



Bonsai Notebook

www.austinbonsaisociety.com

A Publication of the Austin Bonsai Society

November 2026 vol 194

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Calendar of Events

November 6 - 8, 2026

- [The Texas State Bonsai Exhibit \(TTSBE\) Seminar](#)
- Artist: Randy Bennett
- Topic: Taper and Proportion: The Keys to Transformative Bonsai Design
- Location: Anderson Mill Garden Club
- Friday workshop, Saturday/Sunday seminar

November 11, 2026

- Annual Holiday Celebrations
- Time: 6:30pm – 9:30pm
- Location: First English Lutheran Church
- A Bonsai-Inspired White Elephant Gift Exchange
- With everyone contributing, the gathering becomes a truly wonderful time

December 27, 2026

- Shohin Society of Texas (SSoT)
- More exciting details are on the way, so stay tuned!

2026 Board of Directors

Eric B.
President
Sachin A.
Vice President
Simon T.
Secretary
Jonathan W.
Treasurer

Fred W.
Members-At-Large
Ross C.
Members-At-Large
Abby B.
Members-At-Large

Volunteers

*Refreshments
Everyone*

*Tree Hosts
Everyone*

Urgent Update: Meeting Venue Impacted

From ZBGC Manager:

“We’ve received unfortunate news from the City: the ceiling in the auditorium requires extensive repairs, and the space is now closed until further notice.

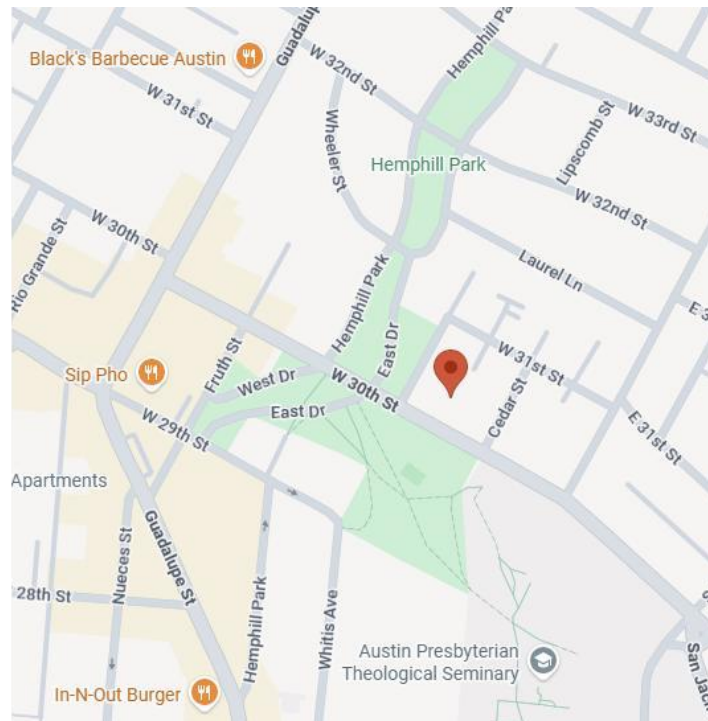
This means the Austin Bonsai Society meeting scheduled will need to be canceled or relocated. We are actively working with APR and AAGC to identify alternative options; however, some city facilities may involve additional costs, so we encourage clubs to explore other meeting locations as well.

ZBGC will share updates as soon as more information becomes available.”

The Austin Bonsai Society board has secured a new meeting venue at [First English Lutheran Church, 3001 Whitis Ave., Austin, TX 78705](#) ensuring our gatherings continue without interruption. If any members have access to—or connections with—other suitable meeting spaces, please reach out for future planning. We look forward to welcoming all bonsai enthusiasts at our new location.

ABS Board

First English Lutheran Church



President's Message

By Eric B.

Hello everyone, I hope you are all doing well, and your trees are thriving. The weather is finally starting to cool down, so that means it's time to think about preparing our trees for winter conditions. For deciduous and evergreens, protect roots from freezing, protect the trees from the wind, and don't forget to water - the trees may be dormant, but they are still slowly metabolizing, and dry winter winds can dry out a shallow pot with bonsai soil quicker than you might think. A greenhouse, unheated shed, or unheated garage are excellent ways to protect your trees, if you have access. Put your trees on the ground, because it's a heat sink and can help keep roots from freezing. For tropicals it varies a bit by species but generally don't let them get below 50 degrees or so.

At our October meeting we learned from our Treasurer, Jonathan Wood, that the club made a profit of about \$3,000 on our annual auction in September! That's great news, and I believe the best auction profit we've had in a few years. Great job everyone, on bringing in interesting auction items that got people excited...and spending! Thanks again to the volunteers who brought refreshments and helped set up beforehand and clean up after.

Our October meeting with Rob Kempinski, who worked on a yaupon holly collected by Joey McCoy, was both well attended and well received. Rob is an engaging speaker, with tons of experience and anecdotes to share. He also has an unorthodox approach to bonsai development and display, which I encourage you to explore online if you couldn't make the show. It was great having Rob visit, and I hope we get to see him again.

Our November meeting is of course our annual Austin Bonsai Society Fall Party and Gift Exchange, which should be great fun! Several people have signed up on the paper sign-up sheet, and there is an online Evite at <https://evite.me/XmZbgPy9Jx>, where you can sign up to bring a dish, and indicate whether you want to participate in the white elephant gift exchange. If you do want to join the gift exchange, please bring a wrapped (or bagged, etc.) gift, about \$20 - \$30 in value. Also, feel free to bring a small bonsai decorated in a festive holiday manner, to use as table centerpieces. We still need a lot of items, such as decorations, plates, cups, utensils, and so forth. We also need...you guessed it...volunteers for setup and cleanup. Please visit the Evite and sign up, so we can know what is being brought to the party, and to try to avoid too much duplication. To find the list for items in the Evite, scroll down to the section titled, "Please sign up here to bring an item for the party".

Well, that's all I have this month. Keep your trees happy, and I'll see y'all in November!
Eric

New Meeting Venue



Vice President's Message

By Sachin A.

As we move into November, we are heading into the holiday season - a time to enjoy good company, reflect on the year, and appreciate the friendships we have built through our shared love for bonsai.

Before our November club meeting, there's a great opportunity to learn and connect with fellow bonsai enthusiasts at the **Texas State Bonsai Exhibit (TTSBE) seminar featuring Randy Bennett, November 6–8**. The seminar will focus on *Taper and Proportion: The Keys to Transformative Bonsai Design*, exploring how these elements help create trees with age, character, and visual balance. The weekend includes seminar sessions and optional hands-on workshops. For the full schedule and registration information, check out the seminar flyer here - <https://www.ttsbe.org/2026randybennettseminarinvite.pdf>.

Our **November club meeting will be held on November 11 at First English Lutheran Church**, and we'll be celebrating the season with our annual holiday potluck and White Elephant gift exchange! I hope you'll join us for an evening of good food, laughter, and holiday fun. These gatherings are a wonderful opportunity to catch up with fellow members, share stories, and celebrate another year of learning and growing together.

Please be sure to **sign up for both the potluck and the White Elephant gift exchange** so we can plan for the evening. Bring a favorite dish to share, and if you're participating in the gift exchange, don't forget to bring a gift!

As the year winds down, I want to thank everyone who has participated in our meetings, workshops, demonstrations, and other club activities. Your enthusiasm and willingness to share your knowledge help make the Austin Bonsai Society such a welcoming and vibrant community.

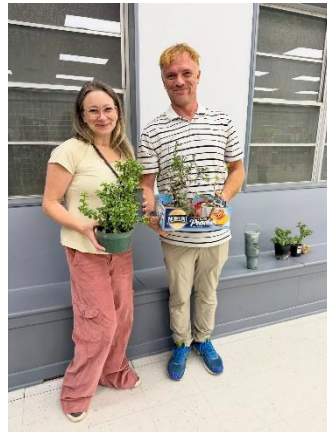
I look forward to seeing everyone on November 11. Let's enjoy some good food, a little friendly competition with the White Elephant exchange, and time together as a club!

Wishing you all a happy holiday season, and as always, happy bonsai!
Sachin

October Meeting with Rob Kempinski



October Meeting (Refreshment and Raffles)



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discussion



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ABS Board Meeting Minutes

Date: October 20, 2026

Location: Virtual

Meeting Attendees:

- ❖ Eric (President)
- ❖ Sachin (Vice President)
- ❖ Simon (Secretary)
- ❖ Abby
- ❖ Ross
- ❖ Fred

President:

- Preparations are underway for the upcoming year's events and activities, with particular attention given to annual auction and holiday gathering.
- Confirm and finalize nominations for the upcoming ABS Board.

Annual Auction:

- Our Annual Bonsai Auction is just around the corner, and we'd love your participation. Your donated trees, pots, tools, and materials help support the Society and keep our programs thriving. Join us, contribute if you can, and enjoy a day of community and great finds.

Vice President:

- Artists planning for the upcoming year.

Secretary:

- The meeting commenced at **7:35 pm**.
- The most recent report was approved as submitted, with no amendments required.

Treasurer:

- N/A

Meeting adjourned at **8:09 pm**

To Cross a Wire Or Not To Cross A Wire

by Michael Hagedorn (Permission to repost)

Given that many of us were taught to never cross a wire, suggesting that we could might sound treasonous. There are, however, situations where crossing a wire can be the right move (and yet hopefully not get you kicked out of the local bonsai club).

Many of you who have studied with me know I challenge you not to cross wires, in our wiring exercises. But there are situations where it has utility.



This is the usual — a large wire put down first (the darker one), then a smaller wire politely laid next to it (the lighter one), without crossing anywhere.

However — a crossed wire is a lesser evil than a bad anchor.

An “anchored” wire is what we call a stabilized wire. When we position a wired branch, the anchor prevents it from wobbling. Usually this is done with at least one full turn around a connecting branch. Sometimes—and here is our first crossing possibility—this is at the end of a thick wire, with a thinner wire being anchored by wrapping it over the end.



Anyone see the cross? This is well done. There is a cross there, but it's on the bottom so you don't see it. This is a typical situation for a crossed wire (seen a lot in Japan)—a large wire stopped short because the branch gets too skinny and you might damage it with the big wire if you wrapped more, and then the smaller wire (the next wire put on) wrapped over the tag end to be the anchor.

Are we scandalized yet?

Well, it's only wire. And the above solution does provide an anchor, which is the key thing.



Same idea, but with an even shorter tag with the big wire, and the cross happens on top where we see it. This one doesn't look so nice. And likely only a fair anchor.



Another cross, a bit more visible. The big wire almost has a full turn, which would provide a good anchor for the second wire if laid parallel, but the cross gives it extra anchor.



A cross between secondary branches. This is an important example for the situation happens a lot. Notice there's not enough room between side branches for the big wire to make a full rotation around the main branch without damaging it, so the spiral of that large wire is kept elongated. Then the two branchlets are wired together with a crossed wire, circling the main branch 1.5 times, which is an excellent anchor.

A big point to make is that if you put big wire—size 6 and 4 copper—on branches, it will damage those branches if the spiral is too tight. Elongating your big wire is gentler on the branch. The tradeoff is you'll likely not have the wire planning to avoid crosses with your secondary branches.

If you were taught that all crossing is naughty, retain your humor, this is all good. Keep breathing.



A situation similar to the last one. The main wire, a big one, didn't have the room to make a full rotation, so the secondary wire wraps around it to make a good anchor for the two side branches. It would look a bit better if the cross happened below the branch, but at least this solution has a good anchor.

To sum up the advantages of a CROSSED wire:

- ❄ To provide a good anchor in a tricky situation a crossed wire is acceptable. Wire must first function, and its primary function is to bend the branch where you want it. Without a good anchor, you can't do that
- ❄ In first stylings with big wire, getting the spacing right for the side branches to be wired is often impossible with large wire, like size 6 copper and above, and in that case crossing the smaller wire over the bigger wire, like a 16 over a 6, helps to avoid damage
- ❄ In short, in some instances crossing wires helps prevent branch damage

In fair weather and fair branching, we may prefer NOT CROSSING wires for these reasons:

- ❄ It looks cleaner and is less visible
- ❄ It's easier to take off. Often it's the thicker wire underneath that needs cutting off, which makes a mess and takes time to sort
- ❄ Better suited to developed trees

This wiring decision often depends on who you study with, or your clan "lineage." Crossing a wire in one garden in Japan is sacrilege (Toru Suzuki), whereas it may be expected in another (Masahiko Kimura). My teacher, Mr. Shinji Suzuki, was in the middle. We might cross wires at the very tips.

Although I teach the be-polite-don't-cross method, I do have one preference based on experience. Over the decades I've done bonsai, I'm less a fan of many crossed wires.

My reason isn't how it looks so much as how I prefer to take wire off. Which is piecemeal. I take wire off as it tightens, which gives more time for the other wires to do their work. Otherwise we waste wire and work. Crossing wires is faster to put on. But if you take wire off as I prefer to, it ends up being rather slow if you're trying to get at a wire underneath another one that isn't biting in yet. If you prefer to take wire off all at once, this doesn't apply.

Some crossed wire, especially first stylings of coarse trees with big wire, and at the tips, makes sense to me. I think we could relax some of our rules around wiring, for none of us studied under the same teachers, and all trees in Japan are accepted in the shows regardless. We might loosen up a bit...within reason.

Studying how to not cross wires is time well spent. Studying the situations where one might cross a wire is also time well spent. And then, as the examples may show, this is case by case. Perhaps gauging how good the anchor is can help decide which wiring method is best.

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!

Reminder for club membership and advertisement

2026 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

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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

Website: <https://www.austinbonsaisociety.com>

Email: webmaster.austinbonsaisociety@gmail.com