



# GREAT SWAMP BONSAI SOCIETY

January, 2008 Newsletter

Next regular Meeting on January 8  
Frelinghuysen Arboretum, E. Hanover Ave, Morristown, NJ

## December Highlights:

Our December meeting featured our holiday party. With the possible exception of the “broccoli”, everyone seemed to have a good time. Lots of good food and lively discussions were the order of the day. Some pictures of the festivities appear below...



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## Presidential Corner:



*John Michalski*

Hi everyone, and Happy New Year!

We had a nice Holiday Party at our December meeting. About 17 members brought in food (including David Seaton's bonsai cookies!), beverages, DVDs, holiday music, and good stories. There were also dozens of gingerbread houses left over from the Arboretum's holiday show, and we were encouraged to take what we wanted!

Thanks to all who attended and thanks for all the great eats! If you missed it this year, please plan to attend the next one.

## Upcoming Event Calendar:

We have a lot of good things coming up for you in 2008.

**January 8th:** Large branch pruning and major redesign. Winter is the right time for such work on apples and pines, and John M will bring in a variety of trees to explain their histories and demonstrate the process of redesign on established bonsai. Please consider bringing in a tree of your own, to bring up front and encourage our group to brainstorm design alternatives.

**February 12th:** Repotting forest plantings. This can be complicated work, and Fred will bring in two of his own bonsai forests, which will require volunteers who want hands-on training in the process of removing, root-pruning, and repotting before our live audience.

**March 11th:** a. Selecting the 3 trees to represent GSBS at the MABS symposium; please begin preparing your best material to be submitted before our membership. b. Hands-on workshop on one of the following topics, depending on availability of materials: (a) soils and soil-making; (b) fertilizers and fertilizer-making; (c) design and styling of literati bonsai. We will provide an update as things develop.

**April 8th:** Guest lecturer Mr. Min Hsuan Lo (note change of date, back to our 'usual' second Tuesday). This internationally-renown Taiwanese bonsai artist will be presenting a lecture-demonstration later that week at the Mid-Atlantic Bonsai Symposium in upstate New York. Topic for our meeting to be determined; Mr. Lo is well-known for his work with junipers, but this may be a good opportunity to have a critiquing session with your trees.

**May 15th (Thursday):** Guest lecturer Jim Barrett. Perhaps best known for his pottery, Jim is also an outstanding bonsai artist in his own right. Topic to be determined.

**First Saturday in June:** Annual GSBS Club Open House. This takes place in the big hall upstairs of our regular meeting room, and is open to the public from 10:00 am until 3:00 pm; club members begin setting up at 9:00 am. We will present our annual display of club members' trees, as well as lecture-demonstrations, raffling demo trees, and engaging our visitors with conversation and answering their bonsai questions.

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## Other Club Business:

**Membership:** We are entering an interesting time in the history of GSBS. Right now our paid membership is at a long-time low; Fred tells me there are currently only about 23 of you paid up! If you've been attending the meetings and receiving our newsletters, and enjoying the stimulation and camaraderie they provide, please consider sending in your annual dues to Fred ASAP. We in turn look forward to providing you with the most dynamic and educational program our funds can accommodate – but bringing in outside expertise costs money, and we are doing what we can to stretch those dollars as far as they will go.

On the other hand, we have added a healthy number of new members to our club in the past several months, and for that we are most grateful! Please let us know what you'd like to see at the meetings, so that we can be the kind of club that encourages more and more people to join, and keeps the long-standing members interested in coming back again and again. We have the brains, we have the talent, and we even have some of the cash – but we sincerely need your input to keep the GSBS a rewarding organization for everyone interested in bonsai.

And, if you are long-time member who has started to lose interest in GSBS, please let us know what you'd like to see happening – we don't want to lose you, but we need your input to keep it interesting and fresh!

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## Club Trips:

**Brooklyn Botanic Gardens 27<sup>th</sup> of April, Sunday.** Parking and admission is FREE. The curator of BBG's bonsai collection will provide a full back-stage tour of their collection, and we suggest a donation of \$10.00 per person, which will go toward the purchase of a larger-size pot in the club's name to the garden. Please contact GSBS club member Greentree at [jsgreen@optonline.net](mailto:jsgreen@optonline.net) so she can coordinate the details.

**MAINE Collecting Trip the last week of June 2008.** John M will lead a 4-5 day camping trip to northern Maine and teach you how to locate and collect exquisite, weather-pounded larch and spruce for bonsai. A great opportunity to get to know each other and have tons of laughs, along with a great way to obtain some wonderful trees! Donation of \$100.00 per collector, all proceeds to GSBS; non-collectors (friends and family who attend) are not expected to pay. Attendees handle all their own expenses. Please contact John at [huonia@aol.com](mailto:huonia@aol.com) if interested. We currently have about 4 paying participants, so the trip is definitely on.

**Bonsai Nurseries – Ringos and New Hope.** As Spring approaches we would like to arrange a day trip to Allshapes Bonsai Nursery in Ringos NJ and Rosade Bonsai Studio in New Hope PA, with lunch in New Hope. We would probably select a sunny Sunday in April. Contact John at [huonia@aol.com](mailto:huonia@aol.com) as the season approaches.

Beginner's Workshops are offered FREE OF CHARGE to interested club members. Attendees pay only the cost of materials if applicable. Contact John at [huonia@aol.net](mailto:huonia@aol.net) to make arrangements.

## **Concrete Slab Workshop.**

Chase Rosade, of the Rosade Bonsai Studio in New Hope, PA, has led workshops in making large-scale stone-like slabs for bonsai plantings. Several club members have expressed interest in participating in such a workshop. We are in the 'discussion phase' with Chase about this; however keep in mind this is a multi-day enterprise and will almost certainly need to happen at Chase's studio in New Hope. It is also a several-hundred dollar commitment, though well worth it for those interested. Please contact John at [huonia@aol.com](mailto:huonia@aol.com) if interested, and we will see if there is sufficient interest to tempt Chase into leading a special session for our club. It will all come down to time availability and a commitment from enough members to make it happen.

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## **GSBS Club T-shirts are still on the agenda.**

Please contact John at [huonia@aol.com](mailto:huonia@aol.com) (if you haven't already) and we will get around to this once we have determined the level of interest.

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## **NEW BOOK!!!**

Our own Marty Schmalenberg had a big hand in producing the North American Bonsai Book, as many of our members know, and there were many problems with getting it to press. It is now finally available!!! -- Marty says it looks really great -- and, by the way, features trees from several of our members. Marty will be in attendance at the January meeting, and copies will be available.

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## **January Plant Care Tips:**

So far, so good. Hopefully, all trees are doing well.

Not much going on at this time of the year. All of our plants have gone into their dormant period. Except perhaps, for those of us with tropicals, we're not doing any styling, pruning or wiring at this point.

Outdoor trees should not need watering, but may need to be protected from excessive rain. A blanket of snow will do no harm to hardy trees in the open, but if a quick thaw occurs, it could be like having a week's worth of rain in a day. So if you have a large blanket of snow and expect a thaw, it's wise to remove most of the snow before the temperature warms up.

Check for pests during your weekly water check. Conifers can be destroyed by aphids or spider mites in a matter of a couple of weeks. Also, allow your lower trunks to get some air during any mild spells to prevent them being over moist. (move the mulch around and leave the trees exposed during a warm day)

Look over your tools, pots and other supplies. A good cleaning might be required. Review your styling notes, and photos. Plan for the up-coming spring while the time is available. You could also prepare your soil supply for repotting and order in any supplies that you find to be in short supply. growing in the winter and can be a continuing source of satisfaction in the coming months.

Tips taken from *Growing & Displaying Bonsai* by Colin Lewis and Neil Sutherland  
and from *Bonsai, the Art of Growing and Keeping Miniature Trees* by Peter Chan

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