



Great Swamp Bonsai Society

Next meeting: **TUESDAY, October 8th**
6:30– 9:30 PM

“Oddball Night”

October 2019 Newsletter

In Memorium: Solita Rosade

On September 1st we received the sad news of the passing of Solita Rosade, wife and partner of noted bonsai instructor Chase Rosade of New Hope PA, and a great bonsai artist and instructor in her own right. Solita hailed from Columbia and, (from the Rosade webpage) was, among other things, Past President of the Asociacion Vallecaucana de Bonsai, Chairman Emeritus of the World Bonsai Friendship Federation (WBFF), Past President of Bonsai Clubs International (BCI), founding Chairman of the Latin American Bonsai Federation (FELAB). She was well-known around the world, and a featured guest at bonsai conventions and events in Asia, Europe, India, South Africa, New Zealand, United States, Canada and several countries in Latin America.

We share the following Facebook posting from Randy Clark:

“Solita Rosade of New Hope, Pennsylvania, passed away last night and when she did the world of bonsai lost one of the best friends they have ever had. I had the good fortune to know her and work with her for more than two decades. She was a tireless and enthusiastic proponent of bonsai not only at the local and national levels but on the international scene as well. But perhaps her greatest attribute was an ability to inspire that enthusiasm for bonsai in others. I shall miss my friend, but I will keep her in my heart and I am sure those of you who had the chance to know her will do the same.”



September's Meeting: Wiring and Design Workshop

At the September meeting **club president John Michalski** led a hands-on demo/workshop on initial design and wiring of **spruce**—this happens to be the best time of year for this genus of evergreens, which have an unpleasant tendency to die back if wired and shaped during the main part of the growing season.

While some of our newer club members worked on spruce, some of our senior members offered hands-on guidance and assistance, while others sat back to enjoy the spectacle and catch up with old friends (see photos). We also had a few **new faces** in the crowd, which always excites us. (I have to work harder at getting the names, sorry about that!)

Thanks to Karen Siedenburg for the eclairs and Mary Larsson for the watermelon slices. We love to snack almost as much as we love our little trees!



Mark Schmuck (right, reaching) and Izzy Gurler (left) offer a few insights as Zach Bier plots a future for his Dwarf Alberta Spruce. In the background Fred Aufschläger and Bob Inglesias discuss an unusual spruce cultivar (shown below, on left).



September Meeting: Photos (cont'd)



(left) John Michalski discusses Spruce pros and cons.

(below) Mark Sanders (standing) helps one of our new attendees with a yew he brought to the meeting.



(below) Old friends: Doug Siedenburg (left) enjoys catching up with Genevieve and Pete Michienzi.





October Meeting: TUESDAY, October 8th – “Oddball Night”

A slight change of plan—at the September meeting it was announced that the October meeting would be a hands-on workshop on initial design with Junipers, but following the meeting it was felt that this was very similar to what we had just done. (For those among you who are hankering for this lesson, we will certainly get to it at the May 31st Open House, if not sooner—or, talk to a club member about arranging for a one-on-one session at your convenience.)

Alert club member (and Treasurer) **Rick Myers** suggested we bring in our “**oddball**” **bonsai**—plant species not often considered for bonsai, or (I suggested) trees that present unique design problems—you might have a bonsai in your collection where the apex or main branch has died back, and now you wonder how you might redesign it to work with what’s left.



So, have a look through your collection, and bring something to talk about. You are also welcome to bring along any other “show and tell” bonsai that you wish to share, or any other tree for which you would like advice, suggestions, or hands-on assistance. (Newbies, don’t be shy!)

The one that got away

Alert club member **S.C. Hwang** remarked on the “bonsai that got away” in last month’s newsletter (see picnic photo from Doug Siedenburg’s collection):

“I like the picture of "Doug's bonsai material that has 'gotten away' from repotting." About 30 years ago I purchased a bundle of Chinese elm as bonsai material. They were 1-2 year seedlings and I potted them in gallon pots. The attached picture shows the one that got away. The pot was tilted and the roots went out through the drain holes and settled on the ground. So at the base of the trunk it's the original tap root, not the trunk. Next to the tree is a gallon pot for scale.”



Can We Call It a Drought Yet?

Round these parts (as of Sept. 28th), we haven't had more than an occasional cloudburst in over two weeks. My yard in Morristown experienced a dark, windy rainstorm on the 26th that lasted about a half hour, but measurable rain was not more than a few millimeters. Though I've been using the lawn-sprinkler to ease the situation in my flower beds, a spade stuck into the soil yesterday revealed nothing but chalk-dry dust starting an inch below the surface.



This is an important time for your bonsai trees, as they are now setting buds for the spring and storing reserves in their trunk and roots to get through the winter. Make sure your trees are kept properly watered—the days are sunny but not overly hot, and the nights are pleasantly cool, but the humidity is deceptively low. Deciduous bonsai (birches, elms, beeches, maples) have “hardened off” to the point where the leaves don't wilt the way they might have in the spring or summer, therefore the trees don't show the outward signs of desiccation that would be more obvious earlier in the growing season.

A word to the wise!

MABS Disbursement: It Pays for Club Members to Register using Our Club Name!

GSBS representative and board member for the **Mid-Atlantic Bonsai Societies (MABS) Mark Schmuck** reports the following disbursements (monies returned to individual bonsai clubs in proportion to their participation at the **2019 MABS Spring Festival** that was held last April in Hershey, PA—specifically, paid subscriptions to the lecture/demos). From the chart below you can see that, of all the clubs, GSBS had the third highest attendance, after Susquehanna and Mohawk Hudson, and as a result we received a disbursement of **\$1,056.00**, which represents a terrific windfall for our coffers. This money allows us to pay for guest speakers and club supplies such as those yards signs that helped boost attendance at our own show last spring. As we are a relatively small club, these dollars really come in handy. Keep it up!

In other fiscal news, club Treasurer **Rick Myers** reports that, in addition to this “MABS money,” we currently have about \$5,500.00 in our club account. So we are doing well.

2019 MABS Spring Festival			
Clubs Share of Points			
(Does not include \$20 walk-ins)			
Club	# Pts	% of Total Pts	Disbursement
Bergen	15	4.72%	\$453.12
Brandywine	19	5.97%	\$573.12
Deep Cut	19	5.97%	\$573.12
Greater Hartford	19	5.97%	\$573.12
Great Swamp	35	11%	\$1,056.00
Lehigh Valley	33	10.38%	\$996.48
Mohawk Hudson	40	12.58%	\$1,207.68
Pennsylvania	29	9.12%	\$875.52
Pioneer Valley	11	3.46%	\$332.16
Susquehanna	72	22.64%	\$2173.44
South Jersey	3	.94%	\$90.24
Yama Ki	23	7.23%	\$694.08
Total Points	318	99.98%	\$9,598.08

Topics for Upcoming GSBS Calendar of Events

Your club officers are still at work, developing meeting topics for the coming fall, winter, and spring. We have provided the meeting dates on [page 13](#) so that you can put them on your calendar, but apart from that the situation remains somewhat fluid. (Please note that topics may be substituted, with advance notice, depending on member interest.)

What we are trying to do is provide novices with the basic instruction and hands-on guidance that they've joined a club to get, while providing challenging and stimulating subject matter for our more advanced artists. As our meeting times are relatively brief, it is a challenge to "do a little of both" at the same meeting, but we are working on it!

With that in mind, please feel free to contact any of us (contact info on [page 14](#) 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.

And, as always, we welcome any offers to lead a demo or presentation yourself! Don't be shy!

Dues are Due

Dues are normally collected at the September meeting. If you haven't yet paid up, 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.

From your Editor: Update on the Air-Layer

During the July “Show and Tell” meeting, I brought along a green-leaf Japanese Maple that I had decided to air-layer—the original plant lacked taper and needed to be drastically redesigned, so I decided to make the most of the situation by creating another, smaller bonsai from the original tree’s apex.

The air-layer was begun in May (after a good crown of leaves had developed and hardened off), when I removed a 1-inch ring of bark and cambium from the point just below where I wished the new root-crown to emerge. I took a small plastic nursery pot, sliced it open vertically along one side, and positioned the pot around the new surgery, filling it with a medium-grade bonsai mix and taping up the seam. I placed the tree into partial shade and made sure the soil in the small pot never dried out.



Update on the Air-Layer (cont'd)

By the time of the July meeting, small roots were visible projecting from the drainage holes of the suspended pot (see photo, right).

I waited until early September before carefully sawing the layered apex from the base of the tree, and opening the small pot revealed a very well-developed root system, as shown below.



(left) Well-formed surface roots (*nebari* in Japanese) completely encircle the area at the upper edge of where bark and cambium had been removed in May.

Update on the Air-Layer (cont'd)

Once freed from its pot, the successful air-layer was examined to determine the desired planting angle of the future bonsai.



The layered tree (below) is potted. It is imperative that this newly-potted tree receive careful protection throughout the coming winter. The new roots have not had time to establish themselves in their new container, and could easily be killed by dehydration, or repeated freezing and thawing.



Plant Care Tips for October

Tree growth is now drawing to a close, with 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. Certain types of trees are repotted or trained at this time of year—see the comments that follow. In recent years our winters have not been as stable as they once were, with more frequent warm spells followed by deep cold snaps, so preparing your trees for winter is more crucial than ever.

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, and the drought and all, 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.

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]

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!

October 8th (Tuesday, 6:30-9:30 PM). **"Oddball Night."** Bring in your puzzlers and other bonsai grown from unusual material.

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

*** No meeting in December**

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

*** No meeting in February**

March 10th (Tuesday, 6:30-9:30 PM). **Soils and Repotting Workshop, conditions permitting.**

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.**

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

Novices and non-members always welcome!

Come and plan to get your hands dirty!

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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:
