

# BADGER NEWS

A PUBLICATION OF THE  
BADGER BONSAI SOCIETY

## MEETING - NOVEMBER 13th 2008

7:00 PM at Olbrich Gardens  
3330 Atwood Ave. Madison WI

### MEETING AGENDA:

Officer elections, Ron will demonstrate jin and shari carving techniques

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

Well the year is quickly slipping by and what a year it was, really late spring, record rains, record drought, another batch of heavy rains and we finally mellowed out to a nice fall. We have reached a quiet time in the bonsai calendar. But don't pack it in just yet. Now is still a great time to plan for next year. Here are a few things that you can still do in preparation for next year:

1. Look at the silhouette of your deciduous trees now that all the foliage is gone and mark those branches that you may want to prune back next year, or possibly wire differently.
2. Take a digital picture of your tree from all four sides, so that you can study what you can do with that tree next. I am told that often pictures reveal things you do not always see when you are looking at a tree with your eyes. The moment in time eliminates the other distractions and allows you to see just the structure of the tree.
3. Don't forget to spray your trees for bugs before you put them away so that you don't have even larger colonies of predators on your trees come spring.
4. Make sure that your trees are protected for the harsh winds of winter and don't create nice little homes for mice and voles spend the winter feasting on your trees
5. This is also a good time to wire up any conifers that need work, they can sit the winter which is usually good for getting branches into position. Caution! Don't put the wire on too tight or you could be in trouble in spring when the first flush of growth comes.
6. Watch when you water your trees at this time of year if the water stands on the surface for a while it is a sign that the tree is possibly root-bound, and in need of repotting next spring.

### President's Message(Cont.)

7. This is also a great time to make notes of which trees need to be repotted in spring. Take measurements for the new pot they may need.
8. Great time to gather up all the items that you will need to repot in the spring. Who knows it could happen early next year. Get your soil, pots, netting, wire, ready to go. Make sure you place those trees you want to repot in the spring in a place for easy access so that when the rush of spring comes you can get to those trees first.

For our November program, I will bring in a couple of trees to demonstrate some carving techniques that can be done with hand tools, grinders and other products.

As a club we also need to hold elections for our board during that meeting. Please come, vote early and often just like they do in Chicago.

The final item that I would like to do on the night of our meeting is discuss what programs we would like to have during the next years meetings.

Some ideas that were brought up last month:  
Kusamono (grass bonsai) accent plantings used to display with your bonsai or by themselves.  
Workshop with a common plant material for all participants

So bring any ideas you have and toss them into the ring don't be shy as your idea may be something many others have also been thinking about. There are NO bad ideas.

See you November 13th

Ron

## HYPERTUFA SLAB (cont.)

If you are carefull, start brushing. If the slab is still real soft, leave it alone for one more day. Very gently lift and brush the slab to the desired texture. Some shaping is still possible using a putty or butter knife. You can do more the fourth day, but you can't put it back together.

### BE CAREFUL!

Now immerse the slab in water (bath tub, wash basin, whatever) Of course it should stay in water for at least a month( 2 would be better), so maybe the bath tub isn't such a good idea!! Change the water every other day. This will help to leach out the alkilinity.

After all the brushing you've done, your slab will look like a "brown fuzzy cat". Let it dry, after it's long bath, and using a torch or candle carefully burn the hair (fuzz) off. Don't stay to long in one spot though, keep your flame moving.

The shape of your slab can be anything that excites your artistic self- oval, rectangular, free form, kidney, etc. Just remember not to make your bottom too thin- it will have to support your trees, soil, and water. Once your slab has trees planted in it, you should carry it only with adequate support under the base- do not lift by the rim!

Jim G.,

## Thinking about WINTER?

### Tool Care by Bonsai Bob (2001)

This is something you can do now or in the winter when you do not have much to do on your bonsai. It will hhowever extend the use of your tools by keeping them clean and sharp.

#### Cleaners:

- Soap and water, bleach, WD-40, and rubbing alcohol
- Wire brushes (hand held and rotory for dremel)
- Rust eraser
- Steel wool
- Fine emery cloth

#### Sharpeners

- Hand files (course, medium, fine) I found the diamind files to work the best
- Fine sand paper
- Power brush and grinder
- Vise

#### Conditioners

- Naval Jelly( if the tools are this rusted you really need to let them go)
- Ball peen hammer and block of steel or anvil
- Light oil( 3 in 1) or WD-40
- Plastic dip if you desire to color code handles

## Tool Care (cont)

Cleaning tools after every use you should never need to do major work on them. Tools should be cleaned with soap and water, and rinsed in a clorox mix and wiped down with WD-40. Tools that are cleaned after each use and sharpened occasionally should never need major work. You can really damage a costly bonsai by using tools that are not sharp or in good condition.

To begin with: clean your tools in warm soapy water to get off any residue that was left from the last time you used it. To remove any heavy rust, steel wool, sand-paper, wire brush, or rust eraser may be used if you have them, as they are great to use to polish tools.

A vise can help in the sharpening of your tools if you have one. The main thing is to follow the angle of the cutting edge when you sharpen and remember that you are removing metal as you do this so just move your file at that angle in one complete pass each time. Concave cutters are sharpened from the inside, and do not change the overbite of the cutting edge, as one should slightly overlap the other. Wire cutters need to be sharpened on both sides, it is best to use a fine file, because if you remove too much metal they will not close properly. Removing metal from the stop will not help as you will be changing the angle of the blades, so keep them sharp and try not to remove too much metal when you do, as wire cutters are one of your more costly tools.

It is quite hard to tell you how to sharpen tools without you watching someone first, but if you follow the angle of the blade, take your time, be careful and clean them you should have no problem.

Bob

Something else to do during the winter months is to read. **Your** library has many great books and many magazines which contain many informative articles. If you cannot read, the pictures alone in these magazines are well worth taking the time to look at. If you want to borrow a book or magazine please let me know and I will be glad to help in getting them to you. Contact me at the meetings or e-mail me at

Thank you and see you at the meeting this week. Please attend, remember we are voting on club officers Decembers meeting is bring your own treats to **WOW** the other members on your own culinary skills, also I hope to have enough information to give a talk on Juniper diseases.

Greg

At this meeting, this Thursday we are needing some ideas as to what topics we would like to do for the upcoming meetings. Going through some old newsletters here are some topics that were covered in past meetings. Use these to spark some ideas of your own.

Greg

Some ideas from our last meeting;

- Kusamono
- Carving
- Potentilla workshop
- Visit Anderson Gardens in Rockford
- Visit Rotary Gardens in Janesville

Some ideas from this last year;

- Book review
- Repotting
- Tropical workshop
- Boxwood workshop
- Wiring on conifers

Some ideas from past years;

- Making Hypertufa Slabs
- Visit local nurseries
- Photographing bonsai
- Lecture on pests and diseases
- Cold frame construction
- Saikei workshop
- Herbs for bonsai
- Japanese Maple workshop
- Cotoneaster workshop
- Problem tree workshop
- Black Pine workshop
- BYO workshop
- Propagation tips
- Hinoki Cypress workshop
- Winter care
- Shimpaku workshop
- Planting on a rock workshop
- Collecting trip
- Ficus retusa workshop

The idea of making pots and slabs were brought up lately, and I have been interested in doing this myself for some time now. In the past Bonsai Bob has had slab workshops, this was before I joined the club. In talking with him though, Bob solved the problem presented by using portland cement (the lime content is high and raises pH to levels dangerous to bonsai and other plants) by using another type of cement mix, can not remember the name of the cement but do know that it was difficult to get, I believe that it was based on Aluminum Silicate and used in making Terrazo. I do know of some plant people using "Hypertufa" for making pots and slabs. The end result

## HYPERTUFA SLABS (Cont.)

still has lime and high pH but by letting the pot set a few months the pH will neutralize. The other materials used in hypertufa also make the result extremely light which is a good thing.

An old newsletter dated Feb. 1993 has an article for an upcoming workshop.

## HYPERTUFA SLAB WORKSHOP by Jim G

Tools and Materials needed

- Stiff working surface (3/8" plywood works)
- 5 gal bucket to mix the hypertufa
- Rubber or plastic gloves, material dries out hands
- Container for water
- Cork to be cut for feet, glued on last
- Stiff wire brush
- Putty knife or old butter knife
- Screwdriver with a 1/4" blade, to drill holes for wire
- Torch or candle and a dust mask

Recipe for Hypertufa

- 1 part each by volume, of: Portland Cement, Sifted Peat Moss, Very fine grained Vermiculite and to each 3 lbs mix (about a 39 oz coffee can full) add, 2 grams (a generous pinch) of Fiber Mesh for reinforcement
- add, 1.5 oz (about the size of a medium egg, or weight) of Dye. Dye is available in many different colors

Measured out, this recipe will yield one, 1/2" x 11" x 17 inch slab, or two, 1/2" x 11" x 8 1/2" slabs.

Mix the dry ingredients, breaking up and spreading the reinforcing fibers evenly throughout the other dry ingredients.

Add water slowly, just a little at a time. Mixing continually, until the mixture feels like cottage cheese, or at least what you think cottage cheese would feel like.

Having attained the proper feel, we get to the fun part, forming your slab. Freeform your desired shape, at least 1/4" in thickness, preferably 1/2" thick.

Cover your slab with plastic, store it frost free for at least 24 hours

With screwdriver and butter knife, carefully drill holes for drainage 1/2" wide and for wire 1/4" wide, then leave it alone for another 24 hours

## 2008 CLUB OFFICERS

President	Ron F
Vice President	Tim C
Secretary	Duke T
Treasurer	Gary J
Librarian/Newsletter	Greg C
Refreshments	Elaine V

