



GREAT SWAMP BONSAI SOCIETY

October, 2006 Newsletter

Next Meeting: 7:00 pm on Tuesday, October 10

Featuring: Club Auction &

"Overwintering Your Bonsai" - J. Michalski

September Meeting Highlights:

Our September meeting featured a lecture by Martin Schmalenberg. Marty's lecture was derived from his presentation at this summer's ABS conference in Saratoga, NY, and the ensuing discussions focused on developing a "Bonsai Eye". The lecture raised as many questions as there were answers. While this may seem a bit confusing, it allowed members to begin thinking of their trees with the following questions...

Are WE creating, or are we letting the tree decide it's fate? Should we seek the front or the back of the tree first? Are the "rules" inviolate, or are they the basis upon which we, as individual stylists, must build? How does the tree "read"? Left to right or right to left? These are just some of the concepts to be considered when viewing and developing a bonsai. Many factors come into play in the design including the proper use and proportion of "white space", those empty areas between tree and pot and between branches that contribute to the overall appearance of the tree.

A tree must be in balance and will often tell a story just by its design and condition. Is deadwood in proportion to the overall design and to what you wish to convey about the perceived age of the tree? Does the nebari speak to you about the age of the tree? Is the tree balanced and in proportion though 360 degrees and when viewed from above?

Several techniques for improving design were discussed at length but this communication can not substitute for any of the many fine publications that are available to us that explain these techniques in great detail. Marty added his own experiences to those of the textbooks and suggested starting points upon which we can build.

We seek a unity to our designs that can only come with practice and experience. A "serious" tree should evoke a serious emotional response when viewed. On the other hand, a whimsical tree should elicit a smile. Your "bonsai eye" will tell you when your tree has been developed with this sense of unity, and if it has been, then you have achieved your goal.

Several members brought trees for discussion and display. Here are some of them and some pictures of the meeting in general. The larger picture is of a club tree that has been tended by the very capable hands of Peter Michienzi. Great job, Pete. We look forward to the final product...



September Meeting, Continued:

By unanimous decision and with gracious acceptances, our officers have agreed to continue in their current roles for the next year. Let's congratulate President Mark Schmuck; Vice President Michael Markoff; Treasurer Fred Aufschläger and Secretary Ken Olander on their appointments. Let us also offer our assistance to them wherever needed to insure that the coming year is a successful one for Great Swamp.

Bergen Bonsai Bus Tour:

In the last several newsletters we mentioned a bus trip sponsored by the Bergen Bonsai Society and organized by George LeBolt. That trip went off on schedule on September 16 & 17 with the weather cooperating. Mark and I attended (with our wives) as representatives of Great Swamp. I must say that the trip was very well organized and worth the reasonable cost. Here is a summary of the trip and some photos and impressions of the stops...

The bus left Closter, NJ on time and we headed into Connecticut to our first stop at the home of Todd Hansen. Todd showed us his collection (including some Nick Lenz originals) and his gardens, after which he gave a lecture on bonsai design concepts. Many of you will remember Todd from MidAtlantic. He's a member of the Greater Hartford Bonsai Society.

Can anyone spot a Nick Lenz creation?



The next stop was at Bonsai West in Littleton, MA where we were treated to a lecture-demo by the owner, Michael Levin, and were able to purchase material and supplies at significant discount. Here are some shots taken there. This is the "home base" of Colin Lewis who has been a guest lecturer at Great Swamp on several occasions and we were able to view some of his 'in-works' trees.



After this we went to Milford, MA for Chinese Buffet and overnight lodgings at LaQuinta...

Bergen Tour, Cont'd...

On Sunday, we went to New England Bonsai Gardens in Bellingham, MA where a demonstration was presented by a visiting Japanese master. (Kenji was not available). Here, again, we were offered significant discounts on trees, pots and supplies. The selections here were outstanding. Unfortunately, not many pictures were taken at this location. We were too busy drooling over the material...



After lunch, we went to the Arnold Arboretum in Boston, part of Harvard University and the oldest established arboretum in the country. Here, we were invited in to view their Bonsai collection “up close and personal”. This collection is not open to the general public so we were honored to have been given this opportunity. Several trees in the collection date back to the mid to late 1700s. Amazing trees... Here are but a few of them:



After the Arnold Arboretum it was time to head back to NJ with a stop for dinner in Connecticut. We arrived back in Closter at around 10:00 PM.

This trip was definitely a good experience and a wonderful opportunity to see collections of trees both in private and public gardens. The discounts offered by both Bonsai West and New England Bonsai Gardens on trees, supplies and pots were substantial and I don't believe that anyone went home empty handed. Our hats go off to George LeBolt, his wife Judy, and to Bergen Bonsai Society for being gracious hosts and for planning such a good trip. We thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

October Meeting:

Our October meeting will feature our Annual Club Auction and there will be a presentation on Over-wintering Your Bonsai by John Michalski. John will present a video in addition to a lecture on the subject. Now is a good time to think about preparing your trees for the coming winter. Many of us who own tropicals have already sequestered them in preparation for the coming colder nights. In fact, there have been a few nights recently where the temperature dipped into the lower 40s. Can "real" winter be far behind???

Members are encouraged to bring all things bonsai to the meeting for the auction. I'm confident that there are those of you out there who have items that you no longer either use, want or cherish that you can contribute to the auction. Donations of material will be accepted, or you can work out a split with the club that is beneficial to all parties.

We hope to see you all at the meeting.

Presidential Corner:



Mark Schmuck

Hi Everybody !

Cool weather is just around the corner, bring those tropicals back indoors. As for the hardier trees, another month to go. Looking forward to John Michalski's lecture on overwintering.

AUCTION ! AUCTION ! AUCTION !

This is a big fundraiser for the club, so bring in those items, and some bucks !

The David Easterbrook workshop: Think about taking a tuesday afternoon off from work, (you owe it to yourself) The workshop goes along with the evening lecture-demo. Your participation helps the club offset the cost, not to mention an opportunity to have your tree or trees, helped along on the path to specimen bonsai, by an expert in the art..

What a great time was had on the Bergen Bonsai New England Tour. Todd Hansons place was beautifully done, as was his lecture. The Bonsai nurseries were first rate, likewise the food and accomodations. Thank's to George and Judy, and the gang from Bergen for being gracious hosts.

Upcoming Event Calendar:

November 14 David Easterbrook. Afternoon workshop, 12:30-5:30 bring your own tree. The club will have trees available also. Evening lecture-demo at the meeting 7:00- 10:00pm. Mr. Easterbrook is the curator of the Montreal Botanical Garden Bonsai Collection, maintains an extensive collection of his own, and travels to promote bonsai knowledge.

Decembar 12 Annual Holiday Party

Future Reference Midlantic Bonsai Societies Festival APRIL 20-21-22
Guest Artists: Robert Steven - from Jakarta, Indonesia
Guy Guidry - from Louisiana, U.S.A.
Ted Matson - from California, U.S.A.

October Plant Care Tips.

Now is the time to sit back and enjoy the changing seasons. Your deciduous material should begin to turn into those beautiful colors of Autumn. Gold, Yellow, Orange and Red should grace your display tables and benches this month. You've earned this respite from the tasks of summer.

Remove any wiring that appears to be digging into your branches. Do this carefully by snipping the wire with an appropriate cutting tool. Be careful not to damage the branches in the process. It's probably not a good idea to attempt re-wiring at this time. Especially if bending of branches would result. Better to wait until spring.

Water only when necessary this month. But be careful to determine the need. Pots can still dry out over the next few months during those occasional warm sunny days. Don't let the morning dew fool you. It can make it look as though the soil is moist. Run your finger into the pot to see if your first impression is good or not. You can also tell by how heavy the pot is...

Remain diligent about removal of debris from the surfaces of your pots. You need to maintain proper hygiene for your trees. Even though the weather is turning cooler, that leaf litter can still harbor disease that will be difficult to control in the next growing season if it gets a good start now.

Spray trees with an insecticide and fungicide to kill those over-wintering pests and fungus spores.

Keep an eye out for plants to dig up for next year's training. You can take hardwood cuttings and plant hard-shelled collected seeds outdoors. Begin to plan your winter protection....

No more fertilization until next year. If you haven't done so by now, it's probably too late. Resist the urge to feed things until next March.

October is a good time to prune heavy branches on pines, since the sap is no longer freely flowing. Pines that have been pruned in Autumn should be over-wintered in a cool greenhouse or unheated space, protected from the rigors of 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

A Note about Dues and Membership:

Your dues help your club to function during the year and pay for special events and guest lecturers. The club can not continue to exist without your attendance and financial as well as moral support. We ask that you come prepared to "ante up" at the September meeting, or as soon thereafter as you can. Our annual dues continue to be a very reasonable \$30.00 for individual membership and \$40.00 for family.

Please do your part to help the Great Swamp Bonsai Society continue to be successful. We also encourage you to tell a friend about the club and suggest that he or she attend our meetings to see what we're all about. Referrals are the best way of attracting new members and thereby helping Great Swamp to grow. In this way, we can become the premier Bonsai Society in the Northeast.

Its' up to you...

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Be sure to visit our website at <http://www.arboretumfriends.org/gsbonsai>

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