



# BADGER BONSAI NEWS

April 2025

## Herald of Spring

By Mary

After one or two more really cold nights, temperatures will be rising for the rest of April. Spring brings my favorite time of the bonsai year. As my trees start to show buds it's like a new start and always exciting.

Our meeting this Thursday is a potting workshop that you will enjoy even if you're not potting anything - there will be a lot going on. We will be meeting in the Learning Center not our regular room or the Atrium. The entrance is at the back right of Olbrich's main lobby. I will have a few carts in the lobby for moving stuff.

Ron's guide to preparing for repotting starts on Pg 2 of this newsletter. Please bring plastic or a tarp to make it easier to clean up at the end. Everything you bring must be taken back with you.

Our annual bonsai exhibit is less than 6 weeks away. The signup sheet and posters will be available on Thursday and you can see a preview of this year's poster on Pg 6. Your help distributing copies will be very much appreciated. An exciting addition this year will be professional judging, critiques and awards. Voting for the people's favorite bonsai will be the same - the public really likes it. Trees will be judged in two classes: Open (for experienced bonsai practitioners) and Novice (for those newer to the art). Exhibit Only may be used for trees that will not be judged. This allows all members, regardless of experience, to participate and showcase their hard work. Lisa has documented all of this and a few other procedural changes in an Exhibit Guidelines document you can read on our website [here](#). If you are showing any trees, it is important that you review this before the show.



Mary's forsythia in a shell pot blooming in April a couple years ago. It's one of the first to flower in spring.

## UPCOMING EVENT

**April 10, 6:30 to 9:00 pm**

**EXTENDED MEETING**

**Olbrich Botanical Gardens**

3330 Atwood Ave, Madison

### AGENDA:

Repotting Event—bring your trees and supplies and let's get repotting!

Show Planning

# Repotting Bonsai

By Ron

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 th 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 preform 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

## REPOTTING CHECKLIST

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A container/tarp that the repotting will done in/on to contain the debris | <input type="checkbox"/> Knife   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Garbage bag/can   | <input type="checkbox"/> Tie down wire - aluminum, steel   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Turntable   | <input type="checkbox"/> Drain screen  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Soil sieves   | <input type="checkbox"/> Rubber for protecting roots from wire   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Soil scoops   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water mister  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pot saw (Kama)  | <input type="checkbox"/> Watering can  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Root hooks  | <input type="checkbox"/> Tub for watering  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Root cutters  | <input type="checkbox"/> Mycorrhizae , Superthrive, or root stimulator   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Root saw  | <input type="checkbox"/> 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 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chop sticks   | <input type="checkbox"/> Screws for anchoring  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Root chisel   | <input type="checkbox"/> Wood blocks/bamboo for wedging, supporting tree   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Root shears   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wire cutters  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wire pliers   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hammer  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Screwdriver - hand and/or power   |  |



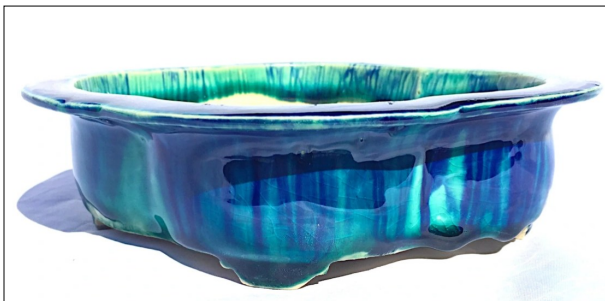
# March Meeting



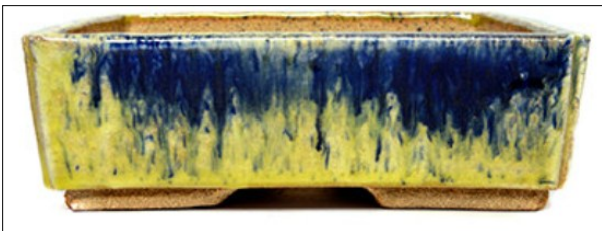
At our March meeting Colin presented on pot artistry and some of the important modern potters.



Heian Tofukuji (1890-1970) was one of the most influential contemporary Japanese potters. His pots sell for thousands of dollars today.



Roy Minari



Dan Barton



Amemiya Shinobu



Sara Rayner



Yamaaki Kiln

## Need a Ride to Meetings?

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





# 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.

### [5 Most Important Repotting Tools](#)

- *Bonsai Mirai*

### [Container Selection for a Shohin Japanese Larch](#)

- *Bill Valavanis Blog*

### [Timeline for Preparing Bonsai for Exhibit](#)

- *Bonsai Tonight*

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

- *Bonsai4me*



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



## Ancient Arts Bonsai 20th Anniversary Open House

**Saturday April 26th from 10am to 3pm**

Come Celebrate 20 years of providing bonsai supplies to Wisconsin bonsai hobbyists. Shop the new supply of trees and pots and other supplies available and get a 20% Discount on all purchases during the event.

933 Duchess Drive, Oconomowoc 53066

we are about 45 minutes east of Olbrich Gardens via I-94

Phone 262-490-8733

Hope to see you there, Ron Fortmann



**BADGER BONSAI**  
*Society*

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Vice President.....Alex	Past President..... Ron
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<https://badgerbonsai.net>



# Spring Roadtrip

By Ron

Spring has sprung at Ancient Arts Bonsai, now in our 20th year of serving Wisconsin Bonsai hobbyists.

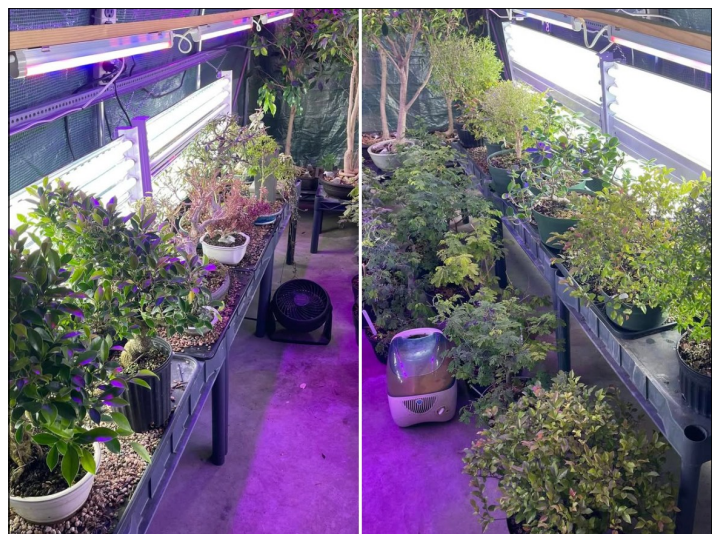
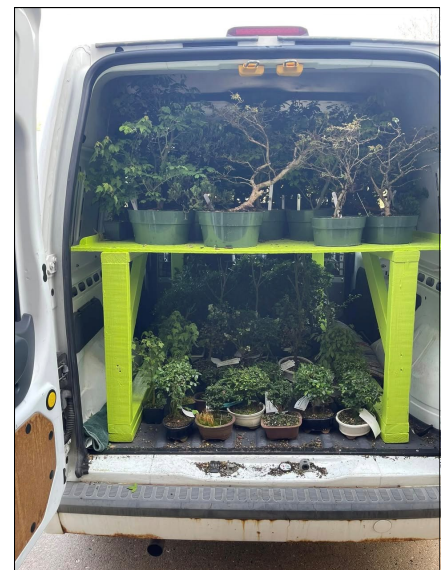
I just finished another successful livestock buying trip. This year I went to a new nursery, D&L Nursery in Florida, in addition to Brussel's Bonsai in Mississippi. Overall, it was a roughly 2,800 mile round trip. I brought back 85 trees, including several species I have not had before.

I look at thousands of trees to pick just a few with the potential to become great bonsai after years of care. I could just order X number of trees and live with the luck of the pick by the person filling the order, but unfortunately some of the trees in the nursery have flaws that will likely never be resolved for the tree

to become an aesthetically pleasing bonsai. I prefer to physically look at every tree so I can bring back the best specimens for my customers to turn into masterpieces. In the picture below I'm looking through several hundred white flowering Japanese Quince, from which I'll pick just four.

The trees chosen are packed into my van for the long ride home, then moved to my garage and winter hoop house, which remains in the 70's. After living in Florida, they won't like the Wisconsin weather until we get into more consistent temperature ranges.

If you are seeking a new tree with a few more years of development already on it, make an appointment to come see what is available now. Many of these bonsai are highly desirable and they will move fast.





## Badger Bonsai Society ANNUAL EXHIBIT



MAY 17-18

10am - 4pm Free Admission  
Demos at 11am and 1:30pm  
Olbrich Botanical Gardens  
3330 Atwood Avenue, Madison, WI

### SEPTEMBERFEST AT WISCO BONSAI!

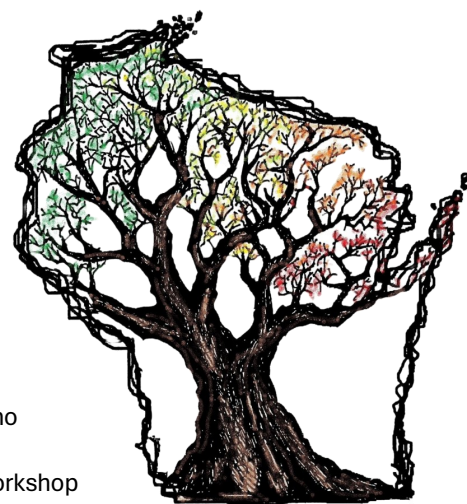
Friday September 26 - thru Sunday September 28

We're planning a workshop-intensive weekend featuring FOUR different Bonsai Artists here at Wisco Bonsai, with opportunities to observe some workshops and a social gathering around the firepit following the workshops.

#### Artist Line-Up So Far:

Kevin Stoeveken (Wisco Bonsai) BYO Open Workshop & possible Demo  
Brian Susler (Milwaukee) BYO Styling and Design Workshop  
Houston Saunders (Milwaukee) Material-provided Japanese Maple Workshop  
Mark Fields (Indianapolis) Material-provided Itowigowa Juniper Workshop  
Elle Nieto (Chicago) BYO Styling and Design Workshop

Watch for details at a later date!



**WISCO BONSAI**  
www.WiscoBonsai.com