



GREAT SWAMP BONSAI SOCIETY

February, 2008 Newsletter

Next Meeting: 7:00 pm on Tuesday, February 12, 2008

Featuring: Repotting Forest Plantings

January Meeting Highlights:

Our thanks to John Michalski for a great presentation on Large Branch Pruning and Redesign. Marty Schmalenberg did a fine job on what appeared to be a bonsai-challenged Juniper. See John's comments (President's Corner) for additional information and a general review of the meeting's highlights. Here are a few pictures taken at the January meeting



February Meeting:

Let's have a good turnout this month. The meeting should be very interesting and informative. Sign up forms for 2007 MidAtlantic Spring Festival will be available.

February's meeting will feature repotting of forest plantings. Many of us have either not attempted this or may possibly just haven't a clue as to how to proceed. This meeting should give us all some background in forest planting from the standpoint of repotting and of starting one from scratch.

Presidential Corner:



Hello everyone, Happy mid-winter!

If you missed the January meeting you're losing out! I'll be frank—when I planned the meeting topic, I was worried that it would be a bit “thin.” I didn't have too many trees on hand, to demonstrate the listed topic of “Large branch pruning and major redesign.” Well, our membership came through and we had a great and instructive time of it.

For starters, Bill Muldowney brought in and demonstrated an off-the-shelf furniture clamp, very inexpensive, that does a splendid job of holding large branches (when you need that strong bend); it works just as well as the costly items sold expressly for bonsai work.

Ken Olander brought in a problematic wild apple tree, and Peter Michienzi took the opportunity to assess the plant's merits and suggest some heavy pruning and redesign, which Ken accepted outright and the work was performed before our eyes.

JM brought in a gawky apple for everyone's advice (and derision—thanks again guys!), and the dark horse was a Hinoki Cypress that has been a poser for several years now. Marty Schmalenberg stepped into the fray and made some excellent suggestions, which JM acted upon at once, with very pleasing results.

Fred Aufschlager brought in a large Pitch Pine which Marty also considered, and the resulting tree was a vastly altered one—and much for the better. It was great to have Marty in the house; we don't see you enough, Martin!

All in all, a really, really good meeting. To your president's (and meeting planner's) surprise, we really managed a lot of large branch pruning and major redesign, though I had feared we might come up dry. Bravo and Brava to all in attendance!

Upcoming Events:

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

New Book:

Marty Schmalenberg's North American Bonsai Book has reached press and is spectacular. The cost is \$50 for ABS members, and \$55 to non-ABS members, and is certainly worth the price; proceeds go to the ABS. Several GSBS members have trees in the book. You can contact Marty directly at sputnik1950@hotmail.com.

Other Club Business:

Membership: Pay up if you need to. And, if you've been away for a while, come on back, we miss you! Please keep sending your input for meetings, field trips, and workshop topics.

Park System Collecting Permits (for non-native, invasive species): This is in the works, but nothing is certain as yet. Details to be announced as things develop, but they are developing!

Club Trips:

Brooklyn Botanic Gardens 27th 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 jslgreen@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 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 as the season approaches.

Miscellaneous:

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 to make arrangements.

GSBS Club T-shirts are still on the agenda. Please contact John at huonia@aol.com (if you haven't already) and we will get around to this once we have determined the level of interest.



This is a Masakuni seventeen (17) piece premium stainless steel tool set.

Retail value is well over \$1500



Ticket prices

Single ticket.....	\$ 5.00
Five tickets.....	\$ 20.00
Thirty Tickets.....	\$100.00

Drawing to be held April 12, 2008 at the MidAtlantic Spring Festival.
Winner need not be present.

Anyone interested in this tool raffle, please see Mark S.

February Plant Care Tips.

Keep an eye on your trees. We've had a fair amount of precip, but check to see if anything might still need water when the pots thaw.

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

A Note about Dues and Membership:

Your dues help your club to function during the year and pay for special events and guest lecturers. The club can not continue to exist without your attendance and financial as well as moral support. We ask that you come prepared to "ante up" at the September meeting, or as soon thereafter as you can. Our annual dues continue to be a very reasonable \$30.00 for individual membership and \$40.00 for family.

Please do your part to help the Great Swamp Bonsai Society continue to be successful. We also encourage you to tell a friend about the club and suggest that he or she attend our meetings to see what we're all about.

Its' up to you...

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