



# Great Swamp Bonsai Society

*Next meeting: Who can say?*

**April 2020 Newsletter**

## Obviously, the big news is the COVID-19 and everything being cancelled or rescheduled

In drafting this month's newsletter, with the national health situation being what it is, it has been a challenge to come up with something cheerful without seeming to be flippant about all the things that are on everyone's mind.

How many more times do you need to be reminded to stay home as much as possible, to sanitize your hands following interactions in public, etc. etc. etc.? At the same time, there are a few ways in which we, as gardeners and bonsai enthusiasts, can give expression to our need for space and enjoy a few quiet moments each day in an attempt to unwind and re-connect with some of the things that make life rather nice after all.

We are, for one thing, fortunate in having an outlet (**bonsai**) that we can enjoy without leaving the confines of our yard, patio, or balcony, that can be indulged in solitude, and that allows for quiet contemplation. We also have the "luxury" of having a schedule to stick to—now is the time for repotting, root-pruning, soil-mixing, and getting back into the cycle of styling, trimming, wiring, and all the other little details that ultimately bring us such pleasure in our craft. The necessity to attend to these tasks in a timely manner can help bring a little "normalcy" into our otherwise disrupted lives.

So make sure to put aside some time each week to work your trees as you would in any "typical" spring season. (And put on some music, not the news.) I think it will be healthful for you in more ways than one.



## March Meeting: Selection of MABS Trees, and Presentation by club member Juan Calderon, on Finding the Design in a nursery-grown Juniper

At the March meeting, we selected the 4 trees that *would* have represented GSBS at this year's Mid-Atlantic Bonsai Societies' (MABS) Spring Festival, which of course has been cancelled owing to the national health situation. Those very deserving entries are shown on this and the following page. Thank you to all who brought something in for consideration.



(left) John Berna's Englemann Spruce.

(right) Fred Aufschläger's Rocky Mountain Juniper.





(left) Rick Myers' Shimpaku Juniper.

(below) Mark Schmuck's forest planting of Chinese Elm.



We also enjoyed a very fine presentation by advanced club member **Juan Calderon** on **Finding the Design** in a nursery-grown juniper. The original presentation was meant to be a joint demonstration with club member **Peter Michienzi** on a wild-collected juniper, but naturally the progress of the pandemic prompted a change in plan. We look forward to a future meeting when Peter will be back to demonstrate his impressive skills in bonsai design and execution.

Thanks again to Juan for an educational and entertaining presentation!



## Should We Be Thinking of a “Virtual” Bonsai Open House?

Taking into account the very real possibility that the Park Service will not open their venues in time for our scheduled May 31<sup>st</sup> “Open House,” perhaps we might consider putting together a “virtual” display of our club members’ work that can be shared online.

For those who are interested, my suggestion is that you photograph your trees against a white or pale gray background (a bedsheet hung from a line works perfectly well), and experiment with lighting (time of day for outdoor natural light, flash/no flash otherwise) to try to obtain the most flattering images possible. Feel free to share them with me or any other club members, and maybe we can get a whole display going.

It’s a thought, anyway. Let me know how you feel about it, at [huonia@aol.com](mailto:huonia@aol.com).

-- Club President John Michalski

## Mid-Atlantic Bonsai Societies (MABS) Spring Festival 2020 CANCELLED

In case you didn’t receive the memo. See their website if you require reimbursement, but most of the pre-paid attendees will have been contacted by now.

## Paid hands-on Workshop with Guest Artist Suthin CANCELLED

While we did have all spaces booked, our club has collected no money in advance of this meeting. We’ll try again next year!

## Plant Care Tips for April

For the gardener and bonsai enthusiast, it is hard not to be a little excited at the seemingly mild winter and early spring that we have so far experienced in 2020. My entire bonsai collection has broken bud and some of my bush honeysuckles are already in full leaf. The conifers have returned to their growing-season colors, and nature in general seems to be kicking into high gear.

Try to keep in mind that the last frost date for northern New Jersey is still a few weeks off—though as day follows day it seems increasingly likely that we will reach that date without frosty incident. Still, keep an eye on the overnight forecasts, and be ready to provide some protection in case a cold front crosses our path—*nothing* surprises me anymore.

April is a decent month for root-pruning, and for digging trees from yard or field. Begin your feeding, pinching, watering, and pruning schedules in earnest. With all the more serious concerns on everybody's mind this year, spend some extra time with your trees, and allow yourself to unwind a little bit. You need it. [JM]

## GSBS Sales Table

Whenever we eventually return to something like a normal schedule, we will continue with our recent addition of a “sales table” for any bonsai-related articles that club members wish to offer for sale at our regular meetings. You simply bring your wares and post the prices with them. This is a good way for members to move along those items they no longer wish to keep, while offering same to other people who might cherish them! So please feel free!

## Dues

While it does not appear that the club will be spending a lot of money any time soon, we will of course still accept dues from current club members, as well as those who wish to officially join our organization. Until we meet again, dues may be paid by check to **club treasurer Rick Myers**, mailed to his address on the last page of this newsletter. Annual membership remains at \$40 for individual, \$50 family, and helps support club activities such as hosting touring experts and purchasing supplies like soil and wire for group activities.

## **Save and Bring In Your Discarded Copper Bonsai Wire**

Please remember to save and (eventually) bring in those wire clippings. **It helps if you cut your wire into short (3-6 inch) lengths, as it packs more easily for transport and sale.** About once a year we bring them to a scrap metal dealer and swap them for cash. It's usually about enough to equal one or two paid memberships, so it really does help keep the GSBS afloat.

## **Keep those Topic Suggestions Coming!**

A reminder to feel free to send your ideas and topic suggestions to any of the Board Members listed at the back of this newsletter. GSBS is always looking for new and interesting topics that will appeal to the various educational needs of our diverse membership. The club exists for you, so don't be shy with your recommendations.

**We especially welcome volunteers who wish to plan and lead presentations and workshops**, so that the club may benefit from the wide array of experience contained within our membership.

Visit our webpage at <http://www.arboretumfriends.org/gsbonsai/>

***Novices and non-members always welcome!***

***Come and plan to get your hands dirty!***

## Calendar of Events for 2020

Obviously, our calendar is currently up in the air. But keep those suggestions coming—we will be back on track sooner or later!

**WATCH YOUR EMAIL FOR UPDATES.**

**???** April 14<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday, 6:30-9:30 PM) ***Soils and Repotting Workshop.***

~~April 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> Mid-Atlantic Bonsai Societies' Spring Festival~~  
**CANCELLED**

~~April 21<sup>st</sup> (Tuesday) Daytime (paid) workshop with guest artist~~  
~~SUTHIN-SUKOSOLVIT~~ **CANCELLED**

**???** May 12<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday, 6:30-9:30 PM). ***Topic to be determined.***

**???** May 31<sup>st</sup> (**SUNDAY**, 9:00 AM – 4:30 PM). ***ANNUAL BONSAI OPEN HOUSE.***

**\* No meeting in June**

**???** July 14<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday, 6:30-9:30 PM). ***Topic to be determined.***

**???** August: ***Annual Club Picnic. Date and location to be determined.***



## GSBS Contact Information:

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Treasurer: Rick Myers [spruce80@verizon.net](mailto:spruce80@verizon.net)  
80 Kenvil Ave  
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Newsletter: John Michalski [huonia@aol.com](mailto:huonia@aol.com)

## Club Information

### Location:

The Frelinghuysen Arboretum  
353 East Hanover Ave,  
Morristown, NJ 07962

### Date:

Usually the second Tuesday of each  
Month, (check our website for  
special dates and locations)

Time: 6:30 – 9:30 pm

**Remember to check our website  
(<http://www.arboretumfriends.org/gsbonsai/index.htm>) for  
special events, dates, updates  
and latest information.**

## Great Swamp Bonsai Society

c/o John Michalski  
223 Mount Kemble Ave., Morristown, NJ 07960

### Great Swamp Bonsai Society Membership Registration:

#### Send to:

**GSBS c/o Rick Myers**       **New**       **Renewal**  
**80 Kenvil Avenue**  
**Succasunna, NJ 07876.**       **Individual (\$40.00)**       **Family (\$50.00)**

**Name(s):** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

**If Family Membership, please list other members:**

\_\_\_\_\_