

FOUR SEASONS of BONSAI



BONSAI SOCIETY OF GREATER SPRINGFIELD, MA

Promoting and Practicing the Art of Bonsai Together Since 1988

Spring, 2009

Another Very Busy Spring for BSGS



Isao and Takashi Lecture
Photo by Sage Ross more can be found at www.flickr.com/photos/ragesoss/

Spring 2009 has been hectic for our Bonsai club. Our April meeting was a joint venture with our friendly neighbor society, the Greater Hartford Bonsai Society. We co-hosted the Prime Minister's Award winning Japanese Bonsai Master Isao Omachi and his assistant, Takashi. There was also an afternoon workshop that was attended by Gerry G., Sandy S., Mich M. and myself. In the workshop we

learned a lot about wiring. They recommended wiring at a greater than 45 degree angle. We were instructed that copper wire should not be used for holding screens or tree tie downs, aluminum or steel is better, copper may leach harmful chemicals into soil. Too much was learned to pass along in this short article, if you really want to learn bonsai sign up for as many workshops as you can.

The 26th annual MidAtlantic Bonsai Societies' Spring Festival took place on April 17-19 and was well attended by our membership. It was a fantastic convention. The Bonsai exhibit has improved tremendously. Don't miss Suzanne Kelly's review of this years convention.

On May 16th five of

our members (we had room for a sixth) made our Spring trek out to N. Leverett to work with world renown bonsai artist Nick Lenz. This event was attended by Bob F., Sandy S., Brian and Amy N., Bill G. and myself.

On May 17th, Sandy and I taught a beginners bonsai class at the Jewish Community Center. The 4 attendees were thrilled with their trees and asked us to return next year.

On May 30th, we are having a soil making workshop at my home where we will sift and mixed 90 gallons of Bonsai soil. We will use Haydite, red lava stone, Turface MVP and pine bark mulch. What a busy, educational and fun Spring .

By Doug Taylor

MidAtlantic Bonsai Societies' Spring Festival

The 26th Spring Festival of the MidAtlantic Bonsai Societies was held on April 15-17 at the Hudson Valley Resort and Spa in Kerhonken, New York.

As first-time attendees to this festival and relative newcomers to the bonsai hobby, JoAnn Skiba and I found the overall experience amazing.

We were impressed with the presenters, learned from the critiques, admired the work of fellow hobbyists, purchased from the vendors, and enjoyed both the people and the events.

ACCOMMODATIONS

The Hudson Valley Resort & Spa is a somewhat tired facility,

located in a beautiful section of upstate New York. It was easy to find, not crowded, quite restful, and had good parking. The rooms were sparse, but adequate. Although I did not use the spa, it seemed luxurious & well maintained.

Continued page 2

Special points of interest:

- BSGS CO-HOSTS JAPANESE BONSAI MASTER
- MABS CONVENTION A FIRST TIMERS REVIEW
- ANNUAL PICNIC INVITATION
- 2009 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Photographs from Nick Lenz Workshop



FOUR SEASONS of BONSAI

MidAtlantic Bonsai Societies' Spring Convention cont.



Bob Neem's Hemlock exhibited at MABS Spring Festival
Photograph by Candy Shirley



Doug Taylor's Pasture Apple at MABS Spring Festival
Photograph by Candy Shirley

JOANN AND I WERE FASCINATED BY THE BEAUTY OF THESE UNIQUE PLANTS



Gerry Garner's Bougainvillea exhibited at MABS Spring Festival
Photograph by Candy Shirley

The exercise room, which I did use, was too warm and rather lonely, but it was satisfactory.

The one restaurant had three different names, depending on what sign or brochure we consulted, indicating that it had had recent changes in ownership. Our dinners there on Friday evening were delicious and reasonably priced. Although the menu choices were very limited, we all found something we liked. Jeff Cohen and I had identical meals of herb-encrusted salmon, JoAnn had a nicely cooked steak, and Doug Taylor had a more casual meal. We were able to charge our meals to our rooms, which should have simplified payment, except that the restaurant's computer was malfunctioning.

On Saturday and Sunday mornings, the restaurant offered a breakfast buffet for \$11.00. Omelets to order, fruit, and a variety of baked goods were well prepared and tasty. The buffet lunch that was included in the registration fee was attractively presented, filling, varied, and delicious. We could have hot dishes of fish and chicken, salads, cold cuts, and desserts.

DEMONSTRATIONS

The four demonstrations were held in a ballroom equipped with a stage. Thanks to Gerry Garner's tip about reserving seats in advance,

JoAnn and I had excellent seats in the front row, but some people had trouble seeing the presenters at work. The portable lighting did not allow everyone to see what the artists were doing to their trees. Closed circuit TV might have helped the audience in the back to see the fine wiring and trimming that the presenters were doing.

Susan Amoy, a native of Hawaii, spoke on Friday night after dinner. She brought approximately thirty of the succulent bonsai that are her specialty. Her slides showed the succulents in their native climates in places like Madagascar, Yemen, Arabia, and East and West Africa. JoAnn and I were fascinated by the beauty of these unique plants, particularly ones like the desert rose with its profuse pink flowers. Her plants represent a new field in bonsai, which some of the international experts did not know how to judge. Since I do love flowering tropicals, these succulents really appealed to me.

The three presentations on Saturday followed a similar format. After being introduced, the presenters first spoke about their background and then transformed raw collected material into a bonsai. Pauline Muth assisted them with wiring and supplies; she had the uncanny ability to anticipate their bonsai needs and produce the right tape or wire or tool

that they wanted. Her calm, professional, competent presence was extraordinary.

Isao Omachi, 35, a resident of Japan, was the first presenter on Saturday. He has won the prestigious Prime Minister's Award, which makes him an elite bonsai artist. He and his assistant, who, he says, "reads my mind," worked together on several junipers, creating bunjingi. Since he does not speak or understand English, Hidako Metaxas, a delightful Japanese-American grandmother, translated for him. Her understanding of bonsai helped her convey Omachi's thoughts to the audience. Farrand Bloch, a resident of The Netherlands and the editor of *Bonsai Focus*, was the second presenter. He, too, worked on a juniper, transforming the collected tree into a stunning bonsai. Both men continued to work on the trees offstage in an area where we could watch up close.

The third presenter, David Easterbrook of Montreal, was the most beneficial to a novice like me. Working with an ancient larch and a larch forest, both of which he collected on crown land in the peat bogs of northern Canada, Easterbrook taught as he styled. Because he is a teacher, he was able to tell us about larches and their natural growing conditions and about the tools, techniques, and materials that

MABS review

he was using, all while converting the larches into bonsai.

After all of the trees were completed, they were raffled off. A few lucky people, including Doug Taylor, went home with outstanding trees, styled by the experts. Doug's prize tree was a Chinese juniper, styled by Far-rand Bloch.

EXHIBIT MATERIAL and CRITIQUES

The exhibited trees in the Columbia Room represented the best work of members of the societies who are a part of the MidAtlantic Bonsai Societies. The quality and variety of the trees impressed JoAnn and me. We both feel that it will take years for us to achieve what we saw on display, if, indeed, we ever get that good.

It was during David Easterbrook's critique of the exhibit material that I learned the most. As he went from tree to tree, he pointed out improvements that could be made in the styling or exhibiting of every tree. I learned the importance of the pot, the stand, and the companion, in addition to helpful comments about each type of tree, its trunk shape, bark, branch position, foliage pads, etc. My head was spinning as I tried to absorb all that he was teaching us.

BANQUET and AWARDS

The banquet held on Saturday night was the only time during the festival that participants dressed up. Once again the food was well prepared and presented, with an entrée choice of prime rib or chicken.

After dinner, the winners of the awards of distinction were announced. The four awards

were the Artists' Award, the President's Award, the Exhibit Committee Award, and the People's Choice Award. Yama Ki Bonsai Society member Michael Pollock's juniper forest that won the People's Choice Award and the President's Award was my choice, too. I was pleased that despite my inexperience in bonsai, I could discern the best in a highly competitive field. Hideko Metaxas, the translator for Isao Omachi, was given well-deserved recognition for her contributions over the years to the MidAtlantic Bonsai Societies.

AUCTION and VENDORS

I was surprised at how many opportunities there were to spend money at the convention! Raffle tickets for each demo tree were \$2.00 each. In the back of the demonstration ballroom, tables contained donated items for a silent auction. JoAnn won several silent bids for pots, but unfortunately only a few turned out to be in good condition.

The Saturday night auction featured dozens of donated items that were auctioned off to benefit MidAtlantic's treasury. The items ranged from books and magazines to bonsai trees to tools to pots to Japanese scrolls. Some items generated active bidding, but most went for a relatively low price. I stayed for an hour and a half of the auction, then went to bed.

The large room with the vendors was tempting to anyone from a novice on up. The first tree that caught my eye was priced at \$545; the second, at \$1500. Just when I was beginning to wonder if I could afford anything in the room, JoAnn steered me to other vendors with more affordable merchandise. I eventually bought a lovely long-leaf ficus for \$60. Pots, tools, stands, and plants of all shapes, sizes, and prices were for sale.

Jo Ann and I learned so much

by attending the MidAtlantic Bonsai Societies Spring Festival. On our drive home, we agreed that we would attend again next year if our lives permitted. Next year I may even be ready to attend the workshops offered on Sunday afternoon by the experts. I encourage anyone in our club who is serious about bonsai to attend this worthwhile convention next year.

By Suzanne Kelley



Suzanne (left) and JoAnn at MABS
Photograph by Jeff Cohen

Many Great Photographs from the convention can be found online at:

www.midatlanticbonsai.freeservers.com

<http://forums.bonsaisite.com/index.php?showtopic=14190>

www.ArtofBonsai.org

www.flickr.com/photos/candyjshirey/sets/72157617381540042/with/3478796428/

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BONSAI SOCIETY OF GREATER SPRINGFIELD, MA

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Annual Bonsai Picnic, Come & Enjoy the Fun

Saturday 7/11/09 Rain Date 7/12/09 Hosted at the Berrouard's
508 Mountain Road, Wilbraham, MA 599-02190

BONSAI ON THE HILL

This provides the theme for this year's annual picnic. Activities will include an early morning demonstration on the **Art of Bonsai** by the gifted artist **Doug Taylor**. Later, this tree will be raffled. Throughout the day there will be a Free Bring Your Own Tree Workshop. Numerous and varied work stations will be available. Members may choose to work independently or cooperatively to create their special tree. Gentle guidance will be provided for new members.

The games of Bocce, Horseshoes, Backgammon and Billiards will be available for those who wish for something different. A very special auction of member donated items will complete the day.

The Bonsai Society of Greater Springfield will provide hamburgers, hot dogs and drinks. Members are encouraged to bring a food item. Pot luck options include: appetizers, fruit plates, salads and deserts.



B.S.G.S. Schedule of Events for 2009

Monthly Meetings, are held at Springfield Technical Community College, Armory St., Springfield, MA in the Putnam Building in room 316. Every third Tuesday at 7:30, unless stated otherwise. For directions visit our web site, www.SpringfieldBonsai.com.

Board Meetings, are held at various club members homes, location will be announced via e-mail and at the monthly meeting. First Tuesday of the month at 6:00, unless stated otherwise. All members are welcome to attend. Please contact host so they have a head count for dinner.

Workshops, Take place at Randall's Farms & Greenhouse, 631 Center St., Ludlow, MA unless stated otherwise in workshop description. Directions Take Mass pike (Rt90) to Ludlow exit take right onto Center St. (towards Belchertown) Randall's is about two miles down on left.

May 30, **Special Event**, Saturday 10 – 1:00, Bonsai Soil making workshop, At Doug T.'s home. Come help us sift bonsai and learn the basics of making your own members who assist get a special discounted rate of soil purchases.

June 2, **Board Meeting** Hosted by Al & Gerry G. at their home.

Monthly meeting at regular meeting location but at an Earlier Start Time 7:00pm

June 16, **Monthly Meeting** Visiting Artist Rodney Clemmons Bonsai demonstration and tree raffle.

Snacks: Suzanne K. Beverages Doug T.

June 16, **Workshop** With visiting Artist Rodney Clemmons at Sanctuary Bonsai in East Hartford CT.

This is a Bring your own tree event, but Sanctuary has many nice pre-bonsai trees available if you don't have a suitable workshop tree. Limited to 8 participants.

Directions to Sanctuary bonsai available at www.sanctuarybonsai.com

Signed up so far: Sandy S., Gerry G., Doug T.

July 7 – 13, **Special Event** the World Bonsai Convention in San Juan, Puerto Rico

Visit <http://www.worldbonsaiconvention2009.com/> for details

July 11, **Special Event** Annual Free Workshop, Summer Picnic, and Fund raising Auction

Hosted by Donna and Lee Berrouard in their wonderful Japanese style, garden.

Workshop 10:00 – 1:00, Picnic 1:00 – 2:00, Auction 2:00 – 4:00

August **Monthly Meeting** Road Trip/Workshop at bonsai Nursery.

September 13 & 14 **Special Event**, the annual Bonsai Societies of New England's "Bonsai Weekend" at Tower Hill Botanical Gardens. Get your trees ready! Set-up is on Friday afternoon Sept. 12 and Saturday the 13th. 8:00 – 10:00 am.

October 3rd and 4th, **Special Event**, our Annual Bonsai Exhibit at 16 Acres Garden Center in Springfield MA (Details TBA)



Doug Taylor's YEW exhibited at the MABS Spring Festival