



# BADGER BONSAI NEWS

April 2024

## President's Message

By Ron Fortmann

As expected winter has decided to show itself just when we thought it was over. I don't know about you, but my trees are a bit confused. My crabapple is in full flower and a Chinese quince that normally is in flower is just starting to swell its buds.

Our April meeting will be a big one. It's a workshop format with repotting the focus. We also have an extra hour to work. We will be in the space directly below where we usually meet. So bring a tree to repot and take advantage of the experience of other members who can help you and answer questions.

A ground rule for this meeting is what you bring in you take out. You should be prepared to have a piece of plastic or tarp to work on to contain the debris, which you'll need to take out with you as we can't dispose of it at Olbrich. As I stated last month, be like a Boy Scout and "Be prepared." Refer to the list on the handout from last month of tools and supplies you may need for your repot. Think things through for what you may need and bring those items along just in case they are needed.

### RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

One housekeeping item that may exist for just a few of you is



Teamwork is the dreamwork in a photo from last year's repotting meeting, Skylar, Zach, and Paolo work together to repot Skylar's larch.

to renew your membership before the meeting this week. We have several convenient ways for you to handle your renewal: see the website, or a newsletter from the past four months or so, for details. For those who have not yet renewed, if we do not receive your renewal by the April meeting, we will assume you are no longer interested in BBS membership and remove your name from the membership list. And we'll be sorry to see you go.

### BBS ANNUAL EXHIBIT

Our annual show takes place May 18-19 and as usual we need your help to get

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### BBS MARCH MEETING

Thursday, April 11, 6:30—9:00 pm

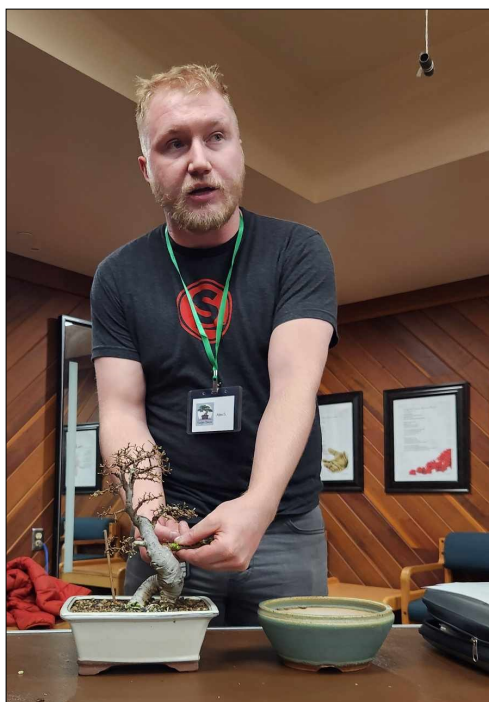
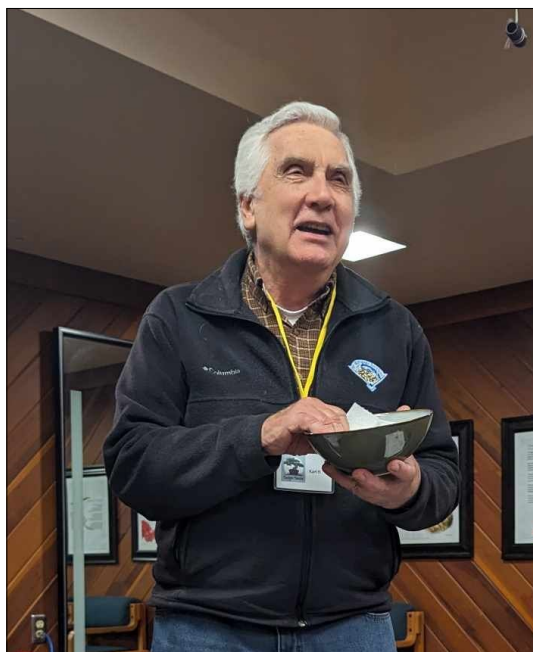
Olbrich Botanical Gardens  
3330 Atwood Ave, Madison

### AGENDA:

Repotting our Bonsai - bring your tree(s)!

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# March Meeting SHOW *and* TELL



From left:

Karl told us how he uses a diamond bit on a drill press to turn thrift store bowls into bonsai pots; a very useful skill!

Alex's smooth Bark Chinese elm is in the refinement stage and ready for a repot. He has a nice new Sarah Raynor pot from the Chicago show that he plans to repot into.

Colin's Prunus Mume (pronounced Ume) is flowering beautifully in a newly repotted Shuho pot. His Chojubi Japanese quince will be repotted into an exquisite new Roy Minarai pot (bottom left) at a new angle.





From top left:

Ben made his own screen from scrap materials at home to sieve his own soil! His first attempt sifting over a wheel barrel went great.

Mary bought this Forsythia from Home Depot last year and potted it in a half moon pot; it is ready to bloom very soon. BBS members expressed interest in a Forsythia workshop if Mary can find suitable specimens.

Paolo's Lavender starflower has beautiful flowers right now (close up above). He plans to chop the top in an effort to change the design.



From top left:

Skylar recently repotted his literati-style Japanese maple into a nice shallow pot that doesn't take away from the design but instead puts more emphasis on the tree.

Zach grew his triple-trunk Amur maple he grew from a cutting about 4-5 years ago.



Bottom left:

Ken's False Spirea from Menards is looking beautiful with its new spring color in a nice glazed pot.

Dean made the case for very small trees because they are cheap and easy to manipulate. He potted these three birth saplings with a washer and a piece of sheet metal at the base of the trunk that will force the trunks together and also force the roots to form into a flat plane over the sheet metal. Definitely a very cool technique.



# 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.

### [How to Repot a Bonsai](#)

- Bonsai Empire

### [When Will Spring Start? Examining Why The Start of Spring Varies Each Year](#)

- Bonsai 4Me Blog

### [Uncovering a Nebari](#)

- Crataegus Blog

### [Field Growing Trees for Bonsai](#)

- Bonsai 4Me Blog



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

## President's Message

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the show setup and taken down. We also need volunteers each day to walk throughout the show and interact with our visitors, provide demonstrations, and man the welcome table to hand out and collect favorite tree ballots. And of course, we need your creations to display for everyone to admire. This is our opportunity to show the public and inform them more about a hobby we all enjoy, and while doing so, hopefully convince them to start their own bonsai journey. Whether you consider yourself experienced or a seasoned pro at growing bonsai, a few hours of your time to interact with show attendees helps make the hobby more accessible to everyone.

### MAY MEETING PREVIEW

Our topic in May will be show preparation. We'll do a quick review of what items should be considered before putting a tree out for public scrutiny. We want to put our best foot forward and it is the attention to the minute details that allow a tree to be the best it can be at an exhibit.

I will also share some knowledge about stands and accent plants or other items that are typically displayed with trees as a way to accentuate and compliment the tree. It's like choosing the appropriate outfit and accessories for an important event. The pot and the stand needs to be the right pot and stand for the variety and size of the tree, the moss or other top dressing needs to be freshly groomed, any accent plants or rocks should harmonize, and the tree itself should be neat and tidy.

### BBS WEBSITE

Finally, if you have not looked at the Badger Bonsai Society [website](#) lately, take a few minutes review it. Paolo has been spending considerable time refreshing and working to make it a better site. Please let him know what you like and share any new ideas you have for improvement. Our website represents us to the rest of the world.



### CLUB OFFICERS AND ROLES

President .....	Ron
Vice President.....	Mary
Secretary.....	Lisa
Treasurer.....	Ken
Web Manager.....	Paolo
Newsletter .....	Lisa
Librarian .....	Alex
Past-President.....	Wayne
At-Large Board Member.....	Zach
At-Large Board Member.....	Skyler
At-Large Board Member.....	Loren

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

<https://badgerbonsai.net>

# Repotting Bonsai

Why do we do it?

And how do we plan for it to be a successful event?

## Reasons to repot

- Water does not easily flow through the pot
- Tree needs to be repositioned in its current pot
- You want to move the tree to a new/different pot
- Tree is in a mix that is too wet or dry
- To slow the growth of a tree (trees that are too strong)
- To accelerate the growth of a tree (trees that are weak)
- To develop the root spread and root system
- To get the tree into a mix that is manageable by the owner

## Repotting as a technique to develop our trees.

- Refined deciduous trees are repotted yearly to slow down vigorous spring growth.
- Refined conifers are allowed to become root bound to slow down vigorous spring growth.
- Repotting and soil mixes are a fundamental part of bonsai cultivation and should not be overlooked on your journey to creating beautiful bonsai.
- Trees that are in soil mixes that hold water for longer periods of time will grow slower.
- Trees that are in soil mixes that hold water for shorter periods of time will grow faster.
- If you find your trees are not developing the way you expect them to or the quality of the tree is no longer increasing year after year, the length of time the soil mix holds water may be a factor.

## Questions to ask yourself when repotting

- Is there enough or too much room in the pot I selected?
- Is this the appropriate pot for the tree?
- Is the soil mix I have chosen going to cause the tree to grow too fast or too slow?
- Did I get the tree in the ideal position?
- Did I get the tree firmly anchored in the pot?
- Did I get the soil integrated properly with the roots without overly impacting them?

## Timing - Best when the tree is energy positive

- Deciduous trees - as buds are swelling, just as leaves are about to emerge or are just emerging; generally not once leaves are fully emerged.
- Deciduous conifers - just before foliage emerges.
- Conifers - usually as the winter color is receding and the foliage is changing back to brighter green.
- Tropical trees - usually early to mid summer, typically when they are more active.

## Setting yourself up for a successful repot

- First and most important step is to create a space that provides plenty of room to easily perform the scope of work you are about to begin.
- Next, have the soil you intend to use prepared and ready for use. Sift soil one last time to remove more dust; every little bit helps.
- Give yourself enough time to repot, it often takes longer than you estimated

## Here is a list of other items that you should consider having ready and available for the repotting process

- ☐ A container/tarp that the repotting will be done in/on to contain the debris
- ☐ Garbage bag/can
- ☐ Turntable
- ☐ Soil sieves
- ☐ Soil scoops
- ☐ Pot saw (Kama)
- ☐ Root hooks
- ☐ Root cutters
- ☐ Root saw
- ☐ Chop sticks
- ☐ Root chisel
- ☐ Root shears
- ☐ Wire cutters
- ☐ Wire pliers
- ☐ Hammer
- ☐ Screwdriver - hand and/or power
- ☐ Knife
- ☐ Tie down wire - aluminum, steel
- ☐ Drain screen
- ☐ Screws for anchoring
- ☐ Wood blocks/bamboo for wedging, supporting tree
- ☐ Rubber for protecting roots from wire
- ☐ Water mister
- ☐ Watering can
- ☐ Tub for watering
- ☐ Mycorrhizae, Superthrive, or root stimulator
- ☐ Top dressing made from long fiber sphagnum moss and collected green moss often mixed on a 3:1 or 2:1 basis with the higher number being the sphagnum moss