The Buffalo Bonsai Society

Saturday June 13,2026. 1pm

SUNY Erie Community College North Campus

6205 Main St, Williamsville, NY 14221

STEM Building Room 102

President's Corner

Hello,
I hope everyone enjoyed the demo by Terry Monroe, he always enjoys doing a demo for our club.

Our show is almost here. Please consider signing up to spend some time answering questions and greeting people and don't forget to show a tree. WE NEED TO KNOW WHAT TREES YOU ARE SHOWING! We love all degrees of refinement. All members are urged to show their creations. Please let Christine know so we have the name tags ready for the show by June 1st.

We will be doing the Art in the Park June 27th & 28th. We need volunteers to work our tent. Please let Christine know.

Now is the time of year you want to do that air laying of a branch you have contemplated all winter.

Air laying allows you to remove something and not have it go to waste. Be it a well-developed branch or the top of the tree that you want to create a shohin from. There are two ways to air layer, one is the tourniquet method. Tightly wrapping the trunk/branch with copper wire forcing it to grow new roots just above the wire.

The second is the ring method. Cutting away a ring of bark at the point on the trunk/branch where you would like new roots to grow. These are two different approaches to trick the tree to grow roots.

Both interrupt the flow of nutrients, partially and force the tree to grow new roots to survive. The Tourniquet method crushes the bark and cambium layer to restrict the movement of nutrients. When it comes to tightening the wire, it has to be tight. Remember the bark of the tree is just a protective coating you want to apply pressure on the cambium below it.

The Cambium layer is the growing part of the trunk. It annually produces new bark and new wood in response to hormones that pass down through the phloem with food from the leaves.

The ring method removes the bark and the cambium layer down to the sapwood. Sap wood is the new wood of the tree and is responsible for moving water up to the leaves.

Cut a ring all the way around the tree just below where you want the roots to grow. The second ring should be at least 1 ½ the diameter of the trunk or branch that you are removing. Then remove the bark and cambium

layer between the cuts. The cuts allow for uniformity in the removal of material. If you do not remove things down to the sapwood the tree will not develop new roots and you could also kill what you are seeking to remove.

Next you need to provide something to hold water for the tree to draw from and allow the roots to grow into. Some people use sphagnum moss, others use bonsai soil. You also need a means to hold this material. Some people wrap the area in plastic placing the moss in it, some use tin foil. There are plastic reusable containers for sale. Others use a small plastic nursery pot cutting the center out to fit around the trunk with a vertical cut so you can open the pot up and place it around the trunk or branch.

I think one of the best approaches is something Hank Miller does. He uses a small nursery pot with a twist. Just below where he rings the tree he drills 4 holes into the trunk, 90 degrees apart about ¾ of an inch in depth. The holes are to insert a chopstick to support the pot and keep it stable. With the pot being stable and not able to move it allows the fine roots to emerge and grow without being disturbed.

Also, if using bonsai soil, you in theory have a uniform area with respect to moisture and hopefully this will allow for uniform root development. When doing the ring method is there an advantage with using a rooting hormone?

About 5 years ago Boon Manakitivipart asked himself the same question. He took a bunch of cuttings from the same tree, planted some with no rooting hormone, did some with a gel rooting hormone, some with a powder rooting hormone and some double dipping using the same powder rooting hormone. The cuttings that were double dipped yielded slightly more cuttings that survived than those that were not dipped. The single dipped powder and the gel had less that survived than the others. So, to me the answer is it will not hurt.

I think more important than the rooting hormone debate is how you water it. sphagnum moss is water retentive, and I think many people because of this tend to be under water and thus lose what they are attempting to air layer. In using the chopstick supported pot you can use your bonsai soil which you are familiar with and you can water or know when to water because you know the soil already and you can water it just like you would any of your trees.

Air layering is something that should be done at the start of the growing season. Yes, in about a months' time you can have something that will be able to continue growing in a regular pot.
However, you may not have something that will survive going dormant. I would say the same is true with a tropical tree only for the reason that while they survive indoors come winter it is not the ideal setting in many cases. If you have a greenhouse that is heated for the winter then you should be fine.

Scott Russo

***2026 BBS Monthly Agenda**:*
June 6-7th Club Show
June 13th Intro to Bonsai
Art in the Park June 27th &28th (need Volunters)
July 11th John Wiessinger Bonsai tips and Tricks
August 8th Picnic/Auction
September 12th TBD
October 10th Sean Smith
November 14th Suiseki
December Christmas party

2026 Board Members
Scott Russo- President
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