



# BADGER BONSAI NEWS

October 2024

## President's Message

By Ron Fortmann

As the calendar changes to October, there are a number of bonsai activities that should be considered.

As the days get shorter and temperatures fall overnight we can ease up on watering a little bit. During spring and summer when we're not sure whether we should water or not, the advice is to water. If you're not sure during the fall, it's best to let the tree dry out a little more.

Fertilization is a key activity at this time of year as this is the second major growing window our trees experience. This is when they put on vascular growth and storing energy for next spring's emergence.

Leave tropicals outside but keep an eye on the overnight temps. If it's going to drop into the 40s, it's a good idea to bring tropicals in overnight and set back out if higher temperatures are expected during the day. Let those trees experience all the natural sunlight they can until temps are consistently in the lower 40s.

Fall is also a prime time for wiring our bonsai. All conifers will benefit from wiring at this time of year as sap flow has slowed down. For deciduous trees, once leaves change colors and start to fall, you have about two weeks to apply wire before the trees shut down for their winter rest. This is also a great time to prune branches on deciduous trees so as spring approaches the tree does not put energy into areas that will likely be pruned back once leaves have appeared and hardened off.

Fall is also a busy time for pines as shoot selection needle plucking should be done. This is only IF the tree is in the refinement stage of life.



September's meeting was dedicated to wiring.

## BBS 2024 CALENDAR

Monthly meetings are on the second Thursday. All are at Olbrich Botanical Gardens unless otherwise indicated.

**OCTOBER 10, 6:30 - 8:00 pm**

**Olbrich Botanical Gardens**

**3330 Atwood Avenue, Madison**

**AGENDA: Artificial lighting member demonstration**

**NOVEMBER 14, 6:30 - 8:00 pm**

Member silhouette show (naked trees, not stands or accents), Officer elections

**DECEMBER 12, 6:30 - 8:00 pm**

Review May Show Trees, maybe pick top ten voted trees and have owners tell us about them Holiday Treats and social

*Continued on Pg 2*

## President's Message continued

Late fall is also a good time to do soil maintenance on our trees, removing weeds and working through the upper surface of the soil to break up compacted soil to aid in better water flow.

So as you can see there are a number of things that probably should be attended too.

For our October meeting, BBS member Michael, will share his knowledge of and experience with using LED lighting for his trees. I'm looking forward to hearing what his experience has been. As with most things in life there are a wide range of options from around \$20 to hundreds of dollars, and it will be interesting to find out what has worked for him.

In November our meeting will have two significant events. One is the election of board members for 2025. Board members make sure the business of the club is planned and executed. This work is done outside of the normal meeting nights, so we can spend only quality bonsai time during our meetings.

Currently the slate of officers for 2025 is as follows:

President - Colin

Vice President - Alex

Treasurer - Ken

Secretary - Lisa

Webmaster - Paolo

Newsletter - Lisa

Librarian - Alex

Director - Skyler

Director - Zack

Director - Loren

Director - Mary

If you have an interest in any of these positions please let me know prior to our November meeting.

The second event at the November meeting will be a member's show of trees in silhouette (trees with NO LEAVES). This is so one can appreciate the branch and twig structure of the trees on display. The show is simple: no leaves, no stand, no accent plants, no anything, just a naked tree in its pot. No pines, no conifers, no tropicals either, unless they have NO leaves.

See you on October 10th.



## Dubuque Arboretum & Botanical Gardens Japanese Garden

Dubuque Arboretum & Botanical Gardens celebrated the 30th anniversary of their Japanese Garden on September 29. Badger Bonsai Society was invited to demonstrate the art of bonsai during the event along with other Japanese-themed artists, musicians, and the public.



Zach, Loren, and Lisa set up displays and answered questions while Zach demonstrated wiring on two different types of juniper. As is typical of these types of presentations, people were fascinated to learn that bonsai were not a unique cultivar, but ordinary trees trained to their current form and style.

Visitors took with them a handout on the basic principles of bonsai with information about Badger Bonsai Society and several people said they would make the trip to Madison for the BBS Annual Exhibit in May.

The arboretum gave the trio a check for \$100 to offset expenses, but they are donating the money to the club. Special thanks to Loren for driving the hour and a half (one-way) trip and risking us getting his car dirty.

*More pictures on Pg 5*





## September Meeting

The meeting on September 12 was dedicated to wiring. Zach and Ron demonstrated technique and then we got to work wiring our individual trees with guidance from club experts.

September is a great month to wire bonsai for several reasons:

**Active Growth Phase:** In many regions, early September marks the transition from summer to fall, and bonsai trees often experience a second flush of growth. The new growth makes it easier to shape the branches using wiring since they are still flexible but strong enough to hold their shape.

**Mild Temperatures:** The cooler weather in September reduces the stress on the tree compared to the heat of summer. It's also more comfortable for us to work on the tree for longer periods without the intense summer heat.

**Wound Healing:** Wiring in the fall allows the tree to heal any minor wounds caused by wiring before it enters dormancy in winter. The healing process is still active during this period, but growth has slowed, reducing the risk of significant scarring.

**Winter Preparation:** By wiring in September, the tree will be shaped and ready for the upcoming winter dormancy. As the tree enters its rest period, the wired branches will have time to set in place without the need for regular monitoring of fast growth.

**Leaf Drop in Deciduous Trees:** For deciduous species, September often coincides with the beginning of leaf drop. Wiring during or after this process allows for easier visibility of the branches and better access to the structure of the tree. Once leaves fall, wiring should be done within two weeks.





# August Meeting

## SHOW *and* TELL

Pictured from top left:

Skyler saw this rosemary at a recent bonsai convention and just had to get it. He likes the idea of being able to use bonsai cuttings in cooking.

Gabriella with her new tiger bark ficus. She bought some bonsai for her kids and then treated herself to this one. She was concerned about the uneven growth, but we reassured her it's very happy and thriving.

Greg with an *Operculicarya decaryi*, a succulent from Madagascar that grows a wood-like caudex ("trunk"). He brings it inside in winter, where it only needs to be watered twice all winter. He gave cuttings to anyone that wanted some. He cautions people not to buy ones online with a perfect barrel-shaped caudex, as these are virtually all illegally taken from the wild.

Tim with a scotch pine bunjin. He is using string in a pinch to hold the branch in position.

Paolo shows 2 of the 3 narrow-leafed ficus starters he donated to the raffle.

Phillip with a tamarack (larch) and a sunburst honey locust. He donated both trees to the raffle.

Alex with his eastern red cedar that he turned into a bunjin at a previous meeting. He said it's not a true cedar, but actually a type of juniper.

New member Dennis showed a juniper he bought a couple years ago from someone selling bonsai out of a truck. This was his third try at keeping a bonsai alive, and this one has survived and thrived. He and his wife took the tree with them on vacation recently to make sure it would get proper watering and care.

Zach with 2 *Fitzeria* junipers he trained from on-sale nursery stock. The smaller one uses the same or more wire than the large one because it has more intricate branching.







# 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.

[Haunted Trees](#)  
- Bonsai Mirai

[Early Senescence or Leaf-Fall in Trees](#)  
- Bonsai 4 Me

[Wiring Bonsai Trees](#)  
- Bonsai Empire

[What do we call the top of a bonsai?](#)  
- Crataegus - Michael Hagedorn



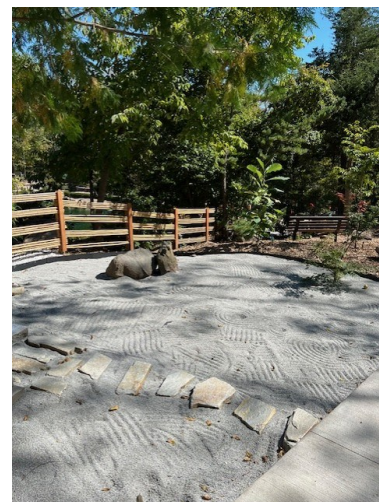
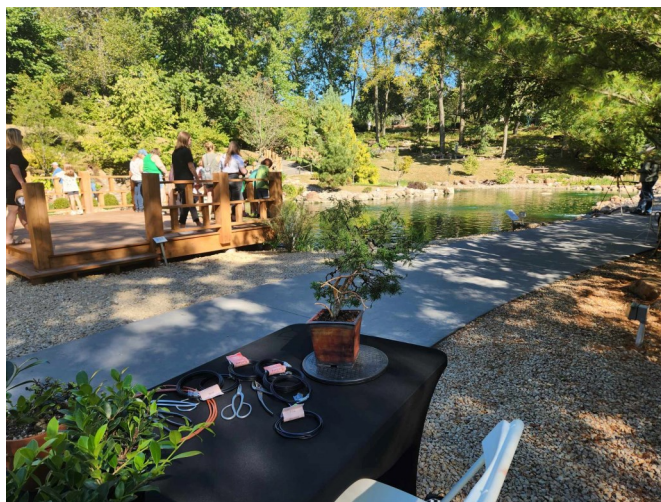
Follow [Badger Bonsai Society on Facebook](#) for the latest news, meeting agendas, upcoming events, and inspiring shares from the world of bonsai.

## Dubuque Arboretum & Botanical Gardens Japanese Garden continued



*A garden in the Japanese style is intended to offer peace and quiet contemplation ... with restraint, order, harmony, and decorum as the guiding design principles. It is an expression of love for living things, acceptance of the transience of nature reflected in the changing seasons, and an inspired vision of the eternal.*

Dubuque Arboretum  
& Botanical Gardens





# Winter Storage Idea

*Now is a good time to begin thinking about winter storage for our temperate bonsai, which must achieve dormancy to thrive. BBS member Jennifer, whose trees have been voted in the top 5 for several years running by attendees of our annual exhibit, shares her successful winter storage method below.*

By Jennifer

Below are pictures of my setup for the care of bonsai that stay out doors in the winter. That box is on a sand pile and bottomless. It's made from one piece of plywood - 3 ft. on one side - 4 ft. on the other. The screen leaning against it is for the top - to keep critters out. When we get freezing weather (which would freeze roots in shallow bonsai pots), I cover the surface of the dirt/moss of each pot individually (to keep the soil/moss relatively clean) with a piece of cloth/old sheet. Then I bury the bonsai in the sand - covering the top of the soil/moss. I can get 15-17 bonsai in that box. The evergreens you see in the picture give some protection from wind. If we have a really dry, snowless spell I sometimes water the bonsai.

My bonsai are divided into three groups. Those that can stand weather outside in zones 3-5; those that shouldn't be below 32 degrees, and a few that shouldn't be below 40-60 degrees. The ones that shouldn't be below 32 degrees I winter in our unheated garage, and the few that can't be below 40-60 in our house or studio.

Of my bonsai that were at the show last spring the large maple forest (with the deer) is wintered outside (I have another box, like the one pictured, for my 3-4 largest bonsai - that maple one, one of my red pines, and 2 others with jack pines and larch). The Geneva Hemlock (bonsai in the rock) stays outside in the first box. The Orangeola maple bonsai (with rock and oriental figures) will be in the garage. I've had the Texas (flowering) Quince in the garage for two years but it insists on leafing and flowering starting in March. Yet the large outdoor bush that had the seedling I dug up doesn't



**BADGER BONSAI**  
*Society*

## CLUB OFFICERS AND ROLES

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

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<https://badgerbonsai.net>

flower until late April-early May. So this year I'm going to try burying my Quince bonsai outside in the first box after I remove it from its pot (the pots sometimes break from the frost and I don't want to lose this pot.)

Most of my evergreens like the juniper, white pine, Scot's pine, spruce, Austrian pines, and boxwood stay outside in the first box. My giant sequoia, Dawn redwood, shore pine, Monterey cypress, black pine (all California species), barberry, Orangeola maples, redbuds, and Korean firs stay in the garage.

If you have a successful winter storage method you'd like to share, in a future issue of Badger Bonsai News, email the editor at [badgerbonsaisociety@gmail.com](mailto:badgerbonsaisociety@gmail.com)

