



Great Swamp Bonsai Society

Next meeting: **TUESDAY, May 14th – 6:30 – 9:30 PM**

Phoenix Grafting & Approach Grafting

May 2019 Newsletter

This Month's Meeting: Tuesday, May 14th, 6:30–9:30 pm – Phoenix Grafting and Approach Grafting

Have you ever had a tree that had all the right stuff, with the exception of a bare spot along the trunk that really needed a branch? One way to remedy this situation is to use an **Approach Graft**, which is a way to attach a shoot from one tree onto the trunk (or large branch) of another tree of the same species. (This can also be done using a long shoot from the same tree on which you wish to attach the additional branch.)

Club President John Michalski will demonstrate this technique on one of the Eastern Red Cedars he's been collecting along the railroad tracks (for an update on the railroad story, go to page 13).



This Month's Meeting (continued)

On another front, the **Phoenix Graft** is a technique by which one or more young, flexible saplings are attached and encouraged to grow along the outside of an attractive piece of deadwood. When successful, the young plant eventually bonds to the deadwood, providing the appearance of a massive dead trunk with narrow veins of living tissue winding over and around it.

The photo below, of club member **Bill Muldowney's Shimpaku Juniper** (which was shown at this year's MABS Spring Festival), provides an excellent example of this technique applied very successfully.



Looking Back: April workshop and presentation with Guest Artist Marc Noelanders

In April, our club hosted a bring-your-own workshop with **guest artist Marc Noelanders** (president of the European Bonsai Association and Director of the WBFF for Europe), fresh from his appearance at this year's **MABS Spring Festival**. As we have done on previous occasions, for this event we joined forces with the **Deep Cut Bonsai Society** based in south Jersey. In all, there were 10 paying participants and a handful of observers, who enjoyed 4 hours with Marc before breaking for dinner at Arthur's Tavern in Morris Plains. Due to the number of participants, Marc chose to begin the workshop by bringing each tree to the front of the classroom for a discussion of its various design possibilities, before setting us off to work, after which he circulated to make sure that each of us had sufficient time with him one-on-one. For the evening presentation, Marc styled an **Engelmann Spruce** selected at MABS, creating the initial design for a lovely informal upright bonsai, which was raffled off at the conclusion of the demonstration. It was a great day and we look forward to more joint meetings with our friends at Deep Cut!

Some photos of the paid workshop are shared below and on the following pages.







Before (above) and after (below).





Before (above) and after (below).





Before (above) and after (below).





Marc is a multi-talented creative artist, and is well-known for his sketches of projected bonsai design.

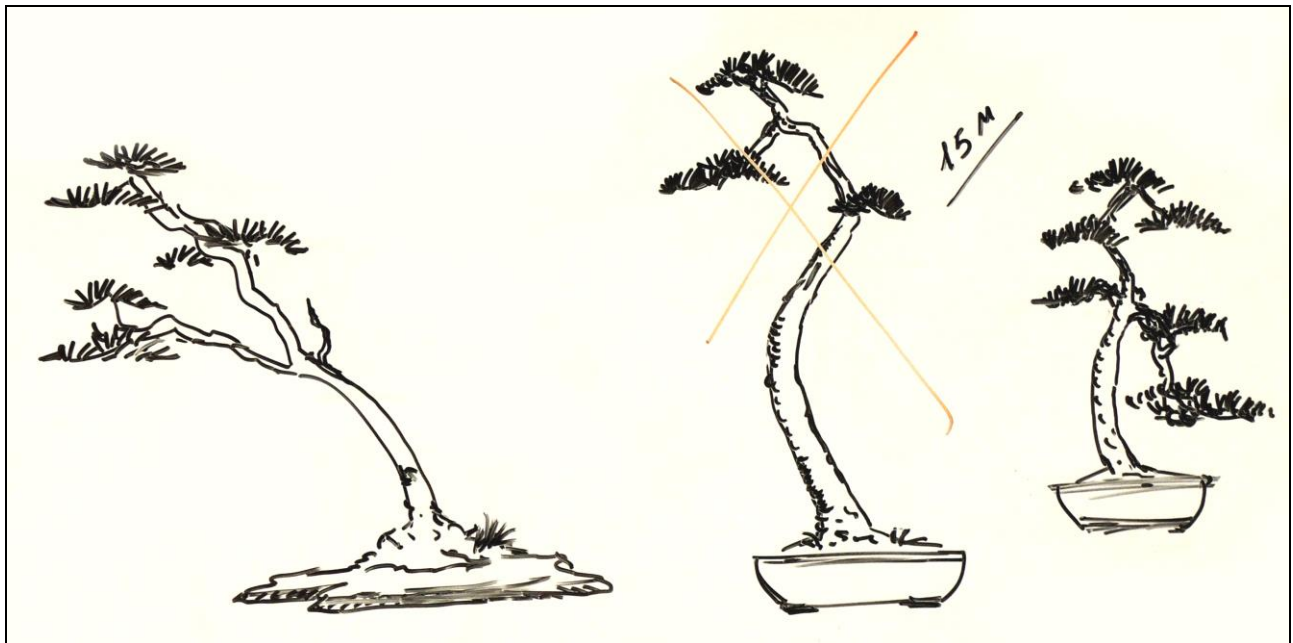


Photos from Marc's evening presentation/demo:





Marc began by sketching a variety of design possibilities for this tree.







We will have “Open House” signs available at the May meeting!

Please be prepared to **take one or more** street signs for our upcoming Bonsai Open House. **Help yourself to as many as you think you can use**—ask your local garden center, flower shop, friendly businesses, neighbors, public libraries, etc. if they will put one in front of their property. Please put your signs up right away, as our Open House is only two weeks after our May meeting. And **please plan on returning the signs to our club President after the show**—we hope to use them for as many years as they hold up!



Update on those Railroad Junipers!

Last fall I reported that my favorite spot for collecting what I call “railroad Junipers” had been sprayed with herbicide since I last collected trees in the spring. Well, most of the trees are dead for sure, but a handful of hearty stalwarts have begun pushing new growth from whatever parts the spray gun missed. I’ve pruned back the dead stuff, and we’ll see what happens!



Bonsai Tip from your Editor #1: Some techniques work better in some climates than others!

At a workshop last fall, I was directed by our visiting artist to trim down all the needles on my Japanese Black Pine—something I had been warned against by other bonsai growers in our area. The guest artist, however, was adamant that “we do this all the time in Japan,” and (I thought to myself), who was I to question the horticultural practices of a bonsai master?

However—as several other participants in the workshop suggested at the time—one thing that our visiting artists might fail to take into account is the differences (sometimes considerable) in the climate between Northern New Jersey and Central Japan. I dutifully clipped down all the needles as directed, but as the winter receded and spring commenced, the consequences were obvious, and not at all desirable (see photo below).

The lesson learned: accept all advice from the experts, but temper it with consideration for variations in growing conditions. Many of our visiting experts hail from regions with much milder winter weather, and many of these people have a support staff to adjust the care of each and every tree as needed. A word to the wise!



Bonsai Tip from your Editor #2: When is it safe to remove your hardy trees from winter protection?

This is a perennial question (literally!) that keeps many of us worrying about the risk of a late frost damaging our trees. The seasons, as we all know by now, are no longer as predictable as they once were, and relying on past schedules may leave you with dead buds if we get a late freeze in the middle of the night.

I have taken to keeping an eye on the **Magnolia blossoms** as they grow and open each spring. Their pale pink petals are highly susceptible to frost, which quickly turns them a muddy chocolate brown, and causing them to drop to the ground in a viscous, soggy mess.

In my experience, if the Magnolias successfully bloom and the petals drop without browning off, the chances are very good that the frost season has really and truly left us until the fall. Good luck!



Bonsai Tip from your Editor #3: Collecting Wild Trees – mark those flowering trees so you can find them next April!

It's getting late for collecting certain wild trees without risking die-off. Many deciduous trees are best collected just before bud break, which usually means late March and most of April. By the time you read this newsletter, many desirable plants are in full leaf and collecting them from the wild (which usually requires significant root pruning) may jeopardize their health.

When it comes to flowering trees like apples and bush honeysuckles, I like to keep my eyes peeled at this time of year for individual plants with noteworthy flowering characteristics. As one example, most of the bush honeysuckles (*Lonicera morrowii*) growing wild in Morris County, NJ bear small blossoms of creamy white that turn brassy yellow over succeeding days. Only a very small minority of them bloom in pink or pinkish-purple. At this time of year you can see the difference, but the rest of the year the plants all look pretty much the same. But collecting them during the flowering season is risky.

My solution is to tie brilliant plastic tree-marking tape near the base of the more desirable plants, so that I can find them next spring, when the season is more appropriate for collection. If placed properly the tape is unnoticeable to the general public but you'll spot it because you have a sense of its general vicinity.



Plant Care Tips for May

By May most deciduous trees have come into leaf and new candles on pines have sprouted. Watering should now routinely be done once a day. Cuttings of evergreens may still be taken. Air-layering of deciduous and evergreens can be continued. Pinch back long shoots of deciduous trees as sudden frosts can damage the young leaves.

[DY]

You can still repot or dig trees in May if you're careful. Begin your feeding, pinching, pruning schedules in earnest. Species like Japanese Maples require constant bud-pinching to maintain short internodes (pluck out the tiny "praying hands" of the upcoming bud before it begins lengthening), but some species like Amur Maples require new shoots to harden off before you clip them back to the first pair of leaves, otherwise you risk branch die-off. Beeches should be clipped or pinched back as soon as buds begin lengthening, leaving only the first two leaves per shoot. Remember that Spruces should not be wired or bent until the end of August or beginning of September, otherwise branches may fail and die back.

It's growing season, folks! Oddly, in many ways this is easier than the worrying months of winter. [JM]

Save and Bring In 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.



Calendar of Events for 2018-2019

May 14th: Phoenix/Approach Graft Workshop/Repotting Workshop.

Learn how to graft live “whips” onto dramatic deadwood, to create stunning bonsai material. (Repotting Workshop may be moved to March depending on local conditions (that is, temperature!)—stay tuned.)

June 2nd (first Sunday): Annual GSBS Bonsai Open House. Club members please arrive by 9:00 AM to help set up. Open to the general public from 10:00-4:00.

Dues are Always Welcome!

Dues are normally collected at the September meeting. If you have not yet paid up, please bring cash or check to **club treasurer Rick Myers**, or mail it to his address on the last page of this newsletter. Annual membership remains at \$40 for individual, \$50 family membership, and helps support club activities such as hosting touring experts.

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

Novices and non-members always welcome!

Come and plan to get your hands dirty!

GSBS Contact Information:

President: John Michalski

huonia@aol.com

Phone: 973-829-0094
223 Mt. Kemble Avenue
Morristown, NJ 07960

Past President: Diego E Pablos

neyamadoribonsai@gmail.com

Phone: 973.224.8139

Vice President: **Position Open**

Secretary: Mark Schmuck lofty235@verizon.net

Treasurer: Rick Myers spruce80@verizon.net

80 Kenvil Ave
Succasunna N J
07876

Newsletter: John Michalski 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:
