

# Brandywine Bonsai Society

Promoting the art and horticulture of bonsai since 1967

## There was No Brooklyn Botanical Gardens Trip So what are we going to do next? Or NOT?

Stay at home. Work on your trees whenever you like

Pre-meeting coffee and tree counseling will not be available. **No refreshments served.**

**Fix your own coffee, or better yet, have a drink.**

**Jin that tree with a gin and a grin.**

## June, 2020. COVID-19 Edition

### Brooklyn Botanical Garden Bus Trip

**We didn't go. We are deciding what to do with the money of those who signed up.**

### Survey Number 1 – Future Meetings

A few members were included in a brief survey to explore what people's interests were. We would now like to expand that survey to all members.

Before Covid, we planned the following three outdoor meetings:

1. July (Nixon Park picnic/auction),
2. August (Nixon) and
3. September (Mark Huf's)

The officers request that you indicate which meetings you might plan to attend by emailing Greg at [gkanaskie@verizon.net](mailto:gkanaskie@verizon.net) with your intentions for EACH meeting. And please give us your thoughts.

We are considering outdoors, lawn chairs six feet apart, BYO food or drinks, hand sanitizers, masks, etc.

Share your thoughts with Greg directly. Should we meet? Should we picnic? Should we auction? Should we stand down until there is a vaccine? Preliminary answers ranged from essentially "Yes to all" thru "with precautions" to "Maybe OK for others, but not for me."

### Survey Number 2 – Invasive Plant Usage

There was a recent BBS Club Survey On Invasive Plant Usage in Bonsai. Those BBS members who are part of our open email group took part in a survey on invasive plants. Here are the results. Of those that took the survey...

1. 82% are aware that plants that are identified as being invasive are being used for bonsai.

2. 50% could identify invasive plants in the wild. Species most commonly named wisteria, Oriental bittersweet, honeysuckle, winged euonymous and porcelain berry.

3. 53% have bonsai in their collection that are considered invasive. Most commonly named, porcelain berry, winged euonymous and wisteria.

4. 69% said that invasive species should be allowed to be used as bonsai; 19% said that it depended on the particular species.

5. 87% felt that most physical methods to prevent the spread of pollen and/or seed (e.g. netting) are not effective.

6. 57% said that plucking flowers before seeds are produced is an effective method to prevent the spread of pollen and seed.

7. In the comment area, there were opinions that were very strongly against ever using an invasive species to those that felt as strongly that we should not worry about the effect of having one or two bonsai that are of an invasive species.

Survey #2 is now available – Survey on favorite species, styles and sizes,

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/H7KHHSS>

*Note added by your editor: Because I am the person who pushes the SEND button on newsletters, somewhat by definition, I get the last word.*

Yes, I have invasive plants in my collection, and I have tried unsuccessfully to add some others I currently do not have. Am I aware that it is not good for the environment? Yes. But let me explain my position.

I live in a community of heavily-wooded, 2.5 acre lots. We are adjacent to some wooded parkland. I am directly responsible for the upkeep of two of those lots and indirectly responsible for the upkeep of

others. First of all, that means that several time a year I wander all of the property carrying RoundUp with a mission to kill any poison ivy. I also RoundUp, pull out or cut oriental bittersweet, honeysuckle, winged euonymous, multiflora rose and porcelain berry whenever I can. But those few times that I see bittersweet, winged euonymous or porcelain berry that can make a nice bonsai, I will lovingly dig it and carry it home. (Note the absence of honeysuckle from that list). The only reason to have bittersweet, or porcelain berry is for their fruit, so I am not going to pull fruit off. Winged euonymous are for their great fall color and de-fruiting can help them grow faster.

(ASIDE: I consider RoundUp to be the safest herbicide ever invented. It is a “chemical” by definition and I handle it with appropriate care, but I hate to think where we would be without it.)

How many of you know that Japanese Black Pine is considered to be an invasive plant in the State of Delaware? I am not giving up my black pines. I have a neighbor who considers Japanese Maples to be invasive plants (as does Delaware). She allows me to clear them from her property on a regular basis and I have a bunch potted up for you whenever we have a meeting. But I am not giving up my Japanese Maple bonsai.

So, I am a net destroyer of invasive plants by a long shot, and I think that buys me the luxury of experimenting with a few invasive plants. I would never import a new invasive plant into our region but have no problem with working with the ones already here.

If you want to see the list of all the invasive species of Delaware, go to [http://www.dnrec.delaware.gov/fw/NHESP/Documents/Non-native%20Invasive%20Plants%20of%20Delaware\\_2018.pdf](http://www.dnrec.delaware.gov/fw/NHESP/Documents/Non-native%20Invasive%20Plants%20of%20Delaware_2018.pdf)

You will have to get rid of most of your collection.

## Alternatives to Wiring

There was a recent BBS Club discussion on wiring spruce. In my opinion, they are among the slow learners of the bonsai world so wiring is problematic. To train a branch, the wires would have to stay on much longer that it takes for the wire to cut into the bark. Purely clip-and-grow is an option, but I still like to place branches. I use a lot of guy-wires when normal wiring is not going to work well.

Lets start off with some illustrations. This first picture is a juniper that has been heavily wired. The branch can be bent anywhere I want it to go and it will learn what I want in a relatively short period of time. Normal wiring works well.



The next two illustrations are examples of where I have used double guy-wires on older junipers. Neither aluminum or copper wire were strong enough to hold what I wanted, so I combined normal wiring with guy-wires to do a tough bend. Using a double wire, one can tighten it like a turn-buckle pulling the two parts closer together. These bends were close to the breaking point and that is where a guy-wire can also be an advantage. It can be further tightened on a bi-weekly basis with much less danger of a serious crack.



The next example is on the following page. Once again, I wanted to pull two parts of the tree closer together and a turn-buckle guy-wire worked perfectly.



The double hook spreads out the tension a bit to reduce cutting in, but it also allows me to periodically move the hook to a new location on the branch, maybe just ½” or ¼” away at the first sign of scarring. I used single wires in this case and applied as much tension as I thought the tree could handle. It flushed out with some nice new light blue growth this spring so I think it will be OK. The design of the tree has a long way to go, but it no longer looks like a roman candle with all of the blue shooting out the top.



Family and neighbors are curious to see how long I will work on this experiment.

My final example is on a spruce. Last year during the late summer drought, I was not watching my yard trees closely enough and I ended up stressing several trees. This (what was once a) very nice Colorado Blue Spruce lost all of its lower branches. I left them on all winter hoping that some of the buds were viable, despite disparaging comments from family and friends.



**Stay apart. Stay happy. Stay healthy.**

They were not viable. All I had left were dead brown branches on the bottom and a few live top branches. It was either chop it or wire it, so I ended up doing both. You can see that all of the dead lower branches were cut off, leaving knobs. I then made double hooks with heavy-gauge wire to loop over branches (shown in the next picture). The fat wire is less likely to cut into the bark. If you have good eyes, the wires are just visible in the picture above.