



# Great Swamp Bonsai Society

Next meeting: Saturday, April 24<sup>th</sup>

Noon - 4:00 PM - General Workshop!

April 2021 Newsletter

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## Spring Has Definitely Sprung!

Hello again, bonsai friends. It seems that we are very likely past winter and into the bonsai growing season, and for most of us, I'm sure, not a moment too soon! In my Morristown garden, the vinca are covered in blooms, the Forsythia and daffodils are out in full force, the spring azure butterflies are flitting around my spicebush, and the bearded irises are extending their leaves. The local magnolia trees are in nearly full flower, and my usual rule of thumb is, if the magnolias successfully bloom without a late frost browning all the petals, we are pretty much good to go. Here's hoping!

In my bonsai garden, the bush honeysuckles are well into their first flush of foliage, and I've already pinched back one set of growing tips. My plums and Amur maples are beginning to open their leaves, and my junipers and arborvitae have all regained the bright green colors of the growing season. Many of you have been repotting by now, and there is still plenty of time to get at this important chore, but if you haven't yet started, don't put it off too much longer. Not every tree in your collection need be repotted every year, but if you're going to do it, this is the time. And our **upcoming meeting** (see below) will be a great opportunity to do so, if you would like some assistance.

## April Meeting! Saturday, April 24<sup>th</sup>, from noon to 4:00 PM

(We will continue with Saturday afternoon meetings to be held at club member homes until further notice. Watch your email and facebook for updates as they develop.)

The April meeting will be hosted by **Fred and Doris Aufschläger** at their home in **Bernardsville, NJ**. The topic will be a **General Hands-on Workshop**, so bring trees, pots, tools, and soil (if you have it), and we will be available to help you navigate all the intricacies of repotting & bonsai design, or anything else you would like help with.

Fred is also prepared to provide (sell) **professional-grade bonsai mix** to order. **(See announcement on page 2.)**

## Plant Care Tips for April

April is still a decent month for root-pruning, and for digging trees from yard or field. Begin your feeding, pinching, watering, and pruning schedules in earnest. Of course, be mindful of potential cold snaps, and be ready to protect vulnerable plants. The growing season has well and truly begun!

Ask 20 bonsai practitioners about fertilizers, soil mixes, and repotting schedules, and you are liable to receive 20 different answers. Nowadays, with so many genuine bonsai masters making their expertise available via YouTube, you can get all kinds of good advice from the people with the most experience, and I encourage you to do so.

As for me, I tend to let individual trees remain in the same pot until I sense that the water is no longer draining well during watering—unless there is an obvious health issue that might require a change of soil mix, or checking on possible root damage. My soil mixes have evolved quite a lot over the past 30 years—frankly, mainly in the direction of pre-package professional mixes, or potting mixes fabricated to order by people who have all the right ingredients. In short, I go where the pro's go.

As to fertilizing, for the past several years I've placed my faith in pelleted surface fertilizer (the brand I use is **Osmocote**) that releases small amounts of the good stuff every time you water, or every time it rains. (The products you mix in the watering can work fine, too, except that they will leach out when it rains.) I have fortified all my bonsai with this product [this weekend](#), as the buds are expanding and leaves are extending. [The only exception](#) I make is for refined trees for which I do not wish to encourage excessive growth. For those trees, I hold off on fertilizer until after the first set of leaves has set and hardened off. Everything else gets the full treatment. [JM]

## Professional-grade bonsai mix available to order

Club member **Fred Aufschläger** (at whose house our upcoming meeting will be held), is offering the following deals on his own, hand-crafted, professional-grade soil mixes. He is prepared to make them to order, priced as follows:

Coniferous (coarse and fine): \$50/5 gal., \$12/gal. for 1-3 gal.

Deciduous (fine): \$60/5 gal., \$14/gal. for 1-3 gal.

Those interested should contact Fred **in advance**, at [fdauf@msn.com](mailto:fdauf@msn.com).

## Repeat: No Dues for 2020–2021 Season!

As we will not, any time soon, be meeting at the Arboretum, and as our club treasury is already ample to meet our meager needs, dues will be suspended until further notice. If you have already paid your dues for the coming season, you may request a refund, or have them applied to next year, at your discretion.

## Repeat: GSBS Facebook Page / GSBS YouTube Channel

A reminder that our club **Facebook Page** is a wonderful venue for anyone in the group to post photos, ask questions, or chime in with ideas and opinions about other people's work and accomplishments. To contribute to the discussion, all you have to do is go to the page and request to join the group—once your request has been accepted, you will be able to post photos, videos, and comments.

We have also established a Great Swamp Bonsai Society **YouTube Channel**, which at the moment features only a few amateur video clips by yours truly (John Michalski), expounding or demonstrating simple maintenance techniques for different species used in bonsai. If you have something you'd like to upload, get in touch with me at [huonia@aol.com](mailto:huonia@aol.com). Thanks!

## GSBS Sales Table – “Virtual” Sales Table

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.

In the meantime, feel free to post announcements on our club **Facebook Page** if you have something to sell, or something you are seeking. **(Non-commercial sales only, please. This is not intended as advertising space for full-time professionals.)** 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!

## Save Your Discarded Copper Bonsai Wire

Please remember to save and 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 on the last page 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.

## Calendar of Events for 2020-2021

Our club meetings are finally coming out of suspended animation. But keep those suggestions coming—we are cheerfully open to any and all topic ideas!

### **WATCH YOUR EMAIL FOR UPDATES.**

**April 24th: (Saturday, rain date 4/25).** General bonsai hands-on workshop and club meeting, at the home of Fred and Doris Aufschläger (17 Lakeview Drive, Bernardsville, NJ 07924). All are welcome.

**May: Date, venue, and topic to be determined.**

**June: Date, venue, and topic to be determined.**

## GSBS Contact Information:

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## Great Swamp Bonsai Society

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

## 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.**

### **DUES SUSPENDED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**

#### **Great Swamp Bonsai Society Membership Registration:**

#### **Send to:**

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

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

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

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

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