



BADGER BONSAI NEWS

September 2023

President's Message

By Ron Fortmann

Our September 14th meeting is an extended session ending at 9:00 pm.

Early fall is one of the best times to do structural wiring on our trees. This is mainly because it's during the months of September and October when most of our trees are putting on vascular growth (girth). Trees have two main growing sessions during the year. One is in the spring when they experience foliage growth to propel them into the new growing season and the other is in the fall when they add girth.

Fall is a great time to position branches and make movement in trunks, and the wire can often stay on over winter to help set things into position.

So bring a tree that you might want advice on how to wire or move branches into other positions.

I will also bring you updates on the recent shows in Chicago, Milwaukee, and Rochester, New York, and share news about shows that will be close to us next year. I hope you will mark your calendars and make plans to attend some or all of them.



BADGER BONSAI
Society

Promoting and enjoying the
ancient art of bonsai since 1972.

CLUB OFFICERS AND ROLES

President	Ron
Vice President.....	Mary
Secretary	Lisa
Treasurer.....	Ken
Web Admin.....	Jason
Newsletter	Lisa
Librarian.....	Alex

*Badger Bonsai News is a monthly
publication of the Badger Bonsai Society.*

<https://badgerbonsai.net>

UPCOMING EVENTS

BBS August Meeting

Thursday, September 14, 6:30–9:00 pm
Olbrich Botanical Gardens
3330 Atwood Avenue

Agenda:

- Fall structural wiring

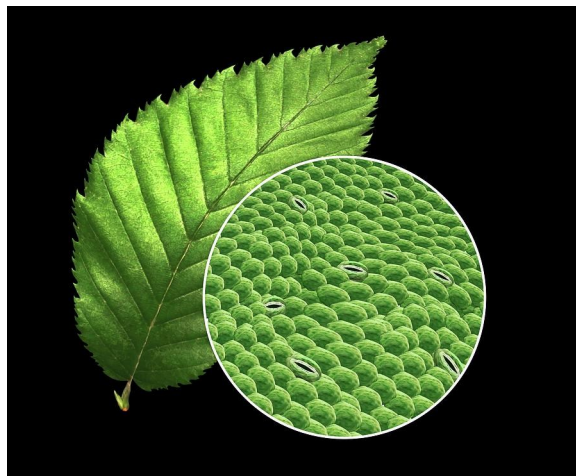
August Meeting

With the dog days of summer upon us and in the middle of a draught to boot, Ron decided we'd take a "deep dive into water" at August's meeting (pun intended? we weren't sure). Take a deep dive he did, with a comprehensive presentation on the role of water in bonsai cultivation.

We were on the edge of our seats as we listened to the fascinating story of how water travels through a tree from its roots to its foliage via the tree's vascular system, or xylem, and exits as water vapor through tiny openings in the epidermis of the leaves in a process called transpiration.

We were so transfixed by Ron's presentation, we didn't even notice when it was time to end the meeting.

For more on this topic, see Ryan Neil's article, [The Function of Water in Bonsai](#) which was published on the Bonsai Mirai blog.



Plant Leaf And Stomata is a photograph by Mikkel Juul Jensen / Science Photo Library

Of Interest on the Web



[Badger Bonsai Society Member Group](#)

BBS members only platform for sharing tips, advice, and inspiration between monthly meetings

A few of our suggestions for further study on what's happening this month in the world of bonsai.

[Wiring Bonsai Trees](#)

- *Bonsai Tonight (Techniques—Styling)*

[Eisei-en Bonsai](#)

- *Bjorn Bjorholm Facebook Page (Inspiration)*

[Chopstick Creation](#)

- *Bonsai Mirai (Blog Post)*

[Yamadori Bonsai - The Home of the Most Extensive & Dramatic Collection in North America](#)

- *Stone Lantern (Bonsai Bark Post)*

[Bonsai Auctions](#)

- *Facebook Group—Weekly auctions of bonsai and related goods with a value over \$75.*

[99 Cent Bonsai](#)

- *Facebook Group—Weekly auctions of bonsai and related goods with a value under \$85.*



Follow [Badger Bonsai Society on Facebook](#) for the latest news, meeting agendas, upcoming events, and inspiring shares from the world of bonsai.

Show & Tell



Thorns on the branches of Zach's bougainvillea (*Bougainvillea glabra*) have stopped him from doing any real wiring work, but they haven't stopped the tree from putting on a stunning magenta show. Fun fact, the colorful and showy bloom we think of as the flower, is not a flower at all but a bract, a specialized leaf with the function of attracting pollinators for the plant's reproduction. As seen in the enlarged picture on the left, the white bougainvillea flower is insignificant compared to the larger and more colorful bract.



cialized leaf with the function of attracting pollinators for the plant's reproduction. As seen in the enlarged picture on the left, the white bougainvillea flower is insignificant compared to the larger and more colorful bract.



Colin introduces us to his latest acquisitions, Sechuan (*Zanthoxylum simulans*) and Sansho (*Zanthoxylum piperitum*) pepper trees from One Green World, a nursery in Portland, Oregon, specializing in unique trees and shrubs. The pair will mate (aka pollinate) for a, hopefully, long life in Zach's care and can be expected to produce peppercorns in about two years.

land, Oregon, specializing in unique trees and shrubs. The pair will mate (aka pollinate) for a, hopefully, long life in Zach's care and can be expected to produce peppercorns in about two years.



Sharon, who never thought she'd grow a tree she'd have to keep outdoors, found herself buying what she thought was a low-growing blue globe Japanese larch (*Larix kaempferi*?) at a nursery in Indiana. More investigation, which included getting the opinion of



her BBS friends and calling the nursery where she bought it, followed by calling who she thought was the original grower from Ohio, revealed that the tree actually came from a totally different grower but was mislabeled by the nursery in Indiana. While NOT a low-growing blue globe larch, we definitely think it's

a larch, although it looks more like a pine. Having solved the mystery of what type of tree she had, Sharon got to work turning it into a low-growing specimen after all. She much prefers Shohin to the space-hogging larger varieties in many of our collections. It will remain in the nursery pot until next spring when it returns for a second show and tell appearance.



Mary brought in a juniper she had found at a big box store which she had gotten to in time to save from certain death. Potted in a ceramic container in potting soil and topped with decorative moss,

the tree, like many of its kind, looked healthy enough with dark green foliage. But because junipers tend to retain green foliage for a long time, even when in distress and dying, Mary examined the roots and was pleasantly surprised to see them healthy as well. But left in that container, Mary's new juniper didn't have long to live because the pot had no drainage holes and without drainage, repeated waterings would lead to root rot. Lucky for this particular tree, it had been rescued by Mary. The other junipers that remained on the store shelf are either still there languishing or in the home of an unsuspecting bonsai enthusiast who will blame themselves for their little tree's demise.

Show & Tell



Alex showed us the progress that had been made by his beautiful Shim-paku juniper since being voted in the top ten of favorite bonsai at this year's BBS Annual Exhibit in May.

He also shared a lesson he had learned about

the importance of a good set of wire cutters. When he needed to move up to 8 gauge for the juniper's thickening branches, his ordinary toolbox wire cutters literally couldn't cut it. So he sprung for a pair of nice bonsai wire cutters and quickly came to understand why nice tools are so expensive. They are an investment in the hobby definitely worth making, he advised.



Ken shows us that even an unassuming annual like this Lantana (*Lantana camara*) can become a bonsai if kept alive until it's stem turns into a woody trunk.



One of Skylar's very first trees is this nice little Trident maple (*Acer buergerianum*). This deciduous tree is named for its leaves with three forward-facing lobes resembling, you guessed it, a trident. Fall color of the leaves varies from yellow to red and orange.



Zach somehow found room in his car for an impressive American larch (*Larix laricina*). Also known as a tamarack, this deciduous conifer is very hardy in our northern winter climate.

Zach described his plans for the tree and the various supports, wires and raffia wraps he was using to bend the strong branches of the ten-plus year old tree to his will.



Visitor, and hopefully future member, Gregory, showed us a trio of the succulent elephant bush (*Portulacaria afra*), which were unlike any we'd ever seen before. Hailing from California, Gregory is used to growing bonsai for milder climates that could live outdoor year round.