



BADGER BONSAI SOCIETY

Promoting and Enjoying the Ancient Art of Bonsai Since 1972

Badger News | A Publication of the Badger Bonsai Society | June 2019

Next Meeting Date:

Thursday Jun-13-2019 | 6:30 to 8:00pm

Olbrich Botanical Gardens

3330 Atwood Avenue, Madison, WI

AGENDA:

Three simultaneous demos; Annual Show Recap

CLUB OFFICERS:

Co-Presidents Bill and Karl

Vice President Mary

Treasurer Gary

Web Master / Newsletter Wayne

Librarian Derek

Refreshments Elaine

President's Message

June-13th Program

After the success of our 2019 Annual Show (see the recap and highlights below). we would be hard pressed to do better ... but thanks to 3 of our experienced bonsai veterans, we are going to give it a try. — *Karl*

- ***Bonsai 3D — Demo, Demo, Demo***
- ***Review and Discussion of Annual Show***

Welcome New Members

Aside from showcasing our membership's efforts, the Annual Show is one means in which we educate the general public and attract new members. 2019 was no different. We are proud to welcome 4 new members joining at The Show: EveD, EmilyR, and family members KatrineR & ScottR. Please make sure you introduce yourself around at your 1st meeting (which we hope is the

June meeting). We look forward to meeting you and sharing our appreciation and knowledge of bonsai! We hope your involvement with the Badger Bonsai Society will be fulfilling and rewarding. At any meeting, feel free to bring along any trees you have to showcase or to ask questions about ... and do not hesitate to suggest or contribute to the newsletters or website (contact Wayne for that) ... don't be shy!

Show and Tell

Remember that members are encouraged to bring along a tree, or something bonsai-related, to our meetings. We'll give you a minute or two for the **tell** part – nothing long, perhaps what species or cultivar the tree is, how long you've owned it, problems/successes, etc. If you need any special resources (such as a computer or projector, ...), please let any officer know in advance (you can get contact info at the meetings or use the Contact-Me form on the BBS website). As an encouragement, we'll give you an extra raffle ticket (for awesome door prizes) for your effort.

Bonsai Demo x 3

When we poll our members for meeting ideas, 'member demonstrations' is always one of the programs requested. So, to accommodate your wishes we will have 3 of our experienced and long-time BBS members (Mary, Ron and Tim) conducting simultaneous demonstrations at our

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June meeting. Recall that these 3 members also demonstrated (along with Bill) at the 2019 Annual Show (those details can be found later in the newsletter), so their efforts at the June meeting will be greatly appreciated.

Each demonstrator will take a few minutes to describe the good and bad points of their selected material, then they will start working on their tree. It is always interesting to see what can be achieved in an hour or so. As always, feel free to ask questions.

Though each demonstrator reserves the right to change their plans right up to meeting time, their current plans are:

- Mary — American Larch, initial styling from nursery stock
- Ron — Honeysuckle, 1st styling of year on established bonsai
- Tim — Blue Star Juniper, initial styling from nursery stock

July Picnic

If anyone would like to host the July picnic, please step forward. The host gets to pick the time and date. We have always done this as a pot luck and it has always worked out well. We also use this occasion as a white elephant 'sale'. Members can bring excess seedlings, cuttings, pots, etc. to swap, sell, give away, or donate to the club to use as door prizes.

Summary of the 2019 Annual Show

Wow!!! What a show!!! I don't know how it could have been any better. We had fifty-eight trees displayed, and as I told several people, about half were worthy of a magazine cover - and the other half were almost as good. When I look back at pictures of our earlier shows, the quality of the trees has come a long way. Most of the trees were displayed on appropriate stands accompanied by accent plants. Mary, Tim, Ron, and Bill each gave a great demonstration. Extra chairs had to be set up to accommodate the audience for the demos. Balloting for 'Public's Favorite Tree' was spread over many trees, but ChrisH claimed both first (Boxwood with water feature) and second place (Korean Hornbeam). BarbaraB's Korean Hornbeam grove on a slab took third. Many folks said they simply couldn't pick one tree as they were all beautiful. Melba's squirrel kept the younger visitor looking; Will's construction treatment captured the kids interest; and Derek's levitating display made all young and young-at-heart stop and take a closer look.

Our estimate is that 1300 people attended the two-day show. This is about 400-500 more than previous years. We had 4 new members join, and expect quite a few additional walk-ins at the June meeting for people showing an interest.

There are so many people to thank – I hope I don't forget anyone. First, Gary was responsible for leading all of our volunteers in setting up and tearing down the exhibit – Wayne, Molly, Ron, Derek, Elaine, Tim, Jason, Gene and Linda, Tamaki, Bill, Will, James, Ralph, Karl and Melba. Thanks to our demonstrators; to the several people who brought treats – Tamaki, Melba, Elaine, Mary; to the folks that ran the front table – Gene and Linda, Mary, Bill; to Wayne for photographing all the trees; to Barbara for making the name tags; to Devon for production of the show flyer; to everyone that interacted with our guests; to Mary for serving as show chairman, and of course, all the members who brought trees to display. Without you there would be no show. In addition, a grateful thanks to the Olbrich Gardens facility & staff for their continued interest and support of the Badger Bonsai Society.

Gary has a few ideas to tweak next year's show to make it even better. If you have suggestions, pass them on to any of the club officers. Again, thanks to all volunteers, "displayers" and visitors! — Karl

Annual Show Public Favorites



1st Choice
Boxwood
Buxus sempervirens
by Chris H
22 years in training
estimated age 25 years

2nd Choice
Korean Hornbeam
Carpinus tschonoskii
by Chris H
25 years in training
estimated age 31 years



3rd Choice
Korean Hornbeam Forest Planting
Carpinus tschonoskii
by Barbara B
20 years in training
estimated age 30 years

Interesting Tidbits

This month, Karl shares a few "interesting tidbits" ... what do you think? Please take a moment to think about these, and hopefully share your thoughts at any of our meetings.

(Eventually we will get these set up on the website for moderated commenting.)

Progress on Ginkgo Seeds: I haven't seen any signs of germination yet. Has anyone else? Our cool spring may have delayed germination. For me, the seeds all sank when they were soaked in water – this is the test used to indicate whether the seeds are vital. These seeds were collected from a different source than in previous years, so I suppose there is a possibility that the seeds are sterile??? I know the crabapple in my yard, in spite of producing lots of apples, has never produced any seedlings. Perhaps the ginkgo seeds will eventually sprout. Don't give up hope yet. In Vertrees book on Japanese maples, the author writes that in his first attempt to grow maples from seeds, only 5% germinated the first year (sown in a seed bed outdoors). However, the second year another 25% sprouted, and lesser numbers continued to sprout for five years! Hard to figure out what Mother Nature is doing in delaying the germination for so long.

WEIRD: I am amazed at unusual stuff that occurs with our trees. The climate in my bomb shelter always lags the season by a few weeks. That is, it is slow to cool down in the fall, and slow to warm up in the spring. I try to get them back outside about April 15. Usually the trees are still asleep and the buds show little to no signs of growth. This year one of the small Japanese maples had four leaves that had already opened and were an incredible bright red. I have never seen this before. Placing the tree outside in the sun, the leaves quickly withered away. I wish I had photographed it, because in retrospect, I wonder if this really happened. It just seems so unlikely.

our website: badgerbonsai.net

Cherry Pits: If you have been out grocery shopping lately, you will have noticed that summer cherries are now arriving in stores. After eating a handful one is left with the pits. Can we plant these? Yes, but the success rate will be dismal. The actual seed is hidden inside this tough pit. I came across a video on YouTube that shows how to eliminate the long stratification process that others suggest. Here is the link:

[Bamong Doaung – How to Germinate Cherry tree from seed](#)

Pinching Junipers: Brussel's Rendezvous brings in five or six world-class bonsai teachers each year to demonstrate and lead workshops. One of the bits of horticulture info that was offered this year was to NOT pinch the growth on junipers. What?!? The Japanese have been doing this for 1000 years and now we're told it is a mistake? We obviously know much more about plant hormones today than even 100 years ago. But, I'm not sure I'm buying this one. Stay tuned ... **What do you think about this?**

Want an image of your tree?

If BBS Members that displayed trees at the 2019 Annual Show would like an image of their displayed tree(s), please contact me (Wayne) and I will email you the image file. You each have my email from the monthly emailings. These are the same images that will be in the 2019 Annual Show slide show, that I plan to have ready for the Jun-13th meeting.

Note that I also have images from the 2018 Annual Show if you are interested in those as well. — Wayne

Annual Show Demos

Each year our Annual Show features multiple bonsai-related demos each day that never fail to capture the attention of the public and members alike. This year was no exception ... though we had upwards of 40 chairs out, at times throughout the 1-1/2 hour demonstrations, it was often standing room only; with more than 50% of the viewers watching the entire program. Each demo is summarized below with relevant information, before and after pictures and some action shots. Thank you again to the BBS members who presented this year.

Saturday, 11am demo: RonF — The Ficus is a very forgiving tree; it can handle aggressive styling and defoliation and regrows rapidly; this makes this species an ideal tree for beginners to experts. Starting with a previously styled tree, Ron re-styled to encourage refinement and improve the overall structure. A key principal of bonsai that Ron learned from John Naka is that *"a well laid out tree does not interrupt your vision path from the base of the tree to the apex of the tree"*.



Intense Concentration



Pleased with finished Ficus



In his demo session, Ron also worked on a *Podocarpus macrophyllus* (also called the Buddhist Pine or Yew Plum Pine); a readily available coniferous tree or shrub that is very suitable for any bonsai project; its smallish elongated leaves work well to achieve a nice proportion in a finished tree (below right).

Though this was the first demo of the 2019 Annual Show, Ron still had a very engaged and attentive audience.



TREE QUOTES

"If you can't find the front, find the back and then rotate it 180 degrees."

— John Naka

Saturday, 1:30pm demo: Tim — If any of you have seen Tim's demos before, you know that he likes junipers and the windswept style. Starting with a nursery shrub, Shimpaku (Juniper chinensis seagreen), Tim swore that this time he was NOT going to end up with a windswept style. Upon completion (below right) we see a very nice start to an informal slanted tree.

Starting point



progress and finished Shimpaku



Tim also had a packed house that he kept entertained as he reviewed his goals for this tree, as well as bonsai principles and tools.

Sunday, 11am demo: Bill (BBS Co-President) — When Bill was first asked about doing a demo, he was not sure what to do ... then it all gelled. This was going to be a slightly different approach to a demo, and focus on propagation methods and concepts. Bill had a tree, *Ficus microcarba* Green Island variant that he found for very little cost. Now it was not your ideal bonsai specimen to begin

with, as it looked like the nursery had tried to create a topiary from it ... you know, like a bunch of leaves in a ball on top of a bare trunk ... that probably explained the attractive price tag.

What you see at the far left is what Bill brought in, after two approach grafts half way up the trunk (middle) and three separate leaf grafts (right) just above the soil line as part 1 of his project.



Bill explained that he had always wanted to try grafting, and knew that this particular variety of Ficus was very amenable to grafting — and more importantly, fusing techniques (more about that later). Using these grafts Bill was hoping to create structure where none originally existed in this tree. Bill was pleased when he found that all 5 of these April-2019 grafts had taken.

Continuing on with the demo Bill explained that he intended to work on and style the top of the tree to reduce the height and remove "what doesn't belong".



Here (to the left) is progress on the tree after some of this initial styling during the demonstration.

With the top complete (for now) with his initial styling, Bill moved onto the next portion of the demonstration. Bill's plan was to attempt to create an air layering that will allow him to separate the top of the plant in a few months. Bill explained that he needed to cut through the bark all the way around the trunk, but only to a depth that would still allow the existing roots to feed the entire plant, but prevent the nutrients and sugars created by the portion of the tree above the air-layering from being transported back down to the original tree roots. As the tree (and Mother Nature) realizes what has happened, the tree (and Mother Nature) kicks in to force new roots to be generated at the point of the air-layering separation.

Shown below is the precision cutting (using a sterile and very sharp knife), allowing Bill to cleanly peel the outer bark layer away from the trunk. Note that it is important that the exposed gap have enough length to prevent the bark closing over the gap. Very nice touch Bill!.



The final step of the demo — for now — is to prepare the exposed gap; keep it damp; dust it with rooting hormone; Bill choose to wrap the gap with dampened Sphagnum moss and bonsai soil / potting soil mix; enclosed this "nurturing mass" in a container that fits around everything (above right); wire it in place; then enclosed everything in plastic to keep everything moist for about a month. With frequent checks to see if water is needed ... need to keep the developing roots moist, but not saturated.

Bill then explained, that in about 4 to 6 weeks, once the air layer takes (and creates a stable root ball)

Bill will remove the top of the plant (below the container) and transplants this new "little tree". He will also seal off the top of this new cut, and move on to the next part of his master plan ... he will do another air-layer (below the looped approach grafts), eventually to allow him to remove the (originally) middle portion of the tree. Once that air-layering is complete and cut off, he hopes to take what is now 3 viable trees (from the original one tree) and some other small ficus trees he is culturing for this purpose, and bundle all the bases together such that the these will eventually FUSE together into a single large base. Bill hopes to be able to get to this point prior to the wintering season, so that spring-2020 "his baby" can get in some serious growth and fattening time. And the best part ... Bill will be documenting this continuing journey and hopes to put together this history for a future BBS Meeting. All in all, a great demo and glimpse into a unique bonsai concept ... Bill kept the audience engaged!



Sunday, 1:30pm demo: Mary (BBS Vice-President) — For the final demo, Mary found a Green Mountain Boxwood (Buxus 'green mountain') nursery shrub that she was excited to style. During the course of her demonstration, Mary explained key bonsai concepts, typical bonsai tools and their specialized purposes and advantages. In addition to the typical cutback removal of "what doesn't belong", Mary also demonstrated how wiring techniques are used to set branches into the location of her vision for this tree, though along the way, she got the audience and BillB involved in choices.



Starting point



progress and consulting



As you can see, the before condition (above left) compared to the ending point (below left) is quite a

transformation ... and not to mention a lot of cutoffs branches on the table; the beauty of those cuttings of boxwoods is that if quickly placed in water or soil, you can generate a separate new plant from each cutting. Notice how the finished tree takes on a different appearance when simulate the final potting.



Throughout the demonstration Mary kept the audience involved and interested ... great demo!
Here are a few more pictures from the Show ...



Other Shows and Conventions:

Annual Prairie State Bonsai Show

August 2 - 4, 2019

Hours: Fri, 6pm - 9pm, Sat - Sun, 10am - 4pm,
at the Morton Arboretum, Lisle-IL
guest artist: Dana Quattlebaum

get show flyer:

[http://www.prairiestatebonsai.com/images/
PSBS_showflyer_2019.pdf](http://www.prairiestatebonsai.com/images/PSBS_showflyer_2019.pdf)

42nd Annual Mid-America Bonsai Exhibition

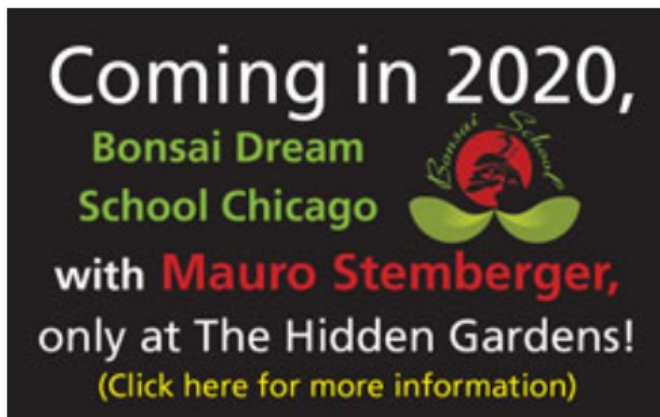
August 16 - 18, 2019, Chicago-IL

Guest Master William Valavanis

Hidden Gardens (Willowbrook-IL)

Visiting Bonsai Artists:

- Todd Schlafer, Aug 10-11, 2019
- Jan Culek, Oct 26-27, 2019
- Mauro Stemberger, Nov 9-10, 2019



MABA / Milwaukee 2020: Jun 25 - 28, 2020

feedback ... Song Sparrow Nursery

Song Sparrow Nursery (Avalon-WI) still has their annual open house on June 15th, however I cannot recommend you go. Barbara B and I went on June 1st and unfortunately they had almost nothing usable for bonsai. -- Karl

Tentative 2019 Calendar for

Badger Bonsai Society meeting & events:

(date is 2nd Thursday unless noted differently below)

TBD – Field trip to [Davidsan's Japanese Maples](#) in New Berlin-IL

TBD – Slab making workshop TBD

TBD – Field trip to Rotary Gardens, Janesville and Anderson Garden, Rockford

June meeting – Veteran Demonstration

Three of our own experts will showcase their creativity with simultaneous demos

July (date probably 2nd Saturday)

Picnic with white elephant exchange; bring items for sale / swap / giveaway ...

we are looking for a location yet ... anyone interested?

TBD – Field trip to Mayflower Nursery, Hobart, WI

August meeting – Succulents, guest speaker

September meeting – Bonsai Styles

October meeting – American Bonsai Masters and examples of their work

November meeting – Tropical workshop; BBS elections; collection of ideas for 2020 BBS meeting topics and content

December meeting – Suiseki and daiza making

Jan-2020: Annual Membership Club Dinner

Watch For
MABA/Milwaukee 2020
www.milwaukeebonsai.org/maba

