



# ANN ARBOR BONSAI SOCIETY

Volume 23  
Issue 2

## March 2026 Program — Member Social!

### Meetings

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. The 6 pm program is our Beginner's Series led by club mentors. Then join us at 6:30 PM to meet members, buy raffle tickets and conduct other club business.. The all member presentation will begin at 7:00 PM.

The March meeting is always well attended and enjoyed. Bring a tree or two and your supplies and get down to doing some spring maintenance with your best buddies and mentors around to help! The Beginner's group, a big hit last month, will discuss repotting to get you started. Be there by 6 pm to reserve a seat. At 6:30 pm Raffle ticket sales will be available (6 for \$5.00) and the club will provide snacks and non-alcoholic libations. Membership Renewals and Merchandise orders will be available in the back. Be sure and stop by!



*Carmen and Mike lead our first beginner's class.*



## President's Perspective — Don Wenzel

Our first Beginners Series class was quite the success. Carmen and Mike gave a great presentation about what bonsai tasks to do when - throughout the Michigan calendar year. There were upwards of 15 people in attendance. This month we will cover the basics of repotting. All are welcome to attend. The class will start at 6 pm and last about 30 minutes. April's class will be about wiring and a schedule of topics for the rest of the year will be published shortly.

This month is our Bonsai Social and New Member night. Bring a tree to work on and/or get advice from some of our more knowledgeable members. I always try to take advantage of this program. It's great to get the perspectives of other bonsai enthusiasts, who may see your tree with different eyes and provide insights that you might never consider on your own.

It's also a great opportunity to get specific questions answered about the tree/trees you bring in; anything from techniques for developing the tree,

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

March 2026 Program	1
President's Perspective	1
2026 Membership	2
February 2026 Minutes	3
Coming Up in April	4
Member Sales	4
Prop.Changes to By-Laws	4
Tree Talk	5
Bonsai Calendar	6
Mission Statement	6
Contact Us	7
Raffle	7
Board Members	7
Support our Members	8

Continued on Page 2.....

## President's Perspective Continued....

whether or not to remove that branch you've been agonizing over, or how it might take to defoliation, to name just a few possibilities.

We've (well, mostly Jay Whitehouse - thank you Jay) been working on making minor updates and corrections to our website. Broken links to resources have been corrected or removed, incorrect information about membership has been corrected and outdated pages removed. A new link has been added to display Board Meeting notes and we've made the notes from 2025 and our first meeting of 2026 available there. We will continue to post them moving forward, primarily to provide some insight into the activities of the board and to give a degree of transparency to those activities

One thing we could use some help with is curating photos of the club's activities during the past 3-4 years. Our last AABS Member Show that has photos posted are from 2022. We have photos from the more recent shows as well as a couple other club events and are looking for someone who would be willing to go through them and select the photos that should be included in links for the shows we don't currently have represented. If this is something you think you might like to do, let me know via [Email](#) or via text/phone at 734.604.1348 and we can discuss.

It's a little early to tell, but it looks like my trees have survived the winter fairly well in their new winter digs. One improvement that I've already been able to take advantage of is the fact that mulch thaws much faster than the ground. I was able to pull out a couple trees to work on this past weekend. That is something I was never able to do with my prior setup. By next month the trees should be active enough for me to know for sure whether or not everything pulled through okay.

Hope to see you at our upcoming meeting!

### Membership Renewal

It's Spring! Time for our annual membership drive. Your annual household membership dues are just \$30 per calendar year. Your dues help AABS to provide quality programming, events, and workshops throughout the year hosting well known artists and experts to help you maintain your trees. Your dues also entitle you to receive the monthly American Bonsai Newsletter, opens the door to showing your trees and Kusamono at the AABS Member show, provides a free opportunity to auction your ready-to-part-with trees and supplies at our Annual Auction, and compete in our first ever Bonsai Trivia challenge! When you think about it, those dues go a long way. I also think that the AABS is a premier club with nationally known members who can really assist you on your journey. Please consider renewing today via our website: [annarborbonsaisociety.org/membership](http://annarborbonsaisociety.org/membership) where you will find a Paypal link. Or, renew with cash, check or card at any meeting. Thank you!

## February Meeting Minutes— 2/25/2026

### Submitted by Chris Kehrig

#### Announcements:



3 new members - WELCOME!



Peter Molesa has Joshua Roth tool orders available for 15% savings. Pre-Order at back table.



60 households have signed up for membership so far with 130 last year.



Proposed changes to our Membership By-laws will be sent in early March with a vote at next meeting.



Rick could use someone to sell raffle tickets from 6-6:30.

#### April Grigsby, Potter

Being a Potter has been her main job since 2017.

She started off the Zoom presentation with 2 pounds of clay on a throwing wheel to create a semi cascade pot.

April sells her pots mainly at shows with the Fall Fruit and Foliage show at Hidden Lake Gardens being one of them.

She showed us her pots around the studio and a separate glazing area.

Her husband makes bonsai stands in another part of the studio.

April adds grooves inside some of her pots for decoration and to help guide the roots.

She then showed us a hand formed oval pot that she married the bottom to.

A smaller pot takes 1-2 hours to make, with a large pot taking up to a full day.

She like to show original texture to show craftsmanship.

Glazed pots don't require as much finishing.

April has a clay mold for the cloud feet to attach to the bottom of pot.

She scores the feet and pot to attach them.

She is very inspired by Sara Rayner.

Her electric kiln can hold up to 40 pots.

April then went on to build a pot with separate sides and united them.

A circle cutter is used for the drainage holes and go in before the feet are attached.

She also enjoys making Kusamono pots.

There was then a discussion on masculine vs feminine with color and texture differences.

April creates 400-600 pots a year.



## Coming Up in April — Ryan Huston

At our April 22nd meeting at 6:30 pm, Ryan Huston of In Vivo Bonsai and Bonsai Time Podcast will be speaking on “Midwest Yamadori.” Join us to learn about collecting species from the wild, invasive species, permits and related topics. Ryan is from Columbus, Ohio. Ryan’s favorite bonsai-related activity is camping in exotic places around the US and collecting naturally stunted trees wherever it is legal. Exploring such natural spaces also has the compounded benefit of providing inspiration, helping Ryan understand forests and species-specific nuances around the country in their native environments

Instead of a workshop, Ryan has offered to lead a group trip for collecting in Monroe, MI on the private land of club member Nancy Delaney. The excursion will take place on **Saturday, April 25th**. If you would like to participate you may sign up at the March AABS meeting. The cost is \$25 and participants should bring any of the following tools/equipment they have:

Shovel, Pruners	Loopers
Hori/trowel	Black Contractor’s Bags
Saw	Electrical Tape

If you are experienced with Bonsai collection, we are looking for a couple volunteers to assist. Reach out to us at [aabonsaisociety@gmail.com](mailto:aabonsaisociety@gmail.com).

We’d also like to thank Nancy for allowing us to do a collection on her land.

## MEMBER X-CHANGE

## Silent Auctions, Sales & Freebies...


Len Buckman will have copies of his new publication; **Bonsai, Anyone Can Do It** available at our March meeting for purchase. Positively reviewed by Jack Wikle and Bill Valavanis, it is sure to make a great addition to your Bonsai Library!



## Proposed Change to By-Laws

By now all members should have received, via email, information regarding a proposed change to our membership by-laws. These changes are intended to simplify membership start and end dates regardless of when dues are paid. They also acknowledge that our practice has been to keep past members, or members who have not yet renewed, on our mailing lists unless they request otherwise. Additionally the changes ensure that membership by-laws are gathered in the membership section and not spread between membership and finance. A vote to approve these changes will be taken at our March meeting: you must be present to vote. A simple majority vote is required to pass the change.

If you have not received the email with the attached proposed changes please contact us at [aabonsaisociety@gmail.com](mailto:aabonsaisociety@gmail.com) so that we can send you a copy to your preferred address.



# TREE TALK - BECOMING A BONSAI ARTIST



*Every member of the AABS started with one tree. Whether you are still considering your first tree or have a dozen or more, here is where you will find suggestions for developing your artistry.*

## Come Prepared!

Spring is here in the Bonsai world and as a beginner, you are probably planning on attending the 6 pm beginner's series prior to our regular meeting on March 25<sup>th</sup> which will be all about repotting. When you repot a tree, you pick not only the pot, but an aesthetic for your tree. You can prune your repotted tree during the evening's club social. There will be many people who can help you shape your tree and promote growth. Whatever your vision for your tree is, you may need to wire it a bit after potting and pruning. So, what will you need?

There are two types of bonsai wire available from suppliers: Anodized aluminum and annealed copper. Aluminum is easier to shape and is often recommended for beginners. However, as you progress you may only use it on your more delicate deciduous trees. Conifers require heavier copper wire. Wire is sold by diameter (thickness) or gauge and usually comes in 1mm (18 gauge) to 6mm (3 gauge) or even heavier. Gauge is important! You want your copper wire to be approximately one third the thickness of the branches you plan to style and aluminum wire to be approximately one half the thickness of your branches.

Some supply sources will sell a variety pack of wire if you are unsure of the gauge you will need or if you plan to wire the trunk as well as some of the smaller branches of the canopy. If you have a variety of trees already, a variety pack of wire is an excellent choice! It is also important to have a pair of bonsai pliers (blunt nosed) and a concave wire cutter.

If you pack up your supplies and come prepared to the March social there will be many people to help you with these first steps. You will be sure to go home feeling a bit further along in your bonsai journey.

## Wiring Tips.....

- Select the correct thickness of wire: Extend 2 inches of wire and press the tip on the top of the branch. The wire should be thick enough to move the branch. If your press ends up bending the wire, go up in thickness. If your wire press moves the branch you may still want to try a size smaller to see if a smaller thickness would be sufficient.
- Cut a length of wire longer than your branch to account for wrapping. Better err long than short.
- With one hand, hold the wire at the base of your branch on a 45 degree diagonal against the bark. With your other hand, using even tension, wrap even spirals around the branch. Support the branch while working.
- With a proper and consistent angle you should have sufficient wraps, but not an over abundance of wraps.
- Wire should be close to the bark, not loose. However, do not pull tight. You do not want to inhibit sap flow or mar the bark.
- You may now move your branch gently into the desired position.

-Hannah Yamamoto  
*Bonsai for Beginners*



## Bonsai Events 2026

Date	Event	Sponsor/Club	Link
April 17th—19th	Spring Bonsai Festival (Hershey, PA)	Mid-Atlantic Bonsai Societies	<a href="#">Link</a>
May 9th & 10th	All Michigan Bonsai Show	Frederick Meijer Gardens	<a href="#">Link</a>
May 16th	Bonsai Day 2026— The Art of Patience	Nash Nurseries & Mike Simmons	<a href="#">Link</a>
August 22nd & 23rd	AABS Annual Member Show	Ann Arbor Bonsai Society	<a href="#">AABS</a>
August 28th—31st	10th World Bonsai Con- vention (Kuala Lumpur)	World Bonsai Friendship Federation	<a href="#">Link</a>
September 26th & 27th	Four Seasons Bonsai Club Show	Four Seasons / Bordine's Nursery	<a href="#">Link</a>
October 3rd & 4th	West Michigan Bonsai Club Fall Show	West Michigan Bonsai Club, Grand Rapids	<a href="#">Link</a>
October 17th & 18th, 2026	Fall Fruit and Foliage Bonsai Exhibition	Hidden Lake Gardens	<a href="#">Fall Fruit and Foliage</a>



### AABS Mission Statement:

The purpose of The Ann Arbor Bonsai Society shall be to promote knowledge, appreciation, and practice of the art of bonsai to its members and to the general public through meetings, lectures, workshops, exhibitions, publications or other means.

*Celebrating over 50 years of promoting knowledge, appreciation, and the practice of the art of bonsai.*

## Ann Arbor Bonsai Society

Written correspondence may be addressed to 907 Hillside Ct., Ypsilanti, MI 48197.

Email us at: [aabonsaisociety@gmail.com](mailto:aabonsaisociety@gmail.com)

### We are on the Web and Social Media!

<https://annarborbonsaisociety.org>

<https://www.facebook.com/aabs1970/>

### Prizes for the Raffle

We are always 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 Rick McCoy at any meeting or email him at [imrickmccoy@yahoo.com](mailto:imrickmccoy@yahoo.com)



*"It [wiring] allows you to gently guide branches and trunks into graceful shapes, mimicking the effects of wind, age, and light in nature. Unlike pruning, which removes growth, wiring works with the tree's living structure. Done well, it creates harmony between your vision and the tree's innate character. "*

*– Wazakura Collaborative*

## 2025 Board Members

Don Wenzel, President

Ellen Veselenak, Vice President, Programming

Mark Hanner, Past President

Brian Shepard, Treasurer

Chris Kehrig, Recording Secretary

Anne Evans, Membership, Newsletter

Michael Bruneau, AABS Show Chair

Hannah Aiko, Communications and Social-Media

Melissa Renaud, Marketing and Merchandise

Jay Sinclair, Director at Large

Denise Bellinger, Director at Large

Carmen Leskoviansky, Director at Large

## Ad-Hoc Committees

Rick McCoy, Raffle Coordinator

Jay Whitehouse, Webmaster

Ryan Bavery, Publicity Coordinator



A BONSAI PODCAST FOR ALL SKILL LEVELS FEATURING CARMEN LESKOVIANSKY AND EVAN PARDUE AVAILABLE ON ALL LISTENING PLATFORMS



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<b>Bonsai at</b> <b>Telly's</b> Greenhouse <i>Experience the Telly's Difference</i> 3301 John R. Troy, MI 48063-5656 Phone: (248) 689-8755 Fax: (248) 689-8731 Show Club I.D. for 10% Discount	<b>Bonsai Trees</b> <b>Pre-Bonsai</b> <b>Pottery</b> <b>Tools</b> <b>Soil</b> <b>Wire</b> <b>Instructional</b> <b>Classes</b> <b>&amp; Much More!</b>
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### SUPPORT for BONSAI MEMBERS' ENDEAVORS

All members can advertise any bonsai or bonsai related materials in the newsletter with no ad fees. Additionally we are happy to promote member podcasts, published materials, non-profits, etc. as long as the content is related to the art of Bonsai. Ads should be submitted for inclusion by the fifth of the month. Materials should be submitted as a jpeg or png full color file. Ads and announcements will run consecutive months without interruption if requested. Please send artwork to Anne Evans at [aevans136@gmail.com](mailto:aevans136@gmail.com). Thank you!