



Brandywine Bonsai Society

(EMAIL: BrandywineBonsai@comcast.net)

Meeting: February 22, 2009 10:00am

Where: Brandywine Town Center

Subject: Creation of a pine *literati* by Jim Doyle
Evaluation of Members' trees

Cookies: Nancy Klabunde Pre-meeting tree advice: Dennis Donald

The February Program. We are fortunate in having the Jack Billet Memorial Meeting followed by one of Jack's dear friends, Jim Doyle, who will do a pine *literati* presentation – a style for which Jack was internationally known. Following the demonstration, Jim has agreed to do an evaluation of members' trees, so that we can all learn how to improve.

At his Nature's Way Nursery near Harrisburg, Jim hosts open houses and classes that draw faithful devotees throughout the Delaware Valley. BBS members who go there know very well the hospitality on offer (loving from dog Maggie, great lunch buffet, and munchies, strutting chickens, and more), as well as the premier guest artists. Of course, there is the shopping for *orientalia*, tools, plant material, pots, and other bonsai needs not to be found anywhere else in our region.

Jim is spending more and more time in Europe, particularly in company with Walter Pall. Check the following website, not only to see Jim in action, but to see European trees, and another bonsai world: <http://walter-pall-bonsai.blogspot.com/> Thanks to Fred Knobloch for passing along this information.

A Merger. Many Brandywine Bonsai members are also members of The Ameriseki Group, a club devoted to display and collection of viewing stones (*suiseki*). The Ameriseki Group for several years have exhibited at Longwood in late March. Stones and bonsai have a natural affinity, and in the past several years, numbers of members of both groups have begun displaying small stones with their trees, and displaying *kusamono* and companion plants with stones. Late last year, officers of both groups decided that it made sense for the groups to join

forces. We are accomplishing the financial merger (modest), and will reflect the joined meetings in the newly published schedule, and on the BBS website, www.goBBS.org. BBS members who are unacquainted with the art of *suiseki* should feel free to join, look, and learn. To members of Ameriseki only: we will continue our sales, and presentation free-for-all.



Silent Auction. Books, pots, and other items offered at the January meeting were snapped up. With warming weather, and thoughts turning to trees and how to train them, please bring your tools, books, etc. to the coming meeting. New members could use them. Also, several DVDs and CDs have been out of the club "library" for a long time. Please return them so that others can benefit from them, too.

Gleanings from Yama Ki: Bonsai Forests. This past November, Yama Ki hosted Marty Schmalenberg who presented a program on bonsai forests. Good information was published in their December newsletter; some of the highlights may be of interest to BBS members who may be planning a new forest planting, or, repotting an established one this spring.

“Every forest reads from left-to-right, or right-to-left. You need to look at your material and plan its layout for directional consistency and try to create a sense of unity. The composition should have the look of an asymmetrical triangle when viewed from the side. You must allow for space among your trees to provide a sense of vista (natural forests are not tight little knobs of trees). Space ‘shows up details and balances mass.’ Look for depth of field – do you feel you can enter the forest? Also, as you are placing the material, look into the top branches to see which limbs may need to be removed – fewer branches add to the sense of age even as they help create a mood. You do not need perfect trees for a forest; if you have such a tree, work it as a single bonsai.

“Your group will be arranged and pruned as though it is a single tree. Small leaved trees work better. Forests require wiring. Literati forests can be created with fairly ordinary material. It is important to recall this since it is hard to find outstanding material for forests. For example, Larch on a rock slab will not work well.



“If you use dead trees as part of your forest, NEVER place one in the front; you

want your eye to wander through the forest looking at the many trees. Dead trees must add interest to the grouping. They can help change the focus to a higher point.”



Other observations: leaf fall is a good time to improve ramification, which will improve the overall look of the grouping; forest rules can be dropped or broken if the grouping is literati; large trees should be placed either front or rear; the main tree should be planted about 1/3 of the way into the group; both trunk diameters and heights should vary; no two trees should parallel each other; wide containers or slabs should have enough open space to simulate the vastness of land; unless there are more than 13 trees, they should not conceal one another; trees in the front should have branches that grow from a higher place on the trunk than those in the back to create perspective and dimension; small leaved trees work best for the overall silhouette; and, if there are many trees in the composition, use fewer branches. (Thanks to Yama Ki and to Irv and Rhoda Kleiman, co-editors of the Yama Ki newsletter.)

Dues are due!

If you misplaced your membership renewal form, more will be available at the next meeting. Please complete the forms and return them to Steve Ittel. Completed forms simplify our bookkeeping.