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The Bonsai Society meets at the Bellerive Community Art Centre,  
17 Cambridge Rd, Bellerive at 7:30 pm on the third Tuesday of the month  
(February – November)

**Website:** [www.key.org.au/bonsai](http://www.key.org.au/bonsai)

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## Newsletter 194 – April 2009

**March Meeting:** Tuesday 17 March – It was lovely to see such a wonderful range of plants for sale, and Noel had a good selection of pots available as well. Will Fletcher provided an interesting discussion and demonstration on selection, preparation and development of native plants for bonsai, with emphasis placed on the importance of developing taper and nebari. His informative presentation will no doubt have inspired some of our newer members! The quite crowded display table had an array of trees some already displaying their lovely autumn colours.

**New Members:** At our March meeting President Noel welcomed new member Tegwen Carey. This month we welcome Andrew Bradbury as a new member.

**April Meeting:** Tuesday 21 April. Gill Roberts will be our presenter, discussing sekijōju – root-over-rock style (see additional notes).

**Display Table:** Please bring along your bonsai - autumn colour, root-over-rock, Launceston purchases and any problem trees.

**Workshop:** Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April 1-4 pm (cost to be confirmed at April meeting)

**Future Workshops:** Saturday 23/5, Saturday 25/7, Sunday 23/8

### Suggested possible outings for Sunday 21/6 and Saturday 19/9

- Digs – Conifers at Seven Mile Beach, Natives back of Geeveston.
- Viewing mature trees as inspiration for Bonsai. For example - Natives on Mt Wellington, Lake Dobson/Mt Field. European trees at our Hobart Botanical Gardens.

Your comments and volunteers to lead/co-ordinate these or other outings please.

### Hobart Horticultural Society Inc Shows

1, 2 & 3 May – Chrysanthemum & Floral Art Show (Hobart Town Hall) – drop off 7.00-7.30 pm on Thursday, and pick up by 4.15 pm on Sunday. Diana Jones will be selling plants at this display. Anyone interested in having Diana sell your plants, please leave them with Diana together with the price.

11, 12 & 13 September – Daffodil, Camellia & Floral Art Show (City Hall Hobart)

6 & 7 November – Rose, Iris & Floral Art Show (Hobart Town Hall)

### Royal Hobart Show

22 to 24 October 2009

### Bonsai Exhibitions & Conferences

22 to 25 May – “Shine on Bonsai” 22nd National Bonsai Convention, Royal on the Park, Brisbane see our notice board or [www.aabcltd.org](http://www.aabcltd.org) for details.

### Interstate Bonsai Society/Club Websites

WA – [www.bonsaisocietywa.com](http://www.bonsaisocietywa.com)

Vic – [www.bonsaisocietyvictoria.org](http://www.bonsaisocietyvictoria.org)

ACT – [www.cbs.org.au](http://www.cbs.org.au)

Aust – (Assoc of Austn Bonsai Clubs Ltd) [www.aabcltd.org](http://www.aabcltd.org)

Qld – [www.Bonsiasocietyqld.asn.au](http://www.Bonsiasocietyqld.asn.au)

## Sekijōju – Root-over-rock style:

In the root over rock style of bonsai the rock is now simply an appendage of the tree. The tree, rather than the rock, has become the focus of attention. This may well be the correct approach from the point of view of bonsai, but the loss of a certain charm and romanticism is sad. Trees grown in root over rock style are usually admired most for their beautiful roots.

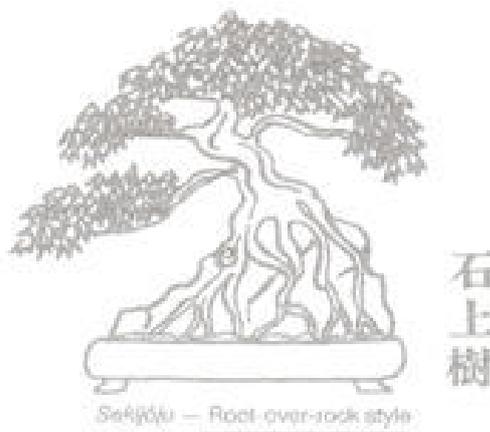
The root over rock style is technically very difficult to achieve. It can take many years for the roots to clasp a piece of rock tightly before it can be considered a good root over rock bonsai. This type of bonsai is usually started by draping the roots of a young tree over a piece of rock. The roots are then tied over the rock with plastic string or metal wire. Tree and rock are planted together in deep rich soil and the tree roots encouraged to grow downwards. The tree is left to grow in the ground for five to six years completely undisturbed. The roots and rock may be inspected every other year, but the tree itself should not be lifted.

When it is time to lift the tree some of the top branches should be reduced so that the tree does not become unstable. If on inspection, the roots appear to have clasped the rock well, the whole tree, including the main roots, should be severed and lifted out of the ground. The tree may now be planted in a deep training box for another couple of years so that the upper branches can be trained in the desired shape.

A good root over rock bonsai can take anything from four to ten years to create. The more vigorous species are the most common subjects as the whole process is less time consuming. Trident maples are therefore a good choice for root over rock. White pines are sometimes grown in this style, but take much longer. In theory of course, any tree can be trained in the root over rock style. It is merely a question of patience.

If a very beautiful piece of rock is used in conjunction with a root over rock tree, the composition as a whole must be very carefully designed and balanced. The exquisite and eye-catching features of the rock must not be obscured by draping roots, nor, by the same token, must the rock itself be so dramatic that the beauty of the tree is diminished. Ideally, the tree and the rock must form a unified whole.

From: "The Art of growing and keeping miniature trees" – Peter Chan.



Suitable Plants: Ones with thick fleshy roots, e.g. maples, elms, larch, etc. Pines and juniper take longer. Avoid cotoneaster and azalea – roots slow to thicken.

### Outing to "Etosha" Tasmania Bonsai Centre at Riverside Saturday 21 March.

Our keen group of eight members gathered at Hobart's TCA ground to car pool for our journey north. Thank you to Jill and Tony for being our drivers. Some early fog made the drive a little slow at first but this cleared relatively quickly. After a comfort stop at Campbell Town we continued on arriving at "Etosha" where we were warmly welcomed with refreshments and plenty of time to view the extensive bonsai collection, potensai, pots and tools available for sale.

On the sounding of a gong we gathered in the centre's workshop area to view a demonstration by Lynne Farrell with Jermaine Dailey assisting.

Materials: Cork oak bark from Victoria with a fibreglass housing at one end to hold the tree's root ball. *Juniperus squamata prostrata* pre-wired with no branches down one side. Muck rolls made from clay and peat moss to create a dam/wall to hold in soil. Wood screws and wire to secure the tree on the bark slab. Bonsai potting mix. Moss. Staples made from small pieces (recycled) bonsai wire to secure the moss. Misting spray bottle. Various bonsai tools.

From previous experience Lynne did not cut the under-trunk to encourage root development but laid and fashioned the trunk along the cork slab bending it back creatively. Jermaine drilled and screwed in wiring to hold the tree in place and the root ball was firmly secured in the fibreglass housing.

Using the clay and peat moss rolls a dam/wall was built around the newly formed mountain ridge forest and root ball. This wall was made high enough to retain bonsai potting mix which was placed and worked in to encourage roots to form. Moss which had been grown in trays was rolled out from its underside, turned over and placed over the potting mix and dam/wall. The moss was then secured in place with staples. Lynne regularly, throughout the demonstration, used water from a misting spray bottle to keep the root ball, soil and moss moist. The whole planting would then be placed in "ICU" (a well shaded moist environment) where it would remain for a week or two before being gradually brought out into morning sun, and later full sun.



In appreciation for the well received demonstration and wonderful experience Noel presented Lynne with a gift. Aaron arrived in time to chat with us before we completed our purchases and headed off to a small commercial nursery down the road at 2 New Ecclestone Road. The nursery is only open to the public on Saturdays and Mondays and is run by the owners of Grasshopper - Indoor Plant Hire and Eppo Groenewold horticulturist (who started with bonsai, as a hobby, and then studied horticulture). A quick visit to Bunnings at King Meadows and home. A fun and relaxing day was had by all.