
MIDWEST BONSAI CONNECTION

www.midwestbonsai.org

President's Message

Greetings club members! I'm in a great mood today—it's still March and one of my deciduous bonsai is pushing big new buds already. Deciduous trees are fairly tolerant of my abuses but there is something unnerving about waiting each year to see if the things are still alive. Usually they do fine, but I've lost enough to justify the concern. The evergreens are every bit as dormant during the winter but at least they look alive. So now I need to prepare for repotting, and protection from frost becomes even more important than before.

By the time of our April 4 club meeting, the repotting season will be upon us and that will be the focus of our meeting. We encourage all members, and particularly newer members, to bring a tree or two to repot during the meeting. Our more experienced members will be glad to help you. The club will have a supply of soil and a few pots - but it's always best if you can bring a pot of your own that looks to be the right size and shape for your tree.

People often ask how our hobby is different from growing houseplants or container gardening.

Aside from the artist elements, the attention we pay to the roots of our trees is something even casual plant enthusiasts can appreciate. Anyone who has pulled a garden center shrub from its pot or relocated a yard shrub knows what a gnarled mess you're likely to find under the soil. But the root structure of a true specimen bonsai is something altogether different—and it doesn't happen by accident. In order to keep these trees healthy in such small pots, all roots not actively engaged in supplying water and nutrients must be replaced with the fine feeder roots that would normally occur only at the very ends of a wild tree's normal root system. Careful trimming over many repotting sessions is needed to achieve this optimal root system and only then will a tree remain healthy in a true bonsai pot. If this is news to you, try to attend our April meeting where you will learn all about this interesting facet of our hobby.

Do you track your trees' development? If not, Spring is a great time to start, and everyone seems to use a different system.

BONSAI WORKSHOP—IVAN WATTERS

Final 4 Workshops of the Season at this location: Sunday April 3, April 17, May 1, May 15, 2016. 9 am to 1 pm, \$50 each. Ballard Point Recreational Center, 8894 Knight Ave., DesPlaines IL 60016 (Continue South on Knight from this address to cross street. Turn Left and go to end of street. Turn Left again and go to near end of street. Rec Center is on Right just past pool. Unload at door, then park.) Sign up for any or all now at yasukunai@hotmail.com Questions? Email or call 817-917-0817. You can do anything now except pot tropicals. (That too if you have lights and heat mats). Washing facilities are very limited. Better to clean the roots at home, wrap the tree(s) with wet newspapers (or similar) and plastic. Bring a turntable if possible. Bring everything else you will need for your work. Need special tools? (benders, jacks, etc.). Let me know so I can bring. Protect tropical from cold.

Many enthusiasts keep a written log, and I'm told there are some good phone/tablet apps as well. Personally, I prefer to take a lot of pictures throughout the course of the year and especially at major milestones like repotting, wiring, pruning or branch bending. I usually follow up sooner or later by jotting a few notes in a word processor but the pictures serve to remind me of exactly what occurred and exactly when. There is just something very rewarding about a visual record of a bonsai's development from crude bush to specimen bonsai that no amount of written notes can replace.

I also need to point out that our 2016 May Exhibit is fast approaching. As many of you know, The May show focuses on education and the development process of bonsai—unlike our August show which celebrates

finished bonsai. Please consider bringing some of your trees that are still in development, along with a narrative that explains how the tree got to where it is and/or where it is going. We rely exclusively on our members to supply the trees for May—and we really want to see your unfinished trees (no living bonsai is ever truly finished, but that's for another newsletter...). In addition to the trees, we also rely on club members to run the show. Please consider signing up for the various roles when you see the signup sheets appear at the next couple of meetings or via email. If you have never volunteered at one of our shows before you are missing out on one of the most rewarding experiences the club can offer. If you have volunteered before, you already know how much fun it can be. I hope to see you April 4. —Jay Albright

Events Calendar

Sunday, April 3, 2016

IVAN WATTERS BONSAI WORKSHOP,

9 am to 1 pm at Ballard Point Recreational Center, see blurb in this newsletter or email yasukunai@hotmail.com for further info.

Monday, April 4, 2016

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: Repotting, Air layering & Propagation, Spring work, Evergreen trees, Bring your trees, Raffle. For further information, go to www.midwestbonsai.org

Tuesday, April 5, 2016

MILWAUKEE BONSAI SOCIETY MEETING,

6:30 pm, Guest artist: Peter Tea. For further information go to www.milwaukeebonsai.org

Wednesday, April 6, 2016

PRAIRIE STATE BONSAI SOCIETY

7pm, Bonsai 101: Air layering; 7:30pm: General Meeting, Room TEC1038b Program: Bring your own repotting workshop. For further information go to www.prairiestatebonsai.com

Friday, April 15 – Sunday, April 17, 2016

MID-ATLANTIC SOCIETIES SPRING FESTIVAL,

Cromwell, CT For further info go to www.midatlanticbonsai.org

Sunday, April 17, 2016

IVAN WATTERS BONSAI WORKSHOP,

9 am to 1 pm at Ballard Point Recreational Center, see blurb in this newsletter or email yasukunai@hotmail.com for further info.

Wednesday, April 20, 2016

CHICAGO BONSAI CLUB MEETING,

6 p.m. We will be repotting, bring a plant to work on. For further info email suekazoo@hotmail.com

Sunday, May 1, 2016

IVAN WATTERS BONSAI WORKSHOP,

9 am to 1 pm at Ballard Point Recreational Center, see blurb in this newsletter or email yasukunai@hotmail.com for further info.

Monday, May 2, 2016

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: TBD, Bring your trees, Raffle. For further information, go to www.midwestbonsai.org

Tuesday, May 3, 2016 1, 2016

MILWAUKEE BONSAI SOCIETY MEETING,

6:30 pm, Guest artist: Mark Fields. For further information go to www.milwaukeebonsai.org

Wednesday, May 4, 2016

PRAIRIE STATE BONSAI SOCIETY, 7:00pm, Bonsai

101, Maple refinement; 7:30pm, General Meeting Room TEC1038b Program: Shaping & wiring techniques. For further information go to www.prairiestatebonsai.com

Thursday, May 12 – Sunday, May 15, 2016

AMERICAN BONSAI SOCIETY (ABS) CONFERENCE

Grand Rapids, MI. Early registration ends in March and the workshops are filling up. Four workshops and meals are included with the price of the registration. Go to: <http://www.absbonsai.org/2016-abs-bonsai-in-the-garden-learning-seminars> for more information.

Sunday, May 15, 2016

IVAN WATTERS BONSAI WORKSHOP,

9 am to 1 pm at Ballard Point Recreational Center, see blurb in this newsletter or email yasukunai@hotmail.com for further info.

Saturday, May 21 – Sunday, May 22, 2016

MIDWEST BONSAI SOCIETY

12th ANNUAL MAY BONSAI EXHIBIT,

Show theme: education. Members invited to bring trees in various stages of training, accompanied by explanations of what processes are being used. Held in the Burnstein Hall of the Regenstein Center at the Chicago Botanic Garden. Vendors, workshops, demonstrations. For further information, go to www.midwestbonsai.org

Saturday, September 10 – Sunday, September 11, 2016

5TH US NATIONAL BONSAI EXHIBITION,

Rochester, NY. Details to follow.

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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 April

By the end of March, depending on weather conditions, trees can be gradually brought out of winter shelter.

April is a great month for repotting, and for digging planted trees and collecting field grown ones. Begin your feeding, pinching, watering, and pruning schedules in earnest. Of course, be mindful of potential cold snaps, and be ready to protect vulnerable plants. This is the time we've all been waiting for!

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. Avoid repotting any larch that are showing green. If they are showing green, it is best to wait until next year.

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.

FERTILIZING... Do not feed your deciduous trees until the leaves have hardened off, that means not until all of 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. 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... Proper directional pruning of your bonsai is a must, to increase ramification and for good taper. 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. Those deciduous trees that you were unsure about pruning can probably be safely pruned in April, but protect them from heavy frost.

—Ed Hake. Fort Wayne Bonsai Club. Reprinted by Permission. Compiled from several web articles and adapted to our area.

Chicago Bonsai Club

The next meeting of the Chicago Bonsai Club, a chapter of the Midwest Bonsai Society, will be held on Wednesday, April 20, beginning at 6 p.m. We will be repotting, so bring a plant to work on. There will be senior members available to answer your

questions and provide assistance.

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

Midwest Bonsai Society Officers + Chairpersons

President	Jay Albright
Executive Vice President	Kurt Nykaza
Vice President Programs	Victor Zurczak
Vice President Special Events	Larry Stephan
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	Tony Welninski
	Dan Turner
Prairie State Representative	

April Meeting Focus

The April meeting is scheduled at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, April 4, at the Chicago Botanic Garden's Burnstein Hall, located in the Regenstein Center.

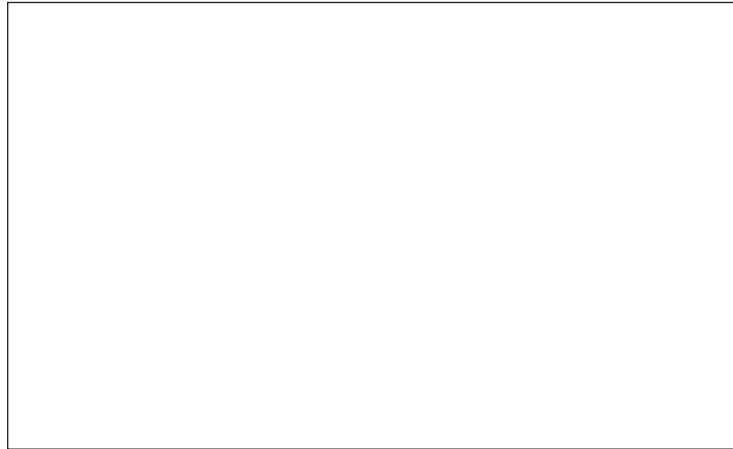
Bonsai 101 begins at 7 pm, topic TBA. At 7:30 pm, this is our repotting meeting. Bring your plants and pots. Soil and assistance will be available.

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

Membership Renewal Reminder

August begins the new membership year. We appreciate the renewals already received in July, and encourage everyone else to send yours in August. Renewing is easier than ever—simply go to the club website at www.midwestbonsai.org, click on Membership and enter your payment information. Of course, we still accept checks at club meetings or by mail, and you can fill out the “Membership Request” form provided on the last page of this newsletter. If you do not renew your membership by the end of the year you will no longer receive newsletters via email or snail mail. Your renewal is important in order for us to keep our mailing lists up-to-date. Thank you for your ongoing support. 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

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Telephone

Date

Email

Please Check If Renewal

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

Send to: Midwest Bonsai Society

P.O. Box 1373

Highland Park, Illinois

60035-7373

Annual Membership • July 1st thru June 30

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