



# GREAT SWAMP BONSAI SOCIETY

April, 2008 Newsletter

Next Meeting: 7:00 pm Tuesday, April 8, 2008

Guest Lecturer: Mr. Min Hsuan Lo

## March Meeting Highlights:

Our March meeting focused partly on choosing the trees that will represent GSBS at the upcoming MABS symposium being held April 11-13 in upstate New York. Those present voted by placing pennies before their three favorites among the trees that were brought to the meeting (or, in one case, represented by photographs). Our winners this year are a windswept Eastern Red Cedar by Peter Michienzi, an informal upright Scots Pine by Michael Markoff, and a literati Eastern Red Cedar by Juan Calderon. It was pretty-much a 'dead heat.'

The other feature of this meeting was the redesign and repotting of two Korean Hornbeam forest plantings owned by Fred Aufschlager. Ken Olander led one group of volunteers while David Yedwab led the second group. Both forests came out very well, and several of our newer members had a wonderful opportunity to work with bonsai design and get their hands dirty, so to speak, in the technical aspects of repotting bonsai, as well as the finer points of anchoring forest plantings into a pot. It was really great to achieve this intermingling of novices with two of our more experienced and talented artists.

Below are some pictures from the meeting.



## April Meeting(s):

Our April meeting will be devoted to a visit by the renowned Taiwanese Bonsai Artist Mr. Min Hsuan Lo, who is noted for his work with Juniper material, and will be presenting at the MABS symposium later in the week. If you have such a tree lying around, bring it to the meeting and enjoy a critique by Mr Lo or perhaps he may choose to assist you with styling.

The Mid-Atlantic Symposium occurs early this month on the 11-13 at the Hudson Valley Resort and Spa in Kerhonkson, NY, (a short ride up the NYS Thruway; near New Paltz) and while you may have missed out on the pre-April 1st discounts for early birds, sign-up sheets are still available at the meeting. We encourage one and all to at least attend if not for the complete weekend, a day trip is worthwhile to visit the vendor area and view the 30 or so trees that will be on display from all participating clubs.

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## Presidential Corner



Hello everyone, great things to report!

As a middle-school science teacher, I can tell you that it's always thrilling to see a student's interest in something mature to the point where you realize they have moved into the "big leagues." Well I can't say I've taught anything about bonsai to Juan Calderon, but I felt the same kind of enthusiasm upon seeing his entry for this year's MABS display. It is not going too far to say that with this tree Juan has certainly entered the realm of the masterpiece bonsai that have achieved international renown. Congratulations Juan, this tree deserves to win 'Best in Show.'

The club trip to Brooklyn Botanic Gardens (Sunday April 27th), as of our last meeting, has 29 paid attendees, which is really something. If you still wish to join us, contact Joan Greentree at [jslgreen@optonline.net](mailto:jslgreen@optonline.net). She's done a great job of getting and keeping things organized.

## Note for the June Open House

Our **Annual Bonsai Open House** (see calendar of events below) gets better every year, but we have a perennial problem attracting the public – some years we get lots of people, and some years very few. Contacting the local papers has proved essentially fruitless; several years they've said they would run our press releases, but failed to do so. We have a number of additional promotional ideas this year: taking advantage of free announcements on NJN, WMTR, WOR's Garden Hotline, etc. We will also be having banners made to place outside the Arboretum for the two weeks prior to the event. But please keep your antennae up for other opportunities to spread the word.

**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.

**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) so we can figure out a reasonable number to produce. Let us know your size preference.

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## Upcoming Event Calendar:

**April 8th:** Guest lecturer Mr. Min Hsuan Lo. 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. Mr. Lo is well-known for his work with junipers, so if your collection includes a fine juniper please contact us – we'd like to have a great tree that Mr. Lo might demonstrate his styling and design techniques on – the owner of the tree basically gets a free design session out of it. If we can't provide such a demo tree we will have Mr. Lo lead a critiquing session, so please bring a tree or two to the meeting for Mr. Lo's critique and advice. We have done this in the past with other great artists and it is always an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

**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, and engaging our visitors with conversation and answering their bonsai questions.

**July is Club Picnic Time!** Lately this has been hosted at the Michalski home, but let me know if you would like to take a turn. Either way, look for further info as the time approaches.

## April Plant Care Tips:

Since the weather is generally still on the cool side, you can continue to do the tasks that you were doing in March. Repotting is chief among these, but discontinue for deciduous trees by midmonth and for conifers by month-end unless a tree is severely root-bound. Pines can be repotted as late as the end of the month. After-care is the same as last month...

Start air-layering on conifers. Deciduous trees that have not been repotted will require fertilizer from now until the end of summer. Fertilize every 2 weeks starting with a weak solution. Never fertilize a recently repotted tree for a few months, giving the tree time to re-establish itself. Use a high-nitrogen fertilizer during spring and early summer to promote leaf growth. Do not fertilize flowering species until several months after the flowers have fallen. (immediate application prevents fruit development)

A good time to take evergreen cuttings of last year's wood. When trimming Hinoki Cypress, Ezo Spruce and most Junipers, use thinnings with a hard-wood heel for cuttings.

Start grooming the trees you will want to display in summer. By the end of the month, all trees should be putting out new leaves and spring-flowering species should be starting to bloom. What a wondrous time of year. Pruning becomes easier since you can spot the dead branches and twigs by their lack of activity. Be sure to seal off all wounds. Pines and spruce should not be pruned, since they will "bleed" resin, disfiguring the bark.

Apply wire to spruce, juniper and pine but not deciduous trees. Don't wire too tightly since the branches will be swelling with new growth over the next month or so. Check small branches that you wired in March. They may be well set already.

Begin your watering routines. During rainy times, shelter newly repotted trees but if dry, remember to water them.

Continue to check for insect attacks. Aphids are a particularly a problem since they tend to take on the color of the branches that they inhabit. Clean off any algae from trunks and branches. If trees have not shown any sign of growth, keep them in a shaded area and keep the soil just moist and feed with a weak phosphorous-based fertilizer.

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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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## 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](mailto:sputnik1950@hotmail.com).

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## 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.

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## Club Trips:

**Brooklyn Botanic Gardens** 27<sup>th</sup> of April, Sunday. We still have room for a few more! Parking and admission is FREE. The curator of BBG's bonsai collection will provide a full back-stage tour of their collection, and we are taking a total donation of \$31.00 per club member which will cover lunch and a donation 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) if interested.

**Morris County Park System Tree Collecting** will take place by special arrangement with GSBS this spring! Look for special announcements in your mailbox as the time approaches. Please plan to come out and join us, to make this cooperative venture a success for the Park Commission, which in turn will help ensure an ongoing relationship with GSBS.

**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. We have room for a few more if interested!**

**Bonsai Nurseries – Ringos and New Hope.** As Spring approaches we will be arranging a day trip to Allshapes Bonsai Nursery in Ringos NJ and Rosade Bonsai Studio in New Hope PA, with lunch in New Hope. We will probably select a sunny Sunday in April or May. Contact John at [huonia@aol.com](mailto:huonia@aol.com) to get on the list.

## Contact Information:

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Don't forget to visit our website: <http://www.arboretumfriends.org/gsbonsai>

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