



BONSAI SOCIETY OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

FEBRUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER

Greetings from our new President Karen Cogswell

Welcome to the New Year! My name is Karen Cogswell, and I am the incoming president this year. I can be reached at catydid514@aol.com if you have any suggestions, questions or problems. We are looking forward to another great year of learning, workshops and fellowship on this journey together. We are strictly volunteers, so please don't hesitate to help with hospitality, cleanup, display, auction or show. We cannot do it without your participation. It is also a great way to meet other club members.

Beginner's Class: March 21st, 12:30-3:30

Taught by Dorothy Demarest Cost \$25

The price includes a tree already potted and a copy of Tom Zane's Introduction of Bonsai: A Course Syllabus

So far, we have 14 people signed up but only a few have paid. Dorothy says that she and her helpers will take up to 20 people, but you must sign up and pay by the February meeting. If you are unable to attend that meeting, please let me know by email, marthagoff50@comcast.net, and we will make arrangements for you.

MEMBERSHIP

I have been sending out numerous emails to remind people to pay their dues. I have heard from several people that they will be mailing in a check but some need to pay their dues at the February meeting. After that meeting, if dues have not been paid, you will no longer receive communication from the club. You are, of course, welcome to come by and see us, but we can't keep up with nonmembers. We don't want to lose you, so take care of this.

WIRE RECYCLING

Beginning with the February meeting, I will be bringing a wire bucket for recycling any wire that you want to get rid of. Bring your used, cut up wire and place it in the bucket. I have contact with a metal collector who makes a little money by recycling all types of metal and he is happy to come to my place and pick it up any time I call him.

SIGNUPS STILL NEEDED

We still have spaces available for Display and Hospitality and Cleanup Crew. For Display, this is a great way to learn 'how to.' Basically, you need a tree, a stand for the tree, and a complimentary plant or item on a stand. The club will provide the tablecloth and backdrop. For Hospitality, the club provide all paper products and all supplies needed for coffee. You would provide the food. We usually have around 30-40 people. The Cleanup Crew is not responsible for your individual table. You must do that. Hospitality will take care of the kitchen. The Cleanup Crew makes sure the trash is taken out and the floor is clean and all things are put back in order.

ORDER YOUR SOIL

Don't forget that now and through February it will be time to repot cypress, pines, and many deciduous trees. If you need soil, give Rick a call or email right away so he can prepare and bring it to the meeting. RICK JOHNSTONE: 941-882-2290; rickj55@verizon.net

TO ALL NEW MEMBERS

Don't forget to pick up your Member's Booklet on the sign-in table. It has all the information you will need about the club and who to contact.

February Program

This is "Black Thumb Award" month. It's your chance to have the coveted award in your home for a whole year! All you have to do is show something that died....trees only, please!

Please bring in your tools and any trees that you are working on for help from our many talented members.

Part of the "Ancient Art of Bonsai" is to nourish and style trees. There is a wide variety of trees that grow in our Southwest Florida climate, and some that don't. For instance, apples trees don't grow here because they need a winter freeze, and as chilly as it can get here, apple trees want a real freeze.

We are fortunate to live in a climate where there is a plethora of trees that do well, but for one reason or another, sometimes they die. If you've been doing Bonsai for even a short while, you've probably had one die despite your best efforts, but now you can win an award for it. Don't be shy. It's happened to all of us.

A hidden benefit of the Black Thumb Award "ceremony" is to treat it as a learning experience. Why did it die? Tells us what happened to it so that we may learn.

Minutes of the General Meeting on Jan 17, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 9:12 AM by Karen Cogswell at our regular monthly meeting hall in the Berne Davis Garden Council Headquarters. Guests were welcomed and introduced with a warm round of applause.

February will be our “Black Thumb Award”. If you have a bonsai plant that has died then that’s what to bring to February’s meeting. You can be creative as one year the dead tree was decorated with headstones.

Richard Owens had a multi tree display with Shohin (trees 8” or less).

Richard reviewed the many plants he had on his Shohin tree display stand.

Thanks to Richard for a great display. [Read More.](#)

Brrrrrrrr 35° on Sunday, Feb 1

“Winterizing your Trees” by Jaye Saarinen

Deciduous trees should not be trimmed this time of year as they are becoming dormant for the winter. No re-potting this time of year. Nighttime temperatures are too low. Low 40’s and 30’s at night you need to protect your trees. 70’s at night allows trees to create energy to grow. Good time to weed your trees. Moss should be moved from the trunk of the tree to prevent waterlogged trunks. Good time to partially defoliate. It’s a good time to wire because of slow growth and wire can be left on the tree longer.

Fertilizer is still required in the dormant season as growth still takes place and these nutrients are important for a healthy and disease resistant plant. He discussed

Organic Fertilizer vs. Synthetic Fertilizer. They are both effective. You just need to remember to fertilize.

Keep records and photos of your trees. One good app is Bonsai Album. For iPhone the app is at <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/bonsai-album/id465021382>. The download version initially runs in an unregistered trial mode, limited to 3 bonsai, 3 pots, and 3 logs, with 3 photos each. It will also only allow a single database to be open at a time, and database import is disabled. Purchasing a license either within the app or via the [Web Store](#) unlocks full functionality. Re-pot when water takes over thirty seconds to start draining and percolating. This most likely means your plant is root bound.

Develop a Bonsai Buddy to have a second set of eyes and knowledge base.

Jaye is happy to help any member via email or text. Use your resources. Information can be geographically specific.

It’s the Dormant Season and Wiring Time by [Martha Goff](#)

Depending on when night temperatures move to consistently low 50’s or 40’s, wire can stay on trees for up to 3 months. Because of what we call cold weather, growth slows way down and lessens the chance of wire cuts.

Other links to wiring from [Bonsai Empire](#), [Bonsai Mirai](#) and [Eastern Leaf](#) that may help you.

“Martha’s Corner”

Each month we will feature one species. It is selected based on the month that it may need your attention. Several years ago, Martha Goff wrote a voluminous work called **Tropical Green Sheets**. In this two-volume set, Martha goes to great length to detail everything about hundreds of trees.... Type, Species, Soil, pH, watering and much, much more. You can purchase Tropical Green Sheets at [Wigert’s Nursery](#) or [Bonsai Jack](#).

ELM

Ulmaceae

History: Various species of the Elm family are found growing all over the world. The most common species used in tropical climates is the Chinese Elm. The Chinese Elm is a deciduous tree native to China, Korea, and Japan. There are several varieties of Chinese Elm available. There are a number of Elms native to the Southern United States that also do well in bonsai. [Read more.](#)

Here are some things that You can do with an Elm



Kokoro: A Bonsai Study group with Dorothy Demarest.

The next date at the Garden Center will be in February and is generally held right after the regular meeting.

The Kokoro study group is built for intermediate and advanced artists seeking to improve their design skills and overall bonsai knowledge.

We are planning field trips to Wigert's and the Morikami Museum and Japanese Garden in Delray Beach. We will feature guest artists, workshops, and demonstrations, and focus on Bonsai design and show preparation. We currently have just a few spots left.

To apply, please contact Jim at james.t.demarest@gmail.com

(The program will be announced quarterly and may include additional workshop material that will be provided for a cost. Participation is \$20 per session. Dorothy's private instruction by appointment.)

Adam Lavigne Workshops

Thursday, February 5th

9AM-3PM at the Garden Center

\$35 per session

Future Workshops are held on the First Thursday and Sunday of each month.

To schedule, please email Sam Wollard at:

sswollard4@aol.com

This is a Link to "[The Florida Bonsai Magazine](#)" by Adam Lavigne.

Shohin Classes by Mike Lane

Friday Feb 13, 9AM to Noon

Friday, March 27, 9AM to Noon

Friday, April 17, 9AM to Noon

(\$90 for all three classes, payable at first class)

[Click here](#) for a YouTube Video by Mike Lane

Here are two Quick-Reference Potting Guides

[Part 1](#) [Part 2](#)

Our Local Talent

POTTERY

Joe Mayhew

impotteryllc@gmail.com 941-650-7635

POTTERY

Don Rosio

don.rosio@gmail.com 321-890-8353

STANDS

Bill Smith

smittysmit23@aol.com 410-869-6650

BONSAI SOIL

Rick Johnstone

rickj55@verizon.net

WIGERT'S BONSAI NURSERY

For all your Bonsai Needs: Trees, Tools, Pots

Wigert's Bonsai Nursery, 2930 South Road, N. Ft. Myers, FL 33917

239-543-2234 www.wigertsbonsai.com

TOOL SHARPENING

Check me out on Facebook @

Bruce's Bonsai Tool sharpening, repair and cleaning

Bruce Riggins, 239-297-7361, grybrd77@gmail.com

Stone Lantern Bonsai distributors are used by many of our members

Their website is at <https://www.stonelantern.com>.

Feb Meeting Crew:

Hospitality: Ileana Flores

Display: Don Rosio

Cleanup: Jack Gorgone and Brenda Sarna

ABOUT THE BONSAI SOCIETY OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

We meet on the third Saturday of each month at the Berne Davis Botanical Garden building located just north of the Edison-Ford Winter Estates at 2166 Virginia Avenue.

Doors open at 9 AM. A friendly member will make you feel welcome. Coffee will be fresh.

Membership Dues

2026 Dues are still the same price! \$45 for single membership, \$55 for family membership. Please download and print the [Membership Form](#). If you haven't paid dues for 2026, you won't get this Newsletter or any of the fine publications put out by the BSF.

Please mail your dues to:

Bonsai Society of SW FL
P.O. Box 61945
Ft. Myers, FL 33906-1945

Make checks payable to: BSSWFL

The Bonsai Society of Southwest Florida, Inc. P.O. Box 61945
Fort Myers, FL 33906-1945 www.bonsaiswfl.org 239 935-5860

