

Brandywine Bonsai Society

Promoting the art and horticulture of bonsai since 1967

Gabe Funke on Native Bonsai Trees Saturday, March 15, 2025, 10:00 am Brandywine Town Center

Cookie Person: **Gilbert Beckett**

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.

March Meeting

For our March meeting, club member Gabe Funke will share his experience with native trees. The species we commonly grow as bonsai mostly come from East Asia. There are many good reasons to using Asian trees, but there is no reason to limit our repertoire to species from a single geographical area. Many excellent species used for bonsai grow native in our own backyards. Gabe will offer his guidance in choosing the best candidates for container culture to broaden our bonsai benches. **If you are growing any native species as bonsai trees, please bring them in with you to the meeting.**

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.

Trees for MABS

We have three nice trees for MABS. **We could use one more tree for MABS. If you have a good tree bring it to the meeting.**

Winter Work on Trees (Steve Ittel)

First, let me state that I am discussing winter-hardy species, not tropicals (I don't have any tropical bonsai but do have a large ficus in my family room). The weather we have been having is confusing to say the least. Based upon a calendar, now is the time to be finishing repotting of trees like maples, junipers, yews, etc. But I just cannot get motivated to work on my trees when it is not getting above freezing during the day (like last week). I tend to work outside or in an open garage and extreme cold puts me off. This week, it is spring-like and maples are starting to push, but winter will be back in a couple days.

It is also possible to do carving (new, or refining already established jins, shari, etc.) on trees stored for the winter, particularly if there is some deadwood already established so that you are sure about where the live veins are. A "jin" is a bare-stripped part of branch and a "shari" is a part of trunk where the bark has been removed. Additionally, a "uro" is a hollow, irregularly-shaped wound in the trunk typically inflicted by a Dremel or some other carving tool; old yews are good candidates for uro. Winter is a good time to do such work. An established shari live vein can be narrowed quite successfully by cutting thin strips off one or both sides. And be sure to put some character into the carving – don't go in straight lines. You might want to alternate sides as you work down the tree to give some movement to the live vein. Have it be in the front of the tree and disappear to the back of the tree for a while. When the spring push gets serious, the newly-carved edges will heal quickly and the push of sap in a narrowed live channel will promote the desirable swelling of that vein. Jins can be extended back down the trunk of the tree to make them more dramatic.

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

If the tree has no jin or shari, it may be dangerous to initiate such work at this time because there is poor visualization of the live veins on the tree. You might cut all the way across a live vein and the tree above that point will die. An interesting method to safely initiate shari is to cut small vertical notches up and down the trunk of the tree at different positions on the perimeter. As the tree recovers from these wounds, the live portion of the vein will swell a bit as it goes around these small wounds, making its presence more obvious. The small wounds that missed the mark will heal with time.

If you have done the repotting or done some carving on your tree, then you should give it some extra protection from really cold or windy periods. But let it have all the sun and warmth it can get because the sun right now is still pretty low and equivalent to dappled shade in the summer. (Remember that you are not going to get much of a tan this time of the year here in Delaware or Pennsylvania.)

The Tentative 2025 BBS schedule

March 15: Gabe Funke on Native Trees (BTC)

April 19: Forest Planting with Steve Ittel (Mark Huf's)

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

June 21: Mark Arpag (LG HH))

July 19: Club Auction and Lunch (ABN Park)

August 16: Concrete Slabs 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 Grantville, 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

MidAtlantic Bonsai Societies Symposium

During the second weekend of April, MABS will be holding their annual festival in the Holiday Inn in Grantville, 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 l

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 16 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 or give them to Karin Simmat at the meeting. The donations will benefit the affiliated clubs (of which Brandywine is one) and future MABS festivals.

MABS has an opening for Secretary. This job involves taking notes at the board meetings which are monthly but not for all months. If you are interested in the workings of Mid-Atlantic Bonsai Societies and/or want to get to know more local bonsai enthusiasts, this is your chance. If interested, contact Carl Achhammer Jr., 570-709-3848.

Crown Custom Bonsai Sales

The liquidation sale continues. With spring just around the corner, this is a good time to purchase the tools and wire needed for repotting your trees. Of my trees, my euonymus, dwarf Korean lilac, larch, zelkova and boxwood are all starting their spring push. Also, I will be bringing mica and plastic composite training pots; from very small to very large.

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

Review of Dan Snipes' Rules of Bonsai Design

The basis for success in bonsai is knowledge and technical skill plus time. Repeating the simple techniques year after year, repetitive detailed work is the foundation of creating good bonsai.

He first discussed the aesthetic principles of an old tree's roots, trunk, branching and foliage. Nebari (surface roots) give the impression of age, The nebari should be radial, not crossing. The trunk should taper as it ascends. Bark

with interesting features such as hollows and irregularities add interest. Branches should also taper. Branches at the bottom of the tree should be thicker while those at the top should be thinner and closer together. Foliage should be uniform in density and character.

He also went into detail about the technical considerations. Select the front first and adjust branches. Foliage and branching should form an asymmetrical triangle (egg-shaped from top per John Naka). The trunk, first two branches and top come forward. The front branches should be short and horizontal while the back branches slope down. Highlight interesting features. Use negative space.



Dan pointed out the important times to prune bonsai trees: winter dormant season; spring/early summer; mid-summer before longest day; and fall especially for maples, birch and hornbeam.

Thank you to Dan Snipes for this information!!