



BADGER BONSAI NEWS

April 2026

Choosing the Right Bonsai Pot: Size, Style, and Subtle Harmony

By Lisa, Editor

Selecting a bonsai pot is not just a practical decision—it's an artistic one. The pot is an extension of the tree, helping to tell its story and reinforce its character. A well-chosen container enhances the bonsai; a poor choice distracts from it.

When selecting a pot, there are three essential considerations: size and proportion, glazing, and the “gender” or character of the tree and pot.

One of the most important rules in choosing a bonsai pot is proportion. A properly sized pot creates harmony. If the pot is too large, it overwhelms the tree and weakens the illusion of age and scale. If it's too small, the tree appears constrained and visually unstable.

Length: The pot should be approximately two-thirds the height of the tree (for taller trees) or two-thirds the width of the canopy (for wider, spreading trees).

Depth: The depth of the pot is often close to the diameter of the tree's trunk at the base.

Width: The tree should not feel cramped, but also not lost in the pot—aim for visual balance.

Different styles may shift these guidelines slightly

Cascade and semi-cascade trees often require deeper pots for both aesthetics and stability.

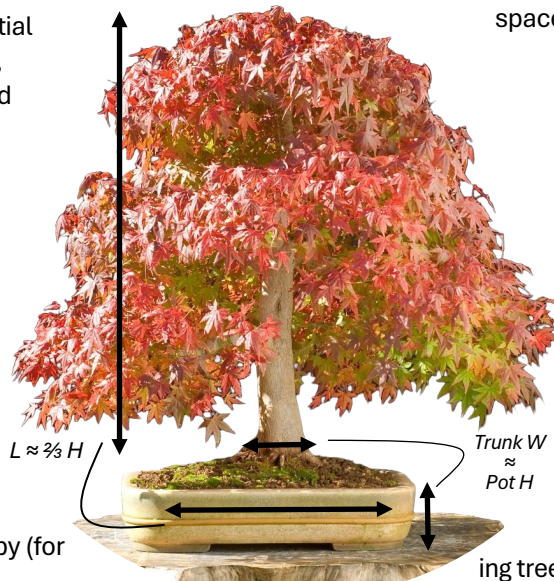
Formal upright trees tend to pair well with more conservative, proportional containers.

Literati (bunjin) styles often use smaller, understated pots to emphasize elegance and negative space.

The choice between glazed and unglazed pots is both aesthetic and symbolic.

Unglazed pots are typically used for conifers (pines, junipers, etc.) Earth tones—brown, red, gray—compliment rugged bark and evergreen foliage. Conveys strength and age.

Glazed pots are commonly used for deciduous and flowering trees. They are available in a wide



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**UPCOMING
EVENT**

**April 9, 6:30 - 9:00 pm in the Atrium
Olbrich Botanical Gardens**
3330 Atwood Ave, Madison

AGENDA: Member Repotting
Workshop - Bring your trees and
supplies for assistance with repotting

Potapalooza Was a Lalapalooza!

By Mary

At our March meeting the sale of the pots donated by Gary was wildly successful. More than 60 pots were sold and I didn't have to take a single one back home. You guys are the best! Gary's wish is for the funds to be contributed to having a visiting bonsai artist demonstration. The BBS Board has already been talking about who and when we can make that happen. BBS treated Gary to lunch last week and gave him a gift card, a big Thank You and a hug from me! To everyone who bought one or more pots - may all the trees that go in them be healthy and happy.

Choosing the Right Bonsai Pot

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range of colors, which can highlight seasonal interest—flowers, fruit, or autumn color. Conveys a softer, more refined quality.

The pot should never compete with the tree. Instead, it should quietly support and enhance the tree's natural features. A bright glaze might beautifully echo a flowering quince, but feel out of place with a stoic pine.

In bonsai, “gender” does not refer to biology, but to visual character—a design concept rooted in traditional Japanese aesthetics.

Masculine Trees have a thick and tapered trunk, strong nebari (root spread), angular branches, and rugged bark.

When choosing a pot for masculine trees, consider rectangular or square shapes, strong lines and sharp corners, unglazed finishes, and those with heavier visual weight.

Feminine Trees will have a slender trunk, graceful movement, softer branching, and smooth bark.

The best pots to pair with feminine trees are oval or round, have soft edges and curves, have a lighter and more delicate appearance, and are often glazed.

Matching the “gender” of the pot to the tree creates visual cohesion. A delicate, flowing tree in a heavy, angular pot feels mismatched. Likewise, a powerful, rugged tree in a soft, pastel

oval can feel visually confusing.

When selecting a bonsai pot, think of it as a partnership:

Proportion ensures balance

Glaze and color support the tree's species and seasonal interest

Form and “gender” reinforce the tree's character

A successful pairing doesn't draw attention to the pot—it makes the tree feel complete.

As your eye develops, you'll find that choosing a pot becomes less about rules and more about intuition. But these guidelines provide a strong foundation, helping you create compositions that feel harmonious, intentional, and true to the spirit of bonsai.

Sources & further reading:

Bonsai Empire – [Choosing a Bonsai Pot](#)

Bonsai Direct – [What Is the Rule for Bonsai Pots?](#)

Sun Green Bonsai – [Choosing the Perfect Container for Your Bonsai](#)

Bonsai Mirai - [Choosing Your Ceramics](#)



Examples of feminine and masculine style trees.

Photo credit: Bonsai Mirai

Of Interest on the Web



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

[Repotting Your Bonsai](#)

- *Bonsai Bark*

[An Introduction to Bonsai Soils](#)

- *Bonsai 4me*

[Early Spring Work](#)

- *Bonsai Tonight*



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

[Badger Bonsai Society
Member Group](#)

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

Have some news to share?

Submit articles, ideas, photos, and events to the Newsletter Editor at badgerbonsaisociety@gmail.com

Young Choe Demo

We're pleased to announce a **free** demonstration by Young Choe on Thursday, April 30, 2026.

Young will present a two-hour demonstration covering the proper display of accent plants with bonsai, as well as year-round care of Kusamono.



Members are encouraged to bring their own Kusamono for personalized feedback and suggestions.

This event is free and open to all members.

Thursday, April 30, 2026- 6pm - 8pm
Goodman Community Center- Bolz-A,
149 Waubesa St., Madison, WI - [directions](#)

We look forward to seeing you there!



In January Sharon organized a pot-making workshop for members of BBS at a local pottery studio. Participants designed and made their own pots in a glaze color of their choosing. The potter finished the firing stage just in time for pot-makers to show off their creations at our March meeting Show-and-Tell. The workshop was such a success that Sharon is thinking about organizing a follow up workshop in the future.

BADGER BONSAI SOCIETY
BONSAI EXHIBIT

Olbrich Botanical Gardens
 3330 Atwood Ave.
 Madison

May 16 & 17, 2026
 10 am to 4 pm

Demos at 11 am
 and 1:30 pm
 Both Days

Free
 Admission



World Bonsai Day 2026

Saturday, May 9 from 9 am to 4 pm

Boerner Botanical Gardens
 9400 Boerner Drive
 Hales Corners, WI 53139

55th Annual Exhibit

Friday, Jun 26 at 8 am to
 Sunday, Jun 28 at 4 pm

Lynden Sculpture Garden
 2145 West Brown Deer Road
 River Hills, WI 53217

2026 MBS State Fair

Thursday, Aug 6 at 8 am to
 Sunday, Aug 16 at 9 pm

Wisconsin State Fair Park
 640 South 84th Street
 West Allis, WI 53214

Mark Your
 Calendars



**MID-AMERICA
 BONSAI EXHIBIT**

May 16 & 17, 2026
 August 15 to 17th, 2026

Chicago Botanic Garden
 1000 Lake Cook Rd
 Glencoe, IL 60022



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