



AMERICAN BONSAI SOCIETY

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NEWSFLASH

***News from the American Bonsai Society
For Bonsai Club Members in North America, Hawaii and Puerto Rico.***

***To join the American Bonsai Society please visit our website at americanbonsaisociety.org or
contact membership chair Larry Benjamin at membership@americanbonsaisociety.org.***

***May 9-11, 2024
ABS Learning Seminars
In Coordination with
Meijer Gardens Michigan All-State Bonsai Show
And the West Michigan Bonsai Club
Guest Artists -
Hugo Zamora, Suthin Sukosolvisit, Jack Sustic***



***Demonstrations, New Talent Contest, Cash Awards, Vendors, Banquet, Welcome Reception.
Additional Guests: Steve Jetzer, Mark Fields, Kurtis Smith, Matt Spinniken, Tim Priest.***

ABS Learning Seminars 2024 Grand Rapids, MI

The ABS Learning Seminars are a tradition geared towards the edification and development of bonsai artists and practitioners of all levels. The event includes:

- A major Exhibition of exceptional trees;

*-20 different seminars on two tracks - (1) **Horticulture & Techniques** and (2) **Design & Display** (Participants can choose to follow one track or may move back and forth between them; all seminars are covered by the cost of basic registration);*

-16 different workshops, geared for various levels - beginner through advanced (The cost of workshops is in addition to the basic registration fee and depends on the material offered);

-Demonstrations by major bonsai artists; AND

-The New Talent Contest (for information about the New Talent Contest, please visit the ABS website).

- More Information About Artists and Speakers available on the website. ONLINE REGISTRATION IS OPEN at (<https://www.americanbonsaisociety.org/abs-learning-seminars/>)

THE VENUE

Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park, Grand Rapids Michigan ABS Learning Seminars 2024

We can't wait to experience this exciting venue, chosen to host the ABS Learning Seminars 2024. We hope you'll join us!

GRAND RAPIDS, MI – Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park is the No. 1 sculpture park in the U.S., according to a national reader's choice award. Meijer Gardens opened in 1995 and has a 158-acre main campus that boasts the state's largest tropical conservatory and one of the country's largest interactive children's gardens. One of the most beloved exhibits at the park is the annual "Butterflies are Blooming," which features thousands of butterflies and moths from dozens of species. The permanent collection highlights hundreds of sculptures from internationally acclaimed artists. Indoor galleries with changing sculpture exhibitions have featured artists such as Pablo Picasso, Jonathan Borofsky and more.

"We invite art enthusiasts, nature lovers, and visitors of all ages to experience the captivating beauty and serenity of Meijer Gardens," said Charles Burke, president and CEO of Meijer Gardens. "This accolade reinforces our mission to promote the enjoyment, understanding, and appreciation of gardens, sculpture, the natural environment, and the arts."

Except from release by Michael Kransz, with permission from the Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park.



"The American Horse" by Nina Akamu.

Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park
The 2024 Learning Seminars



We can't wait to experience this exciting venue with you in May!
We hope you'll join us!

ABS Learning Seminars 2024

Joshua Roth/ABS New Talent Contest

Eligibility*

Any person living in North America is eligible, provided he or she has been involved with the art of bonsai for fewer than 10 years. Past winners are ineligible, and no individual may participate in the contest more than twice. If entering for the second time, there is no need to submit tree pictures again, but one must complete and submit the declaration form.

Stage One

Each new potential contestant shall submit (either by email or US mail) photographs of 3 bonsai he or she has personally styled. More than one picture of each bonsai is preferred. The photographs do not have to be publication quality, but should show the talent of the artist to the best advantage. A brief description and history of each bonsai should be enclosed. Please also include a signed copy of the declaration form available at <https://www.americanbonsaisociety.org/new-talent-contest/> with your submission.

Stage Two

Each contestant shall:

- Pay his or her expenses to register for the seminar and attend the contest.*
- Be provided with pre-bonsai material by the contest organizers.
(Special effort will be made to ensure that all of the trees are of similar size and quality.)
- Furnish his or her tools, wire, supplies, and turntable. (Power tools are permitted.)
- Have from 9 AM until 5 PM to work on their tree
- Have the option of purchasing their tree after it has been displayed and judged.
(Non-purchased trees will remain the property of ABS and will be sold at auction.)
Contestants are not permitted to receive advice regarding their work on trees.
They will not report their trees during the contest.

Judging

Three appointed bonsai artists will judge the completed bonsai. The artist whose bonsai receives the highest number of points will be the winner. The results will be announced at the banquet on Saturday night. The winner will receive \$1000 gift certificate, good for any Joshua Roth tools, with 2nd place being a \$500 gift certificate and 3rd, a \$250 gift certificate.

****Contestants must be either full or single day registrants of the Learning Seminars in order to compete.***

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Questions

Any further questions may be directed to John Ruth, NTC Coordinator, at the address below.

Entries should be sent to: John Ruth, NTC Coordinator,

at newtalentcontest@americanbonsaisociety.org, or 2055 Jackson Bridge Rd, Bowling Green, KY 42101

All applications must be received by **April 1, 2024**. Contestants will be notified as to whether or not they have been selected to advance to Stage II on **April 15, 2024**.

ABS Learning Seminars 2024 The Schedule

Thursday, May 9, 2024

8:30 am - 5 pm **Joshua Roth/ABS New Talent Contest**

12 pm - 5 pm **Exhibit Set up**

All Trees in the Exhibit Must Remain on Display Until Sunday at 5 pm.

1 pm - 6 pm **Registration Open**

6 pm - 8 pm **Vendor Area Open**

Kickoff Reception - Hors d'oeuvres & Cash Bar (Full Registrants Only)

Friday, May 10, 2024

8:30 am - 5 pm **Registration Open**

9 am - 5 pm **Vendor Area Open**

9 am - 6:30 pm **Workshops, Seminars, Demos and Exhibit Critiques***

Saturday, May 11, 2024

8:30 am - 5 pm **Registration Open**

9 am - 5 pm **Vendor Area Open**

9 am - 4:30 pm **Workshops, Seminars, Demos and Exhibit Critiques***

6 pm - 9 pm **Dinner, Awards Presentation, Raffle and Auction**

***See <https://www.americanbonsaisociety.org/abs-learning-seminars-schedule/> for full schedule.**

ABS Learning Seminars 2024

The Workshops

Friday

Beginners Bonsai Package (Mother's Day Special) - Scott Zomerieli

Creating a Dawn Redwood Forest - Kurtis Smith

Shohin Junipers - Jack Sustic

Kotohime Japanese Maple - Hugo Zamora

TBD - Suthin Sukosolvisit

Find the Tree in the Tree: Drawing the Plan (Itoigawa Juniper) - Mark Fields

"Bonsai with Soul" Bring your own tree - Hugo Zamora

Michigan Yamadori (Thuja Occidentalis/ White Cedar) - Matt Spinniken

Saturday

Beginners Bonsai Package (Mother's Day Special) - Steve Jetzer

Bring Your Own Tree - Jack Sustic

TBD - Suthin Sukosolvisit

Spruce Bonsai - William N. Valavanis

"Bonsai with Soul" Bring your own tree - Hugo Zamora

Scroll Painting - Kristy Majeske

Japanese Black Pines - Rob Hoffman

Old Shimpaku Junipers - Ken Huth

ABS Learning Seminars 2024

The Seminars

Horticulture & Techniques Track

Friday

Disease & Pest Management - Scott Zomereli

Basic Wiring - Karen Harkaway

Species Specific - Pines: Single Flush vs. Multi-flush & Candle Pruning - Rob Hoffman

Tool Sharpening - Tim Priest

Deep Roots of Bonsai Horticulture - Ross Clark

Saturday

Winter Storage - Mark Fields

Grafting & Air Layering - Eric Newton

Tree Collecting (Yamadori) - Matt Spinniken

How to Create Pads - Christopher Sambolin Perez

Tropical Bonsai - Kurtis Smith

Design & Display Track

Friday

Moss; Techniques for Mossing - Ted Bentley

A 30-year Evolution - Jimmy Whiteley

Suiseki - Viewing Stone Appreciation - Chuck Barker

Classical Japanese Bonsai Display - William Valavanis

Taking Your Tree to the Next Level - Jack Sustic

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Saturday

Kusamono & Shitakusa (Accent Plants) - Eric & Victrinia Ridgeway

Scroll Paintings - Choice & Display - Kristy Majeske

Photographing Bonsai Trees - Tim Priest

Round Table: Take Your Tree to the Next Level - Christopher Sambolin Perez

Bonsai Containers - Teresa Wooden



**LEARNIG
SEMINARS 2024**
Register Now
([https://
www.americanbonsaisociety.org/abs-learning-seminars/](https://www.americanbonsaisociety.org/abs-learning-seminars/))

ABS Learning Seminars 2024 Some Seminar Highlights

Judging, Displaying and Understanding Composition (Demo). Jack Sustic. Judging a bonsai exhibition can be challenging. The first half of this demonstration will take a systematic approach to judging bonsai: Aesthetics, technique, horticulture, and overall impact. For the second half, the demonstration will move to the exhibition area to discuss the displays. Based on the information given in this seminar, each participant will be asked to select their own "Best in Show."



About Jack Sustic: Jack Sustic's interest in bonsai began in the mid 1980's while serving in the military in South Korea. In 1996 Jack was selected as the first intern at the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum, U.S. National Arboretum in Washington DC and in 2002 was appointed Museum Curator, retiring in November of 2016. He has received formal bonsai training from masters in both the United States and Japan. In 2005 one of his trees was selected as an international winner in the World Bonsai Friendship Federation (WBFF) photo contest and his trees have been exhibited in numerous local and national bonsai exhibitions. A member of several bonsai and viewing stone organizations he is an honorary member of Nanpu Kai, a study group comprised of bonsai master John Naka's students. He served as co-chair of the 5th World Bonsai Convention in 2005 and Co-President of the National Bonsai Foundation (NBF), currently serving as the World Bonsai Friendship Federation North American Regional Director and President of the North American Bonsai Federation (NABF). Jack keeps busy maintaining his own bonsai collection in his home state of Michigan and as acting curator of the Mattaei Botanical Gardens bonsai collection.

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Deep Roots of Bonsai Horticulture. Ross Clark. Most of us learned how to do bonsai by a combination of guidance from friends, sensei and trial and error. However, the ecology and physiology of bonsai subjects is an even deeper foundation of bonsai horticulture. That level of knowledge which actually undergirds horticulture is invisible to many bonsai practitioners. Adding that level of understanding can help us make better decisions and keep our bonsai healthier, especially as changing climate challenges our horticultural practices. We will discuss these true fundamentals of bonsai horticulture, and how they relate to things like how to find the best bonsai subjects, and how best to work with them as we turn them into bonsai.

Dr. Ross Clark is a retired professor of botany whose fascination with bonsai goes back about 70 years. His botanical specialties are the biology and classification of woody plants. Ross is a founding member of Prairie State and Central Kentucky bonsai societies, edited the ABS newsletter for five years, and wrote the only comprehensive book on native North American plants for bonsai.



Dr. Ross Clark.

A 30 Year Evolution & Care of Old Bonsai. Jimmy Whiteley. The long term evolution and care of two very different species of bonsai trees provides valuable lessons learned. Jimmy will share his 30 years of experience in caring for his 174 year old Rocky Mountain juniper and 75 year old Banyun Fig bonsai trees. He will share photos of the trees design evolution as well as share his care tips for each species.

Jimmy's love of plants developed during his youth as he grew up around family farms. He discovered bonsai as a young military officer traveling the world and found that it neatly combined his passion for plants with his creative and design background. This craft has even influenced his home surroundings. Landscaping of his home is always evolving to incorporate different garden design features for bonsai. Among the additions has been an all season greenhouse, Benches and stands for bonsai, a waterfall pond with Koi, bonsai growing beds and an area to over-winter outdoor bonsai. Jimmy is the president of Four Seasons Bonsai Club of Michigan. Love for the art of bonsai has inspired him to continuously gain more knowledge about the craft and hone his skills. He even acquired a Michigan Master Gardener certification for his craft and started a Gone Wild Farm plant rescue and reclamation group. He has lectured, conducted demonstrations and provided workshops for beginners through advanced bonsai enthusiasts. Jimmy's bonsai have been exhibited in local, state and regional shows culminating in numerous awards.

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Classical Japanese Bonsai Display. William N. Valavanis.

The principles of displaying bonsai and suiseki will be explained during a PowerPoint program. Aesthetics will be the major emphasis of this special seminar and other topics will be covered including seasons, holidays, exhibitions and spacing. Selecting the appropriate display tables and accessory plantings will be discussed. Finally, bonsai will be used to illustrate the design and display aesthetics. No limit to the number of students.



William N. Valavanis (Bill) became interested in bonsai and horticulture at age 11 and pursued his interest by studying Ornamental Horticulture at SUNY Farmingdale and Cornell University. He has made over 50 trips to Japan and formally apprenticed with Kyuzo Murata and Kakutaro Komuro in Omiya Bonsai Village in Japan. Additionally, a 30 year study and association with Yuji Yoshimura combined with his formal horticultural degrees, apprenticeships in Japan and his artistic talent, provide Bill with the solid background to promote and teach classical bonsai art around the world. His educational programs have been presented throughout the United States, Canada, Brazil, England, Italy, Africa, Belgium, China, Indonesia, Australia, China, Taiwan and Japan. He is the proprietor of the International Bonsai Arboretum in Rochester, New York where he maintains a fine personal collection of classical bonsai. He offers introductory and advanced classes as well as seminars in Rochester, New York. Thirty successful bonsai symposia were organized during the past three decades. He also maintains a busy teaching schedule for bonsai and horticultural organizations worldwide. In order to further promote the artistic and horticultural expression of classical bonsai art around the world he began publishing International BONSAI magazine the first and only professional bonsai magazine published in the United States 40 years ago. He has authored 11 books and many articles published in English, Japanese and other European languages.

Bill is an active member and officer of numerous local, national and international bonsai and horticultural organizations. His distinctive bonsai and garden displays have received many awards both in the United States and abroad. In 2008 he organized the First US National Bonsai Exhibition which was very successful. The 8th US National Bonsai Exhibition was held in September 2023.

In October 2017 the US National Arboretum honored him by inducting him into the US Bonsai Hall of Fame, the third and only living member following John Naka and Yuji Yoshimura. In November 2018 he became the first American and Westerner invited to assist judging the Nippon Bonsai Taikan Exhibition in Japan, one of Japan's highest quality shows.

He freely shares his 60 plus years of dedicated scholarly bonsai study, experiences and discoveries with students and serious bonsai fanciers through International BONSAI and his educational bonsai programs.

Matt Spinniken
Michigan Yamadori - A Learning Seminars Friday Workshop

During the growing season, Matt operates a landscaping business in Northern Michigan. An avid surfer, he lives in Puerto Rico for four to five months a year during the off-season. Matt started bonsai in 2014, but has had an interest since childhood. As an avid collector of Michigan native trees, he has produced award winning eastern larch (*Larix laricina*) and eastern white cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*) bonsai. Matt's trees have won numerous state and regional awards and have been exhibited at the U.S. National Bonsai Exhibition in Rochester, NY. That he has no formal training makes his amazing artistry that much more remarkable. Don't miss your opportunity to work with this rising star in North American bonsai.



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Please join The American Bonsai Society. Members receive bonsai news from around the country, a quarterly in-print Journal, Learning Seminars discounts and more. Check out the ABS website for details at <https://www.americanbonsaisociety.org>.

American Bonsai Society Contact Information

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For More Information About Learning Seminars Artists and Speakers, visit <https://www.americanbonsaisociety.org/abs-learning-seminars/>.

LEARNING SEMINARS ONLINE REGISTRATION IS OPEN!
