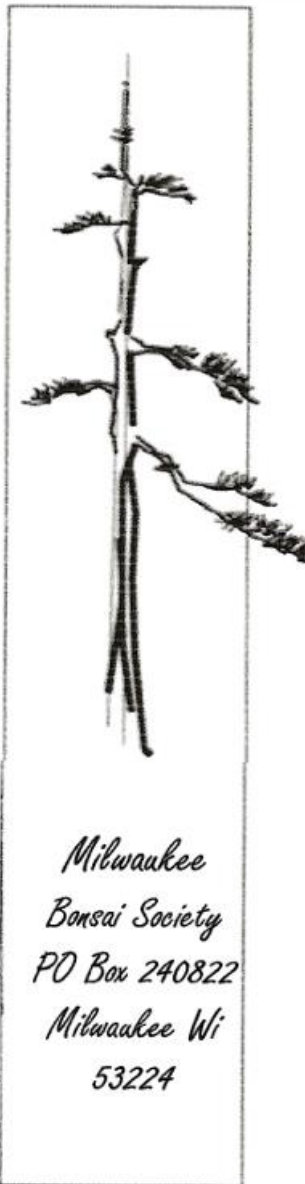


# BONSAI NEWS

November 2024



## Upcoming Meeting

The Main Topic of Discussion for November is Wire and Wiring. This is the one bonsai task many bonsai hobbyists avoid like the plague or political commercials. Especially when you are in the early stages of your bonsai journey, it seems like such a daunting task. Steve C and Ron F will try to demystify and simplify this very important process that helps us create better looking bonsai.

First, we will outline the main reason/purpose we apply wire to our trees.

We will then move into explaining the different types of wire material used, and explain the whys and how comes, one should consider when deciding which type of wire material to use. We will explain the advantages and disadvantages of these wire types.

Next, we will discuss the proper application of wire onto our trees.

There will be an opportunity to apply wire to a couple of "training mules" fake trees so NO live trees are harmed.

Once you understand the basics then it is just like most things in life, you only get better by practice, practice, practice.

So, we hope you can make it to the meeting to experience this discussion in person.

## November

November 2 – Wiring/Winter Storage problems to watch for

November 9 – Bonsai Skills 101\*

November 10 – Bonsai Skills 201\*

November 22-24 – Folk Fair  
State Fair Park

## December

December 7 – Holiday Party

## January

January 4 – General Meeting

## February

February 1 – General Meeting

February 23 – Silhouette Show  
Milw. Domes

## March

March 1 – General Meeting

\*Open to MBS members only

## Next Meeting

November 2,  
2024  
9 am  
Boerner  
Botanical

## President's Message

It's difficult for me to believe that we are sliding from October into November, especially given the extraordinary weather and the summer that doesn't want to end. The calendar doesn't lie, though, and it's essential that we are ready for over-wintering, irrespective of the size of our collections or their composition. I remember very clearly a frantic race to move thirty trees inside while getting soaked to the skin because of a surprise, unpredicted October ice storm.

Once those winter plans are realized, my least-favorite time of the bonsai year begins, when there isn't much to do for three or so months, other than trudging out to the greenhouse to make sure that none of the trees get too dry. It will be a good time, though, to finally address the clutter and chaos in my workshop, take stock of what supplies are on hand for spring repotting, maybe identifying which pot to match with the tree that's ready for a new home.

More important, this is a really good time for reflection and some self examination. For our beginners, as an example, one could ask, what have I learned that I like about bonsai? What species or areas of knowledge do I want to explore further? More experienced members might have different issues to ponder—what really worked this year? How can I further refine my skill set? What can I do next to help this particular tree realize its potential?

What I'm hoping everyone would be asking, to some varying degree, is what can I give back to MBS and this hobby/art form/ passion/addiction that means so much to me? There is a wide range of possible answers, starting with teaching. That might be formal classes, meeting presentations, or little informal study groups—or it might simply be taking the time to answer questions and guidance to help a novice be a little more successful.

It might be leadership. We just got done electing officers and an executive committee who will put in a lot of hours, mostly unseen, to make sure the wheels keep turning smoothly and MBS continues to grow and improve.

The most obvious answer, though, is simply showing up, participating, and volunteering a few hours. I would be the first to agree that we ask a lot of our volunteers, because we are a busy organization throughout the year. That's just the nature of things. I am actually very pleased and encouraged that we are seeing new faces getting involved, and not leaning all the time on the usual handful of stalwart, dedicated folks who have done the heavy lifting year after year.

Coming up on November 22 is the Holiday Folk Fair, the last event of the year. It's an event that gives us tremendous visibility and generates a lot of good will in the community. Yes, it's the weekend right before Thanksgiving and that's a busy time for everyone, but please look at your calendar, see if you can't shake some time loose, and sign up to help. We need all the hands we can get to round out what has been a great year with one more successful event.

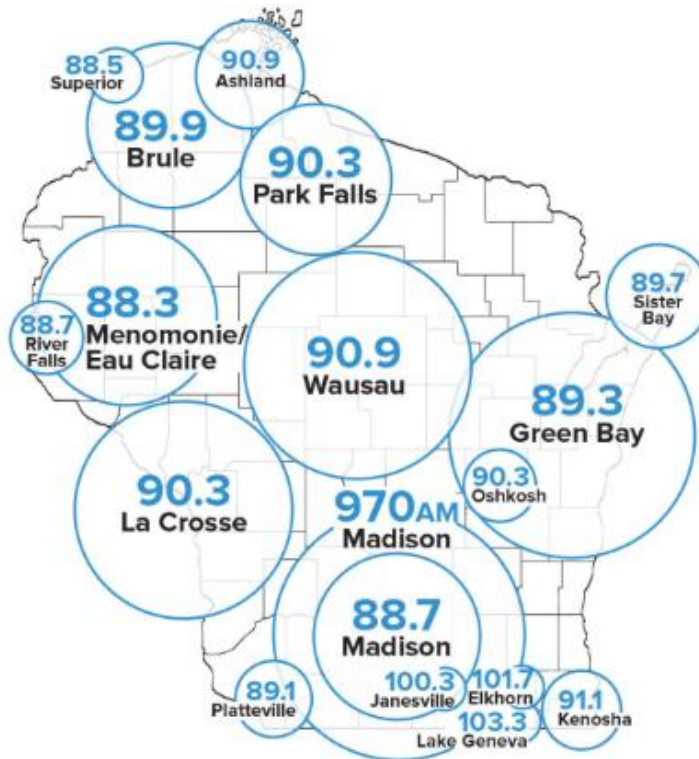
Rick

Kevin S from Wisco Bonsai will be a guest on the Larry Meiller Show: Garden talk.

<http://wpr.org/larry>

**When:** Friday, November 1, 12:30 – 1 pm

Folks in Milwaukee may be better off streaming the program. Below is the station map for areas outside the Milwaukee area.



**WISCO BONSAI NOW HAS THE AREA'S LARGEST SELECTION OF ARTISIAN, HANDMADE BONSAI POTTERY, MUCH OF WHICH CONSISTS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL ARTISTS.**



**WISCO BONSAI**  
www.WiscoBonsai.com

**WE ALSO NOW CARRY A LINE OF TOOLS GEARED TOWARD THE BEGINNER AND NOVICE AMONG US, ALONG WITH ALL MANNER OF BONSAI SUNDRIES, SUCH AS, COPPER & ALUMINUM WIRE, JIN SEAL, WOUND PUTTY, ETC.**

**AND OF COURSE THERE'S THE SUBSTRATE, WISCO GOLD... THE BEST NON-JAPANESE MIX AROUND WE ALSO OCCASIONALLY HAVE OTHER RAW SUBSTRATE COMPONENTS AVAILABLE (PUMICE, LAVA, ETC).**

**SEVERAL SIZES OF KANUMA NOW AVAILABLE !!!**

**GOT ORCHIDS ? WE HAVE A SUBSTRATE FOR THOSE TOO !!!**

[WiscoBonsai@gmail.com](mailto:WiscoBonsai@gmail.com) 414-248-3827 [www.WiscoBonsai.com](http://www.WiscoBonsai.com)

INSTAGRAM @wisco.bonsai

**THE SHOP NOW HAS REGULAR HOURS IN THE SPRING, SUMMER AND FALL. HOURS ARE UPDATED WEEKLY ON MY GOOGLE INFO SITE. OR, TO BE THE AMONG FIRST TO KNOW ABOUT ALL THE WORKSHOPS AND OTHER FUN GOING DOWN AT WISCO BONSAI, JUST SHOOT AN EMAIL AND I WILL ADD YOU TO THE EMAIL LIST.**

**"BONSAI IS THE ART OF NATURE, GUIDED AND NURTURED BY HUMAN HANDS" - KMS**

"Creating a Forest"  
Update provided by John N.

At the April meeting, a forest planting was created. The design used Dawn Redwood trees, started from seed by Bryan L, with the individual trees grown in pots and then transplanted directly into the ground in John N's backyard.

You can review the video for the April meeting in the Member's Video Library.

Now, for an update. The forest is doing well. All but a single tree survived the forest creation process. It has been kept outdoors and watered and fertilized all summer.

Below is a photo of the forest in its current state. It will be overwintered and, in another year or two, will be moved from the box it is currently planted in, into a bonsai pot.



**Ancient  
Arts Bonsai**

Bonsai Supplier Established  
in 2005

Bonsai a Growing Hobby  
Wisconsin's Leading Full Line Bonsai Supplier

Tools, Wire – Aluminum & Copper, Pots, Fertilizers  
Soils – Akadama, Lava, Pumice, Kanuma, Blends  
Trees – Tropical, Deciduous, Conifers, Evergreens  
Services – Lessons, Consults, Repotting, Wiring, Boarding

See our updated Website: [aabonsai.com](http://aabonsai.com)  
Email – [aabonsai@charter.net](mailto:aabonsai@charter.net)  
Phone – 262-490-8733

# Holiday Folk Fair is Quickly Approaching

by PAM W

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Bonsai trees have been a fascination here in western society for many, many years. China started this wonderful art some 1700 years ago. The term bonsai means tree in a pot. It is a living art sculpture which combines three-dimensional design and horticulture. A tree can only be considered a bonsai if it is an "idealized form of nature and the result of a creative expression."

Join in the celebration of cultural diversity. The 81<sup>st</sup> Holiday Folk Fair International showcases the heritage and culture of over 50 ethnic groups through international exhibits, food and dance performances.

**MBS is looking for volunteers to tree sit or exhibit trees. MBS is honored to be a part of this Milwaukee tradition, but needs your help to make the event a success. Trees sitters receive a ticket for the Folk Fair that is valid for all 3 days. Sign up at the November meeting, contact Rob S at [robert\\_sunderlage@yahoo.com](mailto:robert_sunderlage@yahoo.com) or Eventbrite.**

Even novice members are encouraged to help out. You don't need to be an expert to talk about a hobby you love.

Drop off for exhibiting trees is Thursday, November 21 from 6-8pm at the State Fair Expo Center. Pick up is Sunday, November 24th at 6:30pm

**Friday Nov 22 2 PM to 9 PM**

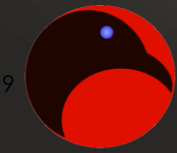
**Saturday Nov 23 10 AM – 9 PM**

**Sunday Nov 24 10 AM – 6 PM**

**Exposition Center at Wisconsin State Fair Park  
8200 West Greenfield Avenue  
West Allis, Wisconsin 53214**

Tree sign up

Volunteer Sign up



# Four Tips for Better Wiring

By Pam W

I can't say that I'm the best bonsai artist out there, but I can certainly wire better than when I started. I've read a lot of advice and worked with several masters about getting better at wiring over the years. Some advice has been very helpful and some advice just hasn't worked for me. I want to share just a couple of tips that have helped me improve, particularly over the last four or five years.

**1. Wire a lot.** How much is a lot? Malcom Gladwell says it takes about 10,000 hours of doing something to become an expert at it. So, the more you do it every day, the faster you'll get good. In 2004, I attended my first private lesson where I nervously showed the artist I admired around my collection and work in progress. My instructor recommended that I work to finish wiring a tree a month, at minimum. I did just that, several months over, and was amazed at how quickly I progressed over that time.



**2. Slow and Steady.** Especially when learning to do small branches, go slowly. It's just like practicing a musical instrument. You start as slowly as you can without making mistakes, then you speed up. Go as slowly as necessary to have control over what you're doing on the branch. This is particularly important when trying to wire secondary and tertiary branches. While it's best to wire two branches with a single wire with a quick stroke, I've never seen an artist I admire wire tertiary branches with a single wire. Most will carefully and deliberately chunk out the branch and carefully reduce wire thickness with smaller controlled wiring.

**3. Fix it until it's right.** When working on a difficult branch, rewire it until you get it right. Especially if you're starting out, I recommend never crossing wires, equaling spacing of wires and a good clean look. When you review your wire and come to a point where you feel it is crossing or too sloppy, you can re-work and readjust until you get it right. Set a high standard for yourself and work to achieve that with every branch. Look at you're wiring from many angles to reveal problems in the wiring. *Don't take this suggestion too far.* If you're really hitting a wall, abandon the branch, and start another. It's more important to wire a lot than get stuck on one branch.

**4. Study the Fundamentals.** Study the best books and videos on bonsai. I like the resources found at [bonsaiboon.com](http://bonsaiboon.com). Go to You Tube and search for bonsai wiring, weekly, if possible. Go to a nursery every week and look for material that you can improve with wiring. I highly recommend reading *The Japanese Art of Miniature Trees and Landscapes: Their Creation, Care, and Enjoyment* by Yuji Yoshimura. The sections on proper wiring technique alone are worth the price of the book.

## **New videos are now available!**

Just in time for the holidays, new videos are being posted to the Member's Only Video Library the week of October 21<sup>st</sup>. Remember, as opposed to videos that you might find on YouTube and other sites, these videos cover topics for trees we need to care for in our climate.

Seven new videos have just been added.

Here's what's new:

### **Monthly Meeting**

July 2024 Meeting Main Topic – Identifying Pine Tree Species – by Ron F

August 2024 Meeting Main Topic – Working with Tropical Trees - by Guest Artist David Cutchin

September 2024 Meeting Main Topic – Review of MBS Members State Fair Trees

October 2024 Meeting Main Topic – Viewing Stones (Suiseki) – by Guest Artist Rafael Guerra

### **Focus Topic Presentations**

Ideas for Critiquing Your Own Trees – by Pam W

Inside the mind of a Bonsai Judge – by Ron F

Root Over Rock Revisited! - by Houston S

The Puffball Stage of Bonsai Trees

Remember, the site is password protected, and we ask that you do not share the login information with anyone outside of our organization. If you have lost or did not receive your login information, send us an email.

Additional videos are added regularly!





# Evaluation of a Stone

By Pam W

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*The whole thing is the relationships between the viewer and the stone.*

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"Turtle Celebrating Long Life Birthday" The contemporary base has a water wave design.



Yellow River stone.



Small, Chinese red Taihu stone.

Last month's presentation by Rafael Perez Guerra introduced us to lot on information. One thing that stood out to me was his answer to how you evaluate a stone. His answer "The whole thing is the relationships between the viewer and the stone". He goes on to say "There are SEVERAL different perspectives on evaluating a viewing stone, depending on cultures, collectors or imagination."

Here the traditional features most frequently used by the Chinese:

**Shou (Thinness):** Elegant, slender, vertical alone.

**Zhou (Wrinkles):** Rich textures, delicate ridges and lines, rhythms in shape

**Lou (Channels):** Exquisite beauty, indentations and channels linked to one another like a path

**Tou (Holes):** Openings, holes (such as those that let moonlight and wind through)

More recently, the basic criteria most often used in modern stone appreciation utilized four primary features:

**Xing (Shape):** pleasing natural shape and not appear artificial or manufactured.

**Se (Color):** hue and luster, black, grey or yellowish brown. Traditionally, gray to dark colored stones were preferred, but in modern times, more colorful stones and more pattern stones have become more fashionable.

**Zhi (Material):** composition of the stone, should feature the degree of hardness, chemical composition, inclusions, ability to resonate, and translucence.

**Wen (Texture):** texture and surface pattern, uniform pattern, stones with deposits or streaks made from lighter colored calcite, celestine, quartz, or other minerals, fascinating patterns that might resemble plants, figures, landscape scene

## Displaying Stone

Rafael Perez Guerra also emphasized that great care should be taken when displaying stones. This comment resonated with me because it is the same with displaying bonsai.

Here are some things he covered (see if they resonate with you):

- Use appropriate container
- Suiseki should always be the predominant element on the container and surroundings.
- The best method for display is diaza (carved wood) or Suiban (shallow ceramic tray filled with sand or water).
- It should never "detract from the stone."



## Daiza making videos

After October's meeting with Rafael Perez Guerra talking about stones and how to display them with your bonsai Bryan L thought it would be a good time to share a series of videos that he made last winter on how to make a daiza.

When Bryan first started in bonsai Sean Smith came and showed how he makes root stands and daizas. Bryan has made a few daizas for some of the many stones he has; it is not an easy thing to do. It makes a mess and takes patience. The chances are the first one will have errors.

Below is a link to a series of videos on how Bryan make daizas.

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/D2wde9RKk7Tx36r97>



# October Meeting

Root over Rock-Revisited

Houston S



Sueseki-Rafael Perez Guerra





PO Box 240822  
Milwaukee, WI 53224  
[www.milwaukeebonsai.org](http://www.milwaukeebonsai.org)

Next MBS meeting will be  
November 2, 2024 @ 9am

#### 2024 MBS OFFICERS

President [Rick W](#)  
1<sup>st</sup> VP [Pam W](#)  
2<sup>nd</sup> VP [Rob S](#)  
Secretary [Greg R](#)  
Treasurer [John N](#)  
Director [Joe T](#)  
Director [Irene H](#)  
Director [Mike B](#)  
Past President [Erich B](#)

#### Other Club Functions

Newsletter [Melissa J](#)  
Webmaster [Pam W](#)  
Librarian [Greg R](#)  
Social media [Jenna W](#)

PAB Board-Ron F, Houston S & Judy S



*Brown leaves gathering-  
Autumn's colors blown away  
Sparrows chatter on.*

*~Modern Haiku of  
Vaughn Banting*