



GREAT SWAMP BONSAI SOCIETY

March, 2009 Newsletter

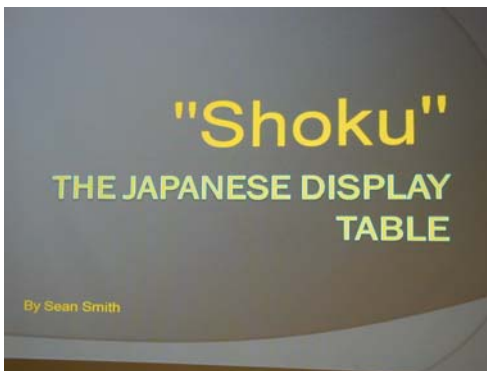
Next regular Meeting on Tuesday, March 10, 2009
Frelinghuysen Arboretum, E. Hanover Ave, Morristown, NJ
Featuring: MABS Tree Selection and Collecting Wild Species

February Highlights:

Our **February meeting** occurred late in the month and featured a wonderful presentation on **Bonsai Display** by **Sean Smith**. Sean is the owner (and craftsman) of Custom Oriental Woodcraft in Marysville PA. His dazzling Power-Point presentation and insight was well received by all 20 or so people in attendance. We learned many good points about how to best display our trees and to appreciate proportion and balance in our displays. Information was also presented regarding *daiiza*, those nifty little stands used to display *suiseki*, a.k.a. viewing stones

Some historical information about bonsai presentation and about the construction of a *Tokonoma* was also presented. It was interesting to learn how much is spent in Japan to create a space for bonsai display. Also of interest was how the seasons are represented in a display. Other than perhaps an obvious season shown in a scroll, there are several much more subtle ways of indicating the season. For instance, the costume on a figurine placed in the display. We westerners may not have been attuned to this since this is not an obvious point to us. We "gringos" might depict Summer by showing a figure in a bathing suit, but that is not quite delicate enough for the Japanese taste.

Here are a few pictures of some of the items that Sean brought for display and /or sale at the meeting:



Presidential Corner & Upcoming Event Calendar:



John Michalski

We have much in store as Spring approaches, beginning with our next meeting on Tuesday, March 10th (our usual “second Tuesday” for a change!). We have two major items on the agenda. First, we will be choosing the three trees to represent GSBS at MABS 2009. If you have tree that you would like to show this year, please bring it (or a good quality photo) to the meeting, and those present will select the three favorites by “penny vote”—each attendee gets three pennies to place before the three trees of their choice. First, second, and third place will go to MABS, with runners-up selected in case of unforeseen difficulties as MABS draws near.

And hey—if you haven’t already signed up and booked a room for the Symposium (April 17-19), please check out the MABS website at www.midatlanticbonsai.freeservers.com. Room rates are reasonable, and we’ll be the only convention in the place this year, so no noisy neighbors! If you haven’t been to a MABS Spring Festival before, you’ve missed a special event – there are excellent lecture-demos, workshops, vendors aplenty, and great fellowship. And, of course, a display of some of the greatest bonsai this side of the Mississippi.

The other topic at our March meeting will be the collection of wild bush honeysuckles, Amur maples, and wild apples for bonsai – and more particularly, for us to collect this spring, to pot and grow out as pre-bonsai, to sell at MABS 2010. I will present some DVD clips to show you how it’s done, and present a sort of timeline for how our members can organize to acquire and prepare a goodly number of trees this year, as a club fundraiser for next April. It’s a good plan that could raise thousands for the club.

On **WEDNESDAY April 22nd** we will host David Easterbrook following his presentation at MABS (a welcome return, with an afternoon “bring-your-own” workshop available to a limited number of participants).

On Sunday, April 26th we will host a Club Outing to the Bonsai Nurseries in Ringoes NJ and New Hope PA. Please plan on joining us to meet David and Diane Hall at Allshapes Bonsai Nursery (www.allshapesbonsai.com) and Chase and Solita Rosade at the Rosade Bonsai Studio (www.rosadebonsai.com). You can bring your own lunch to enjoy at the Rosade Studio, or dine at one of New Hope’s many excellent eateries. Contact club member Greentree at jslgreen@optonline.net so we have an idea of who’s coming.

Our May meeting topic is still open. June is our annual Open House already!

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

March Plant Care Tips:

Are we seeing strange weather or what? See-saw temperatures and not too much moisture seems to be what we’re getting. We just had our biggest snow storm of the season. 6-10 inches on March 1-2. Hope you’ve got your trees well protected..

Ok, let’s see now... March is the time to get serious about re-potting. Any healthy deciduous material should be attended to at the beginning of the month. If there is no sign of bud or root movement, you can hold off for a bit. Keep deciduous trees away from harsh winds and hard frosts to protect them from damage. Of course, if you have a greenhouse, poly-house, or really good cold-frame, any such damage would be minimized. Deciduous trees can be kept in “in the dark”, since they have no need for light until bud-break. Once this happens, you must put them outside. Junipers and spruces can begin to be repotted at the end of the month.

With any luck at all, our trees are beginning to show signs of life now. Branch or root pruning done at this time will heal over quite quickly. Keep a record of which trees are repotted to help keep track of when they will need repotting again. As a general rule, repot trees under 5 years old annually, depending on their condition. Trees between 5 and 20 years should be repotted every other year. Trees in the over 20 year category generally require repotting every third year. And, for those that are lucky enough to own trees that are over 100 years old, repotting can be planned for every 4 or 5 years. Pruning of deciduous trees should wait until budding activity has begun. (You’re making sure that the branches are alive)

By the end of the month you should be able to remove protected, cold-hardy trees from shelter and leave them exposed to the elements. Evergreens can be fertilized with mild liquids at 2-week intervals. Spray with Benomyl for fungus control and with Malathion to kill those overwintering insects such as greenfly, blackfly, scale and mealybugs. Choose mid-morning of a fine, warm day for spraying so that the fungicide or insecticide has chance to dry.

Wiring and shaping of trees can be carried out this month as well. However, don’t wire re-potted material for at least 3 or 4 weeks to avoid strain on the new emerging roots.

The end of this month and into next month are great times for collecting material from the wild. They have the best chance of survival, providing you get a decent sized root ball with plenty of fibrous roots.

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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