



BADGER BONSAI SOCIETY

Promoting and Enjoying the Ancient Art of Bonsai Since 1972

Badger News | A Publication of the Badger Bonsai Society | January 2017

NEXT MEETING:

January 17 | 6:30

Imperial Gardens
2039 Allen Blvd, Middleton, WI 53562

MEETING AGENDA:

Dinner

CLUB OFFICERS:

- President** Karl
- Vice President** Brian
- Treasurer** Gary
- Librarian/Communications** Devon
- Refreshments** Elaine

January Dinner

No Olbrich Meeting in January

We start the new year on January 12 with our traditional January Dinner at the Imperial Garden restaurant, at the corner of University Avenue and Allen Boulevard (same location as previous years). Cocktails at 6 pm and dinner at 7 pm. We can order off the regular menu and separate checks will be given. Santa may even make an appearance. It is always a good time, but be sure your car is ready for winter! We have a history of nasty weather that rivals the boy's high school basketball tournament.



Photographing Your Trees

We have written about this many times before, but you really should photograph your trees. There are several reasons for this. First, it provides a historical record of the tree's development. It will allow you to determine when you obtained the tree, its growth history, and the styling changes that have taken place. Secondly, a photographic record provides proof of ownership should the tree ever be stolen. Thirdly, and perhaps most important, a photograph allows you to evaluate your tree more effectively. I am really not sure why this happens – perhaps Gary, or Devon, or Orion, or Barbara can explain what is going on here. But looking at a photograph I am able to see flaws (and occasionally a good point too) that I didn't, or couldn't see before. "The tree's position in the pot is not quite right", or "there is too much foliage mass on the left", or "the composition is too tall", or ... You don't have to be a first class photographer to do this. Keep in mind the points Gary made in his presentation in November – plain, simple background; use diffuse lighting utilizing cloudy days, or low sun angle; use tripod or monopod to reduce shake; 'zoom with your feet' – to get your best shots.



Pearls of Wisdom

During Tony Tickle's demonstration at the 5th Annual U.S. Bonsai Exhibition in Rochester, NY back in September, Tony made the comment, "make the smallest tree possible with the given material". I think he attributed this quote to John Naka. It got me to thinking, after doing bonsai for more than forty years, do I have any insights that I have learned over that period that can be reduced to just a sentence, or two? Bonsai, of course, requires that you learn hundreds and hundreds of ideas and concepts and information, and these are all important to being successful in our hobby. The fact that there is so much to learn is why aspiring young bonsai artists apprentice with the Japanese masters for several years. But still, is there anything that we can learn in a short sentence that can distill this knowledge from this time-honored tradition? I googled this question and here are some ideas that came up.

"If you have a problem, cut it off – then you don't have a problem." John Naka

"Do not expect the trunk to thicken once the tree is placed into a bonsai pot. Start out with a tree with as fat a trunk as you can find."

"You make the tree look taller by making it shorter."

"Buy trunks, or trunks with superb roots – everything else is easy."

"Bad when young – bad when old. Bad trunks last forever."

"Straight is the enemy of quality in deciduous bonsai." (perhaps arguable)

"If you have a choice of branches, cut off the larger one."

Can you add anything to this list?

Send your thoughts to Karl at [email removed](#) with pearls as the subject. We'll publish them in the next newsletter.

Bonsai Shows and Conventions Afar

Garden Expo

February 10-12 Alliant Energy Center

Lone Star Bonsai Federation

April 6-9 Dallas, TX

Mid Atlantic Bonsai Societies (MABS)

April 7-9, Cromwell CT

World Bonsai Friendship Federation (WBFF)

April 27-30 Omiya, Japan

Badger Bonsai Society (BBS) show

May 20-21 Madison, WI

Midwest Bonsai Society – Spring Show

May 20-21 Chicago Botanic Garden

American Bonsai Society (ABS) w/ Bonsai Societies of Florida

May 25-28 Orlando, FL

Brussel's Rendezvous

May 25-28 Olive Branch, MS

WI State Fair Bonsai Display

August 3-13, State Fair Park, Milwaukee

Midwest Bonsai Society

August 18-20 Chicago Botanic Garden

Bonsai Clubs International (BCI) w/ 14th Asia-Pacific Bonsai

Nov 4-7 Taiwan

Ficus Bonsai

Now that all your winter hardy trees are sleeping, we are left with only tropical material to admire. While there are dozens of species that we can use for indoor bonsai, the Ficus genus has several species that make good bonsai.

Ficus benjamina, commonly known as **weeping fig**

Ficus microcarpa, also known as **Chinese banyan**

Ficus neriifolia, also known as **willow-leaf fig**, or **narrow-leaf fig**

Ficus rubiginosa, commonly known as **Port Jackson fig**

Ficus burtt-davyi is a fig species endemic to Southern Africa

Ficus retusa commonly known as 'green island' / **green island fig**

All of your indoor bonsai will be much happier you provide supplemental lighting. Low light levels make for long internodes, which is not what we are seeking in bonsai. These are all easy to propagate, so you will have more than you know what to do with before long.



BBS Annual Dues

If you've not already paid your annual dues, now is the time.

To pay your dues, see Gary; Treasurer

Membership dues are
\$25/year (individual)
or \$35/year (family).

More information here:
badgerbonsai.net/membership

If your dues are still outstanding, please see Gary soon and make arrangements .