



(Bonsai Yes)

BONSAI HAI!

Prairie State Bonsai Society Newsletter

Prairie State Bonsai Society Newsletter | August 2026



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

August has been a big month for bonsai in the Chicagoland area and a great one for Prairie State Bonsai Society!

First, thank you to everyone who helped make Destination Asia such a huge success! A special shoutout to Craig Cronquist for coordinating the show and doing an outstanding job bringing everything together.

Congratulations as well to our award winners: Jennifer Price received Best in Show, Phil Malhiot took second, and Larry Magee took third. Honorable Mentions went to Jim Keith, Madhusudan Rao, Victor Zurczak, Elle Nieto-Brodnick, and Phil Malhiot. Thank you to everyone who displayed a tree and represented the club so well.

We also had an outstanding lineup of demos from Larry Magee, Matt Mazza, Jennifer Price, and Phil Malhiot, along with workshops led by Peter Chan and several of our own members. It was great to see so many people get the chance to work directly with Peter. Opportunities like that don't come around very often, and it was especially fun to see him work in person the same way so many of us have watched him do it in his well-known YouTube videos. More than 90 of the 96 available workshop spots were filled, which was a tremendous turnout. Thank you as well to Susan Andrese for coordinating our volunteers and to everyone who helped with setup, teardown, workshops, transportation, and everything in between.

We carried that momentum and excitement into our August 5th meeting, where we welcomed several new members who found us through Destination Asia. Linda Camp gave a great presentation on juniper care and styling, and it was especially nice to see our newer members get some hands-on experience working with a tree.

Next month, we'll have our garage sale along with a presentation from Badar Zulqarni and Larry Magee on their trip to the 100th Kokufu Bonsai Exhibition. I'm really looking forward to hearing about their experience.

Thank you again to everyone who made August such a strong month for PSBS. Let's keep that momentum going into the fall. Don't forget to check on the tree you wired in the workshop! Keep an eye on that wire cutting in.

Alex
President, Prairie State Bonsai Society

FEATURED ARTICLE

Special Events Updates!

Craig Cronquist, Special Events Director

2026 Destination Asia Bonsai Show Final Report

Trees

We had 64 trees entered in the show, plus Jim Beck brought one of the Ben Oki trees owned by the club to display. Judged trees totaled 48, with 16 categorized as Trees in Training. For comparison, in 2025 we had 58 trees total, with 34 judged trees and 24 Trees in Training. The result was that every available table was covered with trees. We may look for space for another table or two in future years. Thanks to Rick Butkus who did the photography of all the trees for the February video and to help us remember this very successful event.

Attendance

Our attendance numbers were down a bit this year because the Saturday morning events were rained out. We were the only part of the festival still open because we were under cover. We had a total of 1,949 people view this year's show (417 on Saturday and 1532 on Sunday). In 2025 we had a little over 1500 each day, for a total of 3,075. Our attendance figures have consistently been growing from year to year, unless Mother Nature steps in. We have shown that we can comfortably move about 1500 people through the show a day. Approximately one-quarter to one-third of all the people at the Arboretum visit our show. Remember that there are running clubs, weddings, people attending the workshops, and just people enjoying the paths, who never come near the Visitor Center on the days of the show.

Demonstrations

Our members presented four workshops during the show, and changed our venue for Saturday to be under cover next to the entrance of the Sycamore Room. Many thanks to Jennifer Price, Matt Mazza, Phil Malhiot, and Larry Magee for engaging enthusiastic and

attentive crowds and beginning to infect them with the bonsai bug. One demo tree was won at the August General Membership meeting raffle and the other three will be available in upcoming raffles.

Workshops

Eight workshops were scheduled at the Thornhill Education Center, totaling 96 seats, and we sold 93 of those seats. It was no surprise that the Peter Chan workshops all sold out. We had wonderful material for the participants due to the keen eyes of Jim Beck, Linda Camp, and Jennifer Price who chose the workshop trees. A special thanks to Steve Fluett who unpacked and cared for the Cedar Elms shipped here from Texas. BC Bonsai housed many of the other trees, enticing participants with the prospect of owning one of the Dawn Redwoods or Japanese Maples. Thanks to all our teachers, including Peter Chan, Jim Beck, Linda Camp, Doug Bradbury, Badar Zulqarni, Jennifer Price, Larry Magee, Nick DiBattista, and Jason Davids. In 2025 we sold 51 workshop seats, and in 2024 we sold 43, so 93 seats sold was a huge accomplishment. This is how we fund the Destination Asia Show, so the show does not prove to be a huge drain on the club treasury.

Financial

This project had a budget of over \$18,000, and we expect to end up in the black. This is due to the extraordinary workshop sales, income from our three vendors (BC Bonsai, Green Witch Bonsai, and Bubba's Backyard Bonsai), and our raffle tree. Given the substantial cost of airfare from London and hotel accommodations, we were unsure how we might impact our financial health. Peter Chan made an incredible contribution of autographed books and tools at no charge to PSBS, which we were able to sell to balance the budget. Also, a special thanks to Badar Zulqarni who both recruited Peter Chan as our judge, drove him from event to event all week, and coordinated the sale of the Peter Chan donated material.

Awards

The results of the People's Choice awards and the Judge's award presented by Peter Chan are [available on the website](#). We had an unprecedented (to my knowledge) situation this year with one tree winning both Best in Show and the People's Choice award. Jennifer Price's Bougainvillea likely won Best in Show based upon its amazing trunk, and People's Choice based upon its captivating flowers. As I talked to the people exiting the show. I was told repeatedly that all the trees in the show were amazing. Thanks to everyone who entered a tree.

Next Year

And now we start planning for 2027. When you get your calendar, enter August 7th and 8th as the dates for the 2027 Destination Asia Festival Bonsai Show. Also, while you are at it, put down February 27th and 28th, 2027 as the dates for the 2027 Silhouette Show. Both will be held at the usual venue of the Sycamore Room at The Morton Arboretum. Start planning which trees you plan to show.

Thanks to all,

Craig Cronquist

Enjoy the pictures from Rick and some of the club members.





CLUB MEETINGS

SEPTEMBER CLUB MEETING

Garage Sale & Kokufu Presentation

September 9th | 7:00 - 9:00 pm | College of DuPage TEC 1038B | ZOOM

Moved to the second Wednesday due to the Labor Day holiday.

Do you have extra bonsai items you would like to try to sell? The September meeting is a double feature.

Bonsai Garage Sale — first 30 minutes of the meeting: Bring items to sell, or bring cash to pick up items at discounted prices. Possible items to sell are surplus pots, plants, stands, growing material, or anything bonsai or growing related.

Japan Trip Presentation: Badar Zulqarni and Larry Magee will present on their trip to Japan, including the Kokufu-Ten, Japan's most prestigious bonsai exhibition. See world-class trees and hear about the experience firsthand.

RAFFLE Come to the meeting for a chance to purchase raffle tickets and win trees and other bonsai goods!

NEED ADVICE? Bring a tree to the meeting you have questions about. Members are always encouraged to bring personal trees to the meetings for advice on care or styling from our many club artists.

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS

BC Bonsai workshops



Upcoming Events at our Wheaton location:

Events

Aug 14th, 15th & 16th we are closed. See you at the Midwest Bonsai Show at the Chicago Botanic Gardens. Please sign up for one of the workshops. Go to Midwest Bonsai Society website.

Aug. 29th class is full.

Sept. 12th to Oct. 24th 7-week Bonsai Basics Course. Call 630-386-1515 for more information and to register for the course.

Sept 12th BYOT workshop. \$25. 1:30 pm to 4:00. Call us at 630-386-1515 for more information and to reserve a spot.

Learn the art of bonsai from prize winning artists with 70 years combined experience. BC Bonsai is where you can find over 2000 trees and bonsai pots. Open 7 days a week by appointment. Call 630-386-1515 or 630-386-7585.

BYOT, but not this big



CBG workshops

Beginner Bonsai | Creating Juniper Bonsai

2 Wednesdays:
September 16 – 23
5 – 8 p.m.
\$199/\$249

Advanced Bonsai | Pine Bonsai Workshop

Wednesday, November 4
5 – 8 p.m.
\$59/\$74

Bonsai | Bring Your Own Tree

Wednesday, October 14
5 – 8 p.m.
\$59/\$74

Bonsai | Bring Your Own Tree

Wednesday, December 9
5 – 8 p.m.
\$59/\$74

Featured Article

Peter Chan T-Shirt.

[Last chance to still purchase Peter Chan inspired shirts.](#)

See below for pictures of club members rocking this shirt at the DA show!



NOT A MEMBER YET? JOIN NOW!

Enjoy all the benefits of membership and special access to videos when you join.

MORE INFORMATION & CONTACT: See our club's website for more sources of bonsai supplies and trees. Also listed on the website are fine bonsai publications to assist you in your bonsai endeavors.

RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS

Would you like to become more involved in the club? Do you have skills or other abilities that could help the club? Want to just learn more about bonsai? Consider volunteering to help with things such as the website or emails.

Contact PSBS: PSBSPresident@gmail.com

JOIN THE CLUB



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