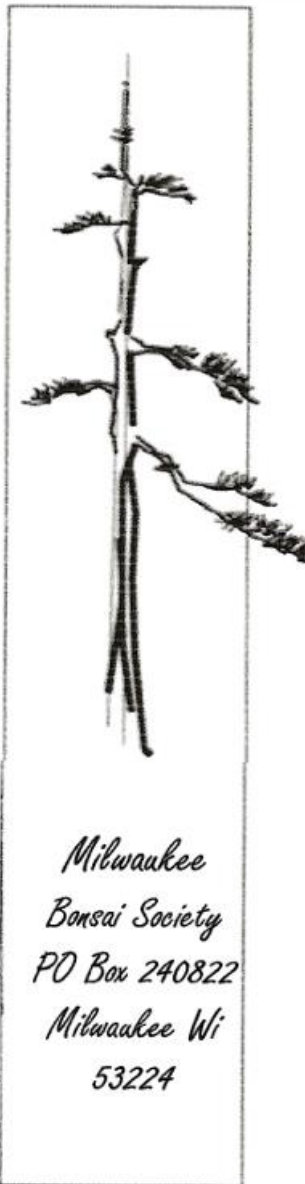


BONSAI NEWS

January 2024



Upcoming Meeting

We kick off 2024 with Brian S and Steve C. Much like 2023, our emphasis is your education and enjoyment of bonsai.

FOCUS: Do I need to Repot and Why Steve C will cover this question. You can find 4 videos on the subject at [MBS Member Video Library](#) (milwaukeebonsai.org)

MAIN: Bonsai Soils/Biology; Bonsai Soil Components This subject is close to Brian S heart and he has some new findings to share with us. Brian's Soil Biology presentation he made at MABA convention in 2022 can be found here at [MBS Member Video Library](#) (milwaukeebonsai.org).

Next Meeting

Jan 6, 2024
9 am
Boerner
Botanical

Upcoming: More Bonsai Hacks Workshop Jan 20 Kris Z will be introducing ideas to keep our costs to a minimum with simple hacks.

January

January 6 – Bonsai Soil/Do I need to Repot?

January 20 – Workshop: Bonsai Hacks*

February

February 3 – Introducing your tree to a bonsai container/ Chopsticking

February 10 – Fundamentals Class #1*

February 17 – Workshop: Make a Pot*

March

March 2 – Wound Care/ Unwrapping an air layer

March 23 – Bonsai Skills 101*

March 24 – Bonsai Skills 201*

April

April 6 – Dawn Redwood Forest Creation/Curved chisel use

April 13 – Bonsai Skills 101*

April 14 – Bonsai Skills 201*

*Open to MBS members only

President's Message

As I write this, my very first President's Message, it is December 21st, the Winter Solstice and the shortest day of the year. On my kitchen counter sits my Japanese flowering apricot, which is currently blooming. It makes tiny blossoms, smaller than a dime, that are white touched with the faintest blush of pink. The apricot is treasured in Japan because it blooms during the bleakest, darkest part of winter, and provides a reminder of beauty.

Beginning tomorrow, the days become longer, and we begin the march toward spring. Right after the holidays is a great time to start preparations—identifying who needs repotting, do I have the right pot, what about wire, and so on. I've often said that for bonsai folks, "March Madness" has its own special meaning.

We have a lot of wonderful things happening in the coming year. Our Education Committee does fantastic work, and we will continue our purposeful, intentional calendar of presentations at membership meetings. The sequence of topics is geared to seasonality—when are the right times to do the things necessary for the development and health of our trees? And as always, what am I trying to accomplish?

We will be continuing the video recording of our presentations, adding to an already substantial library of content available to members on the website.

We will also be substantially expanding our presence in social media, to raise our public profile and further "spread the word" about all the things we are doing throughout the year. We have a full calendar of exhibits, workshops, classes, and outreach events, offering plenty of opportunities to get involved, get engaged, and pitch in by volunteering.

And a quick word on the topic of volunteers: we have a fantastic club, and it operates at a level far above other bonsai groups in terms of resources and education available to our members. That doesn't just happen by magic—we have some really dedicated members who give a great deal of their time and energy to support our activities. Teachers, presenters, and folks behind the scenes who do things like our website, the videos, the newsletter, dealing with artists—the list goes on and on. We should all look for the occasional opportunity to offer them a simple word of thanks for all they do, because their efforts make it possible for all of MBS to be more successful, and to have more fun. And as a wise man has said, if it's not fun, it's not bonsai.

Rick

Ancient Arts Bonsai

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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



Lost tool bag

The tool bag pictured above was left at the Public workshop in September.

If this belongs to you please contact [Bryan L](#) so this can be returned



Soil Biology Notes

By Pam W

The living component of soil or soil biota is essential to many soil functions and overall soil quality. Some of these key services are (1) nutrient provision and cycling, (2) pest and pathogen protection, (3) production of growth factors and (4) water availability and filtration.



*Mycorrhizal fungi forms a symbiotic relationship with grapevine roots
Photo Dave Eissenstat Penn State University.*

Most soil microbes can be classified as fungi, bacteria, archaea, protozoa, or viruses. It has been estimated that a single gram of soil can contain up to several billion bacteria alone.

How Soil Biology Boosts Nutrient Uptake

There is currently a lot of discussion on the effect of inorganic fertilizers on soil health, in particular, soil biology and soil carbon. It is beneficial to understand what is driving soil health to make an informed decision for our bonsai.

Soil microbes interact with plant roots and soil minerals to release plant nutrients from soil minerals. Biological release of plant nutrients has far greater potential for plant mineral uptake than relying entirely on soluble nutrients from fertilizer.

Soil health is associated with three main factors: Chemical properties, physical properties and biological properties. Each factor interacts to create a healthy soil.

The Biological proportion of the soil is made up of macro fauna (tiny worms, myriapods, centipedes, millipedes, slugs, snails, fly larvae), micro fauna (protozoans, small nematodes, small unsegmented worms, and tardigrades (eight-legged arthropod) fauna (biota) and plant roots.

What is a Microbe

A microbe, or microorganism, is a very small life form that we typically cannot see without the help of a microscope. Most of what we consider to be microbes can be classified as fungi, bacteria, archaea, protozoa, or viruses.

In the same way we require food, microbes require an energy source to survive and grow their population in these environments, as well as carbon and other nutrients to build the molecules that make up their cells. Besides using carbon to build their cells, many microbes use carbon-based materials as their energy source as well. In soils, carbon sources available to microbes include plant litter, carbon compounds released by plant roots, and living or dead soil organisms including other microbes and larger soil fauna like worms and insects.

What are Soil Building Practices

Adding compost, using a cover of moss, reducing soil disturbance have overall beneficial impacts on soil biological communities and build soil health

Adding commercial products that contain free-living soil microbes. These are bacteria and fungi that live outside of plant roots, but still promote plant growth and health. The shelf-life of microbial products tends to be about a year before microbial viability starts to decrease.

The interest in soil health is a positive development as it raises awareness and guides management. However, the complexity of soil systems complicates soil health evaluations. Compared to conventional soil fertility testing, soil health testing is in an early stage of development. Scientists and practitioners continue to identify new and to evaluate and refine existing biological indicators, and to improve interpretations of soil health scores.



Repotting Notes

By Pam W

Use repotting to attain your bonsai goals.



Scots pine that is ready for repotting because of the angle of the tree.

The key is figuring out if the repotting actually helped make our trees better.

Repotting

Repotting is very important to our trees. We use this technique as a way to control growth in the trees. Sometimes we repot the tree to slow them down, and other times, we use repotting to reinvigorate the tree. Just like cutting and wiring, how you repot the tree will affect how the tree grows. We can repot just about any tree at this time. I recommend starting with the deciduous trees first, then move on to evergreen trees. Hold off repotting tropical trees.

Repotting is just like any other bonsai technique we use to develop our trees. Think about how you can use repotting to attain your bonsai goals.

Why Repot

The main reason we repot is to manipulate how the tree grows. What does that mean? Here are some reasons as to why I would repot a tree.

Basic Laws of Bonsai Soils effects on Trees

1. The tree is in a mix that is too wet or too dry
2. The tree is so root bound that the health of the tree starts to decline
3. To slow or accelerate the growth of a tree
4. To develop the root spread and root system
5. To change the planting angle of the tree
6. To maintain the health of the tree
7. You would like a new pot for the tree.

Soil mixes can be very complex and there are different variables that will cause us to repot or not repot this year.

Did Repotting Help

The key is figuring out if the repotting actually helped make our trees better. These are some of the questions we should be asking ourselves when repotting. Once we start asking, then the answers can be more complex

- Did we continue the development of roots?
- Did we get the tree in the ideal position?
- Is the tree firmly tied to the pot?
- Is the soil mix we're using going to cause the tree to grow too fast or too slow?
- Is there enough or too much room for the roots to grow?
- Is this an appropriate pot for the tree?

Repotting and soil medium is a fundamental part of bonsai and should not be overlooked in your path to creating beautiful bonsai. You may just find that it's the reason why our trees are not developing the way we want them to, or the quality of the tree is no longer increasing year after year.

Bonsai Hacks

You'll want to participate in this unusual workshop!

Tips, tricks, drawings and give-aways.

Helpful information for all bonsai enthusiasts. Learn how to 'MacGyver' some bonsai tools. Find out about a unique watering system, substitutes for some bonsai items, and many, many more ideas to enhance your bonsai experience.

The workshop is limited to 15 participants, so don't be disappointed... sign up ASAP.

SORRY, but there will be no silent observers for this workshop.

Kris Z and Rob S will be hosting this event.

Coffee, tea and hot chocolate along with snacks will be served,

This is taking place at Boerner in the lower level on Saturday, January 20, 2024 from 9am-12pm.

Cost: \$20

Sign up on Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/mbs-bonsai-hacks-tickets-780521670327>

Bryan Will Be Selling Pottery at the January Meeting



Get ready for repotting season

Did you know????

The MBS library has a collection of bonsai magazines available for members to check out?

These periodicals have a wealth of information and are waiting to be read.

The complete list of magazines available can be found on the MBS website or by clicking on the magazine's name below:

[BONSAI MAGAZINE](#) The Official Publication of Bonsai Clubs International

[BONSAI TODAY](#)

[INTERNATIONAL BONSAI](#)

[BONSAI](#) (Journal of the American Bonsai Society)



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



PO Box 240822
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Next MBS meeting will be
January 6, 2024 @ 9am

2023 MBS OFFICERS

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2nd VP [Rob S](#)
Secretary [Greg R](#)
Treasurer [John N](#)
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Webmaster [Pam W](#)
Librarian [Greg R](#)

PAB Board-Ron F, Houston S & Judy S



*An icy wind blows
The tree is lonely and cold
Its branches are bare*

~Kathleen O'Conner