



BONSAI SOCIETY OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

MARCH 2026 NEWSLETTER

Greetings from our President Karen Cogswell

Welcome to the New Year! My name is Karen Cogswell, and I am the president of the Bonsai Society. 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.

I hope you are enjoying this warm weather after the cold we had this winter. I know my trees are loving it and they are starting to wake up. There are a few that are not looking very good right now – we just have to be patient and see what happens. With Spring comes potting season for many of our tropicals, so get your supplies ready. Many of our club members can help with that. Check the vendors list at the bottom of the newsletter.

Our guest this month will be Brandon Martin. Brandon has been working on Bonsai for 8 years and has apprenticed with Erik Wigert for a year and a half.

Brandon specializes in growing Shohin and Mame trees. His favorite trees to work on are Buttonwoods, Sea Hibiscus and Premna.

Brandon will be coming to help with our trees, so bring a tree that you would like help with. Preferably a pre-bonsai tree, but I'm sure he will help with anything, He will also be bringing some trees he has for sale so you will be able to see his finished work.

Saturday's Meeting Notes by Rick Simon

The meeting on Feb 25th was called to order at 9:32 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. Mary and Cheryl briefly introduced themselves. Welcome aboard. Today is bring your own tree day for members helping members.

Our treasurer, Ham Agnew, reported our bank balance is \$11,264.65. Rick Owens announced he repaired Ham's Kama Sutra Cup using an old Japanese art called Kintsugi (translate to golden joinery). The cup was exquisite and once again useful. Voting for the Black Thumb Award took place during the meeting.

Karen announced that we still have openings for volunteers for monthly clean up, hospitality and tree display. Sign-up sheets are available during the meetings. If you'd like to volunteer you can also send an email with your information and when you'd like to host, clean or display. Remember we are all volunteers and it's your club.

The February meeting display was provided by Don Rosio. The tree was a Nia. Don said he's been working on the pad shapes. Overall, this was a wonderful display. Black Thumb Award voting ended, and Martha announced Jerry Kolybabluk had won. The trophy was not immediately available but should have it by next month.

A raffle was held for members who have been in the Club for two years or less. The trees were donated to the Club several months ago and are being distributed to the newer members. Two trees were awarded this month. Polo shirts are available from Angel Vega during the meetings. Angel had several sample sizes and several orders were made. These are Club shirts with our Club logo.

Upcoming in March is the Beginner's Class hosted by Dorothy Demarest. Cost is \$25 and includes a tree. Class will follow our regular monthly meeting on March 21, 2026.

Sam Wollard announced upcoming workshops with Adam Lavigne and Mike Lane. The classes have seats available so contact Sam with sign-up requests. Adam's classes are the first Thursday and Sunday of each month and Mike's classes are on the third Monday morning for Shohin.

The April Auction is coming up. It will be held on a regular monthly meeting date of Saturday, April 18, 2026. Auctions include live and silent auctions. There will be a grab and go table with inexpensive items. The silent auction will have a "buy it now" price if you're ready. The Club is looking for members to bring plants in for sale and if your plant sells it is an 80/20 split with the Club. There will also be a picnic that day with the Club providing hot dogs and some members will bring side dishes including salads and desserts and so on. Once again volunteers are needed to help watch for pilferage and also to donate a side dish or dessert.

Karen announced State convention in May in Orlando, Florida. Displays and numerous workshops, demonstrations are taking place the entire weekend. The first night, Friday, is Club night and is loads of fun. Volunteers are also needed for the State Convention, and all the information is available on the State's website at [Bonsai Societies of Florida web site](#). Vendors will be on site. Many items for sale. There's an auction of donated trees. May 22-24,

Memorial Day Weekend. Jaye Saarinen reviewed weekend's schedule for the Annual State Bonsai show.

Rick Owens reviewed this year's theme for the State Convention is "small". Any size tree will be accepted and compete. Submit your tree for Club competition on Friday night. Bring in your Mame (trees typically less than 4 inches tall). Further review followed by Jim Demarest. State convention web site was displayed on the front large monitor. Navigation of the web site and where information could be found were outlined. Remember go [to https://bonsai-swf-com](https://bonsai-swf-com).

Volunteers are needed for the State Convention. Signing up will begin March 9, 2026. Discount hotel rooms are made available to our participant members. If possible, plan on volunteering a couple of hours up to the whole weekend. If you volunteer, you'll save approximately \$40 a night on your hotel room. Sandy Spikes requested one day group to travel together to the convention center in Orlando for the May Conventon.in7

Doug Fee announced and displayed the possible t-shirt design. Final design and availability should be as early as next month.

The new member trees were presented to the winners. Regular raffle winners were drawn and announced also.

Meeting came to an end at 10:35 am. Members then broke into study groups to help those that brought trees in for training and education.

Respectfully submitted:

Rick Simon, Secretary

Beginner's Class: March 21st, 12:30-3:30 (After the meeting)

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.

The Torii Gate: As many of you may have noticed, it appears that the improvements to the parking areas on Larchmont are complete. This will make it far more convenient for all visitors to the Berne Davis Gardens.

The Torii Gate has been in its current position for a few years and is showing its age.

For those of you not familiar with its history, it has been in our possession for at least a decade. We assembled it each year and placed on the walkway area for our annual show. Otherwise, it was stored at someone's home or in a storage area. Two years ago, the Lee County Garden Council asked us to make it a permanent display, but there were a few issues to resolve. The Gate was made of soft pine, and although it had suffered only minor damage in transportation, it needed help. The challenge was to try to waterproof it so that it would survive the summer rains.

We went to great lengths to thoroughly soak the inside of the vertical members with gallons of varnish, then apply many coats of red paint on the outside. The hope was that this will protect it for many years to come.

Not long ago, Jaye Saarinen noticed some "soft" spots in parts of it, no doubt rot creeping in. The options were to rebuild it or replace it with better materials. For now, Jaye is going to lather it with sealant and paint, and hope for the best. We may get another two or three years out of it.

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.

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.

“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](#).

Crape (Crepe) Myrtle

History: It has a very smooth bark that will exfoliate in patches as it ages, revealing a pinkish color. In colder climates the leaves will turn autumn colors. In the tropics, it will color some then drop its leaves. [Read More](#).

Here are some things that You can do with a Crape Myrtle



Adam Lavigne Workshops

Sunday, March 29th

Thursday, April 2nd

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.

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>.

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**

Click [Here](#) for some YouTube [Bonsai Pictures](#)