



# GREAT SWAMP BONSAI SOCIETY

Summer, 2008 Newsletter

Picnic: August 10 - Next Regular Meeting: September 9  
Frelinghuysen Arboretum, E. Hanover Ave, Morristown, NJ

## June Highlights:

June's meeting was supplanted by our Annual Open House, held on June 7 in the Auditorium of the Haggerty Education Center at the Arboretum. The affair was well attended by both the public and the membership. Per usual, Jim Gillespie from Danielsville, PA (Sho-Fu-En Bonsai) was on hand with a good array of Bonsai paraphernalia; ranging from books, to tools, soil and workstands. Thanks, Jim, for the opportunity to part with some of our discretionary cash. :)

All in all the show was successful and we were pleased to see so many new faces signing up for the newsletter. Perhaps one or more of these folk will choose to join us at our regular meetings.

Below are some photos contributed to the newsletter by members Diego Pablos and Robert Lin. Thanks so much guys for the great shots and for covering your editor's blunder in leaving his camera at home...

This year's People's Choice award is shared by Mark Schmuck for his Potentilla and Dan Boehmke for his Shimpaku, both of which are shown in the photos below. Note the progress of John Michalski's Taxus; labeled 2007 & 2008.



## Presidential Corner:



Hello again everyone,

Thanks to everyone who attended, helped set up, and/or showed trees at this year's Great Swamp Bonsai Society Annual Open House (or GSBSAOH if you prefer). We had a pretty good crowd – I estimated about 100 to 150 people throughout the day, perhaps less, but we've done worse – and I've received several emails from visitors who have congratulated us on what they thought was an excellent, entertaining, and informative show. So, I pass those congratulations onto you all.

I'm taking this space to emphasize how very important **education** is toward our goal of learning and growing as bonsai artists. And by this I mean **educating others** in any way that you can at your own level of expertise. Maybe it's my profession as a classroom teacher, but it occurs to me that not everyone appreciates the return you get when you take what you know, to help someone else step up to the plate. It is certainly true that teaching something is one of the best ways to learn about it.

And I've found, over my 15 years of teaching experience, that even though I earned my Bachelor's degree in Biology and my Master's in Education, I learned or magnified almost every technique and content area I've taught in the classroom, by the process of developing the lessons by which I teach them to others. I knew all about photosynthesis, for example, before I had to teach it, but the necessity of finding a way to put it in plain language forced me to clarify my understanding and strengthen my expository skills. And when I've lived among "less civilized" people in places like New Guinea, I found that the experience of answering their questions about our society really forced me to re-analyze what I think or believe about things. Teaching makes you think about things in new ways, and that's just as true for Bonsai as it is with anything else.

So I want to congratulate and encourage the new burst of activity I've seen lately among other members of our club: Juan Calderon and Fred Aufschlager took a day to show Phil Shimko the ropes of preparing nursery plants for club demos. Juan and Diego helped Ed Ullrich exhume some massive landscape shrubs for his burgeoning collection, and in the process showed him what it takes to get 'em home safe and sound. And this week Juan and I will be showing a few club members around Maine to teach them how to find and collect wild trees in a horticulturally sensible and ecologically sensitive manner.

Even if you consider yourself very new to bonsai, don't discount the possibility that you and one or two other newbies might organize a beginner's study group, where you can all bring your problem trees or new babies, for feedback and discussion around the table.

It's a wonderful time that we're entering for the Great Swamp Bonsai Society – and I for one am gratified to see so much activity peeking through wherever I look. Keep it up, we all can benefit from giving our experience a workout!

John

6/25/2008 addendum:

p.s. Just got back from the club trip to Maine, with me, Juan, Ed Ullrich and Kerry Heck. Look for some photos and some stories over the summer!

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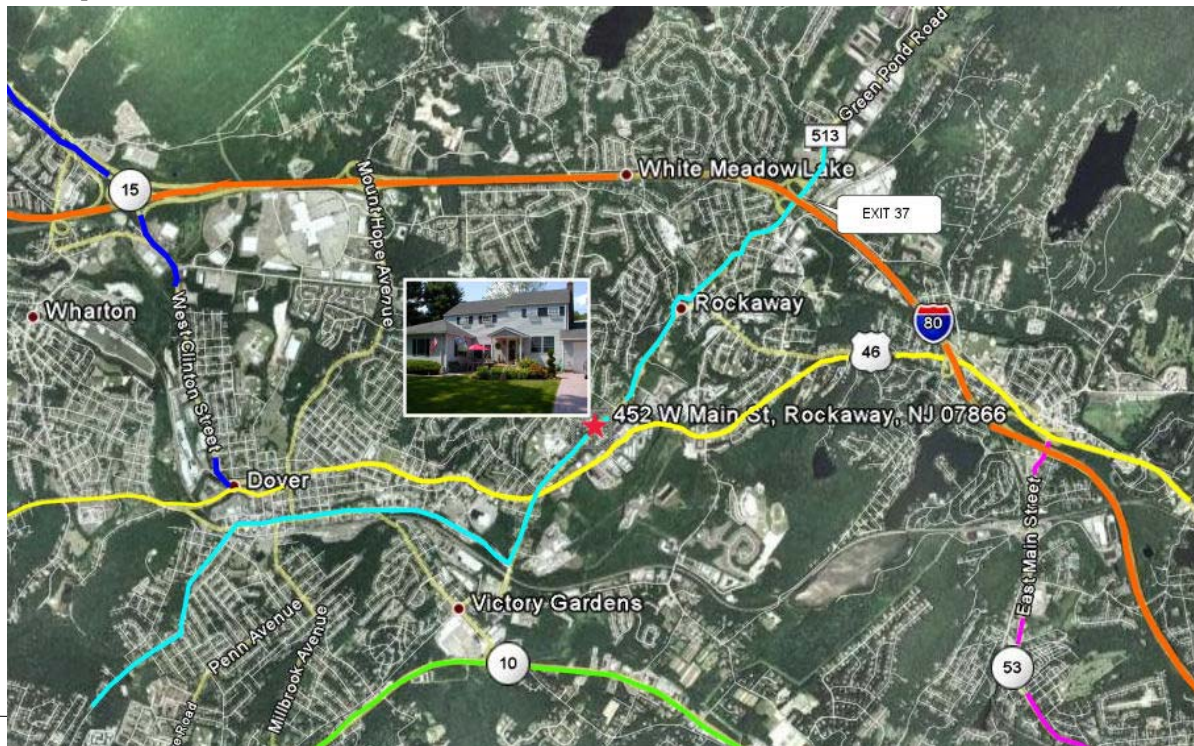
## Upcoming Events:

**August 17** Annual Picnic hosted this year by Dan Boehmke. 452 West Main St, Rockaway. Please contact Dan at 973.627.1318 or e-mail to [danno@earthling.net](mailto:danno@earthling.net) so that we can coordinate the goodies and get an approximate head count. As usual, Burgers, Dogs, Rolls, Condiments and Soft Drinks will be provided. This is a Sunday. A short map is provided on the next page. There will be a flier sent out before the event with a more detailed map, but this one will give you an idea...

**Note:** Due to a schedule conflict, this is a date change from the initially announced date of 8/10.

**September 9** Next regular meeting at the arboretum. Program to be announced...

## Brief Map for Picnic:



## July/August Plant Care Tips:

### For July:

Water, Water, Water. Just don't over-do it. We're into the hot part of the year now and your plants will be getting quite thirsty as the days heat up. With all the rain we've had, just don't let them get too saturated, if it keeps up.

Vigorous growth has slowed but a second surge can be expected. Be sure to keep your watering can handy as pots heat up and dry out quickly.

Wounds tend to heal quickly in the warm weather. It's a good time to prune your pines, but beware of over-pruning deciduous material at this time. It's difficult to see structure through the leaves and you may be making a mistake. Shari can be created now.

Your Junipers are really active and so should you be with pinching back. You can leaf-prune deciduous material up to mid July. Wiring can be done with abandon., especially conifers.

Continue feeding as in June. Give High Potassium to flowering species.

### For August:

Water, water, water, just like July. Maybe, more-so if weather is typical.

Older foliage will begin to look tired, but many trees are still growing. Next year's leaf and flower are already beginning to set.

As with July, wounds will heal quickly but generally best by mid month. Heavy pruning may result in new growth that won't necessarily harden in time for winter. Keep up your Jin and Shari creations.

Trimming should slow considerably except for Junipers which will continue their growth. Stop leaf pruning of deciduous this month.

Wiring of deciduous = Not now, but conifers = Yes, especially Junipers.

Reduce your nitrogen feeding this month, and eliminate it altogether by month's end.

Remove Weeds and "random" shoots. Maintain vigilant pest control. Remove old needles from pine shoots that are ready to wire. Stop air-layering by the end of the first week of the month. Too late for defoliation or heavy pruning now since new growth won't harden off by winter.

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

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