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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](http://www.chooseit.org.au/bonsai)**

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## **Newsletter No 216 – April 2011**

**This month's Meeting is on Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> April commencing at 7.30pm** the subject of which will be a presentation on the use of native plants as bonsai subjects, by Will Fletcher and Ambrose Canning following their attendance at the Canberra Symposium. Members are invited to bring any native species they are training as bonsai or, if they don't have any, something else for the display table.

President Noel Kemp opened the March meeting at 7.45pm welcomed 16 members including new member Zoe Lowe, and visitor Phil Dilger, who has since joined us. Welcome Phil. Apologies were received from Will Fletcher and Ambrose Canning, and Diana Jones has been on the sick list. We look forward to seeing Diana at our next meeting.

Our treasurer, Stuart Clutterbuck reported that we have some \$2400 in the bank account, which puts us in a much healthier position than this time last year, thanks to our exhibition, and a few new members.

Gill reported that we had 40 plants on display at City Hall during the Dahlia & Gladioli show.

**Debco potting mix** will be available at \$10 per 5 litre bag. Anyone who has yet to order, please contact Gill Roberts – Tel. 6247 9719 to be added to the list.

**Sunday April 17<sup>th</sup> dig for native species near Geeveston. Members are advised to meet at the Information Centre in Geeveston at 11am.** Don't forget to bring along digging implements, secateurs, spraying bottle (filled), foam boxes and/or plastic bags etc. And it might be wise to include something for protection in case the weather is inclement! Food and a flask of tea/coffee or cool drinks would be worth bringing too.

**Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> December** is the date for our Christmas barbecue. The venue this year will be Risdon Brook Park where we have a large colourbond hut (just in case we can't organise good weather!) complete with gas barbecue and a couple of tables with bench seats. Further details will be supplied closer to the date, but at least it can be noted on your bonsai calendar now.

**First Workshop:** Saturday April 30<sup>th</sup> at Island Bonsai commencing 12.30-1pm. Directions are given for alternative routes:

**Route 1:** Follow Davey Street (B64/ Fern Tree & Mt. Wellington) and continue till you reach Chimney Pot Road (a large board indicates "Plants of Tasmania Nursery"), turn left and follow this very winding road which will bring you to a "T" junction marked Hall Street, turn right, travel about 600 meters, turn left (sign indicates "Island Bonsai") parking is available.

**Route 2:** Follow Davey Street as above, but bear slight left at sign indicating "Waterworks", and follow Romilly Street, turn right into Waterworks Road and travel approx. 5kms, and turn right at Hall Street.

(A list of items to bring for the workshop appears on page 4.)

**Next Meeting:** Tuesday, 17<sup>th</sup> May at Bellerive Community Arts Centre will continue the Native Theme with Will Fletcher's demonstration using Tea Tree and other natives as bonsai.

**Events: Chrysanthemum & Floral Art Show will be held from April 29<sup>th</sup> – May 1<sup>st</sup> at the Hobart Town Hall.** Members wishing to display bonsai should bring them to the Town Hall on Thursday, 28<sup>th</sup> April. Committee members may not be on hand until a little later to set up, but members can leave their bonsai from 2pm onwards. Please leave a plant list with your name on it to assist those setting up, and ensure plants have been well-watered prior to delivery. They will receive a light misting during the show period. Plants can be picked up on Sunday, 1<sup>st</sup> May after 4pm.

The raffle of a Camellia was won by Leslie Gillie.

**Display Table:** Given the demonstration's focus was on ivy and cotoneasters, a good selection of both appeared on the display table.

Noel had several Cotoneaster species including *thymifolius*, *horizontalis* (in a root-over rock style), *franchetti* (a good species for bonsai); Rose also displayed cot. *franchetti*; Phil showed his Corokia and an Ulmus (advice here to keep tops cut back to force growth down, or these plants will die)

Meeting closed at 8.30pm, after which Gill Roberts showed us how easy it is to create bonsai using ivy and cotoneasters. Gill had a collection of both, some of which had been potted up for demonstration at last year's Hobart Show. Using her words "I went mad with the secateurs!", she provided photos showing the "before", and plants "after" having gone to work on them. She encouraged us "not to be scared and take the plunge". Cotoneasters can be worked on at any time of the year. One specimen already had a bend in it, Gill having shaped it further to emphasize the bend. Most plants were only about a year old. We were invited to have a go, so under Gill's guidance one or two followed suit. Cotoneasters are very forgiving, producing new growth quickly, thus affording the novice to correct mistakes quite easily. Given they are considered weeds and grow profusely, they make ideal specimens for beginners to practice on!

Some time ago, Gill had been advised that the trunk was the first thing to look at before deciding what to do with the plant – the trunk defines its style e.g. formal or informal upright, literati, windswept, cascade and also determines the all-important "front" of the tree. The emerging trunk should appear to rise from the roots with great power, and gradually taper off towards its apex. Branches give the bonsai its shape by the way in which they are pruned and arranged. Heavy or mature branches, and those which hang down, give the impression of age – qualities often looked for in conifers. Branches should alternate in their position going up the trunk, with first (lowest) being either left or right, the second on the opposite side to the first and the third to the back. Front-facing branches are better placed at a slight angle so they do not protrude directly to the front. The first branch on S-shaped or informal upright trees should emerge from the outside elbow of the first bend, but that may not always be so.

Wiring – if you are intending to wire a plant, let the soil dry out a bit prior to doing the wiring, as it makes it easier to shape the plant, and reduces the risk of breaking the branch. Regularly check plants which have been wired to ensure the wire is not cutting into the bark.

**World Bonsai Day** – will be celebrated on Saturday, 14<sup>th</sup> May. It honours the memory of Mr. Saburo Kato, bonsai master and founder of the World Bonsai Friendship Federation (WBFF), who was born 15<sup>th</sup> May, 1915. He believed bonsai has the power to unite people, by acting as a bridge to international friendship and peace.

**Birthday Greetings** to members celebrating in April. Your birthstone is a Diamond,



## Things to Bring to Workshops

Workshops are probably the best way to learn more about Bonsai, and while everyone works on their own trees, the advantage is that plenty of advice is always available from those with more experience, as well as an extra pair of hands if needed. Following is a list of items to bring to each workshop:

1. \$3.00 per member, which covers the cost of hiring the hall.
2. A plastic cover for the tables, alternatively a large plastic bag will do.
3. The most important thing – a tree or trees to work on. You can observe, but it is much more rewarding working on your own tree. If you have nothing else, try a cotoneaster from the garden if it is your first time.
4. Potting mix.
5. Gravel, preferably in with your potting mix.
6. Any tools you will need. Most of our tools are very simple, but if you do need to buy something, Noel may be able to arrange a purchase.
7. A rubbish bin or bag to remove your waste soil and trimmings. This material must not be placed in the dustbins.
8. Mesh to cover drainage holes. Old flyscreen from windows or doors is adequate for this.
9. A turntable makes it much easier to see all sides of a tree, but is not absolutely essential. An upturned plastic pot will help.
10. Moss – if you can find some. It helps improve the look of certain trees.
11. Pots and wire if you have them. Both items are available for purchase at the workshops, but remember to bring some extra money to pay for them. Wire varies in price per meter, depending on its thickness. Noel has a large collection of pots for sale, as does Will Fletcher at Island Bonsai. (Having your tree on hand when you select a pot does help!)
12. A plastic spray bottle filled with water – soil mixes can be a little dry and it helps to settle your plant into its new home!
13. A plate of something to share for afternoon tea – adds to the pleasure of the afternoon.

Perhaps the list can be placed somewhere handy (bonsai toolbox for example) as a reminder of what to bring.