



Great Swamp Bonsai Society

Next meeting: **SUNDAY, June 13th**

Noon - 4:00 PM – Guest Artist Sergio Cuan!

May 2021 Newsletter

JUNE Meeting! **SUNDAY, June 13th**, from noon to 4:00 PM

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

The **June** meeting will be hosted (outdoors) by **Mark Sanders** at his home in **Randolph, NJ** (details and directions as the date approaches). We are very excited to be hosting **guest artist Sergio Cuan**, who will be providing advice, suggestions, and critiques of the tree(s) you bring to the meeting! Sergio is often described as a specialist in **deciduous bonsai**, but you can learn more about Sergio via <https://www.m5bonsaiworks.com>. (He is also all over the internet, but today's technology doesn't let me put the links into the "old form" for this PDF newsletter—sorry!)



This is a rare opportunity to get feedback and design ideas from a professional of some renown, and all development levels of bonsai (and their creators) are encouraged.

Consider bringing a folding chair if you wish to sit, and feel free to bring snacks or beverages if you so desire. If you have skipped a few meetings since the pandemic, this is one you don't want to miss!

May Meeting

Our **May meeting** was hosted at the home of **Mark and Sheila Schmuck** of Rockaway, NJ, on Saturday May 15th. Once again the weather was sensational, the trees were great, and the food and the company were delightful. If you've been keeping away due to concerns over the pandemic, we hope to see you soon!

Like most of our recent outdoor meetings, most of the time was spent hobnobbing and admiring the various bonsai brought to the meeting, in addition to marveling at Mark and Sheila's exquisite garden. Mark and Sheila have done a lot of "thinning" of the herbaceous ranks this spring, and had many plants to give away—hostas, ferns, you name it—and most of them found eager and grateful new owners.

In between all the socializing, club member **Fred Aufschläger** demonstrated the technique of **grafting** young shoots to older branches—this time on a collected Eastern Redcedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) from John Michalski's collection, that has simply refused to "back-bud" and needs this technique in order to produce more foliage closer to the main trunk. We grafted three different branches, and I will keep you updated as things (hopefully) progress.

It was another wonderful meeting. Thanks again, Mark and Sheila!



Left to right: Craig Reimann, Joan Cho, Mark Sanders, Bob Iglesias, Elliot Macdougall, Izzy Gurler, John Michalski, Rick Myers, Diego & Derek Pablos, Chris Kazanecki, Fred Aufschläger, Mark Schmuck, Timothy Kuhlman, Sheila Schmuck w/Dachshund Jill.

Photos from May Meeting



Fred's Grafting Procedure



The juniper in need of closer foliage pads.



Fred selects active growing tips for his scions.



The scions have been selected and cut.



Fred trims the base of each scion with a clean diagonal cut.



The branch to receive the scion gets cut.



The scion is inserted so that the cambium lines up.



Plastic is wrapped tightly around the base of the scion, and then around the entire grafted foliage pad.



The juniper with three new grafts. Now we wait and hope!

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

As for my own bonsai collection, I've been bud-pinching the **bush honeysuckles** for weeks already, and am certainly on at least the fifth or sixth pinching session by now—I nip out the newest pair of leaves as soon as they are big enough for my pudgy fingers to pick them off. My **spruce, yew, and hemlock** have all extended their first set of spring buds (a few weeks back, actually), which I pinched back to half or less of their initial length. And my **beech** bonsai had their buds nipped back leaving only the first two leaves, as soon as the buds extended enough for me to separate one baby leaf from the next.

This week, I am about to go into Round Two of leaf-pruning my **plum** and **Amur maple** bonsai, which I do after the new shoots have lengthened and the leaves hardened off somewhat. In my experience, bud-pinching these species (as we do successfully with Japanese maples) results in weakened branches that sometimes die back altogether, so I always let them extend and enjoy themselves for a couple of weeks before cutting back to the first or second set of leaves on each green stem. [JM]

Repeat – fertilizers, soil mixes, repotting: Ask 20 bonsai practitioners about any of these topics 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 bit over the past 30 years—frankly, mainly in the direction of pre-packaged 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]

Repeat: Professional-grade bonsai mix available to order

Club member **Fred Aufschläger** is offering the following deals on his own, hand-crafted, professional-grade soil mixes. Depending on demand, he may have to order supplies from California, but 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 at 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. Thanks!

Repeat: 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 back on track--Hooray! But keep those suggestions coming—we are cheerfully open to any and all topic ideas!

WATCH YOUR EMAIL FOR UPDATES.

June 13th (SUNDAY): (noon-4:00 PM). To be hosted at the home of **Mark Sanders in Randolph, NJ**. Topic: Special Guest Artist **Sergio Cuan!** Bring tree(s) for advice, suggestions, and/or critique. All welcome!

August (date TBD): club picnic, to be hosted at the home of club member **Doug Siedenbug**. Details to follow.

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Treasurer: Rick Myers spruce80@verizon.net
80 Kenvil Ave
Succasunna N J
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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

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:
