



BADGER BONSAI SOCIETY

Promoting and Enjoying the Ancient Art of Bonsai Since 1972

Badger News | A Publication of the Badger Bonsai Society | April 2020

Next Meeting Date:

TBD ... due to COVID-19, Olbrich Gardens and State of Wisconsin have suspended formal gatherings

AGENDA:

No meeting ... at home activities for you

CLUB OFFICERS:

Co-Presidents Bill and Karl
Vice President Mary
Treasurer Gary
Web Master / Newsletter Wayne
Librarian Derek
Refreshments Elaine

President's Message

April ~~meeting~~ Activities

As you by now know, Olbrich is closed and will probably remain closed for the remainder of the spring. So, do not plan on attending our April meeting at Olbrich. The building is locked up. For now, Wayne has setup another ranking activity that you are encouraged to undertake on your own (see more details on page 4), and I (Karl) have a few suggestions for interesting YouTube bonsai-related videos to keep you involved instead of the April meeting.

I am not too optimistic about whether our May meeting and our May Annual Show will occur. We will just have to wait and see what unfolds. JosephG has suggested that we hold a virtual bonsai meeting. It seems many other groups are resorting to this virtual approach – Madison City Council, the WI State Legislature, and my

granddaughter's school to name a few. While this may offer an alternative to our physical meeting, there are some hurdles to overcome before moving in this direction. We will keep you up to date on any plans.

That being said, it is always great to see plants starting to wake up after a long winter snooze. And unlike last year with the polar vortex, it appears this past winter was not devastating to most things. I always overwinter a few big trees on my driveway, burying them in snow (up to the first branch) if nature provides some light fluffy early snow. There were a few more in the backyard that were left on the ground this year. The combination of the trees getting bigger and me getting older dictated what I was going to move. I decided from the bench to the ground was far enough. Also, it appears the deer browsed some of the arbor vitae. Not bad. They did a somewhat artistic job ... that will be with me for years to come.

This month should be when the bulk of your styling and repotting take place. Repotting should be done if the roots have colonized all the space in the pot, thus reducing water infiltration and aeration. But still keep an eye out for low temps!

What is beautiful?

Suppose you could find someone who had never seen a tree in their entire lifetime. Now take them

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to a bonsai exhibit. Ask them, “Which trees do you find beautiful?” Would they rank the trees in a way comparable to the ranking of a long-time bonsai hobbyist? I don't know for sure, but if I had to guess, I can well imagine a close matching of the two. I think there is something fundamental regarding beauty that exists deep in our genetic make-up. Now, it goes without saying that we are all influenced by what others have dictated to us as to what is beautiful, so it cannot be denied that some portion of our assessment is learned – perhaps even the majority of it. But, I can't help feeling that our hypothetical observer from the opening sentence wouldn't look at 'Goshen' and say “Wow! That's gorgeous.” Our other senses seem (at least to me) to have similar evaluative properties. A newborn might love her first taste of pears, but recoil at being given beets. And certainly the sound of music is much more pleasant than the sound of noise for both new born and oldster. The smell of a messy diaper and the smell of a rose elicit different responses. Right from birth we seem to be wired to evaluate incoming sensory data – this is good, that is bad. My dear psychology friend says these are just learned responses. But I am not so sure. What do you think?

Wild Plum

About thirty years ago the highway department re-did Highway 51 as it runs up the east side of the airport. Jim Gibeau, long time BBS member and now sadly gone, was able to save some trillium from the bulldozer.

I dug up some wild plum. If one flips through most any bonsai book, there is apt to be an image or two of plum bonsai – possessing beautiful gnarly old trunks. I planted my collected trees in the ground, on the south side of my house where they would get lots of light. Well, after thirty years they are a little taller – perhaps four or five

feet now – but, the trunk diameter is virtually unchanged. They were roughly thumb-sized when I collected them, and thumb-sized still today. After thirty years! They do produce white blossoms so it has not been a total loss. I think I will try to air layer a few to see if I can get mame sized trees from them.

YouTube suggestions:

I have been watching lots of You Tube videos recently. Some are very good, others are less so.

Peter Chan, who operates Heron's Bonsai in England, has many, many YouTube videos. He has been doing bonsai for more than fifty years, so he has a great deal of knowledge about what works and what doesn't. His nursery is huge, and he is growing trees in the ground, in nursery pots, in training pots, and in bonsai pots. He propagates many trees utilizing seeds, cuttings, and air layers. He does it all. If he has any fault, I would say he is not as artistic as some other bonsai masters. To a degree this is very understandable, for it is his business is to sell lots of trees. One cannot take a week to style a tree and then put a \$5000 price tag on it – no one would buy it. So market forces limit how much effort can be put into a single tree.

If you like driftwood, then watch Graham Potter of Kaizen Bonsai. Potter is another Englishman and his ability to create marvelous bonsai from what appears to be junk is amazing. He makes extensive use of power tools and is not hesitant to carve away large portions of the tree.

Lastly, give an eye to Bjorn Bjorholm, who operates Eisei-en Bonsai in Tennessee. Bjorn is one of a handful of Americans who has apprenticed for several years in Japan. He obviously learned a great deal while there.

Lots of other talented people out on the Internet, but these are three that I enjoy watching. -- Karl

Show 'n' Tell

remember, bringing something related to bonsai to the meeting to show & tell about, will get you an additional ticket for our meeting door prize drawings!

At the March meeting, MaryE brought in a desert rose (remember our Jul-2019 topic on succulents) that she got from K&W Greenery in Janesville-Wisconsin ... looking forward to seeing it again.

Other Shows and Conventions or Societies:

Listed below are events that were set up prior to the current COVID-19 situation ... May events are going to be questionable, be sure to check out the individual websites for current status.

Potomac Bonsai Association Festival

May 1-3, 2020 United States National Arboretum,
3501 New York Ave NE, Washington, DC 20002

Bonsai Vision 2020

May 14 - 17, 2020

Drury Plaza Hotel San Antonio North Stone Oak,
823 N Loop 1604 W E, San Antonio, TX 78232,
USA ([map](#)). Lonestar Bonsai Federation Convention

For more info see: www.sanantoniobonsai.org

Brussel's Rendezvous

May 22-24, 2020 (over Memorial Day weekend)
Olive Branch, MS

Mid-American Bonsai Show and Sale

August 14 - 16, 2020 Chicago, IL

One of the largest regional shows in the nation, and centered on the Chicago Botanic Garden's Permanent Collection, features over 50 world-class trees.

US National Exhibition

Sep 12 - 13, 2020 East Rochester, NY

Join people from around the world for the U.S. National Bonsai Exhibition, where over 200 of the finest bonsai in the world will be on display.

National Bonsai and Penjing Museum

3501 New York Ave NE, Washington, DC

Bonsai Global Seminars Oct. 8-11, 2020. Kellogg Conference Hotel and the U.S. National Arboretum, Washington, DC.

If you are ...

During these tough times of staying at-home, as you work on trees, please take a few moments to take photos at various stages and jot down some simplified (or detailed) thoughts. We might be able to use your examples for a display at our Annual Show or for future meetings ... whether organized get togethers, or virtual sessions, or just website postings.

Thanks ... and STAY SAFE !

Tentative 2019 Calendar for

Badger Bonsai Society meeting & events:

(date is 2nd Thursday unless noted differently below)

April 9 - **meeting canceled**

May 14 - **meeting TBD** create a forest on a slab

Badger Bonsai Society Annual Show

May 16 & 17, at Olbrich Gardens ... **TBD**

June 11 - simultaneous 3 demos, Annual Show Review; MABA update

July - Membership Picnic ... no meeting

Aug 13 - TBD

Sep 10 - TBD

regarding MABA 2020 ...

The Milwaukee Bonsai Society is hosting the MidAmerica Bonsai Alliance (MABA) convention June 25-28, 2020.

See the MABA/Milwaukee 2020 website for more information, or click to download the PDF of [MABA 2020 Registration Packet](#).

2020 Mid American Bonsai Alliance:

Insights Into Bonsai

June 25-28, 2020 at The Four Points Sheraton Milwaukee North Shore (8900 North Kildeer Court, Milwaukee, WI).

Hosted by the Milwaukee Bonsai Society.

Be sure to check for COVID-19 impact on event.

MABA/Milwaukee 2020

www.milwaukeebonsai.org/maba



[click image for link](#)

our website: badgerbonsai.net

April "at-home" Activities: Ranking Japanese Collection ...

If you recall, in February, we ranked the North American Collection of the National Bonsai and Penjing Museum via their on-line images. Given the COVID-19 situation, and lack of a physical meeting in April, Wayne has prepared a similar ranking document for 42 trees (of the 63 total) that are available on their website for the [Japanese Collection](#). The ranking document is intended to be a guide to assist in your viewing of the on-line images. Instructions can be found on the last page of the ranking document. This time Wayne will collate rankings that are submitted by April-27th via the Badger Bonsai website Contact Us page, and include in the May newsletter and website postings. Get the [ranking document here](#).

Catch Up On National Bonsai Federation blog ...

If you have not explored the website of the National Bonsai Federation, an addition to the website in 2019 is the [Bonsai Blog](#), and with our "stay-at-home-time", what a great opportunity to catch up on these postings. A wide variety of posts are available, ranging from tips for photographing trees, to details of favorite species, bonsai-related techniques, and historical spotlight articles on trees in the National Collections. In fact, if you recall last month, we mentioned one of the trees in the North American Collection – a juniperus communis (shown at the right), that was collected and styled by Jack Douthitt, the first president of the Badger Bonsai Society. [A blog post](#) from March-5-2020 provides a much more detailed history of this tree and Jack ... a very good read indeed!

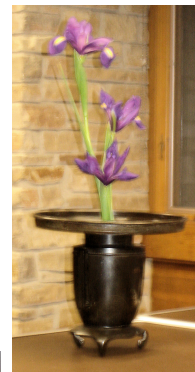


Share your bonsai links:

If you have good bonsai-related resources, be it websites, articles, topics, blogs, stores, or videos that you routinely examine or subscribe to, please prepare a list with a brief summary explaining why you like each (or what you don't like). Wayne will be testing out a submission method on the website in the next couple of weeks that can be used to compile your suggestions, and make available on the website. We have talked about this for a while, and again, what better time to contribute to our website ... you will most likely find something new that appeals to you.

Recap of March Ikebana Program:

At our Mar-12th meeting, David Staats of the Madison-WI Ikebana Society, provided an interesting background and demonstrations of Ikebana, the ancient Japanese art of flower arranging. David spoke of the underlying relationships of heaven - man - earth that quite often guide the arrangements. The results were interesting to see develop rapidly before our eyes. Thanks again David!



Iris emerging from water



Forsythia, literati-type arrangement



Lilies, Tulips, Spray Roses