



Great Swamp Bonsai Society

Next meeting: **TUESDAY**, **September 10th**
6:30– 9:30 PM

Wiring & Styling Workshop

September 2019 Newsletter

September Meeting: **TUESDAY**, September 10th – **Sprucing Up!**

Our next meeting will be held in the downstairs classroom of the Haggerty Education Center of the Frelinghuysen Arboretum (our usual meeting space), from 6:30 to 9:30 PM.

This is the correct time of year for **wiring and styling** Spruce bonsai, so if you have a spruce that you started in a previous workshop (or indeed any spruce bonsai at all), bring it along for the next stage in its bonsai development.

Feel free to bring bonsai of any species or variety to this workshop as well.

This will be a great opportunity for newcomers to get their hands dirty, working beside (and assisted by) some of our more experienced club members. Learn some new skills and practice your old ones!

We will have several Dwarf Alberta Spruce and Japanese Garden Junipers available for purchase (at cost, usually between \$20-40), if you would like something new to work on.

We will also be happy to entertain any **“Show and Tell”** projects/bonsai you’d like to bring in and share with the group.



August Meeting: Annual Club Picnic

From club member Mark Schmuck:

“The Great Swamp Club picnic was held on Saturday, August 10th, at the home of Karen and Doug Siedenburg in Port Murray NJ. The weather was spectacular and we had a good turnout of members. Doug and Karen’s home is like a museum, nature preserve, and antique center—the whole afternoon was a nice feast for the eyes. Plenty to look at, and the bonsai were superb. Doug was always on hand to describe and explain—special thanks go to Rick and Leslie Myers for buying the club food, and also to Juan Calderon, chef extraordinaire, who manned the grill for the day.

Thanks to everyone who attended, and made the picnic another success!”

And from club member Mark Sanders:

“It was an incredible day. Doug’s yard, plants and setup is almost indescribable ... with half-finished plants and projects hidden at every turn ... more than even two people working full time to take care of plus fish tanks, turtle tanks, koi pond, dogs.

We all had an amazing time. He and his wife were fantastic hosts.”



Host Doug Siedenburg (left) and Peter Michienzi (right) in solemn conclave.
(photo by Mark Sanders)

August Meeting: Annual Club Picnic (cont'd)



(photos by Mark Sanders)



August Meeting: Annual Club Picnic (cont'd)



(photos by Mark Sanders)



Some of the bonsai material that has “gotten away” from Doug’s repotting schedule.

August Meeting: Annual Club Picnic (cont'd)



(photos by Mark Schmuck)



August Meeting: Annual Club Picnic (cont'd)



(photos by Mark Schmuck)



A “Bonsai Miracle?”

If you’ve been around this club for a year or more, you may be familiar with my history of “bonsai catastrophes” that seem to strike my collection every other year. One year it was a population explosion of voles that gnawed the bark off half my collection as it lay protected from the winter weather in a cold frame. Another year it was the inadvertent cutoff of my automatic watering system while I was away during the hottest, driest August in recent years. Only recently I’ve identified the fact that my favorite bonsai have been systematically dying off, one at a time, because I was leaving them where I could “keep an eye on them” during the unpredictable winter months, thus exposing them to the worst of our temperature fluctuations.

Well, perhaps I’ve been overdue for something a bit more upbeat, because when my wife and I returned home from a week in the Caribbean this month, we found that a massive locust tree had fallen, crushing both of our cars and tearing the electrical hardware clean off the side of the house! What a welcome home *that* was!

But amazingly, the massive trunk—which was torn from its base by high winds and dropped squarely on our automobiles—somehow leapt over my new (and expensive) deer fence, past two rows of bonsai benches, and landed without touching a single tree in my collection. (I admit the cars and the house were plenty enough to deal with, but in this life we sometimes take our successes where we can get them.)



Topics for Upcoming GSBS Calendar of Events

Your club officers will be meeting soon to draw up our list of topics for the coming fall, winter, and spring. We have provided the meeting dates on [page 11](#) so that you can put them on your calendar, but you will see that most of our topics remain “to be determined.” (Please note that topics may be substituted, with advance notice, depending on member interest.)

Please contact any of us (contact info on [page 12](#) of this newsletter) with your ideas and suggestions. The Great Swamp Bonsai Society exists for your benefit, so if there are topics you would like us to address (presentations or hands-on workshops so that you can learn the techniques and get some experience and assistance), please let us know ASAP so we can put them on the calendar.

Dues are Due in September

Dues are normally collected at the September meeting. 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.

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.



Bonsai Tip from your Editor: Start Planning for the Winter!

The seasons are becoming less and less predictable as the years go by. No doubt about it—my daffodils are regularly trying to bloom in late February, and that’s not how I remember it from my youth. At the other end of the spring season, for the past several years we seem always to get a bitter cold snap just as my hydrangeas are ready to break bud, killing all of last year’s stems and forcing my plants into yet another year of “foliage only.” What to do?

For one thing, I’ve noticed that any hardy bonsai I leave fully exposed (something I felt secure doing with my toughest trees only a few years ago) tend to weaken and finally die after a year or two of such conditions. Best to give all your hardy bonsai the same level of protection, and that should be from sun, wind, and abrupt changes in temperature. (We will address winter care in much more detail in November, but for now, start planning where in your yard or home you will stash your plants, so that it’s not a “mad scramble” the first night the forecast calls for frost.) Clear that space out NOW, and make sure it offers the protection your plants will require. More on this in upcoming newsletters.

Other things to plan for include things like soil mixes and pots that you might need in the spring; any special supplies like fertilizers, insecticides, wire, etc. that you will need when the new growing season commences; and just maybe some changes to your growing and staging areas, if you are lucky enough to have some space in the yard or patio.

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

Novices and non-members always welcome!

Come and plan to get your hands dirty!

Plant Care Tips for September

It is about time to begin hardening-off your trees for the cold months ahead, and preparing a safe place to keep them. For the most part you should not attempt collecting, repotting, air-layering or drastic pruning at this time of year.

Feeding: Please note that fertilization must be handled with sensitivity, or else you risk pushing too much new growth that will not harden-off sufficiently before the cold weather sets in. Following the needs of outdoor plantings, it can be said that deciduous trees may benefit from a low-nitrogen (that is, higher in potassium and phosphorous) feeding **after the leaves have fallen but prior to November 1**; this can promote bud formation and strengthen the trunk and root system for winter. Similarly, evergreens may be fed a low-nitrogen fertilizer, until the end of October. Most reference books refer to a single Autumn feeding.

Repotting and Training: Japanese texts recommend autumn repotting for most evergreens, but they also cite early spring for each of these—considering the difference in climate, I'd stick with early spring. Cherry and flowering quince are repotted by the Japanese in October. Many needled evergreens are most successfully wire-trained during the autumn months, but most sources say wait until October or November.

Winter protection: Start planning how and where you will store your trees for the winter. In a “normal” year—and when was the last time we had one of those?—most of our outdoor bonsai can stay virtually unprotected beyond Thanksgiving, but this holiday is commonly used as a start date for winter protection. If you have only a few trees, it may be possible to plant them directly into the ground, pot and all (glazed containers must be removed or else they will “spall”), but for larger collections it may prove useful to build some sort of cold-frame or organize some space in an unheated shed or some-such. You will not need these precautions for a few months yet, but it pays to plan ahead! [JM]

Watering continues to be the most important task during this month. Reduce feeding slightly at this point, and use low-nitrogen or nitrogen-free fertilizer. September is a good month to take hardwood cuttings. This is the last opportunity to pot up air layerings as they may not be able to root sufficiently to withstand the winter [if you wait longer]. Also remove wires from branches that have set properly and be aware of thickening branches and trunks on wired pines. [DY]

Calendar of Events for 2019-2020

As you can see, we have yet to draw up most of our topics for the coming fall, winter, and spring. Please email any of our club officers with suggestions—we want to plan meetings that will benefit you and cater to your interests!

September 10th (Tuesday, 6:30-9:30 PM). ***Wiring and styling workshop on Spruce and other bonsai.*** (Trees, if needed, provided at cost.)

October 8th (Tuesday, 6:30-9:30 PM). ***Forest Plantings.***

November 12th (Tuesday, 6:30-9:30 PM). ***Topic to be determined—winter protection will also be addressed.***

**** No meeting in December***

January 14th (Tuesday, 6:30-9:30 PM). ***Late-Holiday Party and Club Bonsai Auction.***

**** No meeting in February***

March 10th (Tuesday, 6:30-9:30 PM). ***Topic to be determined.***

April 21st (Tuesday) **Workshop with guest artist from MABS, evening presentation with same. Details as we get them!**

May 12th (Tuesday, 6:30-9:30 PM). ***Topic to be determined.***

May 31st (**SUNDAY**, 9:00 AM – 4:30 PM). ***ANNUAL BONSAI OPEN HOUSE.***

**** No meeting in June***

July 14th (Tuesday, 6:30-9:30 PM). ***Topic to be determined.***

GSBS Contact Information:

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Past President: Diego E Pablos
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Secretary: Mark Schmuck lofty235@verizon.net

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

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:
