

Badger Bonsai Society October 2018

Our October meeting will feature several short presentations, each on a particular species used for bonsai. Each speaker is limited to ten minutes (or less), so it must be short and sweet. So far we have three volunteers – Ron discussing willow leaf fig, Tim speaking on amur maples, and Karl talking about ginkos. We would like to have two more members participate so we would have a total of five speakers. So, if you can talk for ten minutes about your experience with a bonsai species, we would love to hear from you. If we have more than five volunteers, we will hold the extras until November. If any time remains we will watch and discuss a video about a trunk-chop on a willow leaf fig.

Pot Donation

Kathleen F contacted Devon last month indicating she had an assortment of bonsai pots she wanted to donate to the club. Kathy is not a bonsai hobbyist, but she assists a friend who handles estate sales, and these pots were from a sale in the Stoughton area. “The people lived in a school house on Highway N.” That, of course, is where Wayne and Donna T lived and were members of the Badger Bonsai Society many years ago, and both were talented artists. We will use these as door prizes over the coming year.

One of the things I find gratifying is when I receive a tree from someone who has passed away, I always feel a connection with that person. For my other trees, I cannot always remember what nursery I bought a tree from, but I can always remember the owners and the trees that were bequeathed or gifted to me.

Milwaukee Bonsai Show - The 48th Annual Bonsai Exhibit - October 5-7, 2018

Presented by members of the Milwaukee Bonsai Society

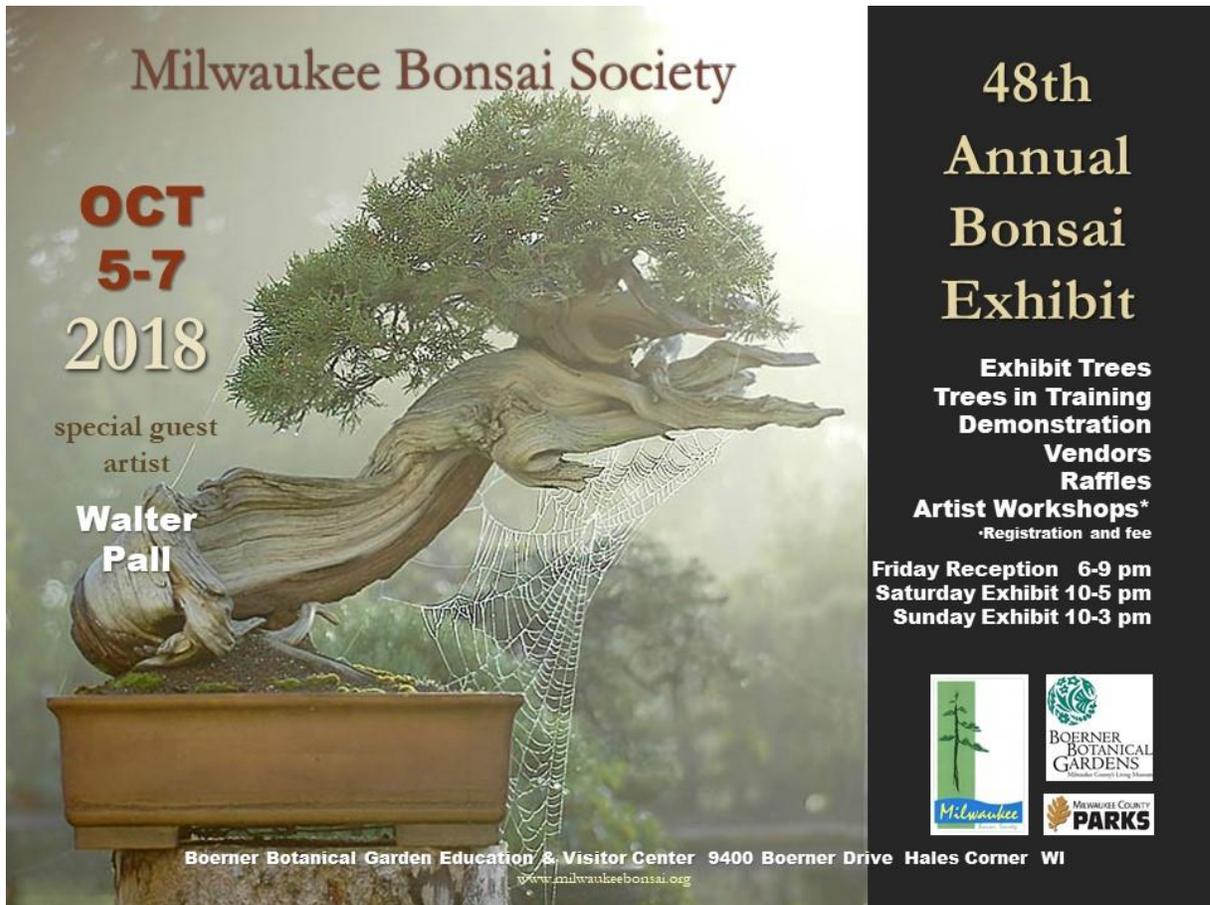
“An exhibit of the best trees of our members... along with trees in training MBS is extremely fortunate to welcome Walter Pall to judge our exhibit and lead workshops. Walter Pall is one of the most popular Bonsai artists who has performed on most international stages. He has visited the vast majority of European countries and also South Africa, Australia, Canada and the United States; he even appeared in Israel and in Argentina and Brazil.

His lectures are a treat. Walter's philosophy about demos is first and foremost to provide a basis of high quality Bonsai work, add a substantial amount of explanation for the audience to clearly understand his development process, and also tell amusing anecdotes along the way. Walter often is called a walking encyclopedia on Bonsai and he shares his knowledge freely. Walter also loves to lead workshops where he sets the main focus on teaching the artistic side of Bonsai. In the past years Walter has also established himself as the key moderator for international Bonsai conventions. A specialty of Walter are his tree critiques which he calls 'tree inspiration'. He analyses anything from stick in a yogurt cup to world class Bonsai. Walter gives clear indications of pros and cons and describes ways to continue working with the trees.

Walter was one of the first Europeans to work with indigenous species, which he collects in his beloved Alpine mountains. He now owns a collection of about 1000 quality trees in varying stages of development and keeps a store reserve of about 1000 handmade pots to

compliment the Bonsai. Besides his famous conifers he is also well known for his beautiful deciduous trees. Walter's Bonsai usually are strong, powerful trees which he frequently forms in natural shapes. The longer he has been involved with tree development, the more he has moved away from traditional Bonsai styling to his own concepts of design. Only those who have actually visited his garden know that he also has an impressive collection of shohin bonsai.”

Admission to exhibit, vendor area and demonstration is free



The poster features a large, detailed photograph of a bonsai tree with a thick, gnarled trunk and dense green foliage, set in a tan-colored pot. The tree is positioned on a wooden stump. The background is a soft, out-of-focus natural setting.

Milwaukee Bonsai Society

**OCT
5-7
2018**

special guest
artist
**Walter
Pall**

**48th
Annual
Bonsai
Exhibit**

**Exhibit Trees
Trees in Training
Demonstration
Vendors
Raffles
Artist Workshops***
*Registration and fee

**Friday Reception 6-9 pm
Saturday Exhibit 10-5 pm
Sunday Exhibit 10-3 pm**

 
Boerner Botanical Gardens
Wisconsin's Premier Living Plant Collection


**MILWAUKEE COUNTY
PARKS**

Boerner Botanical Garden Education & Visitor Center 9400 Boerner Drive Hales Corner WI
www.milwaukeebonsai.org

Other Shows:

Carolina Bonsai Expo (23rd annual), Oct. 13-14, North Carolina Arboretum, Asheville

Golden State Bonsai Federation Convention, Oct. 24-28, McClellan Convention Center, Sacramento, CA The Golden State Bonsai Federation (GSBF) also maintains a list of many bonsai societies in the West. You can follow their activities and find information about their shows by visiting the GSBF website and following the links under “Clubs”. Memberships in the GSBF are available.

Bonsai Society of Southwest Florida, (37th annual) Bonsai Show & Sale, Nov. 3 & 4, Ft. Myers-Lee County Garden Council, 2166 Virginia Avenue, Ft. Myers

Winter Silhouette Bonsai Show, Dec. 1-2, North Carolina Research Campus, Kannapolis, NC National Bonsai and Penjing Museum, Washington, DC Beautiful Transitions: Autumn bonsai exhibit, Nov. 3-11

Mud Men

I love the writing of Andy Smith of South Dakota. Andy is probably best known for his collected trees from the Rocky Mountains. But, he also has a literary style that reminds me of Mark Twain, finding humor in everyday things. The following is taken from the ABS October Newsletter:

“My Name is Mud by Andrew Smith

I was inspecting my platoons of mud men recently and feeling sort of dissatisfied. Sure, it could have been the aroma coming from my socks after a week's worth of wearing them in the rain. Or, it could have been the crooked way I felt because either my right pant leg is longer than my left, or my left leg is longer than my right. Or, even the troubling fact that if I didn't go to work I wouldn't have any money, but I didn't want to go anyway. Those things all left me feeling a bit dissatisfied, but they weren't the main thing, and they all were fixable. I could just change my socks if I felt like it. And I could face east so my right leg was slightly uphill if I didn't want to walk in circles. And if I did make any money I'd just have to pay bills with it, so I still wouldn't have any. So I could just cut to the chase and skip work and save myself a lot of trouble on the road to being broke. Problems solved! The thing that was really nagging me was the atrocious condition of my mud men, and women. They were in terrible shape. The weather had not been kind to them recently and I had not provided them with any kind of shelter from it. I suppose if there was a Society for the Protection and Care of Mud Men, they would take all mine away from me and you could read about it in the paper. But there isn't any such society and I didn't have to worry about that. Mud men, and women, don't have a political voice, yet. Still, the little guys and gals looked pretty battle-weary. Many were missing hands, arms, legs or heads. A tiger was missing its tail and a bull its horns. Books, fans, instruments and cups were gone. A tiny pagoda had no top. On one bonsai pot I found just the white beard of a wise man, with no wise man attached. Surveying the carnage, I began to wonder if there wasn't some place I could order some little mud-crutches or walkers to help them get around. Or call a mud ambulance. Or, maybe it was time to admit I needed to add these ones to the aquarium gravel and just order some new mud men. It seems like the ones I have are always coming apart and I'm constantly in need of new recruits. Apparently it's tougher than I imagine sitting on the edge of a bonsai pot every day and pretending you're fishing. Although I've heard it's tacky, or at least not refined, I enjoy putting mud men around my bonsai trees. I imagine trees as places where people and animals go to hang out, if they can't find a shopping mall. Trees give us shade, and apples, and blossoms. It's hard for me to think of a tree alone, unconnected to the life around it. And even if mud men are tacky, they never last too long, so it's just a temporary tackiness. Our summer hail makes short work of most of them. Falling branches do the same. Strong winds sometimes send them sailing onto the ground. Or I move the pot and they tumble. My watering help sometimes unknowingly blasts them right off the pot with a stream of water. Ice and sun slowly erode them. Birds sometimes fly away with them and then drop them from the sky. Packrats abduct them. It's a transitory world we live in, especially for mud men. So maybe it's not so hard to sit on the edge of a bonsai pot every day after all –if the world would just let you do it. In any case, the ranks of my mud men are always getting thinned out. I usually try to trade up and replace old, broken mud men with new, better mud men, but it's hard to find the really good ones. Every time I go to a bonsai show I search for better ones, but usually I just find the guy fishing with no fishing pole and some tiny bridges and huts. Sometimes I find mud women playing unknown instruments, or old men drinking and playing Go. In a book I have on penjing, there are some really beautiful figurines displayed with the trees, but I've never seen any like that for sale. Some of these mud men may be traditional characters. I had a tiny figurine, a fairly common one, of a robed old man, propped up on a barrel or stone, drinking from a cup. I later found a picture of it in a book that said it was the famous Chinese poet Li Po, who lived over 1,000 years ago and was known for drinking wine. Here's the first stanza in his poem, Drinking Alone Beneath The Moon: “Among the blossoms, a single jar of wine. No one else here, I ladle it out myself.” That's inspiring. I think George Thorogood sang about that too. But I had thought all these mud men were just generic figures. It's interesting that at least some of them may have stories that go along with them. At a silent bonsai auction I

won a nice size, maybe 6" tall, figurine of an old man and a young man engaged in a serious game of Go. What I liked about it was that I was the only bidder so I got it cheap, and the intense expressions on the player's faces. A year or so later Judy got me another figurine from a junk store, and although it was smaller, it was clearly the same two players. And since then I have found two more much smaller mud figurines of the same scene. I can only assume the scene and characters are part of some well-known story, but I have no idea what it is. But all those mud men playing Go inspired me to buy a Go game so I could play it with my son. I got a nice set, very authentic and made in China. But the instructions were written in China too, and weren't translated well, so my son and I were never able to tell if we were actually playing Go or not, though whatever it was we did play took an incredible long time to finish. Anyway, I like to think my Go playing figurines are frowning because they're trying to figure out the rules too. Of course, bonsai figurines need not be of ancient Chinese wise men or lovely flutists. While I haven't found any mud men driving riding lawn mowers, I have found some very realistic and proportional rabbits, deer, foxes and birds, as well as people, at toy stores. Not to mention green army men. These little figures can add a lot of charm to a bonsai landscape. They're made of plastic which doesn't seem as natural as something made of clay, but since plastic is a petroleum product and petroleum allegedly comes from ancient fossilized forests, they're as natural as anything else. And they're essentially unbreakable. And I'm always in the market for a better mud man."

Fertilizing

If you are continuing to fertilize (and this, like many ideas in bonsai, is controversial) be sure to use fertilizer with no nitrogen, like 0, 10, 10 for example. The phosphorous and potassium will help the tree prepare for winter, but we want no nitrogen, which would produce new growth.