



Bonsai Notebook

www.austinbonsaisociety.com

A Publication of the Austin Bonsai Society

February 2025 vol 173

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Calendar of Events

January 31 to February 2, 2025

- ◆ Topic: Club dig organized by The Texas State Bonsai Exhibit (TTSBE)
- ◆ Location: Private Ranch in South Texas
- ◆ Time: January 31 to February 2
- ◆ RSVP at January meeting

February 12, 2025

- ◆ Topic: Grafting
- ◆ Presenter: Brandon B.
- ◆ Location: Zilker Botanical Garden
- ◆ Time: 6:30pm (Mingling), 7:00pm (Meeting)

February 23, 2025

- ◆ Topic: Shohin Meeting
- ◆ Presenter: May L. and Joey M.
- ◆ Location and Time: Spicewood Springs Library (8637 Spicewood Springs Rd, Austin, TX 78759) - 1pm to 4 pm

2024 Board of Directors

Eric B.
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Sachin M.
Vice President

Simon T.
Secretary

Jonathan W.
Treasurer

Jorge M.
Member-At-Large

Ross C.
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Volunteers

Refreshments
John H.

Tree Hosts
Gloria N.

President's Message

By Eric B.

Hello everyone, and welcome to the February 2025 Austin Bonsai Society newsletter.

I hope all of your trees made it through our recent cold weather unscathed. I always find wintery weather unnerving with respect to my bonsai; maybe with time and more experience that will subside a bit...or not, we'll see. This has gotten better since I learned that I can keep my deciduous trees in my unheated garage all winter, as they don't need much if any light once they have gone fully dormant. So this year I'm not doing the "bonsai shuffle", moving my trees into the garage and back outside depending on the weather. Well, I still do with some of my nicer evergreens, but they are both smaller and fewer, so it's a lot less work. Just remember to keep them watered! Being in a garage and dormant does not mean trees can be completely ignored.

Speaking of the cold, it will eventually end - I promise, it will - and then it will be repotting time before we know it. The next month or so is a good time to get your gear and supplies ready for repotting season. Buy soil if you need it, clean pots you want to use, prepare pots by securing screens over drainage holes, clean and sharpen tools...there are all kinds of tasks that done now will make repotting much easier later. Also, now is a good time to decide on changes to the placement of the tree in the pot - a different front, more or less lean, etc. I'm sure you can think of other things you can do now to make it easier later.

Brandon is going to demonstrate root grafting on a cedar elm, at our February meeting. That's a great topic, and timely, too. Because when do you do root grafting? When you repot the tree. And what's coming up soon? Repotting season! I have a couple of trees that I would like if they had fuller nebari, so I'm very interested in this demonstration, and I hope you all are too.

To those of you who have paid your 2025 ABS fee, thank you! To those of you who have not paid your fee yet, please do so as soon as you can. Your membership fee helps us pay for visiting artists and other programming, such as our show in May. We have to book artists and such well in advance, so getting your membership fee in sooner is better than later.

We should all be sure to thank John Hooper for volunteering to bring refreshments to our February meeting, and I'm certain we'll all appreciate the trees Gloria is going to show. Volunteers are what makes ABS work, so please consider signing up to bring refreshments, or show off a couple of your trees, or just help clean up a bit after meetings. Every little thing helps!

That's all for now. I hope February's weather is mild, and nobody loses any trees. See you on the 12th!

Eric

Vice President's Message

By Sachin M.

Hello Austin Area Bonsai Enthusiasts,

We had a fantastic gathering for our first meeting in January, and we're looking forward to your continued participation and support throughout the year. A big thank you to Joey for his excellent presentation on collecting yamadori material—it was both insightful and inspiring.

For February, we're excited to have Brandon present on the topic of root grafting. He will be demonstrating the technique on a cedar elm tree, which will be auctioned off after the presentation. Root grafting is a concept that's easy to grasp, but it requires precision, patience, and practice. It's an excellent method for developing the nebari on any deciduous tree.

In March, we are thrilled to welcome Jonathan, one of our local experts on growing Japanese maples. Jonathan will be sharing his extensive knowledge and tips on how to successfully grow and care for these beautiful trees.

Then in April, we'll be hosting a "Bring Your Own Tree" session, where you can receive valuable feedback from a panel of local Bonsai experts. This session will be a great opportunity to refine your tree and get it show-ready for our annual club show at Zilker in May.

We look forward to seeing you all at these upcoming events!
Sachin

Reminder for club membership and advertisement

2025 membership fee

Individual	\$35.00
Family	\$40.00
Newsletter monthly advertisements:	\$35.00
Directory advertisement:	\$11.00

You may contact payments.austinbonsaisociety@gmail.com for convenient electronic payment options (processing fee will be added).

Gift certificate for memberships is also available, please send inquiry to payments.austinbonsaisociety@gmail.com

ABS Board Meeting Minutes

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discussion



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Date: January 21, 2024

Location: Virtual

Meeting Attendees:

- ◆ Eric (President)
- ◆ Sachin (Vice President)
- ◆ Simon (Secretary)
- ◆ Jonathan (Treasurer)
- ◆ Caleb
- ◆ Ross

President:

- ◆ Talked about AAGC, ZBG and TwiG representation
- ◆ Discussed Convention 2026
- ◆ Greeter team: All board members with Ross, Caleb and Jorge as leaders

Vice President:

- ◆ Talked about programs and preparation for the rest of the year
- ◆ Updates on scheduling and other essential topics

Secretary:

- ◆ Meeting starts at **7:33pm**
- ◆ Last report was accepted without edits
- ◆ Provided Convention updates
- ◆ Club dig - TTSBE will continue the tradition to organize the event
 - ◆ RSVP required for ABS members
- ◆ Excellent feedback on Joey's presentation

Treasurer:

- ◆ Provide financial updates and balances
- ◆ Talked about membership and raffles update
- ◆ Transition of Treasurer in progress

Meeting adjourned at **8:59 pm**

Bonsai Calendar – Looking Ahead

**** Calendar subject to change in 2025- Please review dates in each future Newsletter ****

Date	Event Type	Artist / Presenter	Topic	Location	Approx Member Cost
WED 2/12/2025	Club Night / Meeting	Brandon B. , ABS Club Member	6:30PM social time 7:00PM start time Demonstration: Techniques to Add Root Grafts to a Native Cedar Elm to enhance the root flare of bonsai in development. This technique can be applied to various deciduous trees you may have in your collection.	Zilker Botanical Garden Center 2220 Barton Springs Rd, Austin, TX	Free to attend - Donation table items welcome :-)
SUN 2/23/2025	Bonsai Meetup: Shohin Size Trees	Shohin Society of Texas - May L. and Joey M. , ABS Club Members	1pm - 4pm Explore Shohin Bonsai with a wonderful group of friends. – Special Topic is TBD – Shohin bonsai are typically less than 8 inches tall and less than 10 inches wide (approximately) – bring refined shohin trees , or trees you think would be good candidates for future shohin bonsai development	Spicewood Springs Library 8637 Spicewood Springs Rd, Austin, TX 78759	Free to attend
WED 3/5/2025 *** 1st WED of March ***	***1st WED of March *** Club Night / Meeting	Jonathan W. , ABS Club Member	6:30PM social time 7:00PM start time Presentation/ Demonstration: Japanese maples - Development and care in Central Texas. Varieties for our hot climate. Explore several trees in various stages of development, each with special techniques appropriate to their seasonal needs. *Members are welcome to bring in 1 maple tree for questions if we have time :-)	Zilker Botanical Garden Center 2220 Barton Springs Rd, Austin, TX	Free to attend - Donation table items welcome :-)

Bonsai Calendar – Looking Ahead

**** Calendar subject to change in 2025- Please review dates in each future Newsletter ****

Date	Event Type	Artist / Presenter	Topic	Location	Approx Member Cost
WED 4/9/2025	Club Night / Meeting	Experienced Club Members will offer expert guidance and suggestions for your show tree	6:30PM social time 7:00PM start time Activity: Bring Your Own Tree (BYOT) - Styling Tips and suggestions to take your show tree to the next level, and to help prepare for display in May 2025. Members are encouraged to take the leap into displaying their first tree at a our Club Show	Zilker Botanical Garden Center 2220 Barton Springs Rd, Austin, TX	Free to attend - Donation table items welcome :-)
WED 5/14/2025	Club Night / Meeting	Guest Artist : To be announced soon!	6:30PM social time 7:00PM start time Presentation/ Demonstration: Guest artist will style a quality bonsai and give expert care tips		Free to attend - Donation table items welcome :-)
FRI 5/16/2025	Group Set-up of Bonsai Show		2 groups of volunteers combine efforts to set up a spectacular Bonsai Show for the public to enjoy. Pizza dinner for volunteers around 6:30PM		
SAT 5/17/2025 SUN 5/18/2025	Bonsai Show	Current ABS members display their bonsai for the public	10:00AM-5:00PM Both Days Austin Bonsai Society hosts a spectacular public display at Zilker Botanical Gardens Auditorium. Vendor area for bonsai supplies and sales by members. Educational Bonsai Demonstration each afternoon. 50 or more bonsai to view in the auditorium.	Zilker Botanical Garden Center 2220 Barton Springs Rd, Austin, TX	Free for the public to Attend (with paid park admission). *Special assigned parking areas for Volunteers, please check with show committee for parking details

Bonsai Calendar – Looking Ahead

**** Calendar subject to change in 2025- Please review dates in each future Newsletter ****

Date	Event Type	Artist / Presenter	Topic	Location	Approx Member Cost
THURS thru SUN 9/18/25 9/19/25 9/20/25 9/21/25	Bonsai Convention	Pre-Registration is encouraged (for both the convention and hotel!) Come for 1 specific day or join us for all days! Workshops fill up fast and tend to be first come, first served with paid registration	September 18-21, 2025 LSBF “Bonsai on the Bay” Convention in Corpus Christi. Featuring Jonas Dupuich, Jennifer Price and Mike Lane – Unique Pots, tools, supplies, bonsai material AND quality Bonsai workshops. Jointly hosted by the Corpus Christi and San Antonio Bonsai Clubs!	Holiday Inn Corpus Christi Downtown Marina 707 N. Shoreline Blvd Corpus Christi, TX 78401	Pricing will be released a few months prior to the event



January Meeting



February Bonsai

by John Miller

February is when repotting will generally get underway. It helps if you do some preliminary work. Get a sufficient amount of materials for whatever is your favorite mix or mixes. Then sift them into sizes you need (I like 3 sizes, small for shohin, medium for mid size trees and large 1/4" for the bigger bonsai). Then you can premix three different sizes of soil. At repotting then I will often adjust the mix for the particular tree I am working with by adding an extra bit of one ingredient or other in order to adjust water retention to suit that tree.

Spring is sometimes thought of as an event occurring on some particular day and that all the bonsai will need to be repotted, pruned, fed, etc at one time creating a mass of work. In truth, spring is a long drawn out affair and each species has its own time table in dealing with it. To be really successful in bonsai, then, you must know what each species you have will need and how it responds to your own backyard climate. If you have kept your trees from freezing they will want to start growing much earlier than those kept outside all winter. Typically, in my collection which stays outside, the elms will be first, foliage showing about the end of February or the first of March depending on the winter, along with the earliest maples. Then later in March, the rest of the maples and most of the others. The deciduous oaks will come out around April 1. The live oaks and the cork oaks usually drop their leaves and get their new foliage at the end of March into April. A lack of cold will bring them up earlier and a lot will delay their bud break.

All bonsai functions should be done when your tree tells you that the timing is right. Repotting 'can' be done at any time during the dormancy but new roots are susceptible to freezing so you need some place to protect them after repotting. The best time to repot the deciduous temperate zone trees is when the buds are swelling but before green is showing. Generally this will be before the last of the freezing weather. Trees that leaf out early, maples and elms, can withstand a few degrees of frost but if repotted you must protect the newly growing roots. Sometimes setting them on the ground will be sufficient. Some species such as the oaks and willows are naturally programmed to wait much later so that there is very little chance to get nipped.

The newer wisdom on azaleas is that you also repot them at this time. The roots will be reestablished by blooming time. This is much easier on the tree than waiting until after bloom when the temperature will be hot. (An aside note: later on, before blooming starts, you will be removing a lot of excess buds anyway which will reduce the stress on the tree at that time).

When new growth appears, keep it pinched so you keep the internodes short and develop a compact set of twigs on the branches. On alternate leaved species (e.g. elms) pinch when the shoot gets 4 or 5 leaves. Fingernails or shears can be used. If the twig gets too long it will be tough and you have to use shears. On opposite leaved trees (maples) pinch the central shoot as soon as it can be distinguished from the two leaves. To do this really right you need to use pointed tweezers.

Spring flowering plants will have their buds set on last years growth so pruning them will remove some flowers. Those that bloom later in the year will generally bloom on this years growth. Pruning them will reduce the amount of flowers. In some cases such as crape myrtle, tip pruning of the branch will result in no flowers at all. In these cases you must decide which is most important, ramification or flowers. A compromise would be to prune the branch shorter than you normally would and then let it bloom on new growth which will at the proper length, at least for the first flowering of the season.

When the growth starts the tree will need fertilizer. However, use one that has a small amount of nitrogen (the first number). The tree is naturally programmed to grow rapidly at this time so you don't need to encourage it further. Feed lightly to maintain a healthy green foliage. Trace minerals should be added to help with both the foliage color and the color of blooms.

If you have not used an horticultural oil, the time is fast running out. The oil would be used to kill scale and overwintering mites and other boogers. When new growth starts oil might damage the tender foliage. When new growth starts, the problems to look for are the above mentioned mites but especially aphids and mealy bugs. These can be controlled as well as giving the plants the required fertilizer by using an organic spray (1 tablespoons each of liquid kelp, liquid fish emulsion, apple cider vinegar, and molasses in one gallon of water). All these are available in any organic nursery.) If leaf spot, mildew or any other fungal problems appear, use a 1% hydrogen peroxide solution (dilute the normally available 3% using 1 part peroxide and 2 parts water), a baking soda spray, or a commercial fungicide.

Reminder: 2023 CLUB MEMBERSHIP FEE AMOUNT INCREASE

Beginning in January 2023, ABS will charge an annual membership fee of \$35 for an individual and \$40/couple pursuant to the vote taken by the ABS Board on May 17, 2022, the discussion by attendees at the June 22 ABS meeting, the newsletter announcement dated June and July, 2022 and the regular meeting vote taken on July 13, 2022. Fees for electronic payments will be added to those amounts.

Memberships are annual and need to be renewed each year by the end of February in order to receive a copy of the 2023 Directory.

New/Renewed Members for 2025

May and Simon T.

Matt S.

Phina & Marlon C.

Lizzle and Nathan G.

Jonathan W.

John M. and Blake S.

Eric and Leigh B.

Ross C.

Ruby C.

Alisan C., and Lynn H.

Mike and Candy H.

Julia and Betty D.

Quoc H.

Debbie and John H.

Hunter J.

Jacob K.

Roland L. and Krystal W.

Joey M.

Andrew M.

Michael and Gloria N.

Lyon O.

Corbin C.

Wyatt S.

Spindel, Abraham, and Kelly S.

Jorge V.

Chuck and Pat W.

Janelle W.

Fred w.

Elaine W.

Shawn and Chris W.

Recruiting Authors

With a nod of respect to John Miller, who has been diligently writing monthly columns for our newsletter, we would also like to take this time to invite interested members with knowledge and experiences of local Austin conditions to write articles for beginners and potential aspirants keen on raising bonsai. The Bonsai Notebook is looking for a new voice to author a column providing helpful reminders and tips dedicated to caring for bonsai. Be it a monthly routine or winter procedures, we'd like to welcome new perspectives and experiences to be shared in this newsletter. If interested, please contact: webmaster.austinbonsaisociety@gmail.com.

A warm thank you to John Miller for writing the latest columns. Even I, as the editor, may have taken these last months for granted and have been reminded that life is a charming companion that deserves to be appreciated every day. Thank you for your helpful words!

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About Us

The Austin Bonsai Society is a nonprofit organization which exists to help in providing guidance and education for individuals in their desire to learn and expand their knowledge and skill in the arts of bonsai.

The Society holds regular meetings, twelve months a year, on the second Wednesday of each month. Our social period begins at 6:30 pm, followed by our program at 7:00 pm. Normally, unless announced otherwise, these meetings are held in the Zilker Garden Center building, located on Barton Springs Road in Zilker Park, Austin, Texas. We offer a monthly program of interest to the general membership.

For additional information, contact the Austin Bonsai Society at P.O. Box 340474, Austin, TX 78734 or

Email: webmaster.austinbonsaisociety@gmail.com