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# MIDWEST BONSAI CONNECTION

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[www.midwestbonsai.org](http://www.midwestbonsai.org)

## President's Message

Hello again fellow members of Midwest Bonsai, spring is here! Or not. With all the quirky weather this past month could I be forgiven for some confusion? The nights are still cold so I won't be bringing my trees out of storage anytime soon except to check whether my wire is threatening to bite the tree when the wood starts to swell. What I will be doing though is checking the moisture in my pots a lot more frequently. To paraphrase a famous quote, these are the weathers that dry trees soils. The warm days and cool nights can pump moisture right out of the pots if they aren't sufficiently protected. In addition, with virtually no snow cover and unseasonably warm days it might be good to triple check any trees you wintered "in ground". While there has been a reasonable amount of rain, some extra water won't hurt.

While it may not be here just yet, spring really is right around the corner, and the growing season may arrive as much as a month early. So the best thing to do (I know, this is always the best thing to do) is to get prepared.

Clean out and wire up those pots you're planning to use this year. Seize the warm sunny days and get your soil sifted. Sharpen those concave cutters and shears. Check your wire stocks and call Linda to order whatever you are short on so she can bring it to the next meeting for you. Or you could just sit back with a nice cup of tea cause you already handled all that stuff, right?

Speaking of meetings, our next General meeting is March 6th. If all goes according to plan, the esteemed Anthony Welninski will be giving us a talk on soils for Bonsai after Mr. Zurczak delivers our 101 for the month. I look forward to seeing you all there.

Something I really need to bring your attention to, however, is the APRIL meeting. April is typically our group repotting meeting and while there is no change to that, there IS a change to the date. I'm not aware of all the details because the meeting schedule is typically worked out with the Garden sometime around September, but due to a scheduling conflict the

### Sunday Bonsai Workshops

Ongoing workshops, Sundays through November, 10 AM to 2PM

Brendan Berry's residence

735 Cherry Lane, Lake Forest, IL 60045

Cost: \$60 ea.

Please bring your supplies (and a turntable).

Workshops are limited to 8 participants.

For more info or to register go to [yasukunai@hotmail.com](mailto:yasukunai@hotmail.com) or 847-917-0817.

—Ivan Watters

APRIL general meeting will be held MARCH 27th. This shouldn't pose any unusual threat to the plants especially with what looks to be an early spring.

To those who braved the cold for the February meeting and filled out the new questionnaire, I would like to say thank you. We've compiled the data with some interesting results, and some even more interesting comments. We will continue to circulate them at future meetings. This is your opportunity as a member of the Society to shape the direction of our future endeavors. Please fill one out for us if you haven't already, your input is valuable and will not fall on deaf ears. If you have filled one out already and you have more suggestions, questions, or just general considerations you'd like to put forth, feel free to submit a new one to us. We are genuinely interested in your feedback.

In other assorted news, Ivan Watters has resumed his group workshops Sundays in Lake Forest,

look for his advert in this newsletter or contact him directly at [yasukunai@aol.com](mailto:yasukunai@aol.com) for more details. The Chicago Symphony Orchestra would like the lovers of Japanese culture and the music lovers among us to know they will be hosting the Taiko drummers of KODO, considered to be the world's foremost Taiko group on Sunday, February 26th at 3pm. Tickets start at \$30 at [cso.org](http://cso.org) or phone 312-294-3000. (I've seen some good Taiko groups in the past and I highly recommend going if you can.) Finally, but not least, B.C. Bonsai will be doing a workshop on Shohin sized Mimosa plants (pretty flowers on these). The workshop is Saturday, March 4th at their home base in Wheaton IL. Cost is \$60 for the plant. Contact Linda at 630-690-0404 or 630-386-1515 for more info and don't forget to check out the Events Calendar further down in the newsletter for all the stuff I don't know about.

*Sincerely,  
Robert Wright*

# Events Calendar

**Wednesday, March 1, 2017**

**PRAIRIE STATE BONSAI SOCIETY,**

7:00pm, Bonsai 101, Pot selection, General Meeting  
7:30pm, Room TEC1038b Program: Repotting demo  
by Mark Karczewski. For further information go to [www.prairiestatebonsai.com](http://www.prairiestatebonsai.com)

**Monday, March 6, 2017**

**MIDWEST BONSAI SOCIETY MEETING**

at the Chicago Botanic Garden's Burnstein Hall, located in the Regenstein Center. Program: 7:00 pm: Bonsai 101, topic TBA. 7:30 pm: General Meeting, topic TBA. For further information, go to [www.midwestbonsai.org](http://www.midwestbonsai.org)

**Tuesday, March 7, 2017**

**MILWAUKEE BONSAI SOCIETY MEETING,**

6:30 pm, Taking bonsai out of storage with Chris Baker. For further information go to [www.milwaukeebonsai.org](http://www.milwaukeebonsai.org)

**Saturday, March 11, 2017**

**MILWAUKEE BONSAI SOCIETY Novice workshop.**

For further information or to register, go to [www.milwaukeebonsai.org](http://www.milwaukeebonsai.org)

**Sunday, March 26, 2017**

**MILWAUKEE BONSAI SOCIETY Novice class session 2.**

For further information go to [www.milwaukeebonsai.org](http://www.milwaukeebonsai.org)

**Monday, March 27, 2017**

**MIDWEST BONSAI SOCIETY MEETING**

at the Chicago Botanic Garden's Burnstein Hall, located in the Regenstein Center. Program: 7:00 pm: Bonsai 101, "Rules of Bonsai" featuring trunks. 7:30 pm: There will be a presentation on pot preparation and soil. For further information, go to [www.midwestbonsai.org](http://www.midwestbonsai.org)

**Saturday, April 4, 2017**

**MILWAUKEE BONSAI SPECIAL MEETING,**

9:00 am-1:00pm. Boerner Botanical Gardens. Dale Sievert-Magical World of Moss Gardening. For further information go to [www.milwaukeebonsai.org](http://www.milwaukeebonsai.org)

**Wednesday, April 5, 2017**

**PRAIRIE STATE BONSAI SOCIETY**

General Meeting 7:30pm, Room TEC1038b Program: Slide presentation of last year's show. For further information go to [www.prairiestatebonsai.com](http://www.prairiestatebonsai.com)

**Friday, April 7 – Sunday, April 9, 2017**

**MID-ATLANTIC SOCIETIES SPRING FESTIVAL,**

Cromwell, CT For further info go to [www.midatlanticbonsai.org](http://www.midatlanticbonsai.org)

**Thursday, May 25 – Sunday, May 28, 2017**

**AMERICAN BONSAI SOCIETY (ABS) LEARNING SEMINAR**

Orlando, FL For more information, go to [absbonsai.org](http://absbonsai.org).

Midwest Bonsai Connection

## 13th Annual May Bonsai Exhibit by Larry Stephan

It is that time of year again. The information on the May Bonsai Exhibit at the Botanic Gardens is live on the website. The dates are May 20th and 21st. There are a number of excellent workshops. Cass Bonsai will present a Sunday morning workshop with Japanese Black Pines for novices and intermediates. BC Bonsai will present a Saturday morning workshop on Lavender Star Flower tropicalls. Ivan Watters will have an afternoon class each day in a Bring Your Own Tree workshop to be held in the newly opened Learning Center. Also, each afternoon Frank Mihalic of Wildwood will hold a Children's Workshop. Returning vendors include BC Bonsai, Cass Bonsai, Wildwood Bonsai, Karen Shuman (pots), Fred Tarnow (pots and Suiseki stones), Linda Ipell (pots) and Asian Artiques (scrolls). It is especially exciting to welcome back Stands and Stones with their wonderful Bonsai stands and mini-stones. Save the dates on your calendar and check out on-line registration for the workshops.

## Chicago Bonsai Club

The first meeting of the Chicago Bonsai Club, a chapter of the Midwest Bonsai Society, will be held on Wednesday, March 15, beginning at 6 p.m. There will be senior members available to answer your questions and provide assistance, so

bring a plant to work on.

Chicago Bonsai Club meets at Garfield Park Conservatory, 300 N. Central Park Ave. (at Lake Street) in Chicago. Contact: [suekazoo@hotmail.com](mailto:suekazoo@hotmail.com) or call 773-235-9479.

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of the Midwest Bonsai Society membership or the Board of Directors.

### General Meetings

Meetings of the Midwest Bonsai Society are held at the Chicago Botanic Garden's Burnstein Hall, located in the Regenstein Center.

All meetings begin at 7:30 PM. Bonsai 101 presentations commence at 7:00 PM.

### Library Resources

MBS has a fine collection of Bonsai books and journals which are available for loan. Please contact the Librarian for information.

# Monthly Care Report: What to Do in March

If any of your deciduous trees need to be repotted this year, you will be able to do the repotting as soon as the winter breaks and the ground thaws, which will be soon, end of March and into April. Look to your trees for signs that they are waking up. Look for swelling buds and white growing tips at the end of your roots. Those deciduous trees that you were unsure about pruning can probably be safely pruned, but protect them from heavy frost. Avoid repotting any larch trees that are showing green. If they are showing green, it is best to wait until next year.

Generally there is no need to begin fertilizing your trees yet. Let them leaf out, and for your repotted trees, begin your feeding regime at least one month after repotting. You may want to keep them sheltered under the eaves of the house and out of cold winds.

By the end of March, depending on weather conditions, trees can be gradually brought out of winter shelter. Evergreens may be fertilized lightly now in

April and, in general, you may spray for fungus and insects on a warm day. Evergreens can be lifted until the end of April. March and April are also good months to dig trees from the wild, keeping as much fibrous root attached as possible. Keep your trees cool. Don't be in a hurry to encourage early growth, as it can still get cold.

Transplanting from one pot to another is generally done for aesthetic reasons, but soil changing is necessary for the health of the tree. Some rapidly growing trees should have their soil changed annually. Some trees can go two, maybe up to three years. Slower growing conifers and some evergreens may not need their soil changed more than every three to five years. A younger tree, still in development, will need it sooner, where an older tree less often. You also must consider the size of the pot. However, the best indicator of a need for soil change is not time, but the condition of the tree. A vigorous, healthy tree does not need its soil changed and should not be disturbed.

## March Meeting Focus

The March meeting is scheduled at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, March 6, at the Chicago Botanic Garden's Burnstein Hall, located in the Regenstein Center.

Bonsai 101 begins at 7 pm. Victor Zurczak will give a short presentation

on "Rules of Bonsai" featuring branches. At 7:30 pm, Tony Welinski will talk about soil. There will also be distributing a short questionnaire for members to fill out stating their interest in bonsai topics for future meetings and any specific bonsai questions.

**FERTILIZING...** Do not feed your deciduous trees until leaves have hardened off, that means not until all the leaves are out and branch tips are starting to grow. If you feed them too early you will get a big flush of growth, which translates to long internodes and larger leaves. You could literally waste a season getting them back. You can start feeding your tropicals a bit more, but it is too early to move outside. I have pruned some of my Ficus. Too much nitrogen will go to the leaves and not the roots, hence too large of leaves. You fertilize bonsai for optimum health, not for growth per say like other plants. You need to tailor a fertilization program based on your trees individual needs.

**PRUNING...** You should have already taken a good look at your trees over the winter, now knowing where you want to go with them. If you have a branch or apex you want to thicken, try to divert more energy to it by keeping your other branches trimmed back

and letting that one grow. If all your main branches are good, then work on your ramification by pruning your secondary and tertiary branches back. Always prune in front of the bud that is growing in the direction you want the branch to grow. If any of the internodes towards the tip of any branch are spaced farther apart, then towards the beginning of the branch (closest to the trunk) prune back to where that elongation begins. A branch should be styled just like a tree, the secondary branches on a main branch should get smaller and closer together as you go towards the tip. The tertiary branches on your secondary branches should do the same. Doing this will help create proper ramification and taper. Proper directional pruning of your bonsai is a must, to increase ramification and for good taper.

—Ed Hake • Fort Wayne Bonsai Club • Reprinted by Permission. Compiled from several Web articles with adaptation to our area.

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Midwest Bonsai Society  
P.O. Box 1373  
Highland Park, Illinois 60035-7373  
www.midwestbonsai.org

## Membership Information

To become a member of the Midwest Bonsai Society or re-new your current membership (July is the month to renew), please fill out the "Membership Request" form provided on this page of this newsletter, and mail it in with your check. Membership dues keep the Society running and cover costs such as producing our 2 annual shows, inviting guest lecturers to various meetings, and newsletter printing and postage.

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## Membership Request

Name

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Address

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City, State, Zip Code

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Please Check If Renewal

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Please make check payable to: **Midwest Bonsai Society**

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