



Great Swamp Bonsai Society

Next meeting: **TUESDAY, November 12th**
6:30– 9:30 PM

“Wild-collected Bonsai: Finding the Design”

November 2019 Newsletter

October’s Meeting: “Oddballs”

For the October meeting we invited those attending to bring in their “oddball” bonsai—species or cultivars that are seldom used for bonsai, or problematical trees for which the grower would welcome ideas, suggestions, or hands-on assistance.

It was an interesting meeting with participation from our diverse gathering of enthusiasts.

We also welcomed some new faces—Joan Cho, Rupam Dutta, and Shane Stone. Hope to see you all again soon!

(right) **Mark Sanders** expounds on a yard-grown **Boxwood** as **Bill Muldowney** takes a closer look at one of Mark’s **Azaleas**.



(left) **Mark Schmuck** points out the compelling characteristics of a battered **Colorado Blue Spruce** he bought at a marked discount.

October's Meeting: "Oddballs" – Continued



(left) **Herb Arbeiter** polls the attendees for ideas on a Ginkgo.

(below) **Peter Michienzi** and **Kerry Heck** (on left) assist new club member **Zach Scher** with a landscape juniper he recently purchased, while **Chris Kazanecki** (rear) looks on with great interest, and **Mark Schmuck** (far right) provides an arm.



October's Meeting: "Oddballs" – Continued



Rick Myers (above) describes the origin of his **High-bush Cranberry**.

(below) Three of **Izzy Gurler's** exquisite **Bougainvillea** bonsai.



November Meeting: TUESDAY, November 12th – Wild-Collected Bonsai (Yamadori): Finding the Design

For this meeting, advanced club members **Juan Calderon** and **Peter Michienzi** will be presenting a lecture/demo on **Finding the Design in Wild-Collected Bonsai material (Yamadori** in Japanese bonsai lingo).

Pete and Juan have been collecting wild trees together for going on 30 years, and have a wealth of experience with both the techniques involved in safely retrieving wild-grown material (that is, removing trees from their natural growing conditions with the greatest chance for survival in captivity), and getting the most out of the various design possibilities offered by trees that were not previously groomed with bonsai in mind.

For this presentation Pete and Juan will be working on a wild-collected **Juniper** (*Juniperus virginiana*, also known as **Eastern Red Cedar**) that has been maintained in culture for several years and which poses some interesting design restrictions—or, should we say, opportunities.

It should be a great demo from two of our most experienced club members, and if you are interested in the bonsai potential of wild-grown native trees, **don't miss it!**



One of Pete's outstanding yamadori Junipers, photographed at MABS 2018.

Global Bonsai Seminars

An exciting event announcement from MABS Past-President Pauline Muth:

OCTOBER 8-11, 2020 - Global Bonsai Seminars presented by [The American Bonsai Society](#), [Bonsai Clubs International](#), [The National Bonsai Foundation](#), & [The Potomac Bonsai Association](#), **at the US National Arboretum & The Kellogg Conference Center.**

Four days of outstanding demonstrations **including two days of classes**. Four Friday & Saturday classes are included in your full registration. Many class instructional levels that are designed for novice to advanced students.

- Great Vendor Area at the Arboretum
- New Talent Contest
- Bonsai Masterpiece Display at the Arboretum
- ABS Awards, John Naka Design Award, BCI Awards

More detailed information at absbonsai.org.

What is MABS?

I try not to take for granted that we all know this kind of stuff. If you're new to bonsai, **MABS** stands for the **Mid-Atlantic Bonsai Societies**, an association of a dozen bonsai clubs from the East Coast, from Massachusetts to Delaware. Each club has a representative on the MABS Board, and each April MABS hosts its "Spring Festival," which features guest artists from around the world, hands-on workshops, auctions and raffles, a banquet dinner, and a large display of outstanding bonsai representing the best of each member club. There is also a large vendor room where you can peruse and purchase tools, pots, soil mixes, trees, accent plants, books, magazines, DVDs, etc.

Look for details on the 2020 Spring Festival, to be held in the Hershey PA area, in future newsletters.

From your Editor: Winter Care for Hardy Bonsai—A Start

We at the GSBS usually take time at our November meeting to discuss winter care for hardy bonsai. While well-intentioned, the amount of choices available can seem daunting to newcomers, particularly if you've come to the meeting without a notebook and pen. What follows are some basic guidelines, and a few of the many options for protecting your little trees from the (increasingly) unpredictable months ahead.

(As for your precious **bonsai pots**, be aware that **glazed pottery** (often used for deciduous and flowering bonsai) and **low-fired pottery** such as terra cotta (often found in less expensive or garden-center bonsai-styled containers) are very likely to **spall**, that is, fracture, flake, and break into shards, if trees are kept in them over the winter months. This is because the low-fired pottery absorbs moisture that expands as it freezes, and the glazed containers have a tendency to retain moisture under their external glaze. [High-fired bonsai pottery is essentially “stoneware” and does not absorb moisture, and is therefore safe.] **It is best to remove your bonsai from such containers for the winter months, placing the trees into other more resilient containers or planting them directly into the ground until spring.**)

Now let's look at protecting the trees themselves.

What you're protecting your bonsai from:

Essentially, your winter-hardy trees need protection from

- Dehydration
- Repeated freezing and thawing
- Precocious bud-break

Dehydration can occur if the soil is allowed to dry out completely. While the upper portion (trunk and limbs) of the bonsai do not need as much water as they do during the growing season, they still require a certain amount. Sub-freezing temperatures can prevent moisture from entering the soil and/or the roots (the water is, after all, frozen solid), so it's important to make sure your bonsai are well-watered before such low temperatures become the norm. Any time there is snowfall, it is a good idea to blanket the soil surface of your bonsai with snow if that hasn't occurred naturally—any time ambient temperatures rise above freezing, your trees will receive a little water.

Many bonsai enthusiasts **remove their bonsai from their pots** and plant them directly into the soil for the winter months. This allows for ambient moisture to regularly supply the tree, and also provides a buffer against rapid fluctuations in air temperature.

Repeated freezing and thawing can (a) cause the trees to break bud too early in the season, (b) cause water-filled roots to expand and burst in certain species, and (c) contribute to the dehydration of the soil. This can be **prevented by placing your bonsai into a shaded, protected area of your yard, porch, or patio**, thus minimizing the chance that direct sunlight will warm them by day.

An alternative solution of **removing bonsai from their containers and planting them directly into the ground, in a spot protected from sun and wind** will also achieve this end. (This may prove less practical for larger collections or for larger individual bonsai, depending on the health and vigor of the grower!)

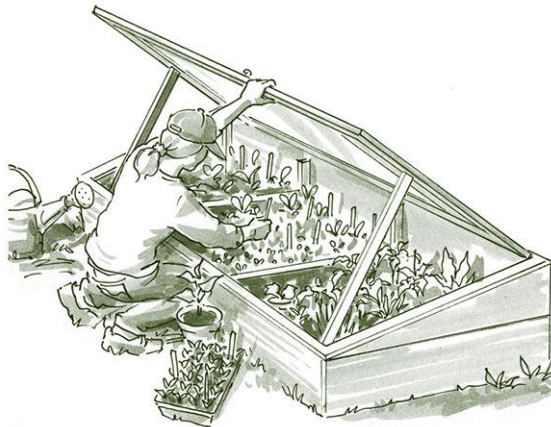
Precocious bud-break occurs if the bonsai are allowed to warm over several days above outside ambient temperatures. The risk is greatest where bonsai are maintained in enclosures such as garden sheds, cold-frames, hoop-houses, or outbuildings such as unheated garages. Each of the above can be highly suitable winter storage solutions, **but be careful about rising temperatures, especially during unusual warm spells in January, February, and March**. If the trees break bud and begin their spring growth in advance of the outdoor trees in your yard or neighborhood, you risk freezing the new foliage during the next cold-snap, and depending on species this may even kill the tree. Be sure to open windows and air-out protective enclosures any time local temperatures rise about freezing—those spaces can easily rise into the 50s and 60s during a bright sunny day or two.

What's a Beginner to Do?

Each of these threats to the survival of your winter-hardy bonsai can be minimized by (a) making sure your trees are evenly moist before cold temperatures set in; (b) placing your trees into an area where they are protected from wind, sun, and abrupt changes in temperature; and (c) removing trees from pots that are at risk of damage from freezing—such trees should be placed into alternative containers or planted into the ground until spring.

Some Commonly-Applied Winter-Care Solutions

- Place hardy bonsai in winter-safe containers directly on the ground, in a spot where the winter sun never hits them, and protected against wind but *not* from precipitation—your trees need the water but not the sun. (This is the method I personally use, with my collection tightly-packed against a wood privacy fence, and with the species in my collection—yews, hemlocks, junipers, maples, spruces, honeysuckles—it works very well.)
- Build a **cold frame**, which is a small shed with a removable roof, often sunk part-way into the ground (in our hardiness zone, about 1 foot deep is usually enough). For reference, see below an image that I shamelessly lifted off the internet:



- Build a **hoop house**, which can be easily fabricated from flexible PVC piping, in 10-foot lengths or so, held in place with 1-foot lengths of ¼-inch iron rebar pounded half-way into the ground. The hoop frame is then covered with a large sheet of light-color tarp or plastic. **Don't use clear plastic, or your hoop house will become a "green" house—too warm!** Behold below another image shamelessly lifted off the internet:



Plant Care Tips for November

During November deciduous and evergreen trees can remain out until about the last week of the month. Prepare trees for their winter setting, whether it be a cold frame or whatever type of winter protection you may have. Prior to setting them in their winter quarters, check for insects and spray and remove all dead leaves and branches. Thinking ahead, write down and plan what you need to do for spring and choose which trees you will work on first. Tropical bonsai should already be indoors and you can continue to water, feed, repot and prune them all through the winter. If they are in a heated dry atmosphere, mist frequently. [DY]

Feeding: As reported in previous newsletters, 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.

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.



Keep those Topic Suggestions Coming!

A reminder to feel free to send your ideas and topic suggestions to any of the Board Members listed at the back of this newsletter. GSBS is always looking for new and interesting topics that will appeal to the various educational needs of our diverse membership. The club exists for you, so don't be shy with your recommendations.

We especially welcome volunteers who wish to plan and lead presentations and workshops, so that the club may benefit from the wide array of experience contained within our membership.

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!

November 12th (Tuesday, 6:30-9:30 PM). ***Initial Design Choices with Wild-Collected Trees***—(winter protection will also be addressed as time allows, or speak with club members for suggestions.)

*** 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!

GSBS Contact Information:

President: John Michalski
huonia@aol.com

Phone: 973-829-0094
223 Mt. Kemble Avenue
Morristown, NJ 07960

Past President: Diego E Pablos
neyamadoribonsai@gmail.com
Phone: 973.224.8139

Vice President: **Position Open**

Secretary: Mark Schmuck lofty235@verizon.net

Treasurer: Rick Myers spruce80@verizon.net
80 Kenvil Ave
Succasunna N J
07876

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:
