

# BADGER NEWS

A PUBLICATION OF THE  
BADGER BONSAI SOCIETY

## MEETING - MAY 14th 2009

6:30pm -8:00pm

Olbrich Gardens

3330 Atwood Ave. Madison

## MEETING AGENDA:

Discuss Annual Bonsai show May 16 and 17, sign ups for demonstrations and help. Demonstration of Air-layering. Sign up for workshop during June's meeting.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

At our next meeting we will review the final details for our show at Olbrich Gardens on May 16th and 17th. There were postcards available at the last meeting that you could send to friends and post at local libraries and nurseries and anywhere else you think will draw people to our exhibit.

(editor's note. You can also get posters at our website [www.badgerbonsai.org](http://www.badgerbonsai.org). Download the poster and get it out to as many places that you can think of. Greg)

There will be demonstrations on both days and we will be looking for volunteers to fill those spots. This is a great opportunity to show the public something about our hobby. You do not have to be "an expert" only willing to share what you know about the art of bonsai.

At the last meeting there was a handout about preparing your tree for a show. It provided timelines and suggestions as to what you should do to make sure your trees are ready. Please start preparing now if you have not started because Friday night or Saturday morning is probably a little to late to start.

Also bring your trees no matter where they are in their process of becoming masterpieces, the public needs to understand that bonsai must go through a process of becoming the breathtaking specimens most people visualize. It is OK to show them that they, Bonsai, just like us grow into what they become, they don't get that way instantly. My only recommendation would be that they are in bonsai pots and be cleaned up like other show trees but being full of wire or still having sacrifice branches growing to thicken up areas of the tree would be great to show the public. So don't rule out trees that are not finished.

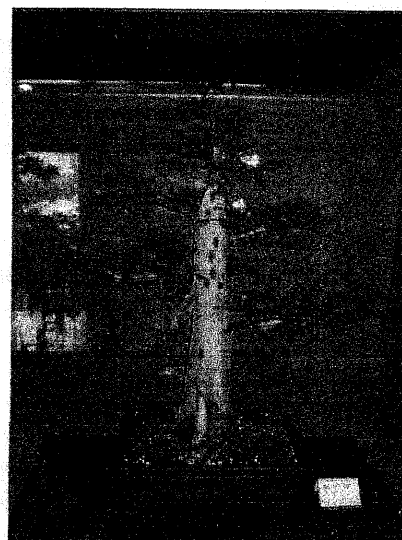
## President's Message (cont.)

The main topic of the May meeting will be a demonstration on air-layering which is one way of propagating potential bonsai from material that may not be as desirable as you would like. We will have two different trees that we will try this technique on and in the coming months we will bring them back to show you the results

For our June meeting we will have a workshop with Boxwoods or Shimpaku Junipers and the cost will be \$80.00 and there will be a limit of participants. I have picked out the trees just this week at Brussels' Bonsai in Olive Branch, Mississippi. Please be prepared to sign up for the workshop at the May meeting and a payment of at least \$25.00 will be necessary to hold your place, or you can pay in full. I will bring an example of what the trees are, so that you can judge if this is material that you would like to add to your collection.

See you on May 14th, remember meetings start at 6:30pm.

Ron



## Newsletter News:

### FLASH

Sooner or later in the next few months we will be stopping the mailing of hard copies of this newsletter opting to install the newsletter in the website only. The option will still be there to get a hard copy mailed to you if for some reason you cannot get the website, please let me know so I can make arrangements so that you will continue receiving this monthly, hopefully informative, if not entertaining newsletter. Thanks

Greg

### DISCLAIMER

This message is made from recycled electrons, the slight variations in spelling and grammar enhance its character and beauty and should not be considered flaws!

Ron provided us with a pamphlet giving us some extremely useful information in preparing our bonsai for exhibition, if you didn't receive a copy someone should have one at our next meeting. Some other helpful tidbits are as follows:

#### One week before show;

Clean sides and bottom of the bonsai container removing all moss and mineral deposits and soil. Mineral deposits are the result of evaporation of mineralized water. Mix a little vinegar with water, this helps loosen those minerals, then they can be easily scraped off with a knife.

Inspect the plants for insects. This can be quite embarrassing, no one wants to see a slug crawling across the table looking for a new home.

Scrub the trunk and primary branches well, removing any moss or mildew.

#### Day before the Exhibition

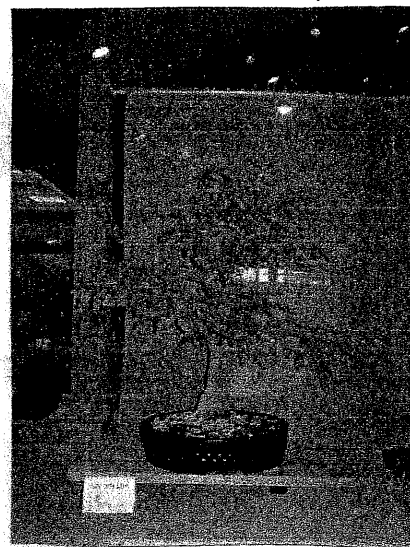
Select the stand on which your tree is to be exhibited upon. Check the stand for damage, dust and apply a light coat of wax.

Remove any new weeds and repair moss.

Water the tree thoroughly, it will be going through a dry spell for the next few days.

Clean the container and wipe the exterior surface with a cloth which has a light amount of olive oil on it. Do not make the pot shiny and slick looking.

Set the tree on the stand, check for overall effect.



#### Show Prep (cont.)

#### After the show

Water the plant

Check the plant for damage and repair if needed

Clean and dry the stand, apply a light coat of wax.

Reminder: tree preparation should not be put off until the day of the show if one is to present the best possible representation of his skill and artistry

**ACCENT PLANTS** are an interesting side adventure in itself. I am going to try to visit Fox Flowers tomorrow. Found this in a website called Knowledge of Bonsai. Funny thing Gary e-mailed me the next day saying that he had just visited a great information packed web site yep- [www.knowledgeofbonsai.com](http://www.knowledgeofbonsai.com). Try it

### **SIMPLIFIED CULTIVATION OF MUSHROOMS FOR ACCENTS AND KUSAMONO**

by Will



After having a photo essay showcasing some of the many accents and kusamono I have created by cultivating mushrooms in accent pots and driftwood published in Bonsai Today, I received many requests to explain the process that I use to do so.

## Mushroom Accents (cont.)

The following is a step by step tutorial explaining one way in which I accomplish this. I have chosen to show the easiest way, which is also the way with the lowest success rate. I have found that I achieve a much higher success rate taking tissue cultures, but that is much more tedious and difficult operation requiring sterilization and pasteurization. There is however, already an excellent article on that, & can be viewed at [www.shroomery.org/...](http://www.shroomery.org/...) Mushroom cultivation. Unfortunately, most online information on cultivating mushrooms deals with the psychoactive type.

The world is full of mushrooms of many shapes, colors and sizes; sadly they are often overlooked by many and simply referred to as toadstools by others. I see mushrooms as undiscovered treasures in the woods, forests and lawns that surround us. Once you start looking for them, you'll notice that they are everywhere, they grow in wood chips, in lawns, on straw, on fallen logs, on living trees, and virtually everywhere else imaginable. Many of us have noticed them in our bonsai pots, this is a good thing, as they are the fruiting bodies of the fungus that lives in the soil and helps our trees grow.

When choosing a mushroom to cultivate for use, size should be of priority. In the picture above are some cultivated *Psathyrella gracillis* which I chose because of their pleasing shape and rich color, as well as for their naturally small size of just over an inch. They were also selected because they naturally grow on wood chips, a very easily obtainable and affordable substrate.

Besides coming in almost every color of the rainbow, mushrooms also come in many different shapes and textures. In the picture above the *Coprinus atramentarius* I cultivated in a piece of pine wood have remnants of a universal veil still clinging to the caps, giving them an almost shaggy texture. The texture is carried somewhat further with the moss planted on the surface of the substrate. Both seem to work remarkably well with the piece of wood collected in the woods. Besides its clean beauty, I selected this species for cultivation based on its size (2-3 inches) and on the fact that it likes disturbed soil and often grows on or near decaying wood.

For the tutorial below, I have selected a very large mushroom for example purposes which would be too large as an accent for all but a very large bonsai. When choosing a mushroom to cultivate one must not only consider the size, shape, color, and texture, but also the pot to cultivate it in. Mushrooms can not be transplanted successfully in my experience, the mycelium, which in the ground could extend for miles, is damaged too easily and the mushrooms will quickly start to pale and in the case of Inky Caps such as the *Coprinus atramentarius* above, melt within hours.

Mushrooms reproduce by spreading spores, some by dropping them from gills or pores located underneath the cap, some by melting into an inky mess, and others like puffballs release them into the air above. These spores are what we need to cultivate mushrooms

Spores are too small to be seen with the naked eye, they can however be seen when there are enough of them. In the picture above I have removed the stems from two mushrooms and placed the caps gill side down on a plain white sheet of paper.

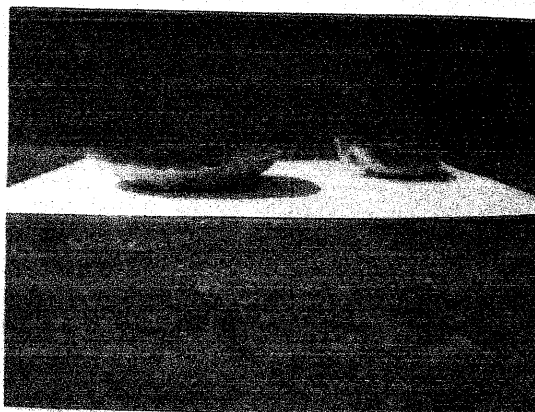
I carefully removed the caps after about an hour and now we can see a brown spore print around the damp area of the paper. The brown spore print is made up of millions of spores.

I know some people who use the paper as the "seed" for cultivating the mushrooms but I have found that cutting out the middleman works best for me. Our goal here is to introduce all the spores directly onto the substrate surface.

For our purpose I will use a single mushroom to "seed" the substrate with spores. With smaller sized mushrooms, I might use as many as a dozen mushrooms.

The mushroom I have selected naturally grows in compacted soils and I have also found it growing in wood chips so I have prepared a mixture of rotted bark, clay based soil, and vermiculite which was sterilized by baking in a clay pot on an open fire. I bake my substrate once mixed and then store it in open buckets with drainage holes all year long until time comes to use it.

I remove the stem close to the cap with a pair of shears



## Mushrooms (cont)

I then lay the cap onto the substrate which is just barely wet and cover with plastic wrap. By barely wet I mean that if I took a handful and squeezed it, no water would drip out, but it is still damp to the touch. If you can squeeze water out, it is too wet.

I leave the cap on the substrate for 24 hours and then remove it, carefully covering the pot back up with the plastic. After a week I remove the plastic and move the pot under the deck where it will stay until the following spring or fall, depending on the species. (Any dark cool place would work, a shed, a basement, a garage, etc.) The time it should be brought out is dictated by when the "seed" mushroom was collected. If I collect in May, Then I'll bring out the pot one month earlier the following year, in other words eleven months. Great care must be taken to assure that the substrate never dries out or becomes waterlogged.

I "seeded" eight pots with this species and only one bore fruit. After eleven months past I brought this pot out from under the deck and moved it to a warm semi shady location where it fruited nicely in a few days, so quick in fact that I almost missed it completely.

It is impossible to control how many mushrooms will come up I often need to prune a few out in order to make a visually pleasing display, be careful though, you can't add them back in. You should also be careful not to touch the mushrooms as they may bruise with ease.

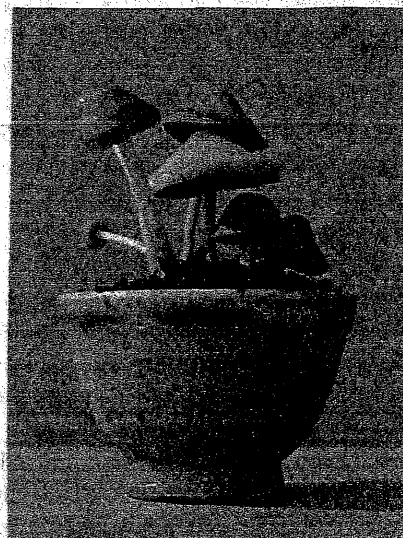
I often get multiple flushes of mushrooms, a new set coming up as the older set begins to die back or even after they have died completely. Each new flush is different in number, sizes, and location.

Although the success rate using this method is low (about 25%) those that do fruit are remarkable and since they are growing in the pot, they last sometimes for weeks and multiple flushes can extend the show period by months sometimes. I make up for the low success rate by "seeding" multiple pots, assuring that the species I want will be on hand.

Will

So while walking around the yard or the woods do not overlook those mushrooms especially the Morels. They are an interesting world all in itself. Be mindful of Nettles, mosquito's and deer ticks. See you at the meeting and also the show.

Greg



## 2009 CLUB OFFICERS

President	Ron
Vice President	Greg
Secretary	Duke
Treasurer	Gary
Refreshments	Elaine
Communication	Devon
Newsletter/Librarian	Greg

