

# E+/- (Energy positive/negative) A Year in the Life of a Wisconsin Bonsai Hobbyist

By Brian S and Steve C

You know those days... you wake up, you feel like you can tackle the world. You jump out of bed and you can just tell that you will accomplish all the tasks you have on your list.

You are in an energy positive state !

Then there are those other days... Hey, where is the coffee? I just can't move. It's so rainy and grey. I'm gonna stay in bed all day.

Clearly... you are energy negative !!

Our trees have days or months like this as well. How do we know?

At this month's meeting, we will try to explain when our bonsai are feeling like they can have their "bodies" manipulated and when they want you to keep your grubby hands off of them.

It's hard for a Wisconsin bonsai hobbyist to restrain ourselves from working on our trees. You know... we don't have that long of a season. But if we keep a few things in mind, our trees may just respect us a bit more and provide some lush green foliage, healthy roots, and years of beauty for us to enjoy. Come and listen in, ask questions, and close out this bonsai season learning a few things that may just help you begin to plan better for the next.

**E +/-**

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## A Year in the Life of a WISCONSIN Bonsai Hobbyist

January **E+**

Plan for the upcoming Spring and repotting season

What trees did not drain well?

Which trees did you buy a new pot for?

What tree might look better if you changed the planting angle?

Is there a tree that just has not looked its best... health wise?

These are all good reasons to consider repotting a tree?

Did you run out of time in fall to cutback any trees?

Are there any trees that could use wire before spring?

What tree will you show this year in MBS club events?

Silhouette show in February

MABA IN JUNE... This is a BIG DEAL !!

MBS51AE in late August

Do you have companion plants ready to use?

Do you want to use a scroll, image, object in your display

Start planning for it now

Plan for any classes you would like to take this year

Novice classes begin in ??????

Ron will again accept ?? Members

Intermediate classes will begin again in March

Steve and I will teach them but...

Private Classes with:

Ancient Arts Bonsai - Ron

Night Owl Bonsai - Brian

Wisconsin Bonsai - Kevin

February **E+**

Do You have all the supplies you need to repot next month?

Soil

Pots

Wire... Aluminum, Steel or copper

Screen for pot holes

Tools... are they sharp... if not... **SHARPEN THEM DAMNIT**

Ron in January

Check out your Kusamono from last year

clean up the soil

remove all dead and dying foliage

add some soil, fertilizer or moss if needed or desired

Is your soil ready to go, is it sifted? Sift it now! Get it now!

Fertilizer... what fertilizers will you use this year?

Order what you need now

If organic, solid fertilizer, bag it up and be ready

**DON'T FERTILIZE NOW, but be ready for March or April**

Some members bring semi-tropical bonsai indoors now

Coast redwoods, NOT Dawn redwoods

Pomegranates

Crepe Myrtle

Chinese Elm, NOT Siberian Elm

Others

Start to think about wiring trees late in the month...

**ONLY IF YOU CAN PROTECT THEM FROM FREEZING**

or plan the work for next month

March **E+**

Start to repot if you can...

REMEMBER they will need protection from a freeze  
Best if they get a bit of bottom heat after repot  
Deciduous first  
Larch when you see a touch of green buds  
Broad leafed evergreens  
then finally conifers

Watch the heat in your greenhouse or cold frame if it is in the sun

Start to fertilize if you have trees:

in development or thickening a trunk  
growing a first branch thicker  
developing taper  
healing a wound or establishing a root system

Black pine you wish to decandle this year  
"What are you trying to accomplish"  
Be very careful fertilizing trees that get long spring internodes  
especially in refinement  
maples, ?????

Cutback any trees you missed last fall  
CAREFUL with trees that bleed easily, test first

Wire trees that need it now  
but they **must** be protected from a freeze

Pines... a big topic

Begin to Fertilize now if:  
`you have black pine in refinement and you plan to decandle  
you have ponderosa in development  
you have short needle, single flush pine  
**don't** fertilize long needle, single flush pine now

Juniper... #1 time for major structural work... heavy wiring!

April **E+ / Beginning E-**

Remember we are in Wisconsin... we freeze in April

Continue with repotting  
protect from a freeze  
a bit of bottom heat is good

Some conifers can get out into the light  
full shade for now  
CAREFUL here... if in temperate winter storage

Wire trees that need it  
Protect from a freeze

Continue your fertilizer plan  
remember... heavy, medium or light  
“What are you trying to accomplish”

Pines... fertilizing same as in March  
too big of a topic to go further now

Junipers... #1 time for deadwood development/live vein reduction

Start to fertilize  
watch closely for the tips of the foliage to get green and extend  
this starts the NO TOUCH ZONE  
no foliar reduction  
no wire  
no bending

Remember !!! In general...

Depending on what winter storage conditions you had...  
Ease trees into the sun  
Foliage on deciduous is not hardened off  
Watch for wind and desiccation  
Watch for water use

May \* **E NEGATIVE / Beginning E+**

VERY CAREFUL THIS MONTH IN WI

Deciduous are leafing out and tender  
Same with broad leafed evergreens  
Junipers are getting green and growing  
Spruce and Douglasfir are elongating  
Pine candles are extending

Most trees are in a “**NO TOUCH ZONE**”

Continue your fertilizer plan  
What are you trying to accomplish?

SNSF pines - some pinching **may** be appropriate if in refinement  
Spruce - some pinching **may** be appropriate if in refinement

Plan for repotting season(June) for tropicals

Remember !!!

Depending on what winter storage conditions you had...

Ease trees into the sun  
Foliage on deciduous is not hardened off  
Watch for wind and desiccation  
Watch for water use

**ONCE THE FOLIAGE HAS HARDENED OFF WE ARE BACK IN E+**

With enough heat and sun we may see this in late May

June \* **E NEGATIVE / E +**

**ONCE THE FOLIAGE HAS HARDENED OFF WE ARE BACK IN E+**

And for us in WI... we can do **just about** anything

Tropicals can now be repotted

    If they have been in the sun in May, put them right back in the sun

Junipers can begin to be cleaned out/maintenance

    bottom foliage removed, wired, pruned

Pines... too big a topic !

    Black pines can be decandled

    SNSF pines - some work is ok - cut long shoots

    LNSF 5 needle pines - some work as the sheaths fall

    Pondos - only fertilize if in development

Douglasfir - NO TOUCH at the beginning,

    Post Flush Harden Prune(PFHP)

Elongating species - spruce, redwood, fir, douglasfir - PFHP

Deciduous - very specific for different species

    Can begin to fertilize

**Consider** defoliating maples that are IN REFINEMENT ONLY

    Hornbeams can be cut back

    Beech harden off late so be careful



