



Brandywine Bonsai Society

November 15, 2008, 10:00

Brandywine Town Center

Sean Smith on Bonsai, Suiseki, and Travels in Japan

Cookie Person: Charlotte Smith

The November Meeting will feature Sean Smith who is a bonsai artist, ceramicist, and world-recognized master of daiza carving and of the art of presentation. Sean's program will concern the display of stones with trees. He will also recount some of his recent travels in Japan with and to see Japanese masters of the art of suiseki. He will be bringing various stones with daiza for purchase, so this will be a chance to expand your display horizons.

Wonderful Longwood Show.

Thanks go out to Pat Morris, Exhibits Chair, for making the Longwood show a great success. Pat gave unstintingly of her time and effort during the entire weekend. The new location in the ballroom got good traffic, but the lighting was too low to show the trees to their best advantage. The award for most photographed tree goes to Ski Dumbrovski for his Japanese Maple that was in perfect fall scarlet. Thanks to all the members who gave their time and effort exhibiting and babysitting. Pictures from the show will be in a later newsletter.

Club Books and Videos. If you have club books and videos in your possession, please make every effort to remember to return them at the last meeting of the year. We need to look over the collection and take stock of our holdings.

An Apology

I apologize to those of you who did not get a newsletter last month. I know that at least a couple individuals showed up at the old location of a meeting that was moved. I will have to stop putting outgoing mail in my street box and take it directly to the post office.

Fred's bougainvillea

We were having a discussion about whether a vine like a bougainvillea could ever have a true bonsai shape or whether they were just for flowers. I think these two pictures of Fred's tree answer the question.



As a classic bonsai.



As a showy flowering tree.

Tentative 2009 Schedule

January 17, The Jack Billet Memorial Program: Winter Silhouette.

February 21, A Literati Demo with Comment on Members' Trees, by Jim Doyle.

March 21, Crabapple Horticulture and Styling, by Ski Dumbrowski.

April 17-19, MABS Spring Festival

April 25, Pat Morris leads a group planting program.

May 16, Club picnic and auction, Anson Nixon Park

June 6-7, BRM Show

June 11-14, ABS Learning Seminars , Boise, ID

June 18-21, BCI Convention, New Orleans, LA

June 20, A Day with Ted Matson

July 7-15, The World Bonsai Convention, Puerto Rico

July 18, General workshop (

August 15. possibly Peter Adams

September 10-13, Bonsai Shohin Seminar, Rochester,

September 19, Materials seldom used as bonsai: expand horizons

October 17 , Nature's Way Open House and Program

October 31, An Ameriseki free-for-all

November 7-8(?), BBS exhibit at Longwood Gardens

November 21, Business and TBA

Winter Storage in the Mid Atlantic

It is pretty obvious that bonsai of tropical species need to be protected from low temperatures from the early fall into late spring, but my intent is to focus here on temperate species native to the Mid-Atlantic area.

Bonsai need to be protected from the coldest temperatures in winter even when they are trees native to the area. In Delaware, it is reported that the temperature passes through the freezing point 72 days each winter. The freeze-thaw cycle is tough on the roots of trees and can also play havoc with pots. The degree of protection will depend upon the species of tree – maples, pines and crab apples can handle very cold temperatures while elms and crepe myrtle need to be kept relatively warm.

Our club members rely upon a variety of means to protect their trees. One of the simplest methods is to place the trees under your bonsai table, mulch in the

pots, and wrap the sides with plastic to slow down the wind. A few moth balls will keep the mice away. Others have cold frames or lean-tos up against a house to provide protection. Unheated breezeways or enclosed porches also provide good protection. With several of these one has to be careful about sunny days because temperatures in a sunny enclosed area can soar in a short time. I have an unheated garage with two and a half exterior walls. The hardiest plants go in the floor along the exterior walls while the more sensitive plants go higher up and on the house walls.

Hardiness given in the USDA Zone system is for mature plants in the ground. It doesn't really work for small container plants such as bonsai because roots are more tender and susceptible to freezing temperatures. In container plants the roots quickly experience the same temperatures as the top of the plant. However, temperate woody plants *must* go through a period of cold dormancy as part of their annual growth cycle. In the fall your plants should experience the early freezes to trigger their cold hardiness mechanisms. I generally move mine into protection over Thanksgiving, but the last several years, that has been too soon.

Dormant deciduous trees have no leaves and do not need light until they begin growing again. Dormant evergreens do not need light as long as the temperature does not rise above 40F for very long. Evergreens stored in the dark at temperatures around or below freezing (32F) will survive the winter nicely. The trees do need water and drying out over the winter is a common cause of plant loss or branch die-back. Plants under benches or in cold frames may get adequate water from the ground and condensation. Plants in a garage will probably need watering every two to tree weeks and plants on a porch could need water every week.

Spring is always a difficult time. As the outside temperature begins to rise above 40 °F temperate plants begin to push buds. This can occur in total darkness giving long yellow shoots that sunburn the first time they see the sun. Thus it is good to let your plants have some light as spring arrives. This may entail moving them in and out of storage until the weather settles down.

GARAGE STORAGE

