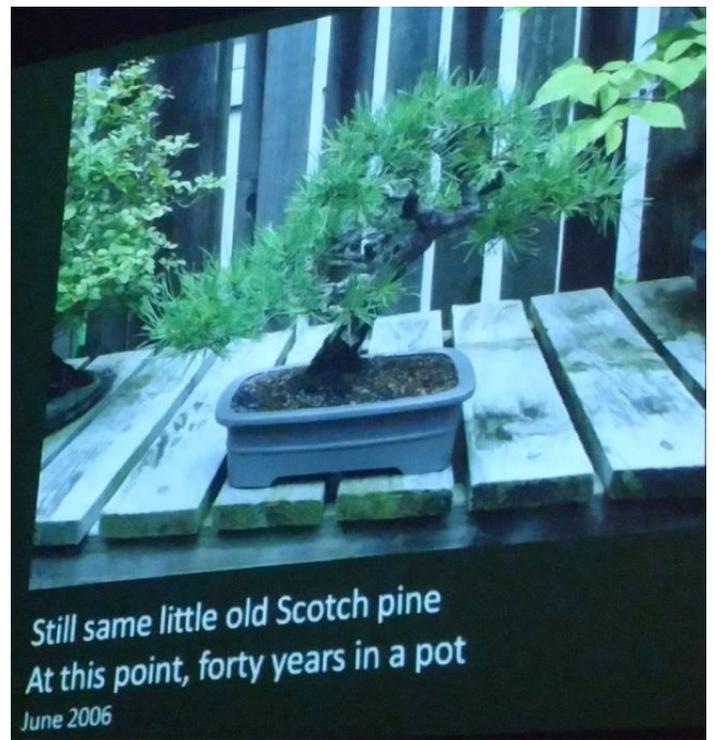
Same tree, five more years, third pot
Now seventeen years as a bonsai

May 1983



Same old Scotch Pine on left after ten more years
with younger Scotch pine on right

August 1993



Still same little old Scotch pine
At this point, forty years in a pot

June 2006

Jack is well known in the Bonsai world. His seminars, lectures, articles and classes have benefitted not only AABS but clubs all over Michigan and beyond.

AN INTRO TO David DeGroot, our April speaker by Peggy Kubitz

The Ann Arbor Bonsai Society is fortunate to welcome bonsai legend, David DeGroot as our next speaker. In his lecture, he will be speaking on the irresistible topic of group plantings and mixed species. Barry and I are looking forward to his talk with great anticipation, and I am sure his lecture will be of compelling interest to our members. David DeGroot is a notable expert in the bonsai world. The curator of Weyerhaeuser's Pacific Rim Bonsai Collection since its inception in 1989, he not only tends the spectacular collection, but manages the facility, special exhibits, and an extensive education program. He travels widely to present lectures, demonstrations, workshops, and critiques. Matthaei Gardens has benefited from his expertise and consultation, with the intent of taking the collection to the next level.

David DeGroot transitioned from music to bonsai. He holds a Master of Music degree from the New England Conservatory in Boston. He was Percussionist for 15 years with the New Orleans Symphony, and served on the music faculties of Xavier and Loyola Universities in New Orleans before starting his own bonsai design and consulting business. He served in New Orleans as editor of the newsletter and president of the Greater New Orleans Bonsai Society. Obviously, he is a very creative and artistic individual. After catching the bonsai bug in 1969 when he visited the Mitchell Park Conservatory in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, David DeGroot was infected with a passion for bonsai. The art of bonsai eventually became his full time mission and focus.

He has studied with many of the world's experts and has written countless significant articles that have been published in eight countries. He has lectured widely, and received Bonsai Club International's "Outstanding Writer, Artist and Photographer" Award. He authored the book, Basic Bonsai Design, which has become a classic. He served two terms as director of the American Bonsai Society. His award winning trees have also earned many recognitions. Our April presentation is sure to be fascinating and informative. Don't miss this engaging presenter!

UP FOR DEBATE:

By Aaron J. Binns

Spring Chores

April has come, spring is here! Kind of.

I am writing this during a snow storm and it is somewhere in the area of 28°F outside. This shouldn't come as a surprise to anyone who has lived in Michigan for more than a couple of years. Like many of you when the nice weather looked like it was here to stay I decided my trees couldn't stay in winter storage and took them out. Snow 4 days later. It's ok because the forecast calls for 70°F weather in a couple of days... ah, spring in the Great Lakes!

Spring should be the busiest time of the bonsai season for everyone. It seems like every bonsai book that I have read

makes statements like, "Ask a bonsai expert in your area for the best time to repot, remove large branches, wire, style, etc." It's very difficult to get that detail advice about anything and more often than not if you ask three people you will get three answers. If you have been reading this column long enough you probably know that I'm a bit of an anything goes kind of Bonsai enthusiast. Generally if you get three different answers it is because all three people have had success with their own techniques which means there is no perfect choice to make. That's a relief to those of us who rarely make perfect choices! When it comes to spring there is a list of housekeeping chores that should be done if your trees are going to live up to your expectations this season.

First, get the trees out of winter storage when temperatures start getting above 40°F regularly. This is generally late March early April on my calendar. Above 40°F and things that grow start to metabolize. This means your trees are going to start needing light. So if your storage compromises this it is time to get the season going. Expect to have to move your trees to a garage or other protected area in the case of late season freezes.

Deciduous trees should be pruned to remove unwanted twigs that developed the previous season and to prevent the tree from getting too congested with growth. This is best done before the tree leafs out so that you can see all of the detailed twigs. If you can do this in the middle of winter go for it. It won't hurt the trees and it is one less thing to do in spring. I would do it in winter too but I have never figured out how to break into my winter storage to actually accomplish a winter prune. Don't prune flowering varieties until after they have flowered. If you do you will have just pruned away the flowers you have been waiting to see. The exception is for a young tree that is becoming a Bonsai. If you are trying to build ramification and shape, it may be worth sacrificing a season or two of flowers for early maintenance that will get you to your goals a bit sooner.

Repot anything that needs it. Most trees are fine being repotted anytime during the spring season with one well known exception. Pines must be repotted when they say they are ready and no sooner. How does a pine say it is ready for repotting you ask? Remove the tree from its pot without breaking into the root ball. If the root ends are white this means the pine has begun to wake up from the winter nap it just took. The pine has started moving energy reserves from the roots to the foliage so go ahead with the repot. If you don't see the white tips then put

the pine back in its pot and come back in a week. For what it is worth as of 4/8/17 my pines are not ready.

Junipers need to be pinched back. Pinch the growth ends back on every Juniper you have on every foliage pad. It is a lot to do but you will be rewarded with dense compact growth this season.

If you own a European Beach you can try a more advanced technique. When the buds start to open you can tease them apart with a set of tweezers and remove the first set of leaflets. If you forget and the buds fully open, no big deal, remove the first set of leaflets then. You should get better results with the first method.

Spring is also the time to begin fertilizing your trees. You might want to take it easy at first or you may encourage larger foliage than is desirable. I do not fertilize my pines as much as other varieties because I want small needles. However, I don't withhold all nutrition. I would rather have a healthy pine with needles a bit longer than a dead pine with short needles. The other rule to keep in mind is to withhold fertilizer from any tree you just repotted until it returns to relatively vigorous growth. In the spring, this shouldn't take long.

Tidy up. Give your trees a fresh top dressing and clean the pots. It doesn't hurt much of anything if you don't but there is no point in putting the effort into making your trees look nice if the pots and soil look grimy from winter storage. If you are really enthusiastic, clean and sharpen your tools.

Wire if you feel the urge and your trees need it. I will wire any time of year if I think the tree needs to be repositioned. Watch out for buds and watch the wire closely for signs that it is biting into the tree.

If you don't get to all of that don't worry. This is supposed to be a pleasant hobby and we should never feel like slaves to the trees. I'm not perfect and you may think something I said is crazy, but so far it has worked for me. I would like to hear from others about their spring tips and techniques. I will try and start the conversation on our Facebook page as soon as the article is published.

The Basics of buying a Bonsai Tree *By Chris Kehrig*

Questions to ask:

- Indoor or Outdoor?
- Garden stock or finished tree?
- Where to buy?
- How much do you want to spend?
- **Do you LIKE IT?**

Indoor vs Outdoor:

One of the most important things to consider when buying a Bonsai is where you will be keeping the tree. Are you looking to have it outside year around, inside for the winter and out for the summer, or inside all year. If you want an outdoor tree, you have these advantages:

- A deciduous tree that changes color and drops leaves in the fall
- A pine or juniper is fairly hardy and may require less maintenance depending on style/type
- Does not require indoor space

However, you must also think of these disadvantages:

- Will dry out faster and may require more watering than an indoor tree
- Need a winter spot for protection
- Theft possibilities

Garden stock vs finished tree and where to buy:

Depending upon your desire to work initially on the tree, there are considerations on buying a garden stock bush/tree or a finished tree.

- Garden stock provides satisfaction in creating your own Bonsai
- Can save a significant amount over finished tree (especially when purchased on clearance in the Fall)
- Garden stock is widely available at home improvement stores such as Lowe's and Home Depot or garden centers such as Telly's and Bordine's
- Finished trees will cost more and can be harder to find
- They can be found at the Flower Market in Monroe, Telly's, and Bonsai House.
- Finished trees however will likely come shaped and in a pot – good for the beginner or someone looking for a specific tree.

- The Bonsai auction through Four Season's and Ann Arbor are a great source – prices are generally less than retail and often gives you a chance to meet the current owner.
- Ebay is great for looking at various types of trees HOWEVER, are you comfortable that the tree will arrive healthy? Also, if coming from another part of the country, can the tree sustain your climate?

How much do you want to spend?:

- Bonsai vary greatly in cost with some free and some into the thousands of dollars
- A good rule of thumb is to start with an inexpensive tree and learn the basics on watering, fertilizing, repotting, and shaping.
- Avoid finished trees from big box stores such as Home Depot, Lowes and Costco as these trees tend to have glued in soil, are often outdoor trees sold as indoor, and not in best health.
- Bonsai may seem like expensive small trees, but one must think about the years of care and training that have gone into it.

Most importantly – do you like it?

- Does the tree grab your eye?
- Have you looked at it from all angles?
- Would you regret not buying this tree – especially true at auction time!
- Every tree is different and requires different care – trees you like will be more likely to receive the care they need.

In summary, bonsai trees vary in quality, price, and type. Joining a club will help expose you to others that are passionate about Bonsai and provide answers to your questions. It can be a very rewarding experience acquiring Bonsai and over time, you'll find that it is a rewarding hobby!

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

Fund Raising: William Struhar

Web Administration: Bob Bauer

Nomination Committee:

Show Committee: Ron Milostan and Paul Kulesa

Annual Auction: Paul Kulesa

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.

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