



BADGER BONSAI NEWS

February 2025

President's Message

By Colin Renk

Greetings, fellow bonsai enthusiasts! While we are still bundled up for the foreseeable future, let's not forget that as temperatures begin hovering in the 40s we need to be monitoring the activity of our beloved trees on a daily basis. Given last year's early heat wave was a strange phenomenon, we should always be prepared to dance along with Nature's capriciousness as bonsai practitioners. By March 1st last year my earliest waking species, ume and Japanese quince, were readily pushing their flower buds with no hesitation. While this can be exciting in a climate where we experience several months of bonsai stasis on a yearly basis, this also is a herald of our busiest time of year as artists. Will you be ready?

It is impossible to overstate the importance of performing repotting in a time-frame that is maximally favorable to a bonsai's health and development. This art is a tight-rope act of balancing positive and negative energy flow through an organism in the pursuit of preserving its life and then committing acts that are unfavorable to its well-being for stylistic refinement. While doing seasonally appropriate work in a timely fashion is instrumental to survival, there are many ways in which we can empower our treasures to survive some of the most grueling winters in the continental United States.

During a discussion at Bonsai Central, Andrew Robson remarked that the average bonsai artist in the states chronically under-fertilizes their bonsai. In warmer climates this could simply be a small developmental setback, in our jarringly elemental homeland those low energy reserves could absolutely prove deadly during a particularly harsh winter.

Sanitizing our tools between work on different trees may seem like an irritating chore but fighting a full blown fungus



UPCOMING
EVENT

FEBRUARY 13, 6:30 pm
Olbrich Botanical Gardens
3330 Atwood Ave, Madison

AGENDA:
Pot Artistry

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or disease epidemic in your collection may change ones perspective! Additionally, routine systemic fungicides could stem many of these problems at their origin.

Our new board (myself included) are working hard to provide educational and novel experiences for our membership and would greatly appreciate any positive or constructive feedback you have regarding programming or direction of monthly meetings. Many changes are coming down the pipeline gradually and we hope you all enjoy the journey into the unknown and avant-garde.

Need a Ride to Meetings?

Let us know by sending an email to badgerbonsaisociety@gmail.com and we'll arrange for someone who lives nearby to pick you up.



January Meeting

As has been tradition for many years, members of BBS gathered at Imperial Gardens for a celebration of the holidays, food, and fellowship. Those of us who brought our significant others had to put up with more eye rolling than usual since, with so many of us in one place, there was just no way to get away from the tiny-tree talk.

Mary handed out the packages with help from Loren and everyone received a little something to add to their bonsai toolkit. Ron once again played the role of secret Santa, thoughtfully choosing and wrapping the presents. Thank you, Ron, and thank you, BBS for a lovely evening.





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.

[Bonsai Pots - Selecting the right bonsai container](#)

- *Bonsai4Me*

[Styling: The basic forms of bonsai](#)

- *Bonsai4Me*

[Coin Toss Forest Design Exercise](#)

- *Crataegus*

[Why the earth is not like a pot](#)

- *Evergreen Gardenworks*



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

A note from Mary...

At the last BBS Board meeting a couple of items were discussed that I want to share with all of you. Because Olbrich only allows our meetings to go to 8:00 we are often short on time to just chat and interact with other members.

Here's something we can try - feel free to show up at 6:00 (the room is open by then). That gives us a half hour of free time before the meeting starts at 6:30. Then let's try not to have separate discussions in the back during the meeting and presentations out of respect for the person presenting and those in the audience who are trying to listen.

The other item has to do with Show & Tell. We all love this but we need to keep to a time limit of 3 or 4 minutes per person, especially if a lot of people have brought stuff. If you have something that really requires more time please consider doing it as a planned presentation - we're always looking for those.

Anyway - all this is just meant to help us get the most out of the limited time we have for meetings.

Thanks - Mary



BADGER BONSAI
Society

CLUB OFFICERS AND ROLES

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Newsletter Editor	Lisa
Librarian	Linda
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Board Member	Zach
Board Member	Skyler
Board Member	Loren

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

Good Fortune

By Karl

Sometimes one gets lucky, even when that luck is not warranted or deserved. To wit: last summer I was using my weed whacker to mow down the vegetation that had grown around some of my benches when I noticed that some of the weeds, which were now about knee high, had leaves that looked very similar to those on *Ficus neriifolia*.

“Hey! Wait!,” I said to myself, “That *is* *Ficus neriifolia* and I just sliced through the bark all the way to the heartwood!” The bonsai had either gotten blown off the bench, or some critter helped it along, and I had just destroyed it.

Now, it wasn't a great bonsai to begin with, only shohin size at best. And although losing a tree to insects, fungi, deer, rabbits, or some other act of nature is always hard, losing a tree through actions of its caretaker is even more devastating. So I cut off the damaged top leaving only a short, branchless stump. I wasn't sure what was going to happen. If the tree died, I would have gotten what I deserved.

That's when the bonsai gods took pity on me. The tree responded by sending out shoots from everywhere, and by the end of summer I had a mame-sized bonsai with a puff-ball top. I pruned nothing to allow the tree to build up vigor.

My second round of good fortune occurred in December. The last few years of wacky weather heading into winter has made putting trees into their winter storage more challenging.

This year, some of the more tender species had been put away; the hardier ones were still outside. So it was December and I was starting to put these tougher guys away as well, when I discovered a Kingsville Boxwood laying on the ground - out of its pot and totally bare rooted. How long it had been lying there I had no idea, but it didn't look good. Now I readily confess that this not the first time I've overlooked something because I am usually working in a blizzard at 2 am trying to get things into the bomb shelter. My boxwoods normally overwinter in the bomb shelter, but they can also be grown inside.

So I potted up this DOA bonsai and brought it inside not knowing if it would survive or not. Hallelujah! It seems to be recovering and the foliage is a healthy green. Another undeserved pardon.

Ficus before encounter with the weed whacker



Ficus after encounter with weed whacker and subsequent trunk chop



Kingsville boxwood after surviving abandonment without its pot in winter

