



# ANN ARBOR BONSAI SOCIETY

Volume 23  
Issue 4

## May 2026 Program — Jaime Whitton

### 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.

Join us Wednesday, 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 content to help make bonsai more inviting to learners at all levels.



Jaime Whitton of Ranni Bonsai

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 Matthaei (Room 125). You must pre-register for the workshop at the May meeting or, visit our website for a PayPal [link](#). The fee for the workshop is \$75 and you will be provided a spruce to style.

## President's Perspective — Don Wenzel

Lots to talk about this month. First off, I want to thank the Delaneys for generously offering much of their 45 acre property for our yamadori group, led by Ryan Huston, to traipse through last month. We had a group of 10-12 people who took advantage of the opportunity, taking home various species, including cherry, maple, and sassafras. This was something I've been wanting to do for quite some time and it was a really great learning experience.

I just got back from this year's All-State Bonsai show at Meijer Gardens in Grand Rapids. As usual, there were many great trees there. Mark Fields was the headliner guest. During his demo of styling a white pine, I learned what his go to fungicide treatment for pines is (Daconil and copper sulfate). I also learned he's something of an artist and collects presi-

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## President's Perspective Continued....

dential signatures. Our club was well represented, with a number of members winning awards for their trees. There are pictures of some of them included here.

While at the show, I spoke with Bill Valavanis's wife, Diane. She informed me that they have obtained a new venue for the 2027 National Bonsai Exhibition in Rochester New York. It will have considerably more space than the past venue, allowing more space for trees and vendors. Space has been an issue in the past so this is a great development for the event.

At our meeting in less than two weeks we will have Jaime Whitton with us to talk about spruces and firs. I haven't done well with the couple I've had, so I'll be taking notes during their presentation.



John Cerovski



Michael Bruneau



Carmen Leskoviansky

There will be a workshop the following day, with tree provided. Price is \$75. You can sign up via PayPal on our [website](#) or at the meeting. If you're using PayPal please make a note in the comment section that you are signing up for Jaime's workshop.

A final note. If you're looking for something to brighten your day and lift your spirits, I heartily recommend visiting the azaleas in Matthaei's Bonsai collection at the end of this month, and the first part of June. They are spectacular in bloom. Matthaei's website usually includes information about when the peak bloom time is, so check there in a week or so to get more specific timing for your visit.

See you soon,

Don

## April Meeting Minutes— 3/25/2026

Submitted by Chris Kehrig

### Announcements:

- ◆ 4 new members in attendance. - WELCOME!
- ◆ Memberships are available at the back table. You may also register for Saturday's dig with Ryan Huston and for next month's spruce workshop with Jaime Whitton.

### Yamadori with Ryan Huston

- He started digging up trees 10 years ago and has 22 years in bonsai.
- Ryan has a podcast called Bonsai Time ([podcast](#))
- Yamadori translates to "from the landscape".
- Pros of digging: time, native, size, prestressed, lower cost, and rescuing of trees.
- Cons are not many collectible areas, may die, low bonsai action first year.
- Alternatives: cuttings, air layering, nursery pre-bonsai.



- Always get permission first.
- Look for trees that are unwanted or nature has stunted.
- First clear leaves on ground around trunk to find the nebari.
- Determine if there are lateral roots or just taproot.
- Bigger trees have lower survival rate.
- Aftercare: let the tree recover with shade, keep hydrated, avoid freezing, and don't fertilize right away.
- Start with smaller trees or trees that won't be missed.
- Don't always have to collect a tree - sometimes it's about the journey



## Coming Up in June — SHOHIN With MARK FIELDS



*Mark Fields beginning a re-styling of a white pine (not a shohin specimen!) at the All State Show this May at Meijer Gardens.*

Join us on June 24th when Mark Fields of Bonsai by Fields, LLC will present on shohin. Shohin refers to small bonsai, typically 3 to 10 inches, usually shown in small groups. The small trees are sometimes challenging because of their watering needs and unique styling but are rewarding in their beauty. Mark is renowned for his styling abilities and you are sure to learn new techniques.

Mark will also be running a bring your own tree workshop Thursday, June 25th at 10 am. The workshop will be \$75 and you should be prepared to bring your own shohin for styling. You can sign up for his workshop at our next meeting or via our paypal link on the [AABS website](#). Please note in the payment comment that you are registering for Mark's workshop.

## Beginner Series — May

**Join us at 6 pm on May 27th** for this month's beginners' series. Carmen Leskoviansky will be speaking to Seasonal Growth Management. This month she will be focused Black Pine, Spruce, Beech, and Japanese Maple.

Feel free to bring any of your trees that will be discussed for consultation.

*Japanese Black Pine, Matthai Botanical Garden*



# 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.

## Rule of Three

If you've ever taken a landscape class or a flower arranging class you will have heard "the rule of three" applied to those pursuits. It generally ensures movement and balance in those disciplines. There is a "Rule of Three" in Bonsai as well. Lloyd Noall of Bonsai Direct teaches that the rule of three in bonsai design promotes balance, proportion, and harmony. He applies the rule in several ways. When styling he considers the tree in three parts. The lowest third of the tree is where he promotes stability and age of the tree. The middle of the tree (branching) is the heart of the tree and the apex, or top, is where one will see the finishing touches or elegance of the tree.

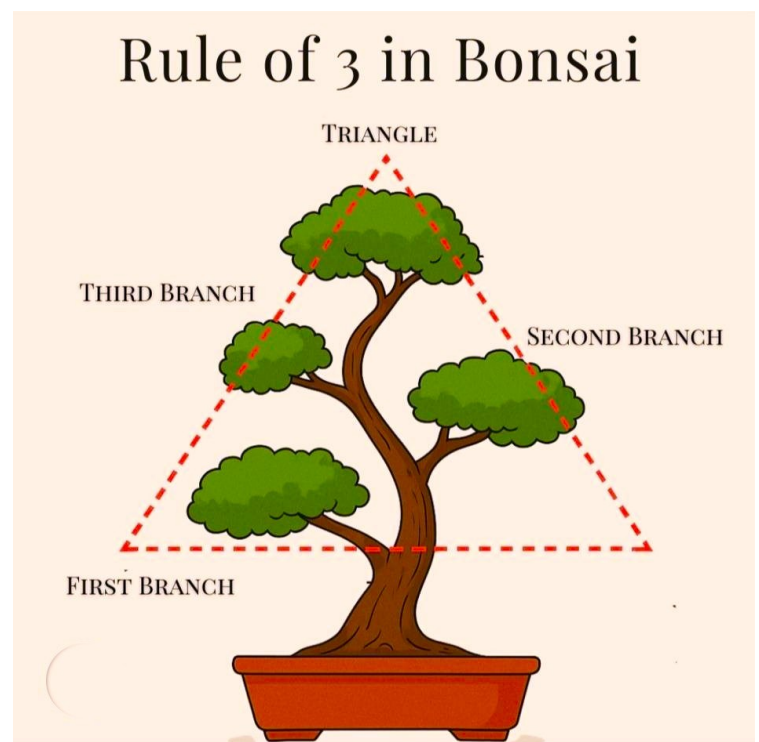
Starting from the bottom of a tree he will wire and position the **first** branch approximately one-third up the trunk with movement toward the front. The **second** branch will be positioned slightly higher and opposite from the base branch. The **third** branch will be positioned toward the back of the tree to ensure dimension.

Thirds also come into play with branch size in relation to the trunk. A base branch one third the diameter of the trunk is very pleasing to the eye and therefore, optimal!

We all know rules are made to be broken. Lloyd allows for this in his approach:

*"Although I follow the rule of thirds when it comes to branches and structure, I don't use this rule when choosing a pot or deciding where to position the tree within its pot. Potting is about balance and aesthetic harmony, not strict ratios. For me, the rule of 3 is more of a guide for growth and form rather than container design." — Lloyd*

Lloyd also recognizes that bonsai artistry sometimes requires bending the rules to achieve uniqueness and character. However, for beginners it's a great guideline!



## Bonsai Events 2026

Date	Event	Sponsor/Club	Link
May 16th & 17th	Spring Bonsai Exhibit	Midwest Bonsai & the Chicago Botanical Gardens	<a href="#">Link</a>
May 16th	Bonsai Day 2026— The Art of Patience	Nash Nurseries & Mike Simmons	<a href="#">Link</a>
August 14—16, 20	48th Annual Mid-America Bonsai Exhibi-	Midwest Bonsai & the Chicago Botanical Gardens	<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)



### 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

**Position Openings on the Board and Ad-Hoc Committees open each October. If a member is interested in serving they should contact the President, Don Wenzel, at [wenzeldt@gmail.com](mailto:wenzeldt@gmail.com) to express interest prior to August first. The Slate of Officers is announced in September.**

**It is also possible to shadow a board member for a period of time to learn the role ahead of the October election. We encourage you to join our leadership!**



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**SUPPORT OUR MEMBERS**

**AABS Member Len Buckman** has published a book, *Bonsai: Anyone Can Do It*. His book is intended for those beginning their bonsai journey.

You may purchase Len's book by contacting him at [lenbuckman@aol.com](mailto:lenbuckman@aol.com). The book is \$16 and shipping is \$5.

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**SUPPORT for BONSAI MEMBERS' ENDEAVORS**

Members may 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 [aevans136@gmail.com](mailto:aevans136@gmail.com). Thank you!