



Bonsai Notebook

www.austinbonsaisociety.com

A Publication of the Austin Bonsai Society

October 2026 vol 193

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Calendar of Events

October 21, 2026

- Topic: An Evening with LSBF Visiting Artist Rob Kempinski
- Material: Yaupon holly (*Ilex vomitoria*)
- Location: First English Lutheran Church
(Please consult page 2 for additional details.)
- Time: 6:30pm (Mingling/Setup) 7:00pm (Meeting)

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

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
Lyons O.
Shawn W.

Tree Hosts

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.

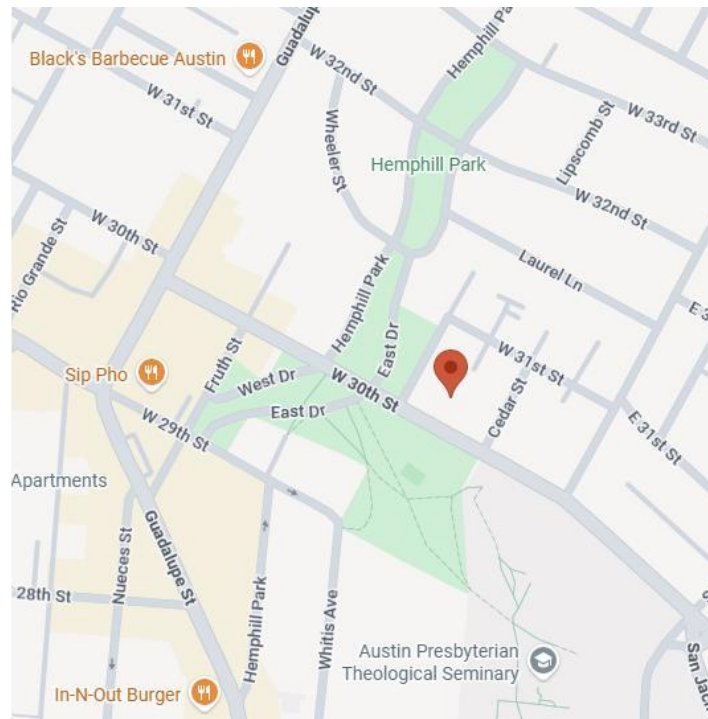
This means the Austin Bonsai Society meeting scheduled will need to be canceled or relocated. We are actively working with APR and AAGC to identify alternative options; however, some city facilities may involve additional costs, so we encourage clubs to explore other meeting locations as well.

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.

It's September, and well...it's still hot. Surprise! Normally this time of year it's about 90 or so for the highs, but this year we've been about 10 degrees hotter on average. Hopefully we will get some relief soon, but for now just stay the course on summer care. You can probably still get away with doing some work on tropicals, but nothing too heavy I'd say. We're forecast to have a wetter and slightly colder than normal winter this year, with sudden episodes of deeper cold. Hmmm...sounds familiar. Start thinking now about protecting your trees - doing the bonsai shuffle while a winter storm is blowing in is not fun.

The September meeting with Sylvia Smith was well-received by all who attended. The ashe juniper she worked on was a nice specimen, with some good deadwood. Watching her give the tree its initial shape and styling was a fun and informative experience. We look forward to having Sylvia visit again in the future.

The annual auction was, once again, a lot of fun! We had a full house at the Anderson Mill Garden Club, and a lot of trees, pots, scrolls, tools, trees, accessories, trees, books, accent plants, and trees. Did I mention we had some really nice trees there? I picked up a little boxwood, and a little Korean ligustrum, both in "signature Joey McCoy pots" (the little plastic bowls used for microwaveable meals). Score! For those of you who came out, thank you for supporting our club both with your donations and your bids, and to those who couldn't make it, I hope to see you there next year. Thanks again to Ryan Odegard, from the San Antonio Bonsai Society, for once again being a wonderful - and funny - auctioneer. And thanks to all the volunteers who helped set up beforehand and clean up afterwards - as always these events couldn't happen without y'all.

For our October meeting, Rob Kempinski will join the Austin Bonsai Society on the 21st (note the date change, one week later than usual) for a hands-on demonstration featuring Yaupon Holly, one of Texas's most adaptable native species. Known for his award-winning work with both tropical and temperate bonsai, Rob will showcase styling, carving, and refinement techniques that highlight the species' natural movement and fine ramification. This session offers members a chance to learn from one of the country's most respected artists and gain practical insights into developing their own hollies. A great opportunity to study with a master and deepen your bonsai practice.

Eric

New Meeting Venue



Vice President's Message

By Sachin A.

October is here, and for bonsai enthusiasts in Central Texas, that means we can finally breathe a little easier. **We survived another Texas summer!** After months of heat, our trees—and hopefully all of us—are ready for a change in the weather.

Fall also gives us a valuable second opportunity for growth and development before winter sets in over the next couple of months. As temperatures begin to moderate, this is a great time to take another look at your trees, assess their health, and prepare them for the coming season.

October Guest Artist: Rob Kempinski

We are especially excited about this month's meeting as we welcome LSBF guest artist Rob Kempinski from Florida!

Rob brings years of experience and a wealth of knowledge to the art of bonsai, and we're looking forward to learning from his visit with the Austin Bonsai Society.

Please mark your calendars:

Wednesday, October 21st
First English Lutheran Church, 6:30PM
Austin Bonsai Society Monthly Meeting
Featuring LSBF Guest Artist Rob Kempinski

Important: Third Wednesday This Month!

Please note that our October meeting will be held on the THIRD Wednesday of the month—October 21st.

This is not our usual second-Wednesday meeting date, so be sure to update your calendar and don't accidentally show up a week early!

We would also like to extend a **heartfelt thank-you to everyone who generously donated items and participated in our annual club auction.**

Your generosity and enthusiasm help support the Austin Bonsai Society and make it possible for us to continue bringing educational programs, guest artists, and bonsai opportunities to our members. We truly appreciate everyone who donated trees, pots, tools, supplies, and other items—as well as everyone who came out and participated in the auction. Thank you for making our annual auction such a success.

With the worst of the summer heat behind us, now is the time to enjoy being back outside with our trees. Take advantage of the cooler temperatures, check on your trees after the long summer, and make the most of this short window before winter arrives.

We look forward to seeing everyone on Wednesday, October 21st, for a special evening with Rob Kempinski!

Happy bonsai,
Sachin

September Meeting



September Meeting (Refreshment and Raffles)



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discussion



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AustinBonsaiSociety

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Follow us on Instagram
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ABS Board Meeting Minutes

Date: September 15, 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**

How do We Deal with a Dead Topped Azalea?

by Michael Hagedorn (Permission to repost)

It seems so quite common, azaleas that lose their tops. A stressed out azalea will often give up what it cares about least, which is its crown. But then it can be troublesome to recreate what was there.

This tree came into the yard recently with just this problem. If anything, it was a severe case, as the dead top had created two shari lines down the tree, front and back, like a juniper or pine might have. So during a Seasonal Workshop we unpuzzled this mess with the following solution...

Enjoy our photo essay of this Satsuki remake-



A Satsuki azalea that lost its top.



The front of the tree is all dead now, one long shari line from roots to top.



Removing one side of its branches...



Here is the dead area, the chalk line roughly tracing the living tissue which is to the right of the line.



...and our solution comes out of the box...



Removing half the tree, so that we might root the sides of it and make a raft style.



The tree in the training container, laid down on its side to create a raft—with the branches rising up to become trunks.



Placing muck on the rootball. Eventually this root mass will be entirely removed, after roots coming from the sides of the prostrate trunk have taken over.



Placing sphagnum on the area we want to root. We did use some rooting hormone, although azaleas root quite easily.



This is the only 'as it looks today' shot I have, so I'll try to circle around to this azalea in the future.

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

Email: webmaster.austinbonsaisociety@gmail.com