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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.chooseit.org.au/bonsai

Newsletter No 214 – February 2011

Our first meeting for this year is Tuesday, 15th of February commencing at 7.30pm. Look forward to seeing as many of you as possible, and remember to bring along your plants for the display table. As it has been surprisingly cool and a trifle damp over the last couple of months, our bonsai have had a gentle introduction to summer – compared with some previous years. It's amazing the difference cooler temperatures, and water make to our plants and gardens – especially rainwater.

Both the Christmas barbecue at Island Bonsai and the January “bring your own” were very pleasant get-togethers and it was really great to see so many members and their “other halves” enjoy the food and companionship on both days. The weather was a little cooler in December, but we had a beautiful sunny day with a light breeze at Gill and Glen Roberts' home in Howrah. As always, there were a few early Christmas presents purchased at Island Bonsai, Will's display being such a wonderful inspiration. Thank you to Will and to Gill and Glen for their hospitality.

Reminder: A letter has been received from the Hobart Horticultural Society reminding us of their Dahlia, Gladiolus & Floral Art Show which will be held on the 11th and 12th March 2011. Attention is drawn to the venue, which has been changed to the **Hobart City Hall** instead of the Town Hall as it was last year. They would like us to display our bonsai as usual and advise that extra space is available if we would like to make it larger. So come on everyone, let's see a special display of plants from as many members as possible. If you are unable to bring your plant along, someone may be able to help out – but please let us know. Plants (well-watered) need to be delivered on Thursday between 4 – 6.30pm in time for setting up the display. And don't forget to include information on your plants.

Next Meeting: Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, 15th March.

Bonsai Calendar for 2011 has been included with this newsletter, although certain details have yet to be finalised. These will be updated at our monthly meetings and via the newsletters. Your attention is drawn to the alternating venues for our workshops, two of which will be held at Island Bonsai, the others at Bellerive.

Members' Questions

How much new growth should be pruned off deciduous trees in summer? Does it depend on the style you are aiming for, or are there different guidelines for different species?

How often should you spray moss in the warmer weather, or should it be left to die (which is what happens) and allow it to come back next winter? Presumably this is dependent on where you live and where the plants are situated.

(Answers can be provided to the Editor via email, post or phone for publication in next month's newsletter.)

An Autumn visit to Japan

I was fortunate enough to be able to spend three weeks in Japan in the last half of October/early November 2010. The core purpose of the trip was to visit the heartland of bonsai, a sabbatical if you will, but also to study and enjoy their iconic gardens and experience also, Japanese life and culture.

Happily the trip was a success on all counts! I was especially interested to see how I would enjoy Japanese bonsai, because I have been immersed in my own attempts at "Australian" styling of bonsai with Tasmanian native plants now for 15 years, and many of the photos of Japanese and other northern hemisphere bonsai are not to my liking.

As it turned out, I liked a lot of the bonsai I saw, but just as in bonsai exhibitions I have seen on the Australian mainland, there were also many that didn't appeal. (Luckily, when I returned, I still liked mine!)

The highlight of my first day on the bonsai trail, was to discover a brand new bonsai museum, located in Bonsai Cho (bonsai village), in a suburb of Tokyo where there are also a congregation of bonsai nurseries. The museum courtyard (pictured at right and below), was beautifully set out with striking landscaping, and plenty of space to admire the bonsai.

The courtyard was surrounded by handsome, modern buildings on three sides, housing beautiful big bonsai in exquisite tokonoma settings, as well as bonsai history and memorabilia. The whole experience was totally captivating, and if I'd taken a packed lunch, I would have had a lunch break, then gone through the museum again!



We visited a half dozen bonsai nurseries in bonsai cho, ranging from the not-so-well-off, slightly run down business, to the obviously-doing-very-well nurseries, with recent infrastructure spending. Most had very little English speaking staff, and obviously assumed we wouldn't be buying (they were right), so we didn't do much other than look. Most didn't allow photos, but from those that did, the following six images are from these nurseries.



My knowledge of exotic bonsai is not very good, so I'm afraid I can't put names on these (except maybe the bottom left.....Trident maple?) Anyway, it was a delight to see the nurseries.....there was a lot of variety. We travelled on to Kyoto and spent many excellent days exploring beautiful gardens. Nearly all the trees and shrubs in gardens, both private and temple gardens, had experienced a lot of pruning and shaping over the years. Often just walking down the street, one would see a pine growing happily out of a tiny courtyard, and always seriously pruned and shaped!





The top four photos are from various gardens in Kyoto and the bottom two are from a delightful little shohin nursery, also in Kyoto. This was my favourite nursery. It seemed truly amazing that such perfect little trees, displaying so much character and age, could be kept so healthfully in such tiny pots! It's an amazing world and it was a privilege and a delight to see this corner of it, and to share some of it with you.

Will Fletcher

Birthday Greetings: to those members who had a birthday in January – your birthstone is a Garnet. And to those celebrating birthdays in February – your birthstone is an Amethyst.

According to Chinese Astrology, 2011 is the year of the Hare/Rabbit. These are sensitive and intuitive creatures that love the company of others, seeking the warmth and security of a one-to-one relationship. They make responsive companions, tactful, respectful and sympathetic. Hares/rabbits will do anything to keep the peace, they will back off at the first sign of trouble. Naturally reserved, they may withdraw into the safety of their own private, untouchable world. They are highly cautious and seek the tranquillity and security of a real home above all things. Often lucky financially, they have an uncanny sense for picking a winner and make good gamblers, disciplined as they are by their innate caution. Are you born in the year of the Hare or Rabbit? (Courtesy of “*The Birthday Book*”, copyright Colour Library Books.)

Your Bonsai Calendar for 2011

Feb. 15	Meeting –
Mar. 11-12	Dahlia, Gladioli & Floral Art Show – Hobart City Hall
Mar. 15	Meeting –
Mar.	Field Trip/Dig – further discussion/information
Apr. 19	Meeting –
Apr. 30 (Saturday)	Workshop – Island Bonsai
Apr. 29-May 1	Chrysanthemum & Floral Art Show
May 17	Meeting –
May 22 (Sunday)	Workshop – Bellerive Comm. Arts Centre
June 21	Meeting –
June 25 (Saturday)	Workshop – Island Bonsai
July 19	AGM/Meeting –
July 24(Sunday)	Workshop – Bellerive Comm. Arts Centre
Aug. 16	Meeting –
Aug. 20 (Saturday)	Workshop – Bellerive Comm. Arts Centre
Sept. 9-10	Daffodil, Camellia & Floral Art Show
Sept. 20	Meeting –
Oct. 18	Meeting –
Oct. 19 - 22	Royal Hobart Show
Nov. 4 & 5	Rose, Iris & Floral Art Show
Nov. 15	Meeting –
December	Christmas Barbecue – date/venue to be decided