



BADGER BONSAI NEWS

November 2024

President's Message

By Ron Fortmann

Believe or not, we're now on the doorstep of winter. As I write this at the end of October, the expected high temperature for tomorrow is 81 degrees. But don't be fooled by these false warm days that will soon change to much cooler weather. Winter is coming.

However, you still have opportunities to prepare your trees for the winter and next spring. Here are some things you can do:

- When the last leaves on your deciduous trees change color and drop you have a few days to do fall pruning before the trees fully move into their winter dormancy cycle.
- Wire your conifers as they prepare for winter.
- Examine your trees' soil surface, which has likely become compacted, and work through the surface layer to remove debris and weeds so water can better percolate into the soil.
- Spray your trees with lime sulfur to kill any pests still lurking around. Follow the container instructions and make sure you have the soil totally covered to prevent any solution from getting into the soil.
- Spray tropical trees with an insecticide to address anybody still hanging around.
- Make some notes as to which trees may need repotting in spring and take an inventory of items you will need next spring, such as soils, pots, wire and other supplies.
- Allow hardy trees to experience overnight frosts, moving them into winter protection when nights dip into the 20s.
- Once you've tucked your trees in for the winter don't forget to set a reminder for every few weeks to check on them.

Continued on Pg 2



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*Badger Bonsai News is a monthly
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<https://badgerbonsai.net>

BBS 2024 CALENDAR

Monthly meetings
are on the second
Thursday. All are at
Olbrich Botanical
Gardens unless oth-
erwise indicated.

NOVEMBER 14, 6:30 - 8:00 pm
Olbrich Botanical Gardens
3330 Atwood Avenue, Madison
AGENDA: Member Silhouette Show,
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

President's Message continued

Two big events are planned for the November meeting. First, the election of board members for 2025 will take place. The second event will be our first member Silhouette Show, which will hopefully become an annual event. For those not sure what this means, the trees shown will have no foliage present, only the trunk, branches and twigs. There will also be no stands, accent plants, scrolls or animal figures. Just the tree in its pot like would be natural during the winter.

There will be tables set up and each participant will be given a couple of minutes to tell the history and future plans for their tree. Since there should be plenty of trees to look at, I recommend we hold off on "Show and Tell" items this month to ensure you have enough time to enjoy the Silhouette Show.

Sadly I will not be available for the November meeting as I will be

training with my teacher in Oregon. Bonsai is a hobby where you can never have enough knowledge, so always try to learn where you can. You'll be more likely to achieve your goals and your trees will thank you for your efforts to better understand their wants and needs. Our very capable vice president Mary will keep things on track for this month's meeting.

I'm looking forward to seeing everyone in December where the meeting focus will be reviewing photos of trees from our Annual Exhibit in May. Plan to bring a favorite holiday treat to share. An evening of enjoying what others have accomplished while mingling with friends is a good evening indeed.

See you in December!

Winter Trees

Winter's grip, they stand,
Tall, stoic, silent band.
Leafless limbs reach sky high,
Under snowy blanket, they lie.

Bark etched with sun and storm,
Cold brings a different form.
Gnarled roots grip frozen earth,
Awaiting spring's rebirth.

Branches, stark against white,
Dance of shadows in moonlight.
Hush over slumbering land,
Trees keep watch, majestic band.

Stillness, presence profound,
Winter's guardians, without sound.
Quiet strength, beauty deep,
In woods, where secrets sleep.

- Emily Verse



October Meeting

BBS member Michael, a physics professor at UW Madison, demystified LED lighting in an informative and interesting presentation at the October meeting. Following is a summary of what we learned.

Choosing Indoor Grow Lights for Bonsai

During the warmer months our tropical bonsai thrive when provided full-sun and outdoor conditions. In winter when tropical bonsai must move inside, providing the sustained, and consistent light they need to live is more challenging. Here's what to consider when evaluating lights specifically for bonsai:

The human eye sees light as electromagnetic radiation of different wavelengths. The wavelength determines the light's color. White (or natural) light consists of all colors of the rainbow combined (the full spectrum).

Plants don't perceive and use light the same way as the human eye, which is most sensitive to green (and yellow) light. Chlorophyll, the primary pigment in plants, absorbs light most efficiently in the red and blue portions of the spectrum and mostly reflects green light. This is why plants appear green to us.

The concepts to know if we are to understand plant lighting include:

Lumens: A measure of the total visible light emitted by a light source.

Full Spectrum: Mimics natural sunlight and is suitable for a variety of plants, promoting both vegetative growth and flowering. This is illustrated by The McCree Curve.

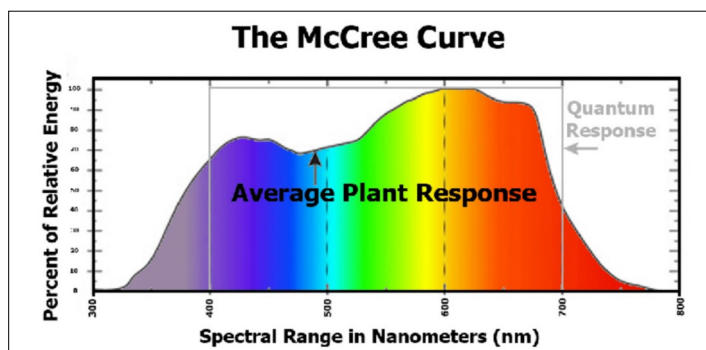
Photosynthetically Active Radiation (PAR): The range of light wavelengths that plants use for photosynthesis (400 – 700 nm).

Photosynthetic Photon Flux Density (PPFD): The measure of PAR that actually reaches your plants, measured in $\mu\text{mol}/\text{m}^2/\text{s}$. High-light plants like bonsai, need 400–1,000+ $\mu\text{mol}/\text{m}^2/\text{s}$. Knowing PPFD helps determine the best placement of grow lights to ensure even light distribution across all parts of the plant canopy.

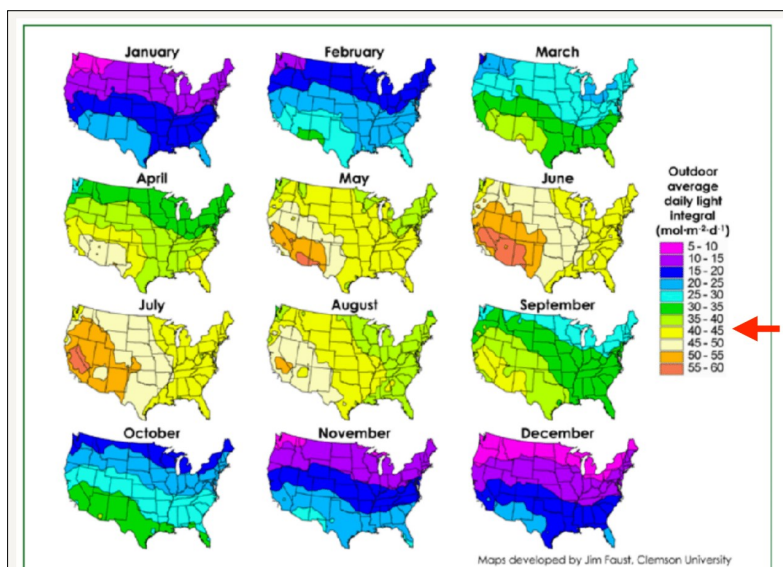
Daily Light Integral (DLI): The total amount of PAR received by a plant in a 24-hour period, measured in $\text{mol}/\text{m}^2/\text{day}$. Every tree has different lighting requirements (this is true outside too).

There are other factors to know, such as which types of lights offer the most efficiency (LED are the most energy-efficient, long-lasting, and capable of providing precise spectrums), but when shopping for plant lights, look for a full-spectrum illustration similar to The McGree Curve with red and green in the desirable range and something with adjustable brightness (can be moved up and down easily as you experiment with what works best for your plants).

Once your lights are purchased and installed, you should ensure they don't get too hot (ventilation and fans are essential in an enclosure).



The McCree Curve bridges the gap between plant biology and lighting technology, offering valuable insights into how light quality impacts photosynthesis and plant health. Plants primarily use blue (400-500 nm) and red (600-700 nm) light for growth and development, absorbing less green light and reflecting it, giving plants their green appearance.



Maps of monthly outdoor DLI throughout the United States. A light with the capability of providing the DLI that would be typical during June and July in Wisconsin is ideal.



PHOTONE
GROW LIGHT METER

A good grow light meter app to try out is Photone. The app allows you to evaluate whether your lighting (indoors or out) is optimal for your bonsai and other plants. The app also contains guides for increasing your understanding of plant lighting and has a plant light database that provides specifics on the photoperiod requirements for common houseplants (including a few of the bonsai we grow). This app comes highly recommended by Sharon, who has tested it extensively.

Of Interest on the Web

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

[Overwintering Bonsai Trees](#)

- Bonsai Empire

[Bonsai Anatomy](#)

- Bonsai Mirai

[Bougainvillea Bonsai Deep Dive](#)

- Bonaible

[Badger Bonsai Society Member Group](#)

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



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

October Meeting SHOW and TELL



Sharon consistently brings in the cutest flowering tropicals and this dwarf Ixora is no exception. Sharon recommends this tree for its easy care and abundant blooms.



Alex recommended we buy those pots we fall in love with when we see them, lest they become unavailable in the future. Alex couldn't stop thinking about this pot after walking away from it at a show a year ago. By the time he tracked it down he was willing to, and he did, pay more to secure it for his collection.



Zach brought in this Siberian elm, which he found on the beach in Wisconsin Dells, as an example of the importance of wiring a tree into its pot. This one wasn't wired and the growing roots are pushing the tree out of the pot. If he had wired it, the bonsai would remain in place even when the roots are growing.



This Eastern red cedar, arranged by Phillip, has some growing to do before it catches up to the rocks it's displayed with but it should be a nice specimen in a few years.