



# GREAT SWAMP BONSAI SOCIETY

May, 2008 Newsletter

Next Meeting: 7:00 pm on Thursday, May 15, 2008  
at Frelinhuyesen Arboretum, E. Hanover Ave, Morristown

## April Highlights:

The regular April meeting featured Mr. Min Hsuan Lo, one of the keynote speakers from the MidAtlantic Bonsai Symposium. Mr Lo spoke about his homeland of Taiwan, and junipers. He styled a San Jose juniper from what looked like an ungainly bush into a very nice future cascade style. His expertise with this species (junipers in general, not necessarily San Jose in particular) was quite evident in the way he coaxed a nice future bonsai out of the provided material.

Speaking of the MidAtlantic Syposium, it was our 25th annual event and was held on April 11-13 at the Hudson Valley Resort & Spa in Kerhonkson, NY in the shadow of the Shawangunk mountain range. Our own Mark Schmuck is this year's president. If you were not able to attend the lecture / demo presentations at the festival, you certainly missed some fine demonstrations and lectures by some of the premier Bonsai artists around today. In addition to those who attended the symposium, several members were seen in attendance in the Vendor area. There was a good supply of tools, trees, pots, and various other supplies to suit every Bonsai need. It is the one time of year when we are able to have so many suppliers in our area at the same time.

This year's presenters were Mr Min Hsuan Lo (Taiwan), George LeBolt (Bergen Bonsai), Graham Potter (UK) and Michael Hagedorn (USA). All presenters gave outstanding demonstrations and lectures. We learned many things about Bonsai that may not have been "intuitively obvious to the most casual observer." Listening to these presenters was a varied and worthwhile experience. George lectured on the history, care and feeding of the Brazilian Raintree. The other artists discussed their techniques and philosophies related to Bonsai design and commitment to excellence. Once again, space does not allow for a complete breakdown of these topics in the newsletter. It is truly a case of "you had to be there..."

For those of you who were unable to attend, please visit our website and follow the link in the Newsletters section to view a series of photos taken at this year's MABS festival. <http://www.arboretumfriends.org/gsbonsai> The pictures will be posted as soon as I put together a presentation. I'll also post pictures from the BBG trip. (Too much for the newsletter)

Here are some of the pictures taken at the April meeting.



## Presidential Corner:



Hello everyone, so many bits of good news!

I realize I'm repeating myself, but it's such a pleasure to mention that our membership has been growing with each meeting. If you're new to us, please let us know what you'd like to see and learn. And if you've been away for a while, come on back, we miss you! The club really seems to be jumping lately, and we want to keep the momentum rolling.

Our Maine collecting trip is about filled up, but if you're going please confirm by email so we know exactly who's going and so that we can get you all the pertinent information.

At previous meetings, club member Diego Pablos told us of an opportunity to acquire some club material by removing unwanted landscape plants from the house of his friend Jim. John M and Diego spent a good part of Saturday April 19th digging stuff up, alongside the homeowners, and we came away with several Japanese Hollies and a couple of large Junipers. All they have to do is live!

### Shoulda Been There!

Saturday April 26th marked the first, very successful, meeting of the GSBS with the Morris County Park Commission, for a honeysuckle dig at the Kay Environmental Center in Chester, NJ. Mike Markoff, John Michalski, Diego Pablos, David Peever, David Seaton, Phil Shimko and Ed Ullrich met up with Kelli O'Connor from the Park Commission and park maintenance man Denman, and we cleared a 10-foot by 75-foot patch of land along the stone fence at the park entrance – all between 8:00 and 11:30 a.m.! The work progressed smoothly and the weather – cloudy, cool, and a bit damp – kept everyone comfortable for the morning's work. By noon we were all up the hill, collecting a great series of large-to-granddaddy-sized honeysuckles to please everyone. The Park was very happy and so were the tree collectors. Not least of all, we had a lot of fun and got to know each other a little better. Thanks to all the members who turned up to support this worthy effort. If you didn't make this one, plan to make it next year, when we hope to have more than one event lined up.

### Shoulda Been There, Too!

Sunday April 27th the Brooklyn Botanic Gardens hosted 29 club members, family and friends, to a backstage tour of their bonsai collection, led by bonsai curator Julian Velasco. The weather was cool (maybe cold is more accurate) and a bit rainy, but the tour was great and we had a great time and a good lunch in the bargain. Thank you Julian for taking time out from your obviously busy schedule – 400 trees and him working solo, with one assistant who comes in once a week! And thank you Greentree, for doing most of the footwork to make this nice trip a reality.

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## Upcoming Event Calendar:

**May 15th (Thursday):** Guest lecturer Jim Barrett. Jim is a founding member of the Golden State Bonsai Federation, probably the premier bonsai organization in the U.S., and a founder of several other bonsai clubs. He is well-known for his work with a variety of trees and this time his topic will be how to match deciduous trees to the best pot. Many of us grow deciduous bonsai yet this is a topic we rarely address, so please bring in your trees and pots for Mr. Barrett to work with. Additionally, if time permits, we may have a critiquing session where Jim offers advice and ideas for your other bonsai, so if you're stuck for a design bring it in!

**Saturday June 7th:** Annual GSBS Club Open House in the big hall upstairs of our regular meeting room, 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, lecture-demonstrations, and engage our visitors with conversation and answer their bonsai questions.

**MAINE Collecting Trip starting June 22, 2008.** John Michalski and Juan Calderon will lead a 4-5 day camping trip (2-3 days in the field, 1 day travel time each way) 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 if interested. We are getting filled up (10 participants max), so email ASAP if interested.

**Club Picnic – July or August?** Please RSVP regarding your preference for a Sunday in July, or a Sunday in August. 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.

**Bonsai Nurseries – Ringos and New Hope.** Spring is here, and 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. A Sunday in May seems best. Contact John at huonia@aol.com to get on the list.

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## Notes on our June Open House:

**BRING TREES:** Please plan on displaying your trees at this year's Open House! Paid members can essentially display any number of trees, though most people find that two or three good ones is about all they can transport and display nicely. We won't have time during our May meeting to discuss display techniques, but we'll have a couple of sample displays set up for you to examine while you're there.

**BACKDROPS:** Each year we face the problem of how to create the cleanest backdrop for our bonsai displays in the upstairs auditorium. (If you're new to us, the upstairs hall has large windows which results in a rather uneven distribution of "blank wall space" for our purposes.) This year, I've hit upon a solution to this problem, which is the use of foam-filled, trifold poster board which you can buy in office supply and craft stores. They're 36" tall and 48" across, so it would be suitable for most small and medium trees. They cost from \$8-16, are lightweight and fold up somewhat, so one for each of your displays and you can stow them away in a closet the rest of the year.

**PUBLICITY:** Please remember to spread the word any way you can about the event. Our show 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. We'll be taking advantage of free announcements on NJN, WMTR, WOR's Garden Hotline, etc. I've also had a banner 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.

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## May Plant Care Tips:

Pines are beginning to show their candles. Spruce and Larch buds are opening up and deciduous material comes into full leaf. Repotting chores should be over by the 10th. The exception would be Chinese Junipers which can be repotted through early summer. Only repot other species if they show signs of distress, such as root rot.

Established trees can be fed at regular intervals. A granular organic-based fertilizer such as blood meal, Bonemeal, or fish/seaweed products should be given once per month. Late developing varieties can be given more Nitrogen now, while others require a balanced diet.

Don't feed anything that has not "leafed out", but spray mist daily. Watering becomes a primary concern as trees develop. Trees should be watered at least once/day and possibly twice as required. Hot dry spells will dictate a more rigorous regime. Early evening or early morning seem best, unless, of course it has been raining heavily.

Evergreen cuttings can be taken, but seeds sown now have a minimum chance of survival. Air-layering of deciduous material can be started and continued through July. Air-layering of conifers may continue. Pinch back long shoots of deciduous using thumb and fore-finger. Late spring frost can damage tender new leaves on deciduous, especially Red maples. If frost is predicted, place your susceptible material in a protected place, such as a greenhouse or in an un-headed garage or shed for protection.

Trees in training can be pruned now but deciduous display material should already be completed. It's too soon to prune pine and spruce, However, dead branches should be removed. Pinch expanding pine candles as they grow. Start with the small ones and finish with the larger a week later. Spruce and Juniper may be ready for their first pinchings. Trim back new growth on deciduous to 2 or 3 buds, and rub off any buds growing where they shouldn't be.

Insects are getting active so inspect regularly and treat at the first sign of attack. Do not use systemic insecticides or fungicides on Chinese Elm. Place sun-sensitive species in light shade. Weeding now will save lots of time later. Be especially diligent about liverwort and pearlwort. Their long roots can clog drainage holes.

Conifers can be wired now but take care not to damage new growth. Deciduous branches can be lightly wired if branches need "teasing" into place. If large branches were not already wired, it's ok to do them now, but watch carefully so as not to damage any new foliage.

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

**Beginner's Workshops** are offered **FREE OF CHARGE** to interested club members. Attendees pay only the cost of materials if applicable. Contact John M. or Fred A. to make arrangements.

We haven't forgotten about **GSBS Club T-shirts!** 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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## North American Bonsai Book

GSBS member Marty Schmalenberg's North American Bonsai Book is spectacular, and features several trees styled by GSBS members. The cost is \$50 for ABS members, and \$55 to non-ABS members, and is certainly worth the price; proceeds go to the ABS. You can contact Marty directly at [sputnik1950@hotmail.com](mailto:sputnik1950@hotmail.com).

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## Contact Information:

<b>President:</b>	John Michalski	- Contact John at <a href="mailto:huonia@aol.com">huonia@aol.com</a> or by Phone: .
<b>VP:</b>	Michael Markoff	- Contact Mike at <a href="mailto:MJSmart@aol.com">MJSmart@aol.com</a> or by Phone: 973.895.6287
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Fred Aufschläger	- Contact Fred at <a href="mailto:fdauf@optonline.net">fdauf@optonline.net</a> or 17 Lakeview Drive Bernardsville, NJ 07924.
<b>Secretary:</b>	Ken Olander	- Contact Ken at <a href="mailto:bowhunter444@verizon.net">bowhunter444@verizon.net</a> or by phone at 732.202.0677
<b>Newsletter:</b>	Dan Boehmke	- Contact Dan at <a href="mailto:danno@earthling.net">danno@earthling.net</a> or by phone at 973.627.1318

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Great Swamp Bonsai Society  
c/o John Michalski  
Mount Kemble Ave  
Morristown, NJ

