



BONSAI SOCIETY OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

MAY 2026 NEWSLETTER

April saw the annual auction come to fruition. Several club members helped set up on Friday for an amazing showcase of trees on Saturday. We had several non-club visitors and we hope to see them come back as members.

The club made a spectacular Total Proceeds of **\$6,320.92**, while the payout for the 80/20 sellers was \$3,195 and the Net Gain to the club, after expenses, was **\$3,012.57**.

May will see us back to normal meeting format as we have a workshop on the tree featured in Martha's Corner of the newsletter this month - the Dwarf Schefflera.



CONVENTION WORKSHOP OPPORTUNITY

Missed workshop registration? No worries! You can still get your hands on a tree and learn the basics. Bring a friend, spouse/partner, sibling - or any bonsai-curious human who isn't ready to join a club yet. For **\$55**, you'll get a fun, beginner-friendly class covering pruning, wiring, and repotting, and you'll go home with your own tree.

You'll also receive a care sheet, you'll be able to choose from several species, and you can pick from various pot shapes/colors (while supplies last). Instructors include Robert Sirota (last year's BSF Scholarship runner-up), Larry Naeder

INTRO TO BONSAI

BSF Annual Convention 2026 

Only \$55!

No need to pre-register*

Walk up, choose a tree and pot, learn how to style, prune, and care for your new bonsai friend **

When? Memorial Day Weekend,

Where? In Beautiful and Sunny Orlando At The Florida Hotel and Conference Center | 1500 Sand Lake Rd, Orlando, FL 32809

Sat May 23 (9-12:30 & 1:30-5)
Sun May 24 (9-12:30)


BONSAI
Instructor:
Larry Naeder

*Tickets available for purchase at the BSF table in the Vendor Area
**price included tree, soil, pot, wire, care sheet, and instruction



(Thunderstruck Bonsai), Adam Lavigne, and more.

How to sign up: No registration needed - and you don't have to be a BSF Member. Just head to the vendor room, find the **BSF table**, and add your name. Spread the word: friends, neighbors, second first cousins... even your state representatives. **Bonsai is fun and doable for everyone!**

[Convention Link](#)

MARTHA'S CORNER

Each month we 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's](#) site.

SCHEFFLERA

Schefflera is a member of the *Araliaceae* family. This is a large species of plants native to most tropical areas of the world, but only the 'arboricola' and its dwarf cultivar, which is native to Taiwan, are suited to bonsai. Used often as a shrub in landscaping, this is a good choice for beginner bonsai or for indoor bonsai. Schefflera arboricola 'Luseane' has the smallest leaves. It is very desirable for bonsai. It is a slow grower and was once difficult to find. It is now common in most south Florida nurseries. These trees are also often times called Dwarf of Hawaiian Umbrella Trees

Find out more [here](#).



CREATING A BANYAN STYLE SCHEFFLERA BONSAI *(contributed by Richard Owens)*

A Schefflera arboricola (Dwarf or Hawaiian Umbrella Tree) is an excellent choice for a Banyan style bonsai. This style features a broad canopy supported by dramatic aerial roots that descend and thicken into pillar-like trunks, creating a mature tropical look.

Schefflera works especially well because it thrives indoors, responds to hard pruning, and readily produces aerial roots in humid conditions.

Start with the Right Plant

- Choose a healthy, bushy nursery plant with a thick trunk or multiple stems. Larger plants yield faster results.
- For a true banyan feel, consider group plantings or encouraging branches to root.
- Don't hesitate to cut back hard in spring or active growth—Schefflera tolerates aggressive pruning and back buds readily.

Create Aerial Roots (The Banyan Effect)

Aerial roots define the style and are easy to achieve with humidity:

- Enclose the tree in a clear plastic tent or humidity dome (vent every few days).
- Mist trunks and branches regularly.
- Provide bright, indirect light or grow lights.

Roots often appear within 1–4 weeks. Once formed, guide them downward using straws or tubing filled with damp sphagnum moss. Roots that reach the soil will thicken into strong support pillars over time.

Tip: Light defoliation during major work can reduce stress and improve visibility.

Shape with Clip and Grow

- Wiring is rarely effective; rely on selective pruning instead.
- Build a wide, open canopy by removing crossing and inward growing branches.
- Let shoots extend, then cut back to encourage ramification and smaller leaves.
- Aim for contrast: a strong, rooted base with a lighter, expressive canopy.
- Air-layering can shorten height or create additional rooted “trunks.”

Repot & Refine Roots

- Repot every 1–2 years in spring.
- Prune roots as needed and position aerial roots neatly into the soil.
- Use a fast-draining bonsai mix (pumice, akadama, lava rock).
- Slightly adjusting the planting angle can expose and enhance surface roots.



Care, Timeline & Tips

- Light: Bright indirect light or morning sun
- Water: Even moisture; let the surface dry slightly
- Temperature: 65–75°F (18–24°C); avoid cold drafts
- Fertilizer: Balanced liquid feed during spring–fall; organic works well
- Humidity: Average is fine—higher levels improve vigor and aerial roots
- Leaf size: Good light + regular pruning keeps foliage in scale

Timeline

Year 1: Develop aerial roots and basic structure

Years 2+: Refine canopy, thicken roots, and build ramification

Significant transformation typically unfolds over 5 - 10 years



Common Challenges

Leggy growth: Correct with hard pruning

Leaf drop: Usually water or light related

Weak taper: Natural to Schefflera—embrace the multi-stem, pillar-root banyan look

CONFERENCE RAFFLE NOTE

The club is hosting the state raffle table on Friday, May 22, and is responsible for supplying everything that fills that long table. Drawings are held twice that day—at noon and 5 pm. Other clubs cover Saturday and Sunday, and at the end, all three clubs split the raffle income. This is a great fundraiser opportunity. Help is needed at the raffle table during the convention, along with lots of tree material. If extra trees would work well on the table, please bring them to the May 16 club meeting so they can be transported to state.

Currently available are about 40 books, 40 pots, 5 trees, and a few kusamono. Each of the two daily \$1 raffles includes about 20 bidding spots, for a total of 40 trees needed on Friday. There are also five \$5 all-day raffle spots for larger trees, which are mostly covered—but the medium and small trees are still needed. Please bring any suitable tree material to the May 16 meeting, and if attending the convention, plan to help at the raffle table. Lots of tickets need to be sold!

VOLUNTEERS 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.

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

TOOL SHARPENING

Bruce's Bonsai Tool sharpening,
repair and cleaning

Bruce Riggins
239-297-7361

grybrd77@gmail.com

Stone Lantern Bonsai

Distributor used by many
of our members:

stonelantern.com

Wigert's Bonsai

For all your Bonsai Needs:
Trees, Tools, Pots

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

239-543-2234

wigertsbonsai.com

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. 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, including contact information.

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.

The Bonsai Society of Southwest Florida, Inc.

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