



Bonsai Notebook

www.austinbonsaisociety.com

A Publication of the Austin Bonsai Society

March 2025 vol 174

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Calendar of Events

February 12, 2025

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

March 9, 2025

- ◆ Topic: Repotting workshop
- ◆ Presenter: Joey M.
- ◆ Location and Time: MBP (1pm to 4 pm)

2024 Board of Directors

Eric B.
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Volunteers

Refreshments
Joey M.
Gloria N.

Tree Hosts
Sachin M.

President's Message

By Eric B.

****Reminder: This Month's meeting is on the FIRST Wednesday, March 5th, at 6:30 PM****

Hello everyone, I hope your trees made it through the arctic blast without too much trouble. My candle-under-a-clay-pot heating system kept my greenhouses warm enough to stave off any damage. If you're interested and haven't heard of this, come to the next meeting and you can ask me about it.

We're now smack in the middle of repotting season for deciduous species, and I know I've been busy. It's about now that I begin to think that I may have, just slightly, maybe, a tiny bit more trees than I can actually work on. And by tiny bit, I mean a few dozen. It's just that people put such cool stuff in the raffles! Also, propagating trees from cuttings or air-layers is magical and makes me feel powerful! Muahahahaaa!!! Tremble before my botanical might! And here, have a plant or three.

Where was I? Oh yeah, repotting. Take extra precautions to protect the roots from frost after repotting, if we get a later freeze in early March. Also, give the tree plenty of protection from wind, as a newly repotted tree may not be quite as secure in the pot as when the roots are more grown. All the other after-care guidelines apply as well: reduced light for a few weeks, avoid overwatering, no fertilizer for a month, and so forth.

Brandon's root-grafting demo at the Feb. meeting went well, with a lot of questions asked and answered. Thank you, Brandon, for donating your time and knowledge to our group, we're richer for having you with us. And congratulations to Chris on winning the tree in the raffle. You should be able to do something pretty cool with that specimen!

For our March meeting we have former ABS President, and current Treasurer Jonathan Wood, giving us a lecture/demo on Japanese Maples as Bonsai. Jonathan, has quite a few Japanese Maples, and if you've ever tried to keep one alive in our climate you understand what an impressive feat that is. Come on out on **Wednesday, March 5, 6:30 - 9:00 PM**, and ask Jonathan all the questions you have about how to keep Japanese Maples thriving. Also, thank you to Gloria Norburg and Joey McCoy, for providing refreshments at our March meeting.

If you would like to do some volunteer work and help out ABS and The Texas State Bonsai Exhibit (TTSBE), we need one or two people to be presenters for Zilker Botanical Garden's "Talks and Walks in the Garden (TWiG)". The Zilker website says TWiG *"...is a monthly workshop presented by one of AAGC's garden clubs and offers educational opportunities as you walk through Zilker Botanical Gardens with other gardeners."* Basically, just lead some folks around the garden and talk about the TTSBE trees, and answer questions. It's on Sat., May 3rd. Please let me or another board member know if you are interested in this volunteer opportunity.

Another volunteer opportunity in May is our annual Show and Sale, Saturday and Sunday, May 17th and 18th. We will need volunteers starting the day before (the 16th) around 1:00 pm for setup, and on the 17th and 18th to help run the show, and afterward to help take everything down. Please consider donating some time to help make the show a success!

Eric

Vice President's Message

By Sachin M.

Hello Austin Area Bonsai Enthusiasts,

Important Note: Our March monthly meeting will be held on March 5th (the first Wednesday) instead of the typical second Wednesday.

A big thank you to Brandon for his excellent presentation on root grafting. I'm sure the society members gained valuable skills from his demo.

Looking ahead, for the March meeting, Jonathan Wood will be presenting on how to care for Japanese maples in Central Texas weather—an excellent opportunity to fine-tune our techniques. Please bring one or two of your Japanese maples to show the group. Jonathan will be providing feedback on some of your trees during the evening.

The "Bring Your Own Tree" session in April will also be a great chance for anyone looking to get their trees show-ready for the Zilker show in May. Will you be bringing a tree to either the March or April meeting?

Look forward to seeing you all at the meeting!

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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[https://www.youtube.com/
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UCLSknKbNLd3EOYwikjNIneA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLSknKbNLd3EOYwikjNIneA)

Date: February 18, 2024

Location: Virtual

Meeting Attendees:

- ◆ Eric (President)
- ◆ Sachin (Vice President)
- ◆ Simon (Secretary) - Need to attend LSBF meeting
- ◆ Jonathan (Treasurer)
- ◆ Caleb
- ◆ Ross - Need to attend LSBF meeting

President:

- ◆ Talked about AAGC, ZBG and TwiG representation
- ◆ 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

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

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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

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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



March Bonsai

by Scott Barbosa

Wiring is one of the most important steps in styling a refined bonsai. You may have heard several bonsai master say, "Wiring is bonsai and bonsai is wiring". From one bonsai professional garden to another the wiring techniques may vary. They do, however, share the same basic principles.

At its most fundamental, good wiring is guided by effectiveness and aesthetics. It must be both functional and beautiful.

Effectiveness is achieved when you can bend the trunk or the branch into the desired position. The wire is securely anchored. The minimum amount of wire is used to do the job. (Too large a wire is harder to apply and can damage bark. Too small a wire will not have the strength to do the job. The strength of the wire should be slightly greater than the branch or trunk you wish to bend.

The best angle to apply wire onto trunks and branches is about a 45-60 degree angle. Tighter angles allow for tighter bends and looser angles mean more gentle curves. Whatever angle you choose, make it consistent throughout the tree.

Wiring is made beautiful by economy (apply the minimum amount necessary to be effective), concealment (hide the wire with foliage branches and trunk) and when the wiring itself is well done. Good quality wiring is expressed by (among other things) even spirals, coils that are neither too loose or too tight and an absence of crossed wires.

Copper wire is more suitable for conifers. Aluminum is better on deciduous, fruiting, flowering and some broad leaf evergreen.

Remove wire when it starts to cut into the bark. Wire can start biting into the tree after about one year for a conifer. It will take longer on an older tree. Be watchful with the wire on a young, fast growing tree. During the growing season, wire can start cutting into the bark of a young maple in a matter of weeks.

Unwind fine wire (smaller than #14) and cut off coarser wire (#12 or bigger). When unwinding wire, use pliers to grave the end of the wire and support the branch with the fingers of your other hand. Then untwist the wire in the opposite you way the wire was applied. When cutting wire, cut each spiral off with a bonsai wire cutter. Check carefully to ensure you've not left any small coils of wire on the branch - it is easy to do and they can cause a lot of damage. You may have to use a combination of both unwinding and cutting for deeply embedded wire.

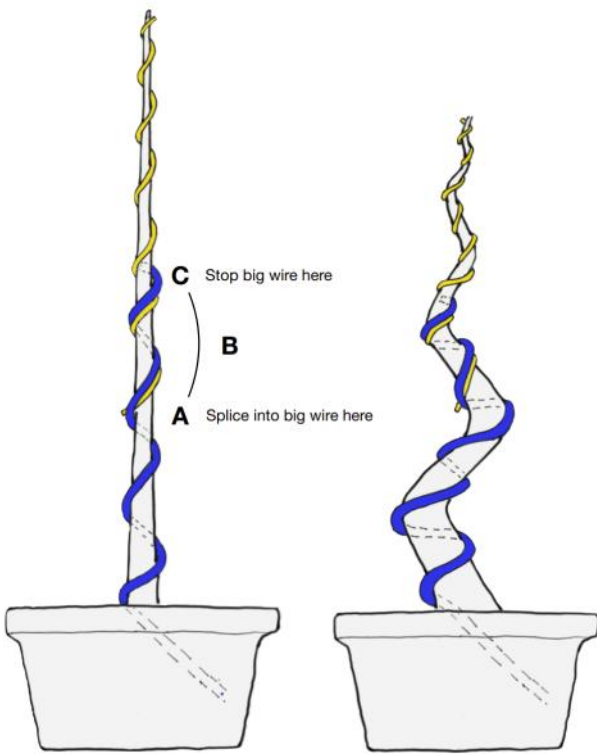


Figure 1

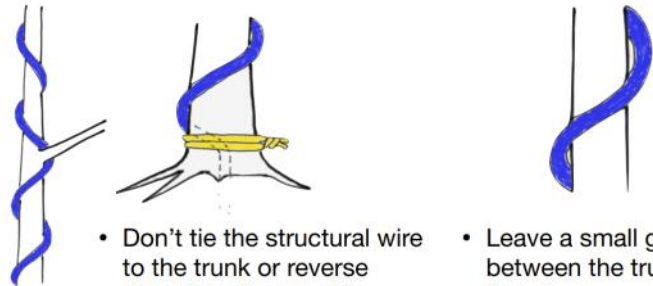
Figure 2

Fig 1. The wire is anchored into the soil at the same angle as the coils on the trunk. (A) The smaller wire is tucked under the larger wire (do not use this technique if you have not been trained in it). The wire needs 1 1/2 to 2 complete turns (360 degrees in order to be anchored effectively). (B) Large wire ends at point C should be placed in the back and out of sight.

Fig 2. The trunk is bent. The wire supports the outside of each bend.

Notes:

- Two small wires do not have the strength of one larger wire - try to use one larger wire rather than doubling up.
- Make a bend every 1 1/2 coils of the wire. When you bend, keep your finger on the inside of the branch and the wire on the outside of the bend. If you want to make bends in between the coils, it's OK to use a second wire. Put the coil in the middle - that way you can bend every turn.



- Don't tie the structural wire to the trunk or reverse direction of your coils

- Leave a small gap between the trunk and the wire

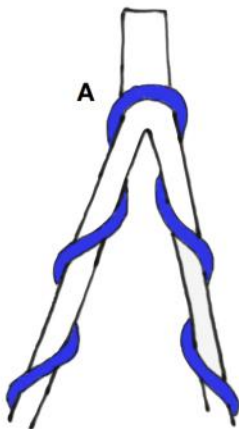


Figure 3

Fig 3. Use one wire to wire two branches. Anchor point is at A. Put the coil at the anchor point on top to bend down or on the bottom to bend up. Put the coil at the bottom if you are using a guy wire.

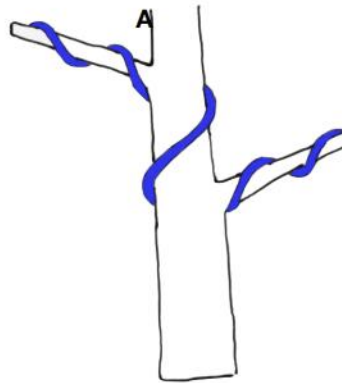


Figure 4

Fig 4. One way to wire two branches at different locations on the trunk. Start on the bottom branch as an anchor and then finish on the top branch. The example is wired for a soft curve. Bring the wire at point A more straight vertically if you want to bend the branch down at the exit point from the trunk.

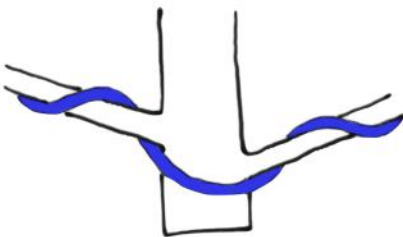


Figure 5

Fig 5. This wiring is not effective as there is no anchor point. Wiring bar branches in this way will result in a "teeter-totter", where changing the position of one branch will move the other. Branches can break easily this way.

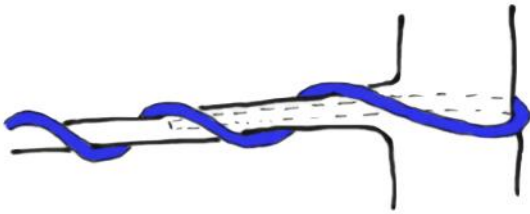


Figure 6

Fig 6. One way to wire a single branch when there is no anchor. Always try to anchor to another branch or a different spot on the trunk. This arrangement will always be unstable.

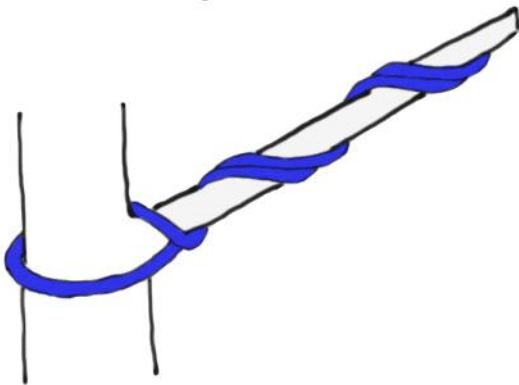


Figure 7

Fig 7. Although still unstable, this arrangement is anchored better than that depicted in Figure 6. Again, anchoring to another branch or splicing into the structural wire on the trunk will always be preferable.

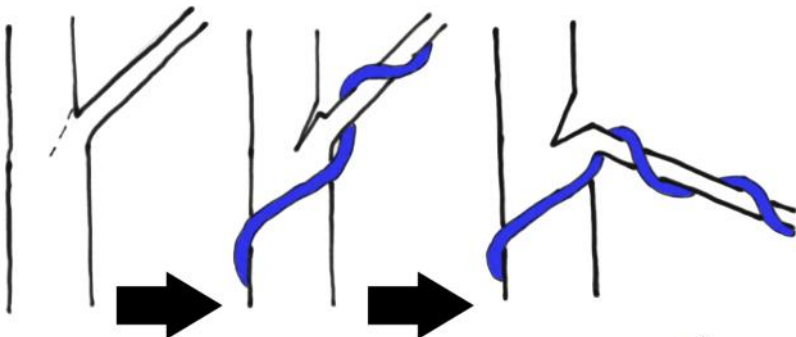


Figure 8

Fig 8. Bending a branch down by cutting or sawing the top part of the branch. Leave a little gap between the branch and the cut to leave room for the bend. This method is for pine trees only - not for deciduous hardwoods, tropicals or junipers. Using this method on these trees can cause an unsightly scar or swelling. On junipers, just pull down until the branch separates a little bit.

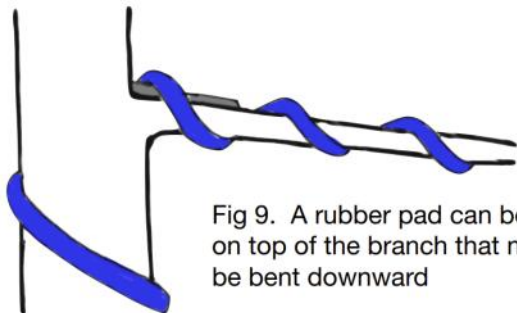


Figure 9

Fig 9. A rubber pad can be placed on top of the branch that needs to be bent downward

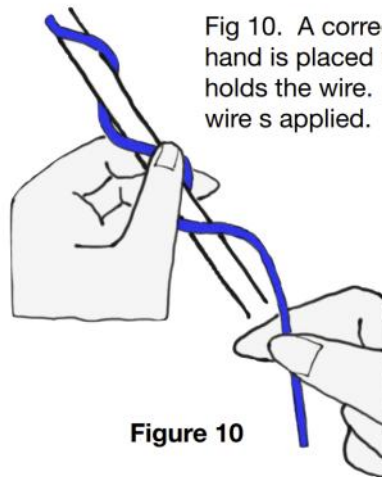


Figure 10

Fig 10. A correct position to handle the wire. One hand is placed under the branch while the other holds the wire. A twisting action is used when the wire is applied.

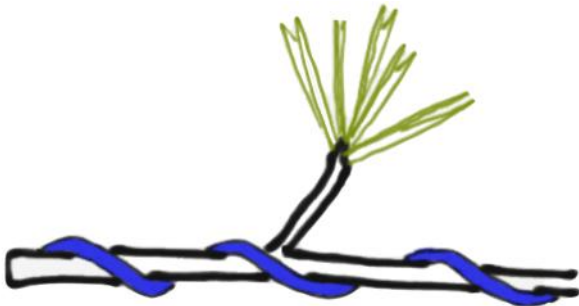


Figure 11

Fig 11. Watch out for small buds and be careful when wiring around them. Putting wire on young shoots may damage them.

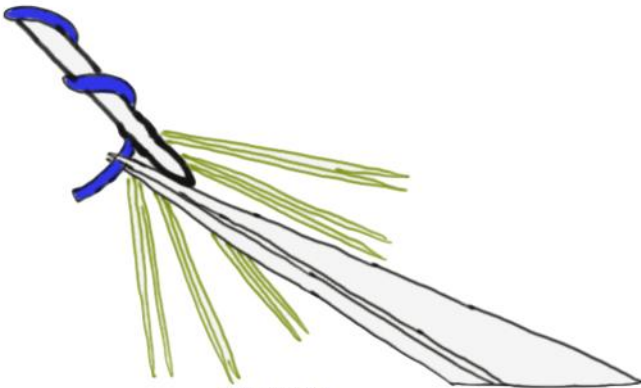


Figure 12

Fig 12. Finish on the bottom of the branch and use tweezers to aid completion

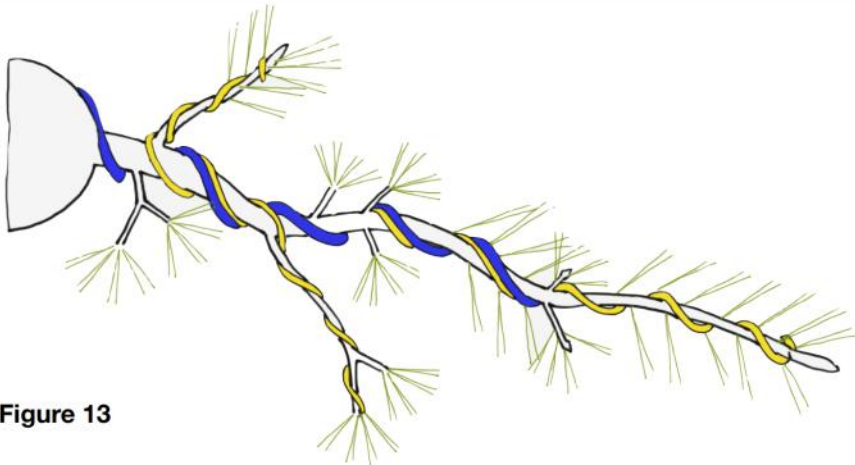


Figure 13

Fig 13. Top view of a wired branch. Wire out to the tips and leave a little hook at the end. Hook should be pointed slightly upward and backward to secure the bud tip.

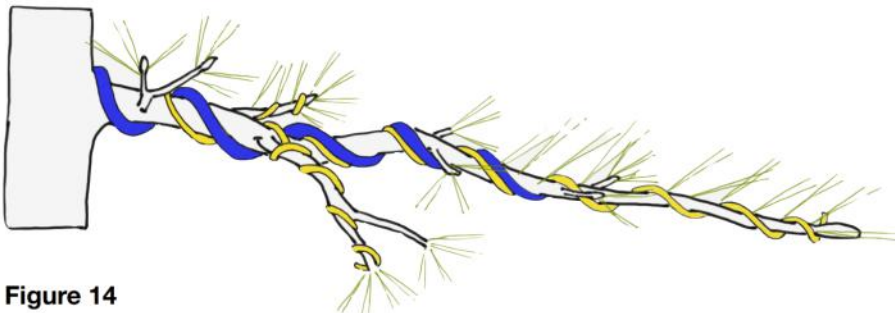
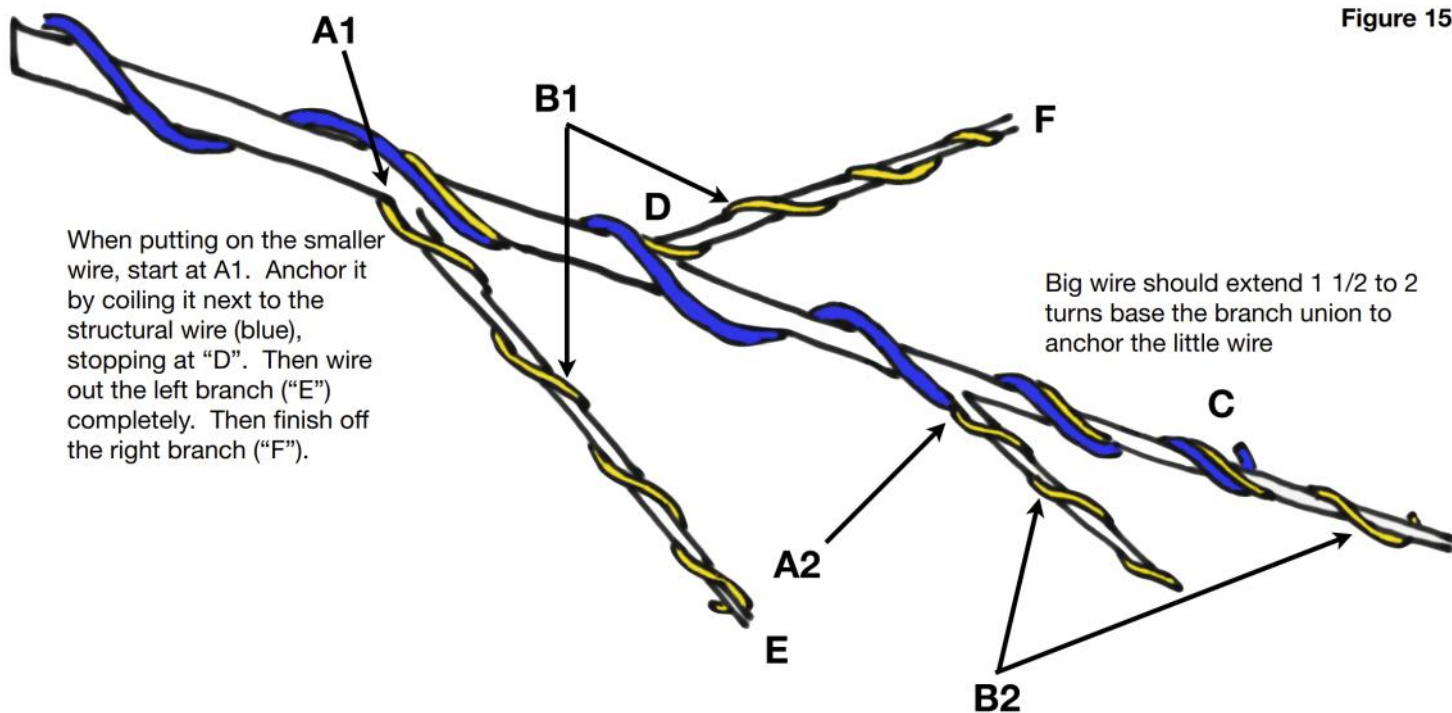


Figure 14

Fig 14. Side view of a wired branch. Notice the end of each wire when you want to bend the bud upwards. Use a longer spiral for conifer and a tighter spiral for deciduous. The tighter spiral will allow you to make more bends.

Figure 15



When putting on the smaller wire, start at A1. Anchor it by coiling it next to the structural wire (blue), stopping at "D". Then wire out the left branch ("E") completely. Then finish off the right branch ("F").

Big wire should extend 1 1/2 to 2 turns base the branch union to anchor the little wire

Fig 15. "A" is where the anchor-bends are. "B" shows where the same wire is used to wire 2 branches. "C" is where the wire ends. Start at the point closest to the trunk and work your way out.

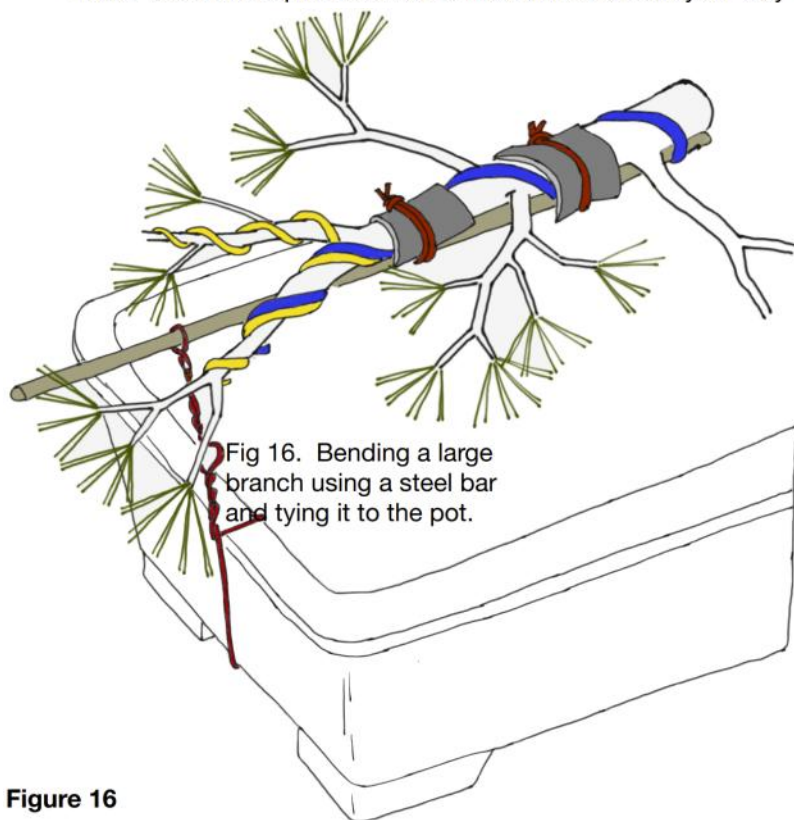


Fig 16. Bending a large branch using a steel bar and tying it to the pot.

Figure 16

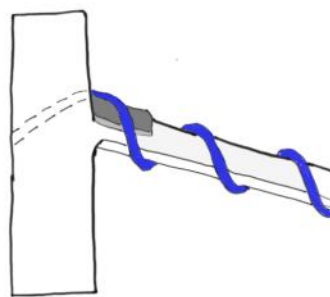


Figure 17

Fig 17. A pad may be used to protect the branch before wire is applied.

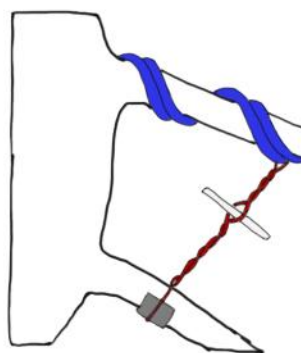


Figure 18

Fig 18. A guy wire can help in bending branches. A turnbuckle (shown) is useful for small adjustments.

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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Bonsai Notebook

Austin Bonsai Society
P.O. Box 340474
Austin, Texas 78734



Austin Bonsai Society

P.O. Box 340474
Austin, TX 78734



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