



GREAT SWAMP BONSAI SOCIETY

February, 2006 Newsletter

Next Meeting: 7:00 pm Tuesday, February 14, 2006
Wiring Techniques with a focus on guy-wiring.

January Meeting Highlights:

Apologies are perhaps in order for not getting the January Newsletter out to you in a timely manner. The season took it's toll on both your president and your newsletter editor. We hope you didn't miss the January meeting as a result of that faux pas.

The January meeting was something a bit different from our ordinary fare. We didn't have a guest speaker, nor did we have a lecture/demonstration as we generally have had in the recent past. As mentioned in the January newsletter, the meeting was devoted to planning for what we will be doing over the next year and how to best serve the membership. We also discussed ways to get our former members back into the fold and to attract new members to the club.

The consensus seemed to be that there should be more hands-on opportunities for members of all bonsai backgrounds and experience. If you look at our revised schedule, you will see that there are many more chances for club members to participate in learning experiences, from both the student as well as the teacher standpoint. We hope to foster more mentoring and assistance than has occurred recently. We hope you will see this as a step toward improving your Great Swamp experience.

Also discussed were the possibility of having some organized trips to bonsai nurseries that are in "striking distance" so that members can acquire new material. We're hoping to have the opportunity to visit these places once the weather warms up somewhat. Members may be able to purchase pre-bonsai ("tended" nursery stock) and/or finished material to enhance their collections. Look for additional information about this in future newsletters.

Peter Michienzi offered critiques on a few of the trees that members brought and I think everyone benefited from Pete's experience. His discussion of the trees was most informative. Below are a few of the trees that members brought to the meeting on January 10.



Ken Olander's Pine



Ramification coming along nicely
on Pete's own Chinese Elm



Mark's Hinoki Cypress

February Meeting:

Come one, come all...

Our February meeting will focus on Wiring techniques, with an emphasis on the use of guy-wiring. This is a technique that allows for bends in branches that may not be able to be accomplished using the standard branch wiring. It is especially useful for those larger branches that just don't seem to want to stay put, even with #4 copper.

Join us as our vice president, Michael Markoff, hosts what promises to be a very informative session..

In addition to the above topic, there will be a beginner's corner devoted to how to choose a tree for bonsai. Our newer members, as well as some of our more "seasoned veterans" could stand to benefit from participating in these discussions. It's never too late to hone our skills by perhaps looking at a particular variety of trees in a somewhat different light or from a slightly different perspective. All members are encouraged to participate in these discussions since not everyone is an expert with all types of material.

Presidential Corner



Mark Schmuck

Hi everybody!

When February rolls around I like to think we're over the hump as far as winter is concerned. The worst may not be over yet, but whatever happens usually doesn't last long.

I want to thank all the club members who, with their input, questions, answers, and constructive criticism, made our January reorganization meeting a big success. Your ideas helped me greatly in mapping out our club's future direction.

Starting this month I'd like to add a Beginners Forum to the beginning of each regular meeting. The exception would be when we have a guest speaker, or special meeting. About 20--40 minutes would be devoted to basic bonsai skills, presented in a logical sequence. In other words, the basics in the order they should be learned.

For example (1: Selecting the tree, where, how & when.) (2: Deciding on a style, review of the different classical and more contemporary styles.) (3: Choosing and eliminating branches.) (4: Tool basics, sharpening, care, etc.) (5: Watering requirements, sun, shade.) (6: Overwintering.) Etc...

You get the picture! I'm hoping that some of the more experienced members will volunteer to take a topic at different meetings. Please keep that in mind.

I'll be thinking of everyone here, while I'm cruising the sandy beaches of Viequez, PR..

See you at the next meeting,

Mark

Another Note About Dues:

The time of the "free ride" is running out.

To those of you who have chosen to not pay your dues, we urge you to do so soon. We hope that the new format is more to everyone's liking. Everyone had the opportunity to attend the last meeting and voice their concerns and opinions on the future direction of the club.

If there's a reason why you haven't attended a meeting recently, let us know. It's always possible to send in your dues to Fred directly. His address is on the last page of the newsletter and he's love to hear from you.

Dues pays for our guest lecturers, demo trees, club supplies and many other things. Without it, we will not be able to provide the quality of service that members have enjoyed in the past. So please, help your club by renewing your membership at one of the next few meetings and keep the newsletter coming..

Upcoming Event Calendar:

- February 14** VP. Michael Markoff will host the meeting. Guy Wires as an alternative to branch wiring.
Beginner's corner: Tree Selection.
- March 14** Members who wish to have trees considered for the exhibit at the Midlantic Festival in April should bring them to the meeting. John Michalski will give a presentation on wild collected trees.
Beginner's corner: Deciding on a style
- April 11** Repotting workshop, Beginner's corner: Choosing branches
Teams will be selected for the May 9 **NIGHT OF THE SIX JUNIPERS** Meeting.
- April 21-23** **MIDLANTIC BONSAI FESTIVAL** at the Ramada in East Hanover.
Sign-up forms are available at meetings.
- April 25** 4th Tuesday. Italy's Marco Invernizzi. Lecture demo with tree to be raffled at close of meeting.
- May 9** -- **NIGHT OF THE SIX JUNIPERS** -- Six Teams, Six Junipers, watch out!
Trees to be auctioned at the conclusion.
- June 3** **ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE** - Haggarty Auditorium 9am-4pm open to the public 10 am- 3pm.
All members are urged to bring a tree or two for display to the public.
Jim Gillespie will be on hand to vend your bonsai needs.
- June 13** Open at this time
- June 15-18** **AMERICAN BONSAI SOCIETY** Learning Seminars at Saratoga Springs, NY
For more info go to the ABS website at <http://www.absbonsai.org>
- July 11** Open at this time.
- August** Picnic???

--- And, coming up ---

November 14 David Easterbrook Curator of Bonsai Montreal Botanical Gardens

February Plant Care Tips:

If you believe the Farmer's Almanac, winter is already over and a warming trend will prevail. But don't count on it... Keep a wary eye on Punxsutawney Phil.

Very hardy deciduous trees can be repotted toward the end of the month if root tips show white. Continue to protect trees from hard frost and don't feed until spring. You may also dig up raw material and pot into temporary containers. Even if you will wait until March for potting, raw material roots can be undercut.

You may wire deciduous trees this month while buds are still tight. As they swell, they become more fragile and are easily damaged. Don't wait too long, as you wouldn't want to see this year's new growth lying in the pot after you finish hours of wiring. Protect newly wired trees from frost until the buds burst.

Late February is ideal for heavy branch pruning as long as the remaining branches and shoots are healthy. Seal all wounds and protect from frost until growth has begun. Toward the end of the month, trim last year's growth back to vigorous new shoots.

Do NOT over-water your newly potted trees. Keep pots moist but not wet. As trees come out of dormancy, be aware that their watering needs will increase. However, since it is still quite cold, there is a chance that wet soil could freeze hard and damage newly developing root fibres.

Be careful with any feeding. New roots can be easily damaged by strong fertilizers. If your conifers did not get their bonemeal last fall, you may apply a light dose of fish emulsion, as this is quite mild.

Keep an eye out for aphids and spider mites. They can defoliate a conifer in a few weeks if unchecked. Commonly used pesticides that are listed for your species should do the trick. Remove algae from trunks and remove any Scale insects that you find.

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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Invasion of the Pine Shoot Beetle:

This insect was mentioned in a recent Star Ledger article. It is known to attack Pine, specifically Scotch Pine. It has been spreading from the Midwest since 1992 and has been detected in our area of North Jersey. (See map)

It feeds on new shoots and diseased trees by breeding under the bark at the base of the tree. And while it really likes Scotch Pine, it will feed on and reproduce in any Pine species. Native White and Pitch Pine are minimally susceptible. It does not appear to attack Blue spruce, Norway spruce, Douglas fir or Fraser fir, New Jersey's commercial Christmas tree stocks.

Severe infestation can result in diminished height and diameter of trees. It is recommended that you inspect your trees for signs of this pest and proceed accordingly.

Contact your county agricultural extension service for appropriate control recommendations.

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c/o Frelinghuysen Arboretum
53 East Hanover Avenue
Morristown, NJ 07962

Tracking an elusive pest

Native to Europe, the pine shoot beetle was introduced to Ohio in 1992, probably from infested ship cargo. Since then, the USDA has established quarantines in infested states to restrict movement.



First reported occurrences of the pine shoot beetle



SOURCES: USDA Forest Service; USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

MICHAEL GUILLÉN, THE STAR-LEDGER

