



ANN ARBOR BONSAI SOCIETY

Volume 23
Issue 3

April 2026 Program — Yamadori with Ryan Huston!

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.

Ryan Huston of [In Vivo Bonsai](#) will be presenting/demonstrating for the Ann Arbor Bonsai Society on wild bonsai/yamadori in the Midwest. In the talk portion, we will cover best practices for tree identification in winter, characteristics of good candidates, how to dig safely and responsibly, aftercare, and the first repot after a wild tree has recovered. We will also highlight example specimens from native and invasive species you will find. Then, after intermission, in the demonstration portion, Ryan will demonstrate the first styling and/or repotting of a collected tree.

Saturday, April 25th: Dig Your Own Bonsai Workshop!

Ryan will be leading a stomp through the woods in Monroe, MI with the purpose of members being able to collect their own Yamadori. The property we will visit is owned by AABS member Nancy Delaney who has graciously agreed to a collection. Ryan will assist you with imagining a future bonsai in raw material and will ensure a safe and responsible dig. If you would like to participate you may sign up at the AABS meeting. The cost is \$25 and participants should bring any of the following tools/equipment they have: Shovel, Pruners, Lopers, 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.

President's Perspective — Don Wenzel

We have all probably at least gotten started on, or are in the midst of the busy spring bonsai season, but I wanted to talk now a bit about our elections that will take place later this year; partly as a reminder of how they work and so you have time to give some thought to them if you are so inclined.

Most of the board members terms are up at the end of this year. As of now, I'm planning on continuing my role and as far as I know, all the existing board members are planning on staying on as well. However, if there are people in the membership interested in a board role, they should feel free to let that be known. Often an interested person will shadow a board position to learn the ropes before taking it on. That being said, what follows are the basic mechanics of how our election is run (Click on [bylaws](#) to find the exact wording)

Board member terms are for 2 years and begin on December 1st.

Board member are elected by majority vote of the general membership at the October meeting.

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President's Perspective Continued....

A nominating committee may be formed earlier in the year. If done, they submit a slate of nominees at the September meeting. In addition, nominees can be accepted from the floor at the September meeting.

The final slate of nominees determined at the September meeting will be shared with the membership by email and the subsequent newsletter.

Members at the October meeting will constitute a quorum for election of the board.

Feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions.

On the subject of considering a position, I'll take this opportunity to remind people that Paul Kulesa is looking for a person willing to take over his role of running our annual auction. He will be happy to mentor/guide someone through the process. Paul has built up a great system that has given us an efficient and smoothly run auction that works with the help of a number of volunteers the night of the auction. If you're at all interested, even in just finding out more, reach out to Paul. He'll be happy to talk with you about it.

Enough of that, back to Bonsai! A reminder that the Michigan All-State Bonsai Show will be held at Meijer Gardens in Grand Rapids on May 9th and 10th. I've written in the past about the value I've found in putting my trees in shows, so I won't repeat that here, but here's the [link](#) if you decide you'd like to show your tree in this show.

Well, I can now say my new wintering scheme for my trees worked out well. I didn't lose any trees. Had a little frost damage to the tips of a couple small boxwoods (which seems to happen every year) and minor chewing damage to one tree (which I think I can fix with the application of a little dirt around the base of the raised bed box). Now to get to repotting in earnest. I already feel behind!

See you soon,

Don

Membership Renewal

AABS 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! If you haven't yet renewed, you still can. Help us fund this year's events before the year ends! Please consider renewing today via our website: annarborbonsaisociety.org/membership where you will find a Paypal link. Or, renew with cash, check or card at any meeting. Thank you!

March Meeting Minutes— 3/25/2026

Submitted by Chris Kehrig

Announcements:

- ◆ 3 new members - WELCOME!
- ◆ The proposed changes to the Membership By-laws (emailed to members on March 12th) passed unanimously.
- ◆ Len Buckman, AABS Member, recently published “Bonsai: Anyone Can Do It.” He brought copies for members who are interested in purchasing a copy.
- ◆ Memberships and Registrations for next month’s Yamadori Dig with Ryan Huston are available at the back table.

Bring Your Own Bonsai and Member Social



Coming Up in May — Jaime Whitton

Join us on May 27th to talk about spruces and firs, and watch a live demo from Jaime Whitton of Ranni Bonsai. Jaime is a bonsai artist, educator, and content creator with a growing emphasis on native conifers. After beginning formal study with Todd Schlafer at First Branch Bonsai in 2023, Jaime has focused on sound horticulture, intentional design, and clear instruction. On their YouTube channel, Ranni Bonsai, Jaime highlights voices across the bonsai community and produces accessible educational content to help make bonsai more inviting to learners at all levels.

On the following day, Thursday, May 28th, Jaime will be conducting a workshop with our members on nursery spruces. The workshop will run from 10 am to 3 pm at Matthai (Room 125). You may register for the workshop at the April and May meetings or, visit our website for a paypal link. Fee TBD.

Jaime Whitton of Ranni Bonsai



Beginner Series: Wiring

Join us on April 22nd at 6 pm for our next Beginner Series short course. Ghazi Zouaoui of Green Witch Gardens will be presenting basic wiring techniques. Ghazi has presented for the AABS on several occasions, most recently demonstrating how members can properly prepare their trees for show.

The program runs for a half hour and then will break for a half hour to allow members time to buy raffle tickets, renew memberships, register for the Saturday, April 25th Yamadori Dig, and socialize. Following our beginner series and social time our regular meeting will begin at 7 pm.



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.

Spring and Bonsai

Long before other growers are celebrating the arrival of spring, bonsai enthusiasts are watching for signs that their trees have survived another winter. By now you've celebrated your trees' resurgence or mourned a loss or an injury. It's time for repotting and styling! The best bonsai season.

If you were at our March social you had an opportunity to meet Len Buckman, an AABS member and author of the book, [Bonsai: Anyone Can Do It.](#)

"The art form of bonsai has similarities to music, painting or even wine."

-Len Buckman

I found this lovely quote in my perusal of his book and started thinking that last month's column with wiring "how to's" might have been a little too technical.

Len covers wiring with a nod to the aesthetic. He notes that wiring is a method of design but also a tool similar to the paintbrushes used by other artists. It allows you the opportunity to "age" your tree by lowering branches on the trunk. It allows the artist to create motion on a tree, bringing to mind wind-swept outcroppings. Proper wiring can encourage growth by opening up interior space on the tree which also helps create dimension. And let us not forget, the yin and yang principle of balance; wiring allows the artist to create balance. Positioning tips of trees upward will help portray vigor as well as uplift the tree.

Yes, friends, spring is a fine time to wax poetic about your trees.

You may purchase Len's book by contacting him at len-buckman@aol.com. The book is \$16 and shipping is \$5.

Remove What is Not Bonsai...

Len advises those new to pruning to identify those branches that "are not bonsai."

Here's his list:

- 1) Suckers at the tree base*
- 2) Branches blocking the view of the trunk*
- 3) Branches emerging low on the tree base*
- 4) Branches growing downward from lateral branches*
- 5) Dead branches*
- 6) Branches that cross other branches*
- 7) Branches that turn backward toward the trunk*
- 8) Branch growing straight upward from lateral branches*
- 9) Branches that have unnatural twists or turns*
- 10) Branches that grow parallel, remove one*
- 11) Small suckers on lateral branches*
- 12) Shorten or remove branches that extend beyond your intended profile*
- 13) Branches at the same height growing in opposite directions, remove one*
- 14) Branches which compete with the trunk leader*
- 15) Branches that are thicker than the trunk*

Bonsai Events 2026

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



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

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



2026 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



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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. Thank you!