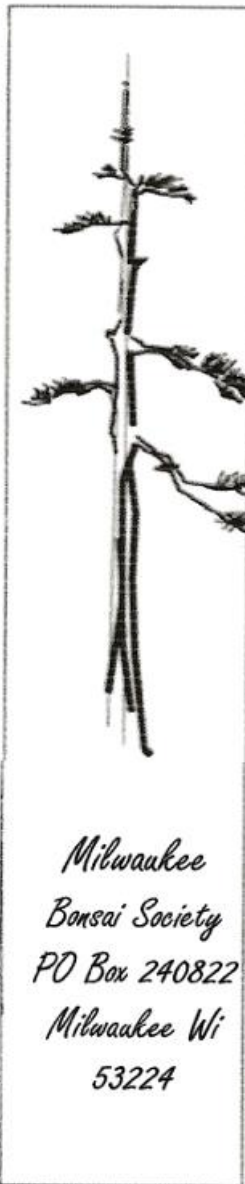


BONSAI NEWS

April 2024



Upcoming Meeting

The April meeting will cover the use of the curved chisel as the focus topic and dawn redwood forest creation as the main topic.

Steve C will demonstrate using the curved chisel, safely.

Steve will also go over some possibilities for creating a dawn redwood forest at this meeting.

This should be an interesting morning for all of us!



Next Meeting

April 6, 2024

9 am

Boerner

Botanical

April

April 6 – Dawn Redwood Forest
Creation/Curved chisel use

April 13 – Bonsai Skills 101*

April 14 – Bonsai Skills 201*

April 20 – Create a Larch grouping*

April 27 – Fundamentals Class #5*

May

May 4 – Group Slash

June

June 1 – Preparing a thread graft/bring
a tree for styling advice

June 8-9 – 53rd Annual Exhibit
Boerner Botanical Garden

June 15 – Bonsai Skills 101*

June 16 – Bonsai Skills 201*

July

July 13 – Show and tell-Pines/Hands-
off, Puff ball stage, Dealing
with Summer heat

August

August 1-11 – State Fair Shows

August 3 – Guest Artist: David Cutchin/
Wire

*Open to MBS members only

President's Message

Strange winter weather patterns seem to be happening more frequently over the last few years, and this winter has to be one of the weirdest. As I write this, I'm looking out the window at six inches of wet, heavy snow from one of only four significant snowstorms all winter—one of which was on Halloween! Less than two weeks ago, it was 70 degrees and sunny.

Several of my trees are behaving out of character. My Japanese apricot flowered in early January, about a month ahead of schedule. In my little greenhouse I have a lilac and a Japanese quince that are both fully leafed out, and a sand cherry and a flowering almond that have buds swelling and getting ready to open—again, at least a month early, if not two.

It's tempting to view this irregular behavior as a frustration or a challenge, but I would suggest it provides an opportunity to learn an important lesson. Personally, it drives me crazy every time I see one of those year-round care calendars from some internet "expert", saying you must do this in March, and you must do that in June. Usually, those schedules are written by people who neglect to take into account that those rigid dates work where they are, in England or California, but not necessarily anywhere else. It would be far better if they suggested what actions to take based on what that specific tree is doing at a particular time, in the context of what life activity is taking place in the tree.

For example, we don't repot deciduous trees in March simply because of the dates on the calendar—we do that just before the buds begin to swell, because that is the signal that the tree is about to embark on a major metabolic process. Once that starts, repotting interrupts that process, which is damaging to the tree's seasonal progress.

In the case of the aforementioned lilac, this year that process began in mid-February.

One of the first important lessons to learn in bonsai is to not water your trees on a rigid schedule. You water the tree when it needs water, not because it's 9:00 on Tuesday morning. In the same vein, trees behaving weirdly present an opportunity to learn something. Paying individual attention to each tree and what it's going through in the moment brings us closer to the tree, helping us to better understand it, especially when it's not following expected patterns. The more that we understand the tree, the more we become partners in its evolution, rather than antagonists. We begin to work with the tree, rather than working on it.

We have some really exciting stuff coming up in April, centered on creating forest plantings. It's the theme of the main meeting presentation, and then Ben will be conducting a workshop on larch forests. When we work with individual trees, we try to create an impression of a real, aged tree. What I find fascinating about forests is that the placement of the trees in their various sizes allows for creating an impression of an actual place. Some of our members have some really wonderful forests [see Pam's article for some pictures], and when I look into them, they really do give the feeling of being there.

LSG Volunteers Needed

MBS members wishing to volunteer at the bonsai exhibit at Lynden Sculpture Garden (LSG) for the 2024 season are asked to meet for lunch/ orientation/ cleanup at **noon, Saturday, May 4**, or at **noon, Sunday, May 5** on the bonsai patio at the exhibit @ LSG. No experience is necessary.

Please bring your calendars and be prepared to sign up for May and June dates. The exhibit is open on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays from 10a.m.-4p.m.

Wear old cloths and bring your finishing tools and maybe a tabletop turntable. We will be refreshing the exhibit area, patio, gates and changing house, cleaning, weeding, raking gravel and sanding display benches. We will prepare the bonsai for exhibit. We can work until the garden closes at 4 p.m.

We plan to open the exhibit to the public on **World Bonsai Day, Saturday, May 11, 2024** with a demonstration open to the public led by volunteer, Erich B.

Anyone interested, please contact Michelle Z. (mgaz.md@gmail.com) so I'll know how many to plan for. Can't wait to get started!

<https://www.milwaukeebonsaifoundation.org/>



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 THERES 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 !!!

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

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Bonsai

Open House & Sale at Phil Malhiot's

Stop by and visit my new bonsai garden and studio!

Friday and Saturday, April 19 & 20

9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

2908 S. 10th Ave. Broadview, IL

We downsized and moved last summer but I still have way too many trees! I'll be selling a wide variety of species from newer cuttings to established finished bonsai. There will also be LOTS of pots for sale including my own wood-fired bonsai pots and pots from other bonsai enthusiasts and artists.

Stop by anytime and check out the collection, new benches, the art studio and our garden. It would be great to see you!

Call Phil Malhiot with questions: 708-705-7768



There is a film maker who teaches at UWM by the name of Jesse McLean. She has won many international awards for her filmmaking and has served as a judge for film competitions world-wide. Jesse has produced a film called "Light Needs" which explores the relationship of humans with plants. For the movie she photographed many of the bonsai in the Lynden Collection and spent considerable time interviewing Jack D. about bonsai. Much of this footage made it into the film. The film will also be part of this year's Milwaukee Film Festival!

Below are the times for the showings:

LIGHT NEEDS: 4/21/2024, 4:45 PM at the Oriental Theatre (Herzfeld Cinema)

LIGHT NEEDS: 4/23/2024, 8:30 PM at the Times Cinema

LIGHT NEEDS: 4/25/2024, 4:00 PM at the Oriental Theatre (Herzfeld Cinema)

Take in a movie and see bonsai on the big screen at the same time!

MBS April

This month we enter some of the fun presentations by talking about a single tool and presenting a Forest Creation with Steve C and John N, Ben H will follow this up on April 20th with a workshop to make your own forest using hardy Larches.

FOCUS

Curved Chisel Use The chisel is a tool designed to create natural looking Jin and Shari on your bonsai. The concave blade makes it ideal for precise and detailed tasks when need to gouge or carve rounded shapes The edge is very sharp and sturdy allowing to carve on any angle you need. Steve C will demonstrate its use. For other carving tools see Wazakura Japan video ([1017](#)) [Bonsai Tool Basics: Jin & Shari Carving Tools || Wazakura Japan - YouTube](#) To learn more about keeping that sharp edge see Pam W article on the Tools for Sharpening in the MBS May 2016 newsletter . [bonsai news 2016-06.pub \(milwaukeebonsai.org\)](#)

MAIN

Dawn Redwood Forest Creation: Steve C will go over the number of possibilities when creating a forest. To get inspired, Ryan Neil has a great video on a Beech Forest creation ([1017](#)) [Beech Forest Creation - YouTube](#) and Morten Albek shows us how to create a shohin forest ([1017](#)) [DIY: Create a Bonsai Forest - YouTube](#)

Upcoming

Group/Forest Planting with Larches Apr 20: Ben H will help you create your own forest using larches. [MBS Larch Grouping Workshop Tickets, Sat, Apr 20, 2024 at 9:00 AM | Eventbrite](#)

Skills 101 and 201 Classes Continue



Forest Creation Notes

By Pam W

The ideal time to create a group planting is when the trees are starting to show signs of new growth.

Bonsai Group Planting

Creating a Bonsai Forest requires an odd number of trees, usually belonging to the same botanical family of different sizes of trees. Use trees mostly growing upright, as the composition could look unnatural when using many different shapes of trees.

MBS Member Forests

Let's take a look at a few examples by our own club members.

Rob P. entered this Dawn Redwood Forest in the **2019 Annual Exhibit** where it took Best of Show



Bonnie P entered this Korean Hornbeam Forest in the **2022 MABA Convention**.



This Bonsai is named Goshin, a forest planting of eleven Foemina junipers by John Naka.



One of the most famous forest Bonsai, by Masahiko Kimura.

2024 Burning Bush Yamadori Dig

There may have been 30 people there last year and people had fun digging up new babies.



<https://photos.app.goo.gl/ByvEdra6G3Uu1Vss7>

Please bring with you on April 6th after our meeting:

- Shovels
- Branch clippers
- Small saws
- Bags and pots to put the trees into
- Maybe a small cart. It's about 300 yards from the parking lot to the woods.
- Bring other family members for the walk in an old woods.
- Prepare at home with pots and wooden boxes

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
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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

Group/Forest Planting Bonsai Workshop

by PAM W

In this make-and-take workshop, participants will create their own stunning group planting / bonsai forest using larch saplings with instruction from Ben H. Get an introduction at the April 6 Dawn Redwood Forest Creation with Steve C.

When? April 20th workshop for \$65 to create your own 10 tree group. Register for this 9:00 AM – noon workshop on Eventbrite:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/mbs-larch-grouping-workshop-tickets-852618233087?aff=oddtcreator>

What's Included? Each participant will get 10 small larch trees. A pot, soil, and enough wire needed to secure trees into pot. Additional trees will be available for purchase if you want more than 10 trees in your forest. Ben will also have a wooden pot available for purchase if you prefer that container.

Why Larches? These trees are easy to grow in our climate. They are often collected in the wild in upper Wisconsin. Several members have them in the personal collections. Instruction will include techniques (bonsai landscaping), root combing, root pruning, potting, basic styling techniques, and aftercare.

Why Ben? Ben loves larches and has created forest using similar trees. Below is a picture of his Larch Forest in 2023.





Urbandori Notes

By Pam W

There are many abused trees in either commercial landscapes or neglected home plantings.



This Birch Bonsai Collected in Upper Michigan in a run-down golf course in 1995. Displayed at the National Exhibit in 2023 by the author.



This Ginkgo grove is one of the Bonsai on exhibit at LSG. All trees for this grove were collected in Bay View area as part of an MBS club dig in 2010. Photo by Jack D.

Bonsai From Home Landscapes

The traditional method of collecting bonsai stock is through yamadori, which refers to the act of collecting wild trees from their natural habitats. Urbandori refers to the practice of finding and collecting small trees that grow in urban settings such as parks, abandoned lots, along roadsides or even our neighborhood Potters Forest. These little trees are often considered “weeds” by most people, but they possess unique qualities that make them suitable for bonsai cultivation.

The practice of using urban yamadori for bonsai cultivation started in Japan during the 1980s when people began exploring new ways to acquire suitable stock for their bonsai artistry.

Tips For Selecting the Best Trees

There are many abused trees in either commercial landscapes or neglected home plantings that get replaced over time. Selecting suitable specimens requires an understanding of what makes a healthy tree suitable for bonsai cultivation – young trees with small leaves being preferred over older trees with larger leaves which are more difficult to reduce in size over time. Some characteristics of desirable specimens include tapering trunks, interesting bark texture, trunk movement, and suitable branching structure. Smaller trees will have a higher survival rate in the transplanting process.

Steps To Take After Collection

After collecting your urbandori tree, let's take steps to ensure its survival. First, remove any dead or damaged branches and foliage to help the tree conserve energy and focus on growing new healthy shoots. Next, trim the roots carefully, being sure not to damage the main root system.

Repot the tree in a well-draining soil mixture that includes some of the blend of organic material included in your collection process. Move it to a shaded location and monitor your newly collected bonsai carefully for the first few weeks after collection. The tree may experience slight shock due to changes in environment and soil composition. Be sure to keep it properly watered but do not overwater that leads to root rot.

Maintaining proper care of your urban yamadori is key to ensuring its long-term health. It is important to move and keep your tree in a location where it can receive adequate sunlight for its species. My practice is leave it alone for the first year or two.

Other MBS Collecting Events

A Ginko Dig was held April 3, 2010 in the Bay View neighborhood of Milwaukee. Over 30 members participated and about 177 trees were collected. You can read about in the [May 2010 MBS Newsletter](#).

The Legendary MBS Larch Hunting Expedition April 30-31 2003 in boggy forest near northern Michigan. Jack D got MBS permission to collect trees Mostly larches but hop-hornbeam, Again over 100 trees were collected. Read about this Legendary Trip in the [June 2003 MBS Newsletter](#).

And other digs to a farm near railroad and of course the nearby Potter's Forest in Hales Corner's suburb of Milwaukee.

March Meeting

The March meeting started with Steve C unwrapping an air layer that had been started last year. Once unwrapped and separated there were 2 very cute trees!



Ron F then talked to us about wound care. He showed the various tools that can be used to help make a wound heal nicely.





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Milwaukee, WI 53224
www.milwaukeebonsai.org

Next MBS meeting will be
April 6, 2024 @ 9am

2023 MBS OFFICERS

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2nd VP [Rob S](#)

Secretary [Greg R](#)

Treasurer [John N](#)

Director [Joe T](#)

Director [Irene H](#)

Director [Mike B](#)

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Other Club Functions

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Webmaster [Pam W](#)

Librarian [Greg R](#)

PAB Board-Ron F, Houston S & Judy S



Kintsugi

*An old broken pot
Mended with lacquer and gold
Now better than new*

~Greg Raleigh