



GREAT SWAMP BONSAI SOCIETY

February, 2009 Newsletter

Next regular Meeting on Monday, February 23, 2009
Frelinghuysen Arboretum, E. Hanover Ave, Morristown, NJ

January Highlights:

Our **January meeting** featured a wonderful presentation on **tool maintenance and sharpening** by **Juan Calderon** and **Fred Aufschlager**. Not only did they bring, explain, and demonstrate the proper use of a great variety of bonsai tools, they brought the material for cleaning, sharpening, and honing them, and performed this service for anyone who brought tools to work with. We also premiered our DVD of the **June 2008 Maine Collecting Trip** featuring club members John, Juan, Kerry and Ed, collecting larches in the bogs and spruces on the mountain tops. There was also a **club bonsai sale**, featuring anything that didn't go at the December auction. It was a great meeting and if you didn't make it, we missed you!

Unfortunately, your newsletter editor was not able to attend the meeting and therefore, there were no photos taken for your enjoyment. Here then, are some photos of the above-mentioned June 2008 Maine Collecting Trip provided by our very own John Michalski.



Special Note from Julian Adams:

I have received many communications deeply concerned about Bill Valavanis' situation after the fire that destroyed his home and much of his library, magazine archives and business equipment. Most of these communications have asked what they could do to help. I talked with Bill today and asked that question of him. In typical fashion, Bill only asked for our prayers. The loss and subsequent mess that must be dealt with would be staggering for any of us. At this point, Bill is clearly overwhelmed by it all. The house will be fully covered by insurance. His church and local bonsai friends are giving strong support. However, there is considerable need. His business insurance is substantially short of covering the losses in the library, archives, and business equipment. There appears to only be \$25,000 available to reconstruct the magazine and all the business office needs. This will be woefully insufficient.

The most direct help is likely to be in the form of a note to Bill expressing your concern and, if you can, enclose a monetary gift of some sort. Additional support that you can offer is to place orders for the 1st National Exhibition album (which should be printed shortly) or to register to attend the IB shohin symposium in Rochester that will be held in September.

Best regards,
Julian

Presidential Corner & Upcoming Event Calendar:



John Michalski

Our February meeting will be **MONDAY Feb 23rd** and will feature **guest speaker** Sean Smith on the subject of bonsai stands and bonsai display. Sean lives in Marysville Pennsylvania, where he owns and operates Custom Oriental Wood-craft.

With a passion for bonsai and suiseki for over 20 years, and an extensive background in carpentry, Sean took the two, put them together and started his own business in 1994. He makes bonsai display tables, and carves daiza (wooden stands for viewing stones) for renowned bonsai and suiseki enthusiasts all over the world. He encourages you to bring your trees for advice and mixing and matching with stands he will bring. Sean will also give a powerpoint (that means “slides” for you nontechnical folk) presentation, and will have stands for sale. Sean’s website can be found at www.bonsai-suiseki.com and features display stands, suiseki, shoji screens, custom daiza, turntables, unique pots, and much else. You might consider arranging a purchase with Sean

that he can deliver personally at the meeting.

March is still open but on **WEDNESDAY April 22nd** we hope to host **David Easterbrook** following his presentation at MABS (this would be a return visit for David this season, but many of us would love to see him again!) and in May Fred has offered to present a lecture-demo on air-layering. June is our annual Open House already!

Club member **Greentree** has graciously volunteered to organize a Saturday or Sunday **club outing** to the **bonsai nurseries in Ringoes and New Hope**. We have some planning to do yet, but keep an eye peeled for breaking news, and we hope to see you all at the meetings!

Finally, I wish to remind the membership that my term as club president comes to a close with the June Open House. It has been very rewarding but I wish to pass the baton so that I can focus on other things, such as writing, lecturing, and producing educational DVDs. I encourage each of you to consider stepping into the role, and if you have any questions about the tasks and responsibilities do not hesitate to contact me or any other club officers; we will certainly be there to support you if you choose to give it a shot.

And let’s not forget MABS in April: Go to their website to sign up: <http://www.midatlanticbonsai.freeservers.com>.

February Plant Care Tips:

Keep an eye on your trees. We’ve had our share of snow and ice so far this winter, 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

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And let's not forget our own website:

<http://www.arboretumfriends.org/gsbonsai>

All newsletters and calendar events are posted for your review.

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