



# BADGER BONSAI SOCIETY

Promoting and Enjoying the Ancient Art of Bonsai Since 1972

Badger News | A Publication of the Badger Bonsai Society | JANUARY, 2011

## NEXT MEETING DATE: **January 11th, 2010**

6:30–8:00 p.m.

Olbrich Botanical Gardens

3330 Atwood Ave. Madison, WI

## MEETING AGENDA: **ANNUAL DINNER AT IMPERIAL GARDEN**

The next meeting will be our annual dinner at Imperial Garden on Madison's West Side ([imperialgarden.com](http://imperialgarden.com)).

## CLUB OFFICERS:

President .....	Matthew
Vice President .....	Beau
Communications .....	Devon
Treasurer .....	Gary
Secretary/Librarian / Newsletter .....	Greg
Refreshments .....	Elaine
Past President .....	Tim

## Happy New Year to You and Your Trees

By: *Matthew*

Well, its 2011 and according to the Mayan calendar, this will be our last year. So make the most of it. Thankfully, whenever my old calendar runs out, I just get a new one.

Since there is little to do with our trees in January, I'd like to talk about another aspect of bonsai, one that we will be celebrating soon. But let me first preface this with a quote. "Bonsai as an art form is not isolated. If you want to excel, study all aspects of Japanese art, philosophy, and culture."

--Mr. Tomio Abe to Hiroshi Matsuda

As we are all aware, the history of bonsai begins in the Far East. Over two thousand years ago, Chinese monks were growing chrysanthemums in pots that were unique among potted plants. They were styled into little trees. One thousand years later, Japan took hold of the art of bonsai. Here it was strictly reserved for an aristocratic group. It was the samurai, the warrior philosophers, who sculpted bonsai into the art form it is today. The samurai lived by a set of ideals, collectively known as Bushido, the warrior's code. With a little imagination, we can translate these into bonsai. Rectitude, courage, benevolence, respect, honesty, honor, and loyalty; these are the virtues that shaped and defined the samurai culture and bonsai with it.



### Inside This Issue

- **Greetings, Fellow Bonsai Enthusiasts ...02**
- **Wintertime is Upon Us .....03**
- **Basic Bonsai Survival Guide ..... 03**
- **Officer Profiles ..... 05**

Based on Mr. Tomio's quote above, we can enhance our bonsai experience by incorporating other elements of Asian culture into our bonsai routines. Music is an element that can be used to "set the mood" so to say. Since art is an expression that comes from within, our state of mind can

affect the outcome of our trees. Bonsai is an art of deep thoughtfulness. The trees are as much the artists as we are. As we help our trees develop, they help us develop. Because of this relationship, it is important to not let ourselves be distracted while we work with them. We need to allow our minds to be clear enough to be inspired by the tree we are working on. Tea is a simple thing that may help us find metaphorical enlightenment and inspiration. Different teas can stimulate or relax our minds. Tea has been an integral part of Japanese culture and undoubtedly has been close in association with bonsai from the beginning.

I'm not by any means suggesting that you convert to Buddhism or Shinto, but simply that if we acknowledge and even embrace the elements that shaped bonsai we may become better bonsai artists ourselves. I've been told I take things a little too far sometimes, but why not? Inspiration is inspiration no matter where it comes from. I've even been known to keep a katana near me while working on my trees, not for self-defense or intimidation, but rather for inspiration and connection. The katana was the soul of the samurai. It is a symbol of their virtues.

So this month we celebrate our hobby by gathering together around the table and fellowshiping over an Asian meal. Imperial Gardens seems like an almost ironically appropriate location for such a meal. The name alone suggests the aristocratic origin of the art we celebrate. Let us all, at least for an evening, embrace the culture that birthed our art and past time. We are all samurai.

P.S. Don't worry; I'll leave the katana at home.

-Matthew



## Editor's Note

### Double News Letter

Because my work life overrode my hobby, but the other contributors did their part, I will place all the content from last month's issue in here as well.

# Greetings, Fellow Bonsai Enthusiasts

By: Matthew

As many of you know, our annual officer elections were held during the November meeting. Most positions changed hands, including the role of president. Normally a total regime change like this is the result of an epic battle or brutal uprising of the people. Normally such an event would end poorly for those stepping out of their positions of power. Thankfully, this was not that kind of event and the former officers forfeit their positions without a fight. On the other hand, they did leave some big shoes to fill.

For those of you who don't know me so well, my name is Matthew . I have been a member of the club for about four years now, maybe five. I am a student at The UW, majoring in horticulture and soil science. I work at Brew and Grow and have experience growing all kinds of plants in all kinds of ways. Hydroponic peppers are one of my specialties. If anyone is interested in Bhut Jolokia peppers (the world's hottest) let me know. Bonsai has been a hobby of mine since 2004, so many of you have been involved in the hobby longer than I have. That being said, I am not an expert in all things bonsai. I see this as an opportunity to not only share what I do know, but also to learn from all of you. I am excited about the year ahead, and I hope you all are as well.

We are getting into another Wisconsin winter, and that means a lot of things to us as bonsai artists. Tropical trees have probably found new homes by now. Deciduous trees are in their elegant skeletal state, and our evergreens are frozen into their pots.

Some things to consider with your tropicals as they move inside are pests and environment control. It is not uncommon for bugs like spider mites to show up when trees are moved in and out of the reach of natural predators. Also, indoor environments are ideal conditions for mites to reproduce and spread. Pay attention to your trees, especially the new growth. Look for webbing on the branch tips. Another technique to identifying spider mites is to hold your tree over a white piece of paper and tap or brush through the branches. Look for spots on the paper that move. I've always had good luck using an insecticidal soap against spider mites. Make sure to do a follow up treatment since







Evidence of spider mites: small webs, dead or wilting foliage.

most insecticides do not kill eggs. As far as environment is concerned, a bright sunny window is often good enough for a couple trees. Artificial light may be beneficial. It's also a good idea to keep a spray bottle handy with good clean, low salt and mineral, water to mist your trees in order to maintain the humidity they like.

Most people already have their own unique method of over-wintering hardier trees. Do what works for you. Just make sure they are not subject to too much freezing and thawing. Also keep them wet enough to avoid freeze drying your root-balls. To accomplish this, protect them from wind and periodically check the soil. If it is dry and not frozen go ahead and give it some water. Other members are likely more qualified discuss over-wintering. If you have questions, don't be shy. Your trees are depending on you.

I hope to see you all at the December meeting. We will be sharing treats and discussing the year to come. I know the winter months are not always conducive to traveling with trees, but if you have a tree you can bring in either for questions or just to show off, please bring it. This is, after all, a tree club. See you soon.

-Matthew

## Wintertime is Upon Us

By: Greg

Finding ways to get our trees through the rest of the year healthy is a top priority. Not all of our trees are hardy. Some are tropical or sub-tropical. Found this article from Pauline Muth who has her own studio in New York so information has relevancy for us. This is a very basic survival guide. Hope this covers what you do. Reading and viewing about bonsai is also a very good way to pass the winter, our library has quite a lot of books, magazines, and videos( last winter I converted the old VCR's to DVD's so we have many forms of media to keep us

informed throughout the upcoming winter, while we snuggle up to the fireplace or at the least a video representation of a fireplace. The only house that I ever lived in that actually had a fireplace was in Southern Florida, go figure. Let me know if you are interested in any. I will bring some to the next meeting. Utilize this resource the club has invested quite a lot into this resource for it's members. Thanks- Greg

## Basic Bonsai Survival Guide For bonsai in zones 4 and 5

Pauline Muth Bonsai Studio  
7 western avenue  
West Charlton NY 12010  
Pauline@pfmbonsai.com  
www.pfmbonsai.com  
518-882-1039



**Indoor Tropical Bonsai** These trees are those that are not hardy in our climate and must be protected from frost and freezing by being grown indoors in cold weather. During frost free months (June-August) these bonsai should be grown outside on a table or stand. Most take full sun. Ask the merchant for the proper light conditions for your plant.

1. These may be kept indoors year round IF provided with humidity, plenty of light and regular watering and fertilizer. They will benefit greatly from being placed outdoors in frost-free weather.
2. Water the regularly (no softened water). Outside you may use a watering can with a fine rose or a garden hose equipped with a fine nozzle. Indoors, in your sink, water gently from the top daily. DO NOT soak established bonsai for watering. If you





leave bonsai in a tray with water you will develop root rot. (Note: if the bonsai soil is too compacted or has glued on stones, the trees will not grow since the soil will not take in water...return the tree to the merchant.)

3. Fertilize with an organic pellets such as Bio Gold during the growing season. In the spring, treat the soil with a dose of micronutrients and a dose of chelated iron. Repeat the iron one month later. Spring for these trees starts in January if they have enough light.

4. When indoors, give the bonsai as much light as possible [southern, western or eastern window, northern is not enough light or artificial light (12-14 hours under plant lights)]. Turn the tree often for best growth. Each species of bonsai has its own light requirements...ask about this when purchasing the bonsai.

5. Pinch or cut new growth back to one new set of leaves as it grows to maintain the shape and promote good branching.

6. Wash the plant in Ivory Liquid solution or Safer Soap every 10 days to prevent insect problems. Remember to rinse the plant later with clear water. When the bonsai is outside, insect problems are greatly reduced.

7. Repot tropical trees in mid summer during their dormant period or in early winter before new growth starts. This is at the end of December or early January. Repotting involves changing the soil and trimming the roots so that new fine roots may grow. When you repot, add iron, micronutrients, mycorrhiza and Bio Gold to the bottom layer of soil. Be sure to put mesh over the pot holes and wire the bonsai into the pot. After repotting, you will soak the bonsai in a solution of water and transplanting solution.

## Semi- Tropical Bonsai

These are trees that benefit from remaining outside from the last frost date in Spring around May 30th and remain there until late fall after light frosts when they lose their leaves (elms, trident maples) or set flower buds (azalea). Once they are brought indoors treat the same as tropicals. Those that have dropped their leaves will bud out after December 21st. They should be repotted in December.

**Outdoor Bonsai** These are trees that are hardy in our climate and could be grown in the ground year-round.

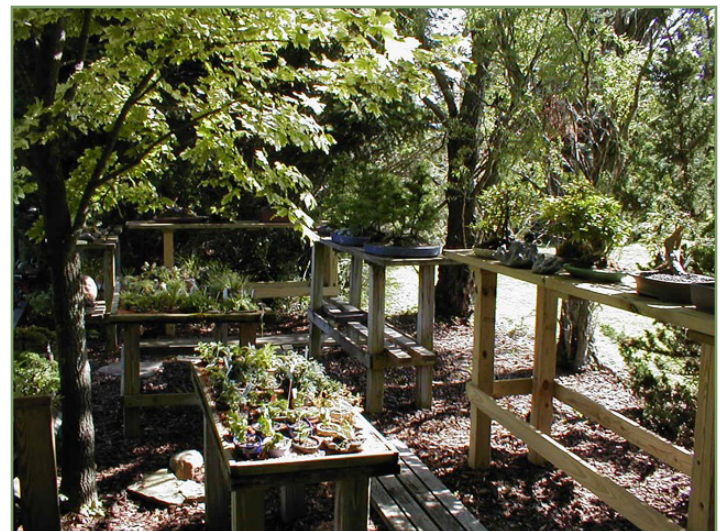
1. These must be kept outside year-round. In the spring, summer and fall they are kept on stands or tables in the sun or semi-shade. In winter they are stored as described below.

2. Protect them in an unheated garage or cold frame in the winter. They may also be planted in the ground for winter where they will be protected from the winds and rodent damage. Mothballs around the tree help protect them from rodent damage. Protect from deer. Very hardy species like larch can be stored under trees in your yard in winter... protect from strong winds and heavy snow dropping on them.

3. Water daily or more often in hot, windy weather with a gentle rose on your hose or watering can.

4. Fertilize with an organic pellets such as Bio Gold during the growing season. In the spring, treat the soil with a dose of micronutrients and a dose of chelated iron. Repeat the iron one month later.

5. Turn the tree often for best growth. Each species of bonsai has its own light requirements...ask about this when purchasing the bonsai.



6. Pinch or cut new growth back to one new set of leaves as it grows to maintain the shape and promote good branching.

7. Wash the plant in Ivory Liquid solution or Safer Soap to prevent insect problems. Remember to rinse the plant later with clear water. When the bonsai is being stored for winter rinse it with both Safer Insecticide Soap and Fungicide Soap. Clean away all dead leaves before storing. Check the bonsai during the winter to make sure it does not dry out. If the soil is frozen, it does not need water.

8. Repot before spring growth and root trim before repotting in bonsai soil. Repotting involves changing the soil and trimming the roots so that new fine roots may grow. When you repot, add iron, micro-nutrients and Bio Gold to the bottom layer of soil. Be sure to put mesh over the pot holes and wire the bonsai into the pot. After repotting, you will soak the bonsai in a solution of water and transplanting solution.

8. If problems develop, see an expert immediately; do not wait for it to get better.

9. During the growing seasons, bring in for special occasions to show, then put them outside on their benches immediately after the event.

Nutrients, fertilizers and other materials mentioned in these instructions are available at my studio. I also offer care of trees, grooming, and repotting at the studio. Remember to read a good bonsai book or take lessons for detailed information.

Lessons are given at our studio by appointment. Call Pauline Muth at 518-882-1039 or contact by email at [Pauline@pfbonsai.com](mailto:Pauline@pfbonsai.com)



## Officer Profiles

*Compiled by: Devon*

Seeing as we've elected a new board, I thought I would make an attempt to shed some light on these New Kids on the Block.



### PRESIDENT

Name: Matthew

Sign: Capricorn

Favorite tree (species):  
My unicorn, Japanese  
Maple

Favorite tree (style): It's  
gotta be Moyogi  
(informal upright)

Hobby/Interest: Guitars and reeftanks

Last book read: Bonsai with Japanese Maples

Last book written: Well, I'm working on a paper for my hort. class about bonsai cultivation in Wi.

If I had three wishes, I'd ask for: Zone 6 in Wi, A wallet that never ran out of hundred dollar bills, and the ability to breathe under water.

Something interesting about yourself nobody knows: I can't say.

When I grow up I want to be: youthful

Favorite toppings on your bratwurst:  
Mustard, sourkrout, and yes, ketchup

Favorite quote: "the dude abides."  
The Big Lebowski

Favorite ice cream flavor: Vanilla, with a lot of stuff on it

The person I admire most, and why: Mr. Miyagi. Do I really need to explain that?

Best bit of advice I ever received: Don't be afraid to dream, and dream big.

Anything else you wish to add: No, I'm saving that for my section of the news letter.





## VICE PRESIDENT

Beau

Favorite tree (species):  
Weeping Willow

Favorite tree (style): Root  
over rock

Hobby/Interest (besides  
bonsai): Ultimate frisbee,  
travel, cooking.

When I grow up I want to  
be: Happy.

The person I admire most,  
and why: Carl F Gauss  
because he may have  
done more to advance  
human civilization than  
anyone else. Thomas Jef-  
ferson was a close second



because he might have been the most free thinking  
person ever.

Best bit of advice I ever received: Don't commit more  
than one crime at a time.

## SECRETARY

Greg G

As duly appointed secretary I do solemnly swear to  
uphold the bylaws if they pertain to me.

Just a little background as requested by Devon. I was  
actually born a hoosier, a long time ago in a galaxy  
far, far away. We moved to the budding metropolis  
of Monroe when I was in the first grade. Apart from  
a few excursions I have always been hear. Graduated  
from UW Stevens Point with a degree in forestry. Got  
my first real job in New York teaching environ-  
mental education to New York City inner city kids,  
and is where I met and married my wife. Took another  
job fighting forest fires in Central Florida. Got tired  
of fighting other peoples fires so I took a cool job as  
forest manager for a cattle ranch in Southern Florida.

Hear I got to set my own forest fires, let them play  
around a little while and then after they did their job  
put them out. It was here that I first dabbled in the  
black arts of bonsai. I actually purchased a few copies  
of the magazine Bonsai Today from a Waldens book-  
store, issues 13 and 14, now their are up to number  
129. Worked for a few years in Alabama (roll Tide).  
Decided that I had seen enough of the world and  
packed up my family and moved back to Monroe.  
Took a job with a growing landscaping company as  
plant purchaser in Madison and came to know The  
Badger Bonsai Society. The rest is as they say - His-  
tory.

As to some of Devon's questions, if cooked properly a  
good brat needs no adornment not even a bun, and god  
made vanilla ice cream -that is alll

-Greg

