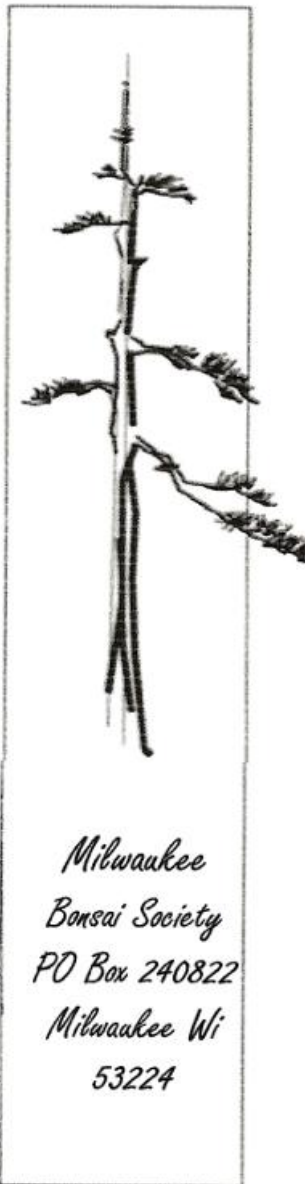


BONSAI NEWS

April 2025



Upcoming Meeting

Focus Topic: Bonsai Technique - Pinching

What does it mean to "Pinch" rather than prune your bonsai tree?

This month we will offer a short Focus presentation on this seldom used but important bonsai technique. Steve C will open the meeting and review the differences and when to apply them on your trees.

Main Topic: Mugo Pine Work

How did you enjoy styling the junipers in March? This month we will be working on Mugo pines. We have nursery-bought Mugo pines to discuss in small groups and style. Six tables, each with a tree and an experienced member will be set up for this month's meeting after Steve C's presentation.

Bring your tools (with ID on them) as well as cash or a check book. The trees will be auctioned off at the end of the meeting. Don't miss out!

Next Meeting

April 5, 2025

9 am

Boerner
Botanical

April

April 5 – General Meeting:
Pinching/Mugo Pine Work

April 5 - Yamadori Dig
Boerner Botanical Gardens

April 12 – Class: Skills 101*

April 13 – Class: Skills 201*

April 19 – Class: Fundamentals*

May

May 3 – General Meeting: Multi Flush
Deep Dive/Accent Plant
Placement

May 10 – Class: Fundamentals*

June

June 7 – General Meeting: Post Flush
cut back deciduous/Boxwood
work

June 14-15 – 54th Annual Exhibit
Lynden Sculpture Garden

June 28 - Class: Skills 101*

June 29 – Class: Skills 201*

*Open to MBS members only

President's Message

As I write this, it is now officially spring, though it can be hard to tell with the oscillating weather pattern. It seems that one day we could say it's summer, only to be followed a day later by a convincing taste of winter. Last weekend I was in Minneapolis, where it was 74 degrees on Saturday afternoon, followed by 28 degrees on Sunday.

Over the next couple of weeks, however, the wild swings will moderate, the nighttime lows will gradually climb, and then it will be safe for most trees to come out of winter protection and into the light. For me, that is when the real fun of bonsai begins. Not only do we get to actually do things again, we get to watch the transformation as leaves unfold, flower buds open, and new growth seems to change by the hour.

My personal resolution is for this growing season to be about goals and objectives, for the trees and for myself. I want to be specifically purposeful and intentional in addressing my trees—not just coasting along but having a sense of what I want to do with each one to encourage its development toward my ultimate idea of what it can be.

I'm beginning with spending time in the greenhouse with a note pad and looking at the trees one at a time. First, which ones need repotting now? If they do, what pot are they going into? Do I want to change the position in the new pot, maybe a different planting angle?

After that, what should I be doing this season to advance the tree's development? Depending on the species, is it "clip and grow", or should some wiring be done? When is the right time to prune, and how much? And throughout the entire process, that essential question: what am I trying to accomplish?

I also want to have goals for myself, around increasing my own knowledge and depth of understanding. Obviously, that starts with attending the monthly meeting presentations and availing myself of any workshops or classes that fit with my collection. It also can involve going places, such as one of the several bonsai collections within a reasonable travel distance. Beyond our own pavilion at Lynden, there is the magnificent collection at the Chicago Botanic Garden, only about ninety minutes away. There are also the Anderson gardens in Rockford, likewise an easy day trip. If you find yourself in the Minneapolis area, the collection at the Como Zoo Conservatory is simply breathtaking. Personally, I find that I learn a good deal every time I visit one of these places, always finding something new or that I didn't see the last time.

My personal learning goals come down to two areas. First is horticulture, about which you can never know too much. The other is the area of design and aesthetics—not about what makes a classical Japanese bonsai, but rather about proportion, motion, and dynamic tension. I have numerous trees that diverge completely from traditional styles in favor of a flower display, but I still want them to have shape and form that expresses an artistic vision.

Our growing season in Wisconsin is almost painfully short. I encourage everyone to take advantage of every hour they can find, to absorb themselves in the trees, the art, and the enjoyment while we can.

Rick

World Bonsai Day

We have been invited by our friends at Boerner to put on an exhibit in the Atrium for World Bonsai Day, which this year is Saturday, May 10. This will be similar to the Silhouette Show in size and scope. Our goal is to have approximately twenty trees for display.

The trees should be in bonsai pots and stands and accents are appropriate. Like the silhouette show, this would be a one-day event, with morning drop off and late afternoon pick up. We will also be doing some sort of demo and will need a couple of volunteers to be on site during the day to babysit the trees and answer questions.

We are meeting with Boerner staff on April 1 to hammer out final details. Please start thinking now about what trees you might have available to show. If we are fortunate, there may be azaleas and other flowering stuff in bloom then, but all species and varieties are welcome.

Also, please bear in mind that we are fortunate to have a home at Boerner for MBS. They have asked us to do this as part of their efforts to draw in greater attendance. Putting on a high-quality exhibit not only raises our profile with the public, but will go a long way toward creating good will with Boerner and their Friends group.



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



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 414-248-3827 www.WiscoBonsai.com

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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.

WISCO BONSAI
www.WiscoBonsai.com

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

Annual Exhibit - Raffle Donations Needed

The Annual Exhibit is June 14-15th this year and is quickly approaching. The raffles go a long way to help provide funds for the club. We use the money raised for many different projects throughout the year. Every donation is appreciated and is tax-deductible. Gently used bonsai items are always welcome. Bring items to the next meeting or contact Melissa J. to make arrangements for pick-up. Missyuc2@yahoo.com text: 414-350-3924



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

Email – aabonsai@charter.net

Phone – 262-490-8733

Former Ballerina Translates Movement to Bonsai

by Pam W

Movement: When styling a bonsai, the bonsai artist can decide which way they would like the movement of the tree to face and how much movement there should be. There are no real hard and fast rules when deciding how much movement can be added to a tree and indeed, in which direction the movement should be.

When bonsai artist speak to movement it begins with the trunkline. Whether the trunk is more feminine—tall, with slender, gentle turns—or masculine—short and thick, with aggressive angles—the character in the primary trunkline, starting from the base and rising to the apex, is the backbone of the overall bonsai design. Movement has to be acknowledged for a bonsai design to be successfully convincing.

With review of the above paragraphs on movement, you can see why education with a focus on movement is needed. At this year's Annual Exhibit in June, we are honored to have an expert in movement.

Jennifer Price

Jennifer Price, a former professional ballet dancer, seamlessly translates her passion for movement into the art of bonsai. Serendipitously drawn into bonsai, she credits Jim Doyle and Walter Paul as pivotal mentors in her journey.

Jennifer is still Walter's apprentice to this day. She has recently decided to study with Ryan Neil of Bonsai Mirai as she wanted to get more formal training, technical training, and of course Ryan's artistry.

To understand Jennifer below are a couple questions asked and answered in an interview for National Bonsai Foundation article [Future of Bonsai: Jennifer Price](#)

Do you prefer outdoor or tropical bonsai or both and why?

Both really. Not a lot of bonsai artists do tropicals. It's really nice to have a killer Juniper next to a blooming bougainvillea, beautiful.

What in your opinion are the most important qualities a bonsai artist should have?

Patience.... A thorough technical knowledge of the technique of working with trees.... a horticultural background. If you don't understand or know how to grow them, how can you take them to the next level....and artistry.

Annual Exhibit

Attend the Annual Exhibit June 14-15 where Jennifer will critique and judge our exhibit of bonsai, do a demonstration on a Pondarosa Pine she hand-picked from Andy Smith. These events are free as well as vendors and raffles.

MBS will also offer 3 workshops for members to participate in. Watch for details on the Annual Exhibit [website](#) and MBS newsletter.



[Jennifer Price](#)

"Bonsai is first and foremost a way for me to express the grace and power of nature with its beauty, quiet elegance, and harshness. Creating a Bonsai forms a connection to a living entity, which you cannot truly control, but can listen to and learn from"

Jenifer Price on her Bonsai Philosophy



The Newsletter has a new Email address starting with April's edition. This new and improved email address will be used to send out the newsletter but can also be used to send information or contact the newsletter staff.

Newsletter@milwaukeebonsai.org

The March 1st MBS meeting had Andy Smith as a guest artist, talking about tree collecting. Andy also hosted 2 workshops over the weekend.



A Study in Elm

By Ben H.

I live in Juneau Wisconsin, a small town about an hour away from both Milwaukee and Madison. Even though the town is the county seat of Dodge County, there really is not much to boast about. Within the less than



1 - My favorite tree covered in snow. This is a swamp oak flanked by two additional swamp oaks on either side. I pass this every day while walking my dogs.

2 square miles that make up Juneau we have a couple of bars and a strip club. The only restaurant is a diner that closes at 2 PM and serves mainly breakfast. We also have a pizza joint that is really more of a bar and a bowling alley that is also really more of a bar. Typical small-town Wisconsin. However, I consider myself lucky to live in this area of Wisconsin for one thing. The trees.

My neighbor has a black walnut in the back yard with a 3-foot diameter trunk. In our backyard we have an old sugar maple. It takes three people to wrap their arms around the base of that grand old tree. While walking my dogs I get to pass by amazing swamp oak, maple, white birch, and a row of old pine trees (I cannot identify which pines because I cannot get close enough to the foliage. All the branches below 12 feet are dead.)

We have a lot of oaks in the area, and they are by far the easiest to identify from the silhouette. We have lots of red maples and sugar maples. I have come across some wonderful box elder trees, ironwood, hackberry, thuja and spruce. On the smaller side but still wonderful are the crabapple with all their variety and the flowers in the spring (some have red leaves, some have green leaves, some have white flowers and some have pink flowers).

One tree that is missing, though, is the elm. Not surprising really. The American elm was once a mainstay of landscape trees in cities throughout the Northeast and Midwest. Growing to 120 feet tall and living for 300 plus years, it was the most planted shade tree in urban America during the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. Native Americans often used American elm as council trees, serving as a signpost for significant tribal gatherings. George Washington took command of the American continental army under the Washington elm in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1775. The "Treaty" elm in Philadelphia is where William Penn and Tamanend, chief of the Lenni-Lenape nation, signed a treaty of peace in 1683.



2 - An elm-lined street in St. Paul Minn., before most of the trees were killed by Dutch elm disease (Photo: Joseph OBrien, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org)

Then came Dutch elm disease (DED) and the population of American elm in the United States crashed. Based on a report released by the WI department of Natural Resources in 2019, elm currently accounts for 1.3% of all volume of trees in Wisconsin. Unfortunately, the elm population is still in decline, accounting for 9.9% of all tree mortality in the same report.

Thankfully there is hope that the American Elm can make a comeback. Researchers at the University of Wisconsin and the Morton Arboretum in Chicago have incorporated the DED resistance from Asian varieties of elms into the American Elm, releasing two varieties: 'Cathedral' and 'Triumph.' These trees maintain the growth habits of the American Elm but are not as susceptible to death from DED. However, it will be many years before old Elm line the streets of Juneau WI (if that will ever happen).

So why do I care so much about Elm? Besides being amazing trees and an important part of American tree heritage, I have a lot of elm in my bonsai collection. About 3 years ago when I really wanted to get into bonsai, I purchased 50 juniper seeds, 50 crabapple seeds and 50 Chinese elm seeds. Of the 50 junipers, 7 germinated, but I lost all but one tree. Of the 50 crabapples 2 germinated but they were attacked by my cat and did not make it. However, of the 50 Chinese elm, I somehow ended up with 70 seedlings. Clearly there were more than 50 seeds in the package and almost all of them germinated. I was not able to keep all of the seedlings, but I still have about 15 Chinese elm that I am working with to train as bonsai. I love my elm trees. They have been so forgiving of my beginner mistakes, and I cannot seem to kill them no matter how I mishandle them. This includes root pruning and repotting in November and then leaving them out for a hard freeze a week later. I was sure that I had lost half of my elms that winter but in the spring they all came back as if nothing had happened.

As I have been thinking about how to style these elm trees, I have decided to avoid the classic S-shaped mass market Chinese elms and opt for something more reminiscent of the trees I see around me. This is where I would love to see some mature elms in America and understand how they grow. We are fortunate to have at least one surviving American elm at the Lynden Sculpture Garden, and it is truly amazing. I would encourage everyone to take some time and visit it this summer, its grandeur is breathtaking. Other examples of elm trees are sadly difficult to find.

I have recently discovered another resource, however, that has been a gold mine. It is the Digital Commonwealth Massachusetts Collection Online and the photographs of Ernest Henry Wilson. Ernest Wilson, otherwise known as “Chinese” Wilson or E.H. Wilson was a British plant collector and explorer. For this article the most important thing is that in 1922 he became the assistant director to the Arnold Arboretum in Boston. While he was there, he traveled New England photographing trees with his large format Sanderson glass plate camera. The camera allowed him to photograph large trees in detail without distortion from wide angle lenses. He took 500 pictures, and his collection has been digitized and stored at the Digital Commonwealth. There are 106 Images of American Elm that have been preserved. Mr. Wilson himself was an admirer of the American Elm stating it was “The most graceful tree of the northeastern states and Canada and one of the most beautiful trees of the northern hemisphere.”

E.H. Wilson said that Elm trees have three forms – the most common having “ascending stems which give off spreading branches and pendant branchlets, the whole forming a round-topped shapely mass.” The second is a broad, low variety having “many massive, wide-spreading branches shading an enormous area of ground.” The third form having a growth habit “strongly suggesting an old-fashioned wine glass.” Below are some of the Examples of each form.



3 - Image of Chinese elm bonsai from Eastern Leaf. It's nice, but it does not look like the trees I see out my window.

Ascending Stems



Broad and low



Vase Like



Even though the American elm has been decimated by Dutch elm Disease, as I think about bonsai in America, I cannot think of a more fitting template than the American Elm when styling our trees. Not that every tree needs to look like an elm – but maybe one or two.

2025 Burning Bush Yamadori Dig

This is a great way for new bonsai addicts to jump into bonsai for no money. We will go back into the woods near Boerner Botanical for free burning bushes. Isn't that where babies come from? It's a great way to get a tree that will become a bonsai. They are tough, they flower, get berries and their foliage turns red in the fall.



<https://photos.app.goo.gl/BwvEdra6G3Uu1Vss7>

Please bring the below with you on April 5th for after our meeting.

We will start the dig after the meeting, about noon

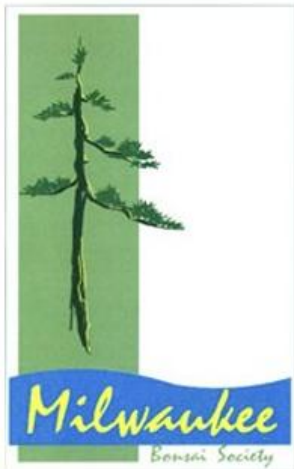
- Shovels
- Branch clippers
- Small saws
- Bags and pots to put the trees into
- A small cart. It's maybe 300 yards from the parking lot to the woods.
- Bring other family members for the walk in an old woods
- Be prepared at home with pots and wooden boxes and soil to plant your trees in

Bryan 414-364-5253

Silhouette Show

February 23, 2025





PO Box 240822
Milwaukee, WI 53224
www.milwaukeebonsai.org

Next MBS meeting will be
April 5, 2025 @ 9am

2025 MBS OFFICERS

President [Rick W](#)
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2nd VP [Rob S](#)
Secretary [Greg R](#)
Treasurer [John N](#)
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Webmaster [Pam W](#)
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Social media [Jenna W](#)

PAB Board-Ron F, Houston S & Judy S



*Some of the blue blues
Laughing on the orchid leaves
Good morning April.*

~Ashraf Masaddeq

*From the book "Absent Zero and Other
Haiku"*