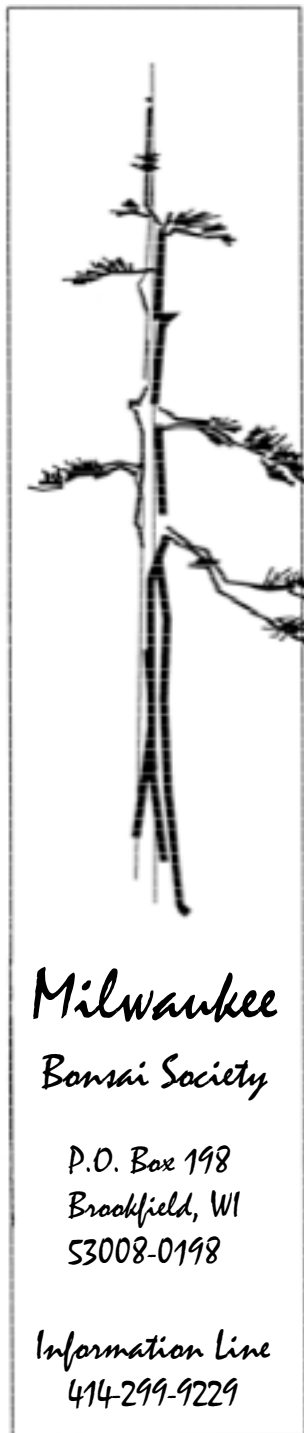


OCTOBER 2008

Bonsai News



**It's time for our
DEAD TREE CONTEST**
Bring any of your trees
that have met an
untimely end! 'Spruce'
them up a little for
presentation. 1st, 2nd
and 3rd place prizes
will be awarded.

Besides the
DEAD TREE CONTEST
we will also have a
presentation about a
very important topic:
fall clean up and
how to get your trees
ready for winter

OCTOBER
Oct 7 - CLUB MEETING*
Dead Tree contest and
fall clean up

NOVEMBER
Nov 4 - CLUB MEETING*
Year end wrap-up

DECEMBER
NO CLUB MEETING

JANUARY
Friday Jan 9
After the Holidays
Holiday Party

* Only meetings with an *
are open to the public.

NEXT MEETING
October 7 - 7 pm
Grace Lutheran Church

President's Message

Hello,

As the days grow shorter the time I spend with my trees seems to shrink as well. It feels like tree time has diminished and I miss looking at the Bonsai without a flashlight.

I have noticed the trees are giving a tiny growth spurt and final push to set new emergent buds for Spring. They too feel the cooler nights and shorter daylight hours and have begun to prepare for winter.

Our October meeting will provide some practical tips for "wintering." This will be a time for sharing ideas and methods for providing safe environments for our trees. Please come and share your ideas with other members.

Last Saturday, September 20, MBS hosted a wonderful Public Workshop. Thanks to all the dedicated MBS members who helped our participants explore the art of living sculpture, Bonsai.

With the guidance from these "helpers" others were able to enjoy the thrill of designing a beautiful tree. Everyone left the workshop contented and excited about the bonsai created.

See you at our next meeting.

Enjoy your Bonsai!

Jean

Thank you to Ron F who served as the nomination chairperson. Following is a list of candidates for the 2009 Executive Board. If you wish to add your name to the following slate, please contact Ron at 262-490-8733 or rfortmann@charter.net or you may nominate someone from the floor at a Club meeting.

President	Joe Herbert
1st Vice President	Jeff Moths
2nd Vice President	John Moore
Secretary	Pam Woythal
Director - 3 year position	Steve Carini

Those with terms to finish:

Treasurer	Laura Larabee
Director - 2 year position	Jerry Niemiec
Director - 1 year position	Michele Zimmer



HOLIDAY PARTY 2009

Our annual Holiday party will again be at Meyer's restaurant at 74th and Forest Home. It's a festive occasion and folks always have a great time. In the spirit of the holidays, please bring a wrapped gift as a contribution for our door prizes. Please fill out the reservation form below and bring it with a check to the November meeting or send to our mailbox: MBS P.O. Box 198, Brookfield, WI 53008-0198.

Date: Friday January 9, 2009

Reservations must be

Time: 6:00-7:00 cash bar

RECEIVED by DECEMBER 27, 2008

7:00 Family Style Dinner

Place: Meyer's Restaurant 74th and Forest Home

Price: \$15 per person

**REMEMBER: EVEN IF YOU RECEIVE A COMPLIMENTARY DINNER,
YOU MUST FILL OUT A RESERVATION FORM!!!**

..... HOLIDAY PARTY Reservation Form

Name(s) _____

Phone # (home) _____ (work) _____

Email _____

Number of dinners _____ @ \$15 each = \$ _____

- Buddy Bucks _____ @ \$3 each = - (\$ _____)

Check # _____ TOTAL \$ _____

Please make check payable to Milwaukee Bonsai Society (MBS). Bring check to November meeting or send to the P.O. Box 198, Brookfield, WI 53008. Reservations must be RECEIVED by DECEMBER 27, 2008

Milwaukee Bonsai Society Membership Form 2009

Name _____

Address _____

Phone # (home) _____ (work) _____

Email _____ Check # _____

for (circle) **Single** 1 year \$25 2 years \$48 3 years \$70

Family 1 year \$35 2 years \$68 3 years \$100

Please confirm your e-mail address here for your monthly online newsletter:

(This e-mail address will not be shared with other parties and is for MBS Board use only.)

Do you have any hidden talents / interests that you would be willing to share with our members?
If so, please describe:

Congratulations to the Club Show Winners!

Novice

- 1st - Blue Rug Juniper - Greg P
- 2nd - Shimpaku Juniper - Greg P
- 3rd - Japanese Yew - Dave E
- 3rd - Boxwood - Barbara S

Youth

- 1st - Ficus - Shannon H

Intermediate

- 1st - Shimpaku Juniper - Rick P
- 2nd - Ficus - Laura L
- 3rd - Alberta Spruce - William G

Advanced

- 1st - White Cedar - Michelle Z
- 2nd - Juniper - Michelle Z
- 3rd - Cork Bark Elm - Ken K

Open

- 1st - Tiger Bark Fig - Joe H
- 2nd - Dwarf Olive - Houston S
- 2nd - Cork Bark Elm - Jack D
- 3rd - Chinese Wisteria - Allen K

BEST OF SHOW

- Ponderosa Pine - Rita E

PEOPLE'S CHOICE

- Yew - Kris Z



Preparing for Fall

Reprinted with permission from Dave Bogan, Indiana

A subject that is probably one of the last things on your mind. As usual, the year is passing fast and Fall is not that far off. In fact just this week, we registered a night temperature below 60 degrees. As much as we hate to, it's time to start taking precautions and planning preparations you will need to plan prior to cold weather.

Trees: For discussion sake, we will break this down into 3 categories.

Cold weather trees – Conifers, Pines & junipers

Medium cold weather trees – Deciduous or special trees we want to protect

Tropicals.

Within each group are variables and special conditions but for now let's just look at them in general.

Cold Weather Trees: Typically includes pines, junipers, and trees naturally from cold climates. These can easily over winter outside and withstand about any of the temperature variations in our local climate. This type of tree usually grows in cold climates and they must have a cold dormant period. Trees in this group will eventually die without a cold period that creates a deep dormancy.

This group usually sets on my benches until late Dec. At which point they are moved to their winter storage areas during Christmas break. By waiting, it allows them plenty of sunlight and they still receive occasional watering when needed. Remember, in our climate, these trees are still growing during this period prior to December especially the root systems. In early fall, prior to total dormancy, the growth switches from top to increased root growth. A critical period where the tree gains strength for the coming winter. When ready to go to the ground (winter storage), the two main considerations are to guard them against wind and freeze / thaw conditions. Over the years, I have tried about everything written on this subject. Finally I settled on the following technique. I use an

area between a fence on the west and the west side of my home and area approximately 12' wide which provides excellent shelter. I chose this area because the fence and house will shelter from the freezing winds of winter. Prior to placing the trees on the ground, spread a thin layer of crushed charcoal on the ground which will prevent worms or ground insects for getting into your pots. This can be simple wood ash or any type of manufactured charcoal. Next, I simply set all my trees on the ground as close together as possible. - Hint, watch the branches. Don't bend them & make sure all the old wire has been removed. Next spring the branches could be set in the wrong position. After all the trees are grouped together I add a thin layer of pine needles around and over the pots. Done deal, I forget these till next spring. Now many will say you must water. From late Dec. until spring, I never water. Ol Mother Nature and a full dormancy will sustain them. I have never lost a tree with this method and only had one (cheap) pot crack.

Medium cold weather trees:

Three location choices here: Outside on the ground – Garage, shed, enclosed porch, cold frame or cold room.

1. Outside. If your situation dictates you must over winter outside, treat them the same as your junipers and pines. As with pines and junipers, additional concern would be protection for the fine branching area. Cold winter wind can dry and kill off some of the very fine branches. You need to insure they are protected from the wind. Some alternatives to fences are to enclose the area with burlap attached to uprights or fence posts. You also need to watch for heavy snowfall, which can weight down and break branches.

Again, start with a layer of charcoal and then cover them with a layer of pine needles. Pine needles are unique in that they allow air circulation and water penetration but will not become wet or soggy. The main reason for the pine needles is insulation and to help retain ground heat. Remember, it's not the cold that kills trees. It's a freeze–thaw condition that will damage or kill trees. We must attempt to maintain a consistent or slowly changing temperature around the pot and root areas. The actual temperature doesn't matter. In

our area, we seldom experience temperatures below 20 degrees.

2. Garage, shed or enclosed porch. All are excellent as they block winds and typically stay at or above freezing. Since they will not receive any rain or snow, they will require occasional watering. Be very careful with your watering. The trees will use very little but they must have moisture to survive. The down side to these areas is light. Dormant deciduous trees do not need light to live. Given light, even a small amount, they will tend to sprout early in early spring if they are in warmer than normal shelters. This will lead to long spindly growth. Eventually most of this growth will require removal. I know of no way to stop this spindly growth and honestly I believe it uses up a lot of the spring reserve strength. Thus slowing your growth once they are taken outside. If possible, stop all light while it's cold out. If available, keep a window open or attempt to keep the interior temperature around freezing as long as possible to delay spring growth. Some will attempt to move their trees in and out of storage. If you only have a couple trees it might work but I again think it stresses the tree and you should leave them alone in their storage.

3. Cold frame or room. Generally the best for over wintering, especially if you want to take advantage of an early spring growing condition. Most cold frames are built partially below ground level. A combination of ground warmth and a clear top allows for warmth and growth. If using these, be very careful on sunny days, even if the outside temperature is below freezing. The enclosure temperature on a sunny day can easily reach 80 – 90 degrees or above. On these days, you must open the top of a cold frame and allow the temperature to stay cooler. The best addition to a cold frame is an automatic top opener. Similar to a hydraulic door opener. They sense temperatures and operate when a certain temperature is registered. Most can be adjusted slightly for a desired operating temperature. Since they do receive good light, the early growth will be more natural and not the spindly growth resulting from low light conditions. But, be prepared to start your spring work early.

In past years I luckily had the use of a large cold room (12' x 10') built in a rear room of my greenhouse. As with the rest of the greenhouse it is

4' below ground. This allowed me to easily maintain a minimum room temperature above freezing without any added heat source. Again, the down side is increased heat during sunny days. The last few years, I have experienced spring growth in late January. Now with the addition of a new wife and a couple hundred additional trees, we will need additional room. My new location will be my existing bench area outside adjacent to my house. This area had an existing wood frame structure to which, I will now be adding a clear Plexiglas roof. The entire area will now be wrapped with a double layer of clear plastic sheeting. Hopefully with its location adjacent to my house (one exposed brick wall) and a concrete floor, it should maintain a temperature at or above freezing. If not, I will be prepared to add supplemental heat as required.

My deciduous trees stay out on their benches again until Thanksgiving. By the time they go in, most all leaves have dropped and they have weathered several cold nights. This allows them to go dormant naturally. Now, I will say last year I did put my trees up a little earlier. Unusual to our area, we had some freezing rain predicted and I put the trees up rather than expose them to ice which could have damaged small twigs and ramification. Always watch the weather and avoid extreme or abnormal weather.

Tropical's: In my early years, I always planned to bring my tropical trees in before the first frost thinking that would be fine. Wrong! Don't watch for frost watch for night temperatures. It can frost at 34 to 35 degrees. We always experience temperatures in the low 40's long before the first frost. Tropical's will of course survive down to occasional temperature of 35 or so. Some have even over wintered at around 40 degrees. But, if you want your plants to enter winter storage string and healthy they must be held at or above 55 degrees. Now, let's think about this, if we leave our tropical's out till the first frost, they have experienced temps well below the 55-degree mark. How do you think this has affected the plants? Leaf drop - yes, tip die back - possible - slowed or stopped growth - yes. How long do you think it will take a tropical to overcome this during winter in your house? Answer - all winter—if you're lucky. How many of you have wondered why that Ficus set all winter with little or

no growth and about as bare as a new born baby? Let's see, it came in after a cold spell, it set in a window with about 50% of its previous light levels, it's soil stayed wet all winter, the air was very dry, the temperatures never went above 70 and fluctuated by 10 or 15 degrees.

Ok, now I have it in the house and it's set to live through the winter. They say to set the pot on a humidity tray. Want my opinion? Forget the humidity part. That small amount of moisture setting under the pot will NOT change the ambient humidity around the plant. The only way to increase humidity is to have a humidifier in the same room. Even then, the humidity level is only slightly increased as most of the humidity transfers to adjacent rooms. The tray's only use is to keep your spouse off your back when you water. With the tray, you spill very little water. Also, if the tray holds water and the pot's bottom hole is below water level, the water will be soaked into the soil and the potential for root-rotting fungus just increased.

Speaking of root fungus, how often do you water in the winter? Typically, your plants have gone into a semi dormant stupor - especially for the first month of inside growth. They will need very little water. Remember; insert your finger or a tooth pick into the soil. If there is moisture 1/2" below the surface, DON'T water. This practice holds truer in winter than during the summer. Plants which have slowed growth and in they're in less than desirable conditions are 10 times more susceptible to problems with water than a healthy growing plant in mid summer. Water can definitely be your worst enemy in winter. If a plant is not using water you may have a severe problem. I've always found that by simply smelling the soil I can tell if there's a problem. Even in winter the soil should smell fresh and not musty or spoiled. If you have a root problem in winter, you can either hope and pray or go ahead and repot the plant. If repotting, clean ALL the old soil off. Pot using a fast draining mix, add a little fungicide and water sparingly. Do not water again until the soil is dry.

Now, we want to keep the temperature more constant so, we keep our set-up close to a heat vent - wrong. Temperatures will fluctuate more when close to a vent and the humidity level is dryer close to a vent. Don't set your trees above an air vent. It's

always better to keep them in a more consistent temperature and humidity level even if it's not exactly ideal. Fluctuations in temperature, humidity and light hurt plants more.

Light: Ok, we setup right next to a southern exposure window - just like the books say. Hey, do you have insulated windows? In the coldest part of winter, do you ever have ice form on the INSIDE of a window? Stop and think what the air temperature is within 6 or 8 inches of this window. How about air leaks? During that hard blowing snowstorm, could you feel cold air around your windows? But, you say, "I wanted to get my plants as close to the light source as possible". Again, remember consistency is better than variations. Now we go to actual lights. "They told me at the garden center, these "grow lights" would be all I needed". Wrong, grow lights typically have about 60% of the required light spectrum plus, they are typically hot. You're better off with fluorescent lights. Ok, so you bought a 4' - 2-lamp shop light and you hung it above the plants. Wrong, let's change the bulbs. 1 - Warm white and 1- cool white is much better than the original lamps, which came with the fixture. Ok, so we have the corrected lamps. We hang the fixture so it will cast light on several trees. Wrong. Arrange plants of the same height together on the same shelf. Now hang the fixture so the lamps are only 2 or 3" away. Yes, you may need to buy more light fixtures. Ok, so we did this last year. Now, we will simply need to set it all up again. Wrong, change the bulbs EVERY year. The human eye can not detect the fluorescent lights dimming and producing less light every month. In one year of usage, a fluorescent light bulb will be below 50% of its original light output. So, what's better, spend a few bucks and keep the plants in better condition or keep going with lamps starting at 50% output which by winter end will be 25%? You figure it out.

Keep it clean. I brought in my Ficus and they dropped all their leaves - clean them up as they drop. Old rotting leaves create disease and don't smell too good either. Keeping your pots and area clean during winter is mandatory.

Hey, the plants aren't growing a lot so they must need fertilizer - wrong. The trees are stressed. They're not growing as much because conditions are not right. Fertilize them and you will stress them

more, maybe burn a few root tips, and maybe even kill them. Rules of thumb watch its growth and water intake. The plant must be growing “normally”, putting out new growth and using water. A growing healthy plant will use a lot more water. Thus, it will take in the fertilizer, convert it to growth and be happy. Here’s a test. Fill a small container with about 2” of water. Add normal fertilizer. Go back and look at the water in 7 to 10 days. It will look scummy and green. Do you really want your plants setting for weeks at a time in this scummy looking water?

What about insects and diseases?

Remember last summer when you saw those insects, maybe a few scale or aphids on your trees? Well, you sprayed and killed those little suckers. Did you kill them before they laid eggs? Did you use an oil-based spray that also kills eggs? Guess what, you just brought in a plant that was living in cool weather into a warm house. Hey, the little eggs just warmed up thinking it was early spring. Now you have “bugs”. I always (or at least attempt too) inspect every tree several weeks before they go into their winter homes. You remember that pruning scar which has healed well this year? Does it have flaky or dead bark around it? Maybe dried out wound sealer which is curling up now due to the new growth of the callus. These are excellent spots for insects to lay eggs in. Also, if laid inside these crevices, the insecticide you sprayed probably did not get into the hidden area. It’s a very good idea to clean off all the old dried wound sealer and flaky bark. I bet you will find at least one area, with what looks like a little white sack, made from fine threads - egg sack! Inspect your tree all over; look in the crotch of branches, under leaves, and yes, in the surface soil. Now, after a thorough inspection, let’s hose the plant down with a strong stream of water. Sometimes it is good to cover the pot / soil with a plastic bag. Once it has dried, apply insecticide. I use pyola-based oil. This will kill any remaining insects PLUS, cover any remaining eggs. Once sealed by the oil, the eggs will die. Another very good preventative measure is to treat with a systemic insecticide. This MUST be applied at least 4 weeks before bringing the trees in. This is so your spouse will not kill you when you bring your trees in and water the first time. Did I mention most

systemic insecticides smell to high heaven? Also, by applying early while the plant is growing well, the plant will take the systemic up into the vascular system thus being ready for that adventurous insect that decides to chew or suck on your plant. Soon as he does, wham, the systemic will give him a stomachache that won’t go away. If you have time after all the above, let’s also apply a diluted fungicide. Remember that we will probably over water this winter and the roots will probably stay wetter than usual.

You will almost always notice more insects in winter. During the summer, you always watered from above, washing away many insects, where as in winter you only water at pot level, thus not removing or washing away pests. Most pests do not like to live in wet areas or like water rushing over them from overhead. A huge winter pest is spider mites, usually going unnoticed until they are covering your entire tree - you know, those miniature spider web looking coating on your leaves or all over the foliage. What did your mother always tell you about an ounce of prevention goes a long way?

With all types of trees, you must always clean them prior to winter storage. Remove all dead leaves or any other type other debris and remember to spray them one last time for insects and especially insect eggs.

If you are using a cold frame or greenhouse, they must also be prepared. Clean everything with water and bleach mixture. This will kill off any bacteria or diseases, which may have developed since last spring. I also spray for insects but I do it the easy way. First I close off all openings, vents and make sure there are no open flames or heat sources. Then I set off 4 spray bombs spaced equally throughout my greenhouse. The greenhouse now stays closed for about 2 days with no air movement. After a couple days, I open it up & turn the exhaust fans on to air it out. I then spray everything down with “pyola”. Making sure I drench everything. Especially under the benches. This is an added insect preventative, which will kill off any left over insects or their eggs.

In closing, simply take good care of your plants over winter, don’t stress them anymore than you have to.

FALL DEALS !!??

It's just about time for the garden centers to be having their fall sales on trees, etc. Many of us eagerly await this time of year to stock up on bonsai possibilities. So the question arises, ¿Are these really deals?

I look at my bonsai benches and realize that the majority of the trees I got on sale are no longer here. So did I waste my money? Not really. They offered me great practice in pruning, styling, wiring and trying to keep them alive. Better to experiment on something inexpensive than a real Pre-Bonsai specimen. A number of my deals died. So I learned something about how not to take care of them. The majority I just lost the vision and passed them on to other club members, some of whom did wonderful jobs re-creating them.

So, what are some things to remember as you hunt for deals:

1. Don't just buy because it's cheap. Really look at the trunk and the roots to see if there is a bonsai in there somewhere. (Remember, the trunk will not grow much once it's in a pot and a root bound tree will be hard to work on).
2. Make sure the tree is healthy.
3. If you just have to get a couple of trees, take note as to how you keep them though the winter. Did they survive?

All in all, purchasing sale trees can offer you an inexpensive way to increase your bonsai skills and who knows? Maybe you'll end up with a show-stopper!!

Many thanks to the following volunteers. For their contributions they have received Buddy Bucks worth \$3 each towards the After the Holidays Holiday Party on Friday January 9, 2009. A raffle ticket (to be used at any time) will be given for all buddy bucks over the 5 needed for the Holiday Party.

WAUWATOSA GARDEN TOUR

2 Buddy Bucks
Jean S, Allen K

STATE FAIR 2008

1 Buddy Buck
Pam W, Lori H, Ken K, Jorge R, Rocío S, Tom A, Susan C, Pauline J, Dennis G, Greg W, Karen G, Kayla C, Laura L, Joe N, Rita L, David E and Leo S

2 Buddy Bucks
Ken J, Ron F. Steve C, Jerry N, Gen M, Pat B, Jack D, Susan L, Michelle Z, Norb B, Don G, Dione H and Scott H

3 Buddy Bucks
Jeff M and John M

4 Buddy Bucks
Bill G and Allen K

7 Buddy Bucks
Kris Z

11 Buddy Bucks
Jean S

13 Buddy Bucks
Tony P

PUBLIC WORKSHOP

1 Buddy Buck
Tony P, Allen K, Joe N, Jean S, Kris Z, Laura L, Ron F



P.O. Box 198
Brookfield, WI 53008-0198
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Next Meeting of MBS
7PM, Tuesday, October 7
Grace Lutheran Church
3030 W. Oklahoma
Milwaukee, WI

2008 MBS OFFICERS

The MBS Officers are:

President	Jean S
First VP	Joe H
Second VP	Allen K
Secretary	Susan C
Treasurer	Laura L
Director	Jerry N
Director	John M
Director	Michelle Z
Past Pres.	Kris Z

Other Club Functions:

Kris Z - Newsletter Editor/
Distribution
Pam W - Webmaster
Joe N - Librarian
Jean S - Telephone response
Mary T - Membership Chairperson

