

Brandywine Bonsai Society

Promoting the art and horticulture of bonsai since 1967

Dan Snipes on Bonsai Development Saturday, February 15, 2025, 10:00 am Brandywine Town Center

Cookie Person: Kathy Cline

Membership

Annual membership fees are due again. The costs are unchanged. Twenty dollars for an individual, \$25 for a family. See attached registration/dues form and send payment to Karin Simmat as soon as possible OR pay at the meeting. Please fill out all the information requested to keep the BBS records accurate. Karin Simmat, 263 Green Briar Court, Newtown Square, PA 19073-2126.

February Meeting: Knowledge, Skills and Pruning

This will be an interactive program where the first half will involve discussing bonsai theory and techniques. In the second half of the program we will analyze trees that members have brought in. The emphasis of this exercise will be on learning to look analytically at bonsai trees and determining, 'Where is the tree now, and how can it be improved'. Trees may be of any developmental stage. Have questions about a young tree? Or want to put the finishing touches on your show tree, bring it to the February meeting. One tree per person please, due to time constraints. Dan Snipes

BBS Incorporation

The paperwork for the BBS incorporation has been filed. We are waiting for the reply from the State of Delaware. Then we will get the Federal tax number but with the chaos there, who knows how long that will take.

Tree Development

It takes years of patience and attention to develop a fine bonsai. It takes at least as long to become a master practitioner. There is no such thing as an "instant bonsai" - nor a "one-minute master."

A skilled and practiced eye is required to recognize promising bonsai material - backing-off or squinting in order to obtain proper perspective. One must learn to identify the fundamental structure and form of a potential bonsai, selectively ignoring tangle or sparseness. Order can be brought to tangle - and sparseness can be used to advantage - but the tree itself will dictate its optimum style.

The master uses rules of style as guidelines only. He knows that rigid adherence often leads to disappointing

results. A master directs his efforts toward enhancing - not fighting - a tree's natural tendencies.

Training is a process of refinement. First consideration is given to the trunk. It may take several years to obtain an appropriate taper. Next, the main branches are refined to provide the general shape of the canopy. This too may require several growing seasons to accomplish. Finally, the branchlets are tended and the bonsai is fully revealed.

The master gives as much - or even more - attention to the back of a tree as he does to its front. He knows that it is the back which provides the depth required for a dramatic frontal view.

Throughout training, the roots of the tree are cared for. Root mass is reduced slowly, over time. Large roots in particular must be removed gradually, in stages, to allow new feeder roots to form and take over supply needs.

During training, wire and other appliances are used sparingly and as unobtrusively as possible, allowing for pleasant viewing even while the tree is being trained. Appliances are left in place only long enough to accomplish their purpose and are removed before scaring or other damage occurs.

Shaping takes place in stages with consideration given to the maturity of the tree. A young tree or branch has the suppleness of youth. More patience is required to bend a mature branch. If one is too aggressive, an important branch can be damaged or lost causing general loss of balance or form.

The nature of the tree will dictate its needs in terms of environment and nutrition. The master knows that the pine likes good drainage provided by sand but the bald-cypress will flourish in bog. He knows that a quince can stand freezing temperatures that would kill a black-olive. A feeding schedule is designed for each tree individually. The master knows the reward for such individual attention.

The master is skilled in the use of controlled stress as part of training. He knows when to withhold water. He knows when root-pruning will lead to leaf-size reduction. He

knows when to withhold feeding to enhance flowering. The master knows how much stress his tree can stand, and when and how to remove stress when its work is done.

In selecting the component pieces of a forest planting, the master again uses nature as a guide. The role, scale, placement and species of each tree is carefully planned and executed. The result is a harmonious and accurate reflection of a natural forest with its dark places, sunny meadows, shaded glens and root-broken paths.

The master is careful in selection of the pot that will serve as home for his bonsai. The pot must enhance the beauty of the tree's form and coordinate with its size. It should provide correct contrast to the tree's color, blending subtly with the tree to form a pleasing whole.

Pruning is performed throughout a bonsai's lifetime, but only as necessary to maintain proper form. Balance is maintained between root and canopy, and trunk and branch. Pruning is performed in a manner that strengthens the tree. The master knows that pruning too much or too often can weaken or even kill a tree.

At times it is beneficial to allow periods of wild, unrestrained growth. Wild branches are often left in place for several seasons to strengthen and thicken the trunk. Later, these can be removed and rooted to form new trees. Many fine bonsai began life as cuttings.

Training of a bonsai is never really finished for it is a living and ever changing thing. Over the years, with practiced observation and close attention, the master learns the nature and the cycles of his trees. He knows their seasons. He knows their spring and fall colors. He knows their summer canopies and their winter forms. He knows when branch and bud swell will occur. He knows how much mid-summer heat and sun can be tolerated. He knows when each is flourishing and when one is suffering.

A master is tireless in his attention. He can be found daily, out among his trees, both reveling in - and wondering at - their ability to reflect the majesty, strength, and mystery of creation. The master is ever grateful for his chance to participate.

Should a fine old bonsai reach the end of its life, the master will show his concern to the end. No trash heap awaits a favored companion.

And finally, when the master reaches the end of his season, he will pass his charges on to another...perhaps student...perhaps teacher...with knowledge that his care will continue through other hands. HAV 1993

Directions to the Brandywine Town Center (BTC)

The meeting hall is a stand-alone building, removed from the commercial area, with a large glass dome on top.

From Route 202 Southbound: Shortly after crossing into Delaware on Route 202 southbound, turn left onto Naamans Road at the intersection bounded by an Exxon station and the Days Inn. At the second light, turn left into the Brandywine Town Center (You will see a large Target store), turn right, and follow the outer parking lot ring road to the meeting hall.

From I-95 Northbound and 202 Northbound: Take Exit 8 Concord Pike North. Just beyond Concord Mall at the Days Inn, turn right onto Naamans Road and follow the directions above.

From I-95 Southbound: Take the I-495 and Naamans Road exit just after passing into Delaware. Take Naamans Road westbound. After passing Grubb Road, you will take the next right into Brandywine Town Center. Look for the meeting center described above. These directions and a detailed map are available all the time on the directions page of the BBS Website, gobbs.org.

Inclement Weather Notifications

Should we have snow or other inclement weather for a meeting, please check your email for a late announcement. We will try to get the email announcements out with ample warning, but once in a while we get surprised. You can call Steve Ittel at 302 778-4546 as a last resort. Steve leaves pretty early for meetings to get that essential coffee brewing, but his wife will patiently answer the phone.

The tentative 2024 BBS schedule

February 15: Dan Snipes on Design and Development (BTC)

March 15: Gabe Funke on Native Trees (BTC)

April 19: Concrete Slabs with Steve Ittel (TBD)

May 17: Marco Invernizzi Demonstration (Marc Huf's)

June 21: Mark Arpag (TBD)

July 19: Club Auction and Lunch (ABN Park)

August 16: Forest Workshop with Steve Ittel (ABN Park)

September 20: TBD (BTC)

October 18: Sergio Cuan (BTC)

November 15: Business Meeting and Garage Sale (BTC)

BTC = Brandywine Town Center, Wilmington, DE

ABN Park = Anson B Nixon Park, Kennett, PA

Mark Huf's = Huf Landscaping, Oxford, PA

LG HH = Longwood Gardens Headhouse

TBD= to be determined

Other Bonsai Events of Interest

PBS Bonsai Exhibit at PHS Flower Show, March 1-9, 2025, Philadelphia Convention Center

Mid-Atlantic Bonsai Societies Convention, April 11-13, 2025 at Holiday Inn in Grantsville, PA

American Bonsai Societies (ABS) Learning Seminars, September 12 & 13, 2025 DoubleTree, 1111 Jefferson Road, Rochester, NY 14623

9th U.S. National Bonsai Exhibition, September 12 & 13, 2025, Rochester, NY

inclusion in the next newsletter. Title your email "BBS Classified Ad".

MidAtlantic Bonsai Societies Symposium

During the second weekend of April, MABS will be holding their annual festival in the Holiday Inn in Grantsville, PA (between Hershey and Harrisburg). To learn much to do about the festival go to <http://midatlanticbonsai.org/>. The weekend is filled with demonstrations, workshops and workshop observations, raffles, and critiques by three world-renown artists (Peter Chan, David Easterbrook, and Mark Fields). In addition, there are auctions all weekend long, a Saturday night banquet/auction, a MABS member only exhibit and over 20 vendors. From the website, you can either register through PayPal or you can download the registration form and mail it in. Furthermore, there are rooms available at the Holiday Inn at a reduced rate.

If you are into bonsai, this is something that you cannot miss. Other than all that you will experience at the festival, the club also benefits from your participation. There is a point system, where the club will garner points for the activities you take part in. At the conclusion of the festival, the points are converted into cash which is then turned over to the respective clubs.

The longer you wait to register, the greater the price. On March 7 the next price increase occurs.

MABS is also looking for donations of bonsai related materials for the auctions, both silent auction and the dinner auction. Bring your donations to the festival. The donations will benefit the affiliated club of which Brandywine is one and future MABS festivals.

MABS has an opening for Secretary. If you are interested, contact Carl Achhammer Jr., 570-709-3848

Crown Custom Bonsai Sales

Crown Custom Bonsai is continuing its liquidation sale. At the meeting there will be a selection of every item that is in the inventory. The entire inventory will be on sale at 50% off, with the exception of wire which will be priced as follows. 1 kilo wire will go from \$25.00 to \$18.00, 500 gram wire will go from \$15.00 to \$12.00 and 100 gram wire will go from \$5.00 to \$3.00. If I have room in my truck, I will bring a selection of pots that are of high quality from Japan, England, Italy and the Czech Republic. Again if there is room in the truck, I will bring a selection of mica and plastic composite training pots that will go at a very reasonable price.

Free Classified Ads: We are still carrying your classified ads in the newsletter for free. Are you planning on selling things that will not be included in the silent auction and that you want the club to be aware so they can bring some extra money, are offering some sort of bonsai-related services, or maybe you are heading to Nature's Way and are offering to pick things up for our members. You can send this info to Karin Simmat (ksimmat@verizon.net) for

*Brandywine Bonsai Society founded in 1967. BrandywineBonsai@gmail.com
President, Steve Ittel; Treasurer, Jerry DiBello; Newsletter Editor, Karin Simmat (610-325-0677)*