



Great Swamp Bonsai Society

Next meeting: **TUESDAY, October 2nd**

Guest Artist: Koji Hiramatsu

October 2018 Newsletter

This month's meeting: Guest Artist Koji Hiramatsu!

Our next meeting will be **Tuesday, October 2nd** (**NOTE:** a week earlier than usual), and will feature guest artist **Koji Hiramatsu**, visiting the United States from Japan. Read all about his multi-generational bonsai business at <http://bonsai.shikoku-np.co.jp/en/map/hiramatsu-shushoen-bonsai-garden.html>.

Koji works with all nature of bonsai material, but is particularly known for his work with **pin**es.

We are proud to offer a unique, **hands-on workshop from noon until 4:00 pm (\$50.00 per participant, attendance limited)**, contact **Diego Pablos** at neyamadoribonsai@gmail.com if interested. **Bring your own, or contact Diego** to see if there are any Japanese Black Pines still available for \$175.00 per plant, grown by renowned bonsai artist David Easterbrook). 'Silent Observers' may attend for \$10.00 per participant.

Following the workshop, any interested persons may join us for **dinner at Arthur's Steakhouse** in Morris Plains (we split the check), from 4:30 to 6:00. Our regular meeting will feature a **lecture/demo by Koji at the usual meeting place from 6:30-9:30, free to the public**. The demo tree (a Pitch Pine collected from the wild by Martin Schmalenberg who, it will be noted, is no slouch) will be retained by the club for further development, possibly with a future guest artist.

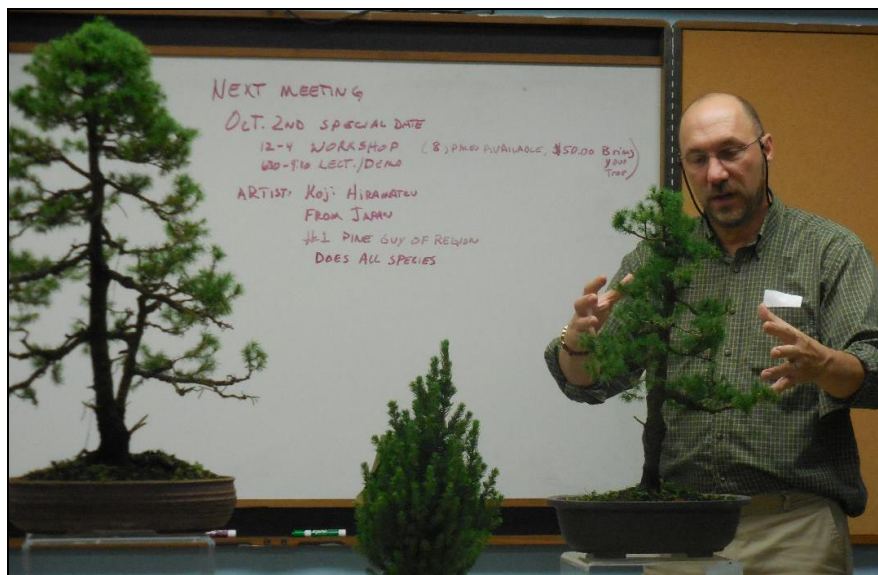
We hope to see you all there!



Looking Back: September Meeting – Working with Evergreen Coniferous Bonsai

Our September meeting was a **hands-on workshop**, with a little lecture/demo, on the subject of **designing evergreen coniferous bonsai**. We worked with nursery-grown Dwarf Alberta Spruce (*Picea glauca 'conica'*), with our more experience club members assisting newbies in the basics of branch selection, styling, and initial wiring. A few photos of the event are provided below, and on following pages.

We also elected a new **club president, John Michalski** (acting in his third nonconsecutive term), approved by general consensus (Bill Muldowney made the formal proposal, Mark Schmuck seconded, and all present said “Aye!”). We thank past-president **Diego Pablos** for his **nine years of service**, during which our membership has increased and diversified.



Bonsai Tip from your Editor: Save Yourself YEARS of development time—Start with Good Material

At our last (September) meeting, we used Dwarf Alberta Spruce (*Picea glauca* 'conica') as workshop trees for practicing the first step of initial design. As always, I semi-jokingly referred to the expected result as 'Charlie Brown trees,' meaning that the first styling of such material usually leaves the artist with a fairly Spartan skeleton which, with good aftercare, should fill out over the next season or two to produce a pleasing result.

For that meeting, we provided small, one-gallon trees that cost between \$13-18, and I also brought an example of a larger specimen that cost about \$40—all from the local landscape nursery (and/or the major Everything Hardware Store that shall remain nameless). We provided the participants with the smaller trees primarily to keep the cost at a minimum. The results of one tree can be seen below:



Before



After

(final height: 18", diameter of trunk: 7/8")

The following weekend, I took it upon myself to style the larger, \$40 tree, for my own amusement. The result, shown below, was achieved in about an hour and a half:



Before



After

(final height: 22"; diameter of trunk: 2")

The message, I think, is clear—when finances or circumstances permit, go for the more advanced material. For a difference of 20 dollars, years of development time are spared, and years of enjoyment added. I think for future workshops, we may simply offer the (slightly) more expensive material, and urge our beginners to spend the extra few dollars for a more satisfying end result.

-- John Michalski

Update: Michalski's 'Charlie Brown' Tree from 2012

I brought along this little Dwarf Alberta Spruce to September's meeting, to show how its foliage has filled out since its original design and styling at a club meeting in 2012 (could it have been SIX years ago? I guess so!). In the years since its original styling, I had simply kept the foliage compact by pinch-pruning in the spring, wired a few branches into position, and pruned long branches back in the fall.

A few days after the September 2018 meeting, I decided to restyle the tree, wiring it out and giving it a fresh look. The results are shown below.



Above left: the tree as displayed at the 09/18 meeting. **Above right:** the tree at its new planting angle.

Below right: the tree as rewired and restyled.



Plant Care Tips for October

Tree growth is now drawing to a close, with—in a ‘normal’ year, and when was the last time we had that?—leaves displaying a final array of color before winter. Watering can definitely be minimized at this time. Heavy branch pruning can be done on pines, and overwinter them in a cool greenhouse. Do not continue to fertilize—begin again in March. [DY]

It is hardening-off time for your trees, and by now you should have created a safe place to keep them for the cold months ahead (though they can stay unprotected at least through most of November). Certain types of trees are repotted or trained at this time of year—see the comments that follow.

Feeding: As reported in last month’s newsletter, many authors suggest a single Autumn 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. 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.

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 late October or November. Spruces may be wired any time after mid-August.

Winter protection: By November you will need to have figured out how and where you will stash your hardy outdoor trees. Thanksgiving 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, and cover the plant with an upturned bushel basket. 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. Beware of continuing—or surprise—warm weather, if you plan to shed or cold-frame your trees, since these enclosures can remain surprisingly warm, causing trees to pop new buds or refuse to harden off. [JM]

Save and Bring In Your Discarded 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.

Dues are Due

Dues are normally collected at the September meeting. If you have not yet paid up, please bring cash or check to **club treasurer Rick Meyers**, 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. See last page for details.

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

Novices and non-members always welcome!

Come and plan to get your hands dirty!



Calendar of Events for 2018-2019

October 2nd: Guest artist Koji Hiramatsu. (see <http://bonsai.shikoku-np.co.jp/en/map/hiramatsu-shushoen-bonsai-garden.html>). **Paid workshop** (\$50 per participant, limited availability, contact Diego Pablos at email on last page) **from noon to 4:00 pm, dinner with guest (we split the check), and FREE lecture/demo from 6:30-9:30 at usual location.**

November 13th: Topic Undecided – (w/brief discussion of winter care).
(We used our prospective topic, “Designing Evergreen Bonsai,” at the September meeting.) **SUGGESTIONS WELCOME.**

December: NO MEETING

January 8th: Holiday Party and Bonsai Auction. *Please begin scouring your collections for trees, pots, tools, etc. to put up for auction—the more the merrier!*

February: NO MEETING

March 12th: Wood-carving Workshop. Bring your own material and tools, if you have them. We will have some dead material on hand to practice with, as well as living.

April: Mid-Atlantic Bonsai Societies’ (MABS) Spring Festival. Stay tuned for details.

Also April: Guest artist Marc Noelanders, fresh from MABS. **Date to be determined.**

May 14th: Phoenix Graft Workshop/Repotting Workshop. Learn how to graft live “whips” onto dramatic deadwood, to create stunning bonsai material. (Repotting Workshop may be moved to April depending on room availability.)

June 2nd (first Sunday): Annual GSBS Bonsai Open House. Stay tuned for details.

GSBS Contact Information:

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Treasurer: Rich Meyers 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 Rich Meyers **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:
