



ANN ARBOR BONSAI SOCIETY

Volume 23
Issue 7

August 2026 Program — David Cutchin

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 on August 19th when David Cutchin joins us to speak on ***Carbohydrates, Hormones and Hardiness: The Science of Late-season Bonsai Management.***

- 1- What happens in late summer (plant physiology)
- 2- Fertilization strategy in August- October
- 3- Water and heat stress in humid Michigan summers
- 4- Fungal and pest pressure in late season.
- 5- Preparing for winter begins in August.



David Cutchin

President's Perspective — Don Wenzel

It's that time of year again. Our annual show is imminent. David Cutchin will be our guest speaker at our August meeting, on the **THIRD** Wednesday this month. He will also be spending the week-end with us during the show. Here's the [flyer](#) with much more information about what will be going on. If you haven't registered your tree(s) (two tree maximum) please take the five minutes it will take right now. Knowing how many trees to expect in advance helps us with show prep in a variety of ways. You can find the registration form on our website, or right [here](#)!

I think it's going to be a great show and I encourage you to be a part of it by entering a tree and/or helping out. There are various volunteer slots still available and there will be sign-up sheets at our August 19th meeting on the **THIRD** Wednesday this month. Also,

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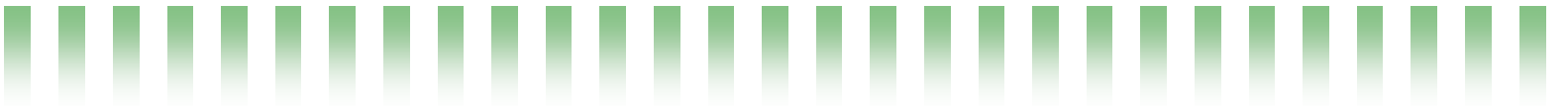
President's Perspective Continued....

remember to tell your friends, family and acquaintances to come by and see the show.

Things won't really slow down next month as it will be time for our annual auction. Give some thought to what you might like to put in the auctions, be it the silent or live auction. A reminder that a policy change was made last year and there are no longer any seller fees. One more thing regarding the auction - a reminder that Paul is looking for someone to take over the reins of running the auction. Please speak to him or reach out to me if you are at all interested in taking on this important task. Paul has put together a simple and smooth system for running the auction and though not a small job, it is not a difficult one.

Besides the auction next month, September is also the month we nominate people for board positions where needed. This year the position of Publicity coordinator and Membership Chair are both available. If you are interested, or would like to be nominated in September please reach out to me. I can describe what's involved in the Publicity coordinator position and have Anne Evans contact you to describe the duties of the Membership Chair. The election of these positions will take place at our October meeting.

Keep your trees safe in this warm weather.



July Meeting Minutes Submitted by Chris Kehrig

Meeting Announcements:

- ♦ The August meeting will be on the 3rd Wednesday (August 19th) to accommodate our Annual Show.
- ♦ The AABS Member Show will be on August 22nd and 23rd with show set up occurring on Friday the 21st at 9am.
- ♦ Tree registration is open on our website. No trees will be accepted for show after 6pm on Friday.
- ♦ Photos of all trees will be taken on Friday.
- ♦ There are 2 board positions to be filled – Publicity and Membership. Paul would also like to train someone to be the Annual Auction Chair. Please see Don if you are interested in training for any of these positions.

Continued on Page 3...

Owen Reich of Bonsai Unearthed



Owen spoke on Japanese Maples and how Michigan is a great climate for them.

When selling, they look to turn over within 3 years.

Leaf thinning is important and Owen mentioned leaf cutting.

This will keep the tree static.

Leaf cutting should be done over defoliating which can weaken the tree.

It should be done after the leaves harden off.

Prune in spring for 2 rounds.

Leaf cutting can be done up through August.

The larger leaves of the silhouette should be cut off.

Shading leaves should be trimmed or removed.

In Japan, the lower branches to the pot are prized.

Smaller trees should have branches removed.

When removing a branch, Owen recommends a small knob cutter to go into trunk.

Japanese maples have opposite growth – prune to have offsets.

He said deciduous trees are 2x harder than evergreens.

Fertilize a low amount often through the growing season.

Hydroponic fertilizer is recommended.

Sea King, Black Forest Kelp is good.

Avoid Miracle Grow.

Owen wrapped up with air layering technique.

He likes using a dixie cup with foil and then growing new roots on top of the air layered.



The AABS Annual Member Exhibit at Matthaei Botanical Garden August 22nd and 23rd

1

TREES: Members may register up to two trees as well as Suiseki and Kusamono for display. Please go [HERE](#) to register. Trees must be dropped off no later than 6 pm on Friday, August 21st.

2

PHOTOGRAPHY: When you drop off your tree you, or your representative, will be asked to sign a waiver acknowledging that the photograph AABS takes of your tree will remain the property of AABS and may be used in promotional materials and on our website.

3

VOLUNTEERS: We need volunteers to help make our show run smoothly. Please sign up to volunteer for a shift at our next meeting, Wednesday, August 19th. If you will not be at the meeting and would like to volunteer email us at aabonsaisociety@gmail.com.

4

CRITIQUE WITH CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST: There will be a professional critique of all trees before the doors open on Saturday morning at 9 am for members. If you plan on attending the critique please sign up at our next meeting, Wednesday, August 19th or when you drop off your tree on Friday.

5

DEMONSTRATIONS AND WORKSHOP: All Demonstrations and the Guided Bonsai Garden Tours are free of charge. There is a \$75 fee for David Cutchin's Workshop on Sunday. There are still openings. Please sign up using www.Paypal.com and entering aabonsaisociety@gmail.com as the payee. Note in the comment section that you are registering for the Cutchin workshop. We will sell any remaining spots at the next meeting.

6

VENDORS: Ten different vendors will be on-site selling trees, pots, and supplies. Leonard Bell has announced this will be his last vending gig with us, so be sure to stop by! And have you seen all the new pots?!

7

SHOW ENTRY FEE: The show is free to all 2026 AABS members, children under 18 years of age, and college students with ID. Non-member or non-student adults will be charged \$3 apiece to help defray expenses. There is an additional fee for parking collected by Matthaei.

Our Annual Auction is Coming September 23, 2026

Submitted by: Paul Kulesa

The month of August foreshadows the return of our auction; a popular program winding down our yearly calendar. This opportunity is for members to offer for auction bonsai and related material. Offering items for auction is reserved for members of the Society. The corollary is, there will be bonsai and related material to purchase.

Please consider **'pitchin-in'** with the administration of the auction. The success of our auction depends on assistance provided by our members. Help is needed for room setup and take down, registration of buyers and sellers, record keeping during the auction, and participation in the smooth operation of the auction process. Your participation is appreciated. You may sign up to volunteer at the August meeting. Additional information and forms will follow.



To the Society,

This coming Bonsai show will be the last wood display for me. Due to the fact that we are selling our home and moving to a retirement village apartment there will be no accommodations for the storage needed for my wood creations business. I have cut all prices in half for quick sale and anything left will be put in indefinite storage. Thanks to all who have supported my hobby over the years and hope to see my work pop up now and again at shows over the years.

Regards, Leonard Bell



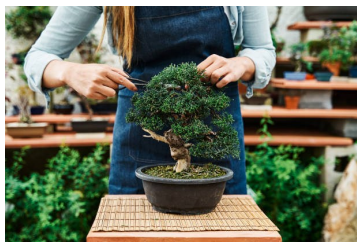
Hinoki Cypress
Justin Whitehouse

Beginner Series on August 19th at 6 pm

Join us early on Wednesday the 19th for this month's beginner's series. The appropriately timed topic will be **Prepping and Preparing Your Trees for Display**. Because this is the beginner's series you should feel comfortable bringing your trees, stands/slabs, and accompaniments to ask questions specific to your display.

Justin Whitehouse, Hinoki Cypress, 2019

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.

Being Judged...

If you are new to Bonsai you may find the idea of displaying a tree quite intimidating. What does a judge even look for? Doesn't it count if I like my tree even though it doesn't follow "the rules?" Do all the rules apply to all trees? Does the display require a handmade pot or can a production pot be used? Can my tree only be styled into certain "acceptable" forms for its species?

Oh, the thoughts that stand in your way. Put them aside. First, you may be one of those artists who loves the process and doesn't really need confirmation or standards. That's fine. Or, you may be one of today's artists who think the "old" (and by old, I mean "ancient") rules need to be broken occasionally. But then again, maybe you want to learn the rules before you start breaking any and need help getting there. These are all valid approaches to practicing Bonsai.

I should mention that the AABS show is not judged. Prior to show open there is a walk-through critique where professionals will assess your tree and presentation and make comments about what they like and what they would concentrate on to improve it. During the critique, members are asked to vote on their favorite tree which will be recognized during the show as the AABS Member Choice. Once the public arrives, they too can vote and the tree with the most votes will be awarded a People's Choice award. My thought is take advantage of this being an exhibit, not a judged show, display your work, get some feedback, and have a good time!

If you are looking for an educational site with an abundance of show/judging advice may I recommend [Bonsai Tree Gardener](#). For a quick review of the basic rules please take a look at the sidebar.

The General Rules...

Trunk and Root Structure

- **Nebari (Surface Roots):** Roots should flare evenly in multiple directions to anchor the tree visually; avoiding crisscrossing and visible root hairs
- **Trunk Taper:** The trunk should be thickest at the bottom and gradually get thinner toward the top, avoiding reverse taper (where the middle is wider than the base).
- **Maturity & Character:** Look for natural movement, aged bark texture appropriate to the species, and neatly calloused pruning scars. Jin should complement not detract.

Branching and Silhouette

- **Proportion:** Primary branches must be thicker near the trunk and taper outward, with lower branches wider and longer than upper ones.
- **Arrangement:** Branches should alternate in threes rather than grow in opposing pairs or directly out toward the front view. Back branches should be visible to provide depth. Branches may be neatly wired with no wire scarring or crossovers. Tree should have a well-shaped crown appropriate to species.
- **Ramification:** Fine twig density should create clear visual layers or pads of foliage without heavy gaps. Leaves should not drop below the branches. Excess foliage creates too much weight at the top of a tree.

Health and Presentation

- **Vitality:** Foliage must display uniform, vibrant color; completely free of pests, disease, or severe yellowing. Foliage should be proportionate to the tree.
- **Pot Harmony:** The container should match the tree's scale; complement the gender/mood and color tone; soil surfaces should be clean and mossed or covered in fine aggregate. Unglazed pot surfaces should be oiled.
- **Technical Neatness:** correct off-center placement within the pot, correct pot width and depth, accompaniments do not detract from the tree but offer an artistic tableau.

Bonsai Events 2026

Date	Event	Sponsor/Club	Link
August 14—16, 20	48th Annual Mid-America Bonsai Exhibition	Midwest Bonsai & the Chicago Botanical Gardens	Link
August 22nd & 23rd	AABS Annual Member Show	Ann Arbor Bonsai Society	AABS
August 28th—31st	10th World Bonsai Convention (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 Bellingier, 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 to express interest. The Slate of Officers is set by the Board in September and voted on by the general membership in October.

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!



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



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. The book is \$16 and shipping is \$5.

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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. Thank you!