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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 221 – September 2011**

**This month's meeting will be** held on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2011 during which Stuart will be discussing Raft Style bonsai.

At our August meeting, which was presided over by new Vice President, Ambrose Canning, numbers were a little down, with 9 members, and 2 visitors, Cameron Wadley and Trish Hosking attending. There were three apologies, and we do hope Lesley Gillie is making good progress following spinal surgery. The main item on the agenda asked members if they were interested in a workshop in September, which would focus on conifers. On a show of hands, it was agreed, the venue being Island Bonsai on Saturday, 24<sup>th</sup> September, from 1-4pm.

**Next Meeting:** will be held on Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> October, the theme will focus on “Pinching out spring Growth”.

**Workshop:** as mentioned, there will be a workshop on Saturday, 24<sup>th</sup> September at Island Bonsai – the focus will be on conifers and, while some members may not have conifers, you are still welcome to participate – cost \$3 and something to share at afternoon tea.

**Reminders:** Rose, Iris & Floral Art Show, Hobart Town Hall, 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> November 2011.  
Christmas barbecue on December 4<sup>th</sup>, at Risdon Brook Dam.  
January barbecue – 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup>, venue 12 Clearwater Court, Blackmans Bay.  
25th National Bonsai Convention in Melbourne, from 18-21 May, 2012.

**Birthday Greetings:** Celebrating this month? Your birthstone is the beautiful sapphire. Enjoy!  
“A maiden born when Autumn leaves are rustling in September's breeze,  
A sapphire on her brow should bind, 'Twill cure diseases of the mind.”

**Raffle:** Prize was an Eriostemon, which was won by Herbert.

**Display Table:** With the theme for the evening relevant to “wiring” there were some good examples and good advice:  
Ambrose brought in the Cedar he spent so many hours wiring – I'm sure he will know exactly when to remove it! Also a prostrate Kunzea and a Sheok. Gill's Copper Beach has been wired because the ends always seem to “flip” back, and she had a flowering plum with lovely pink blossom. She pointed out that Maples need to be closely watched, especially if wiring is done just prior to bud opening, but the best time to wire is as soon as they have lost their leaves, as the wire can be left on for longer. Gill also suggested the use of nuts and bolts are good for weighing down branches.  
Stuart showed us a maple badly scarred with “tram lines” (Herbert's description for wire marks!) . Tony suggested he plant it in a larger pot and let it grow on a bit, as it's still young, the marks will most likely grow out.

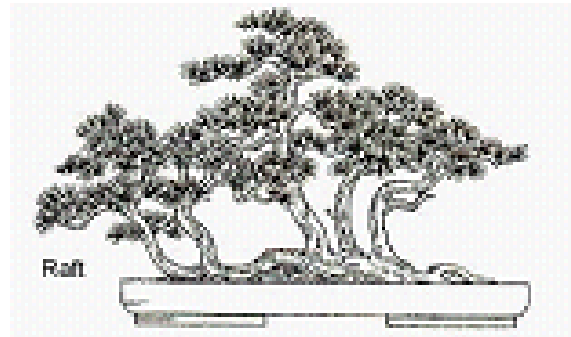
Yours truly thought there might be problems with a Chinese Elm and a Callitris, but took heart from Tony that, being young, they have time to grow out! I'll make a genuine effort to attend my wired bonsai with more attention.

It was determined that Stuart should receive the prize for nearly strangling his Maple!

**Meeting Closed:** approx. 8.30pm after which some discussion ensued with regards to wiring, and the various methods which can be applied (some alternatives reported in August newsletter.

Ambrose talked about the She-oak and problem of wiring because the branches take off and increase rapidly. He will loose-wire it to avoid any damage.

Raft style is the theme for this month's demonstration, and it's interesting how often we see this in nature – a tree, blown over in a storm or by gale force winds, continues to grow, and what were once its branches become a series of trunks.



In bonsai, it is possible to create a very effective, interesting “raft” using material on which growth development has been rather one-sided.

There are two methods by which a “raft” can be created. One, “*Ikadabuki*”, in which the trunk is buried in the ground horizontally, and the branches trained to give the effect of individual trees.



The trunk's function is to provide a firm, running buttress, but it may be slender with many curves, or short and thick, depending on the effect required. As the “raft” is a style from which the trunk base controls certain elements, it is possible to create “variations”.



For example, if the trunk base is compact and dominant, its branches/trees are set in a simple row – called a “straight line variant”, most suited to pines, junipers, cryptomeria and spruce. The main “tree” sets the style and those on either side form the “variant. This can be a simple broad dome, pyramid or major canopy effect, trunks usually upright or slanting



The other is “Netsuranari” in which several trunks grow from a root lying horizontally, thus producing the *effect of a group planting*. Suckering species and layerings provide the best material, and it’s a good style for trees with more delicate characteristics.

Care of your bonsai in Spring – some ideas.

Many books and journals published about bonsai come from the northern hemisphere, something one needs to be mindful of when garnishing information on what to do and when. In our part of the world, spring covers September through November and is probably the most important period of the year for our bonsai to ensure their health and well-being is not put at risk. Watering, feeding and maintenance of trees are important as they move out of dormancy and into mass production – foliage, flowers and fruits are bursting into life.

Before they begin to leaf, deciduous trees should already have been re-potted, and structural pruning carried out. By late spring they will require their first pruning and pinching.

Fertilizer should never be applied to trees which have recently been root-pruned and re-potted as root scorch may occur. Wait for three or four weeks before feeding. As evergreen trees start their growth much earlier than deciduous, fertilizer can be applied at the beginning of spring, whereas deciduous trees such as maples should be left until the new leaves have hardened. On the subject of fertilizer – too much can be more harmful than none at all, and one should never feed a sick or dying tree. It was suggested that diluted fertilizer should be about the colour of weak tea. Small amounts applied at regular intervals are more effective than large doses now and then.

Conifers, pines and junipers can be wired for shaping and it’s a good time to re-pot these evergreens. Some, such as Juniper and larch can have new soft shoot tips pinched out, thus encouraging more shoots to grow. New candles on pines can be pinched back.

Any wiring which has been applied should be checked regularly to ensure it is not cutting in to branches and trunks. If necessary, remove and rewire more loosely.

Moderate watering as required, increasing the amount as temperatures increase – without over watering!

Towards the end of early spring, hardwood cuttings can be taken and seeds sown.

General maintenance: ensure tools and equipment are kept clean, cutting implements sharp and pots clean and ready for use throughout the year. Potting mixes can be blended in preparation, gravel rinsed to remove excess dust, moss gathered for replacement when re-potting.

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**TIP:** To clean your tools, place them in a shallow container and spray an ample amount of WD 40 or Selleys over them until there is depth of a couple of mm of spray. Leave them to soak for as long as you wish and “Presto” – all the stains and marks can be wiped off.  
(Courtesy of Mick Balzary – “Wirrabara” newsletter)

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Another tale from Noel’s travel diary entitled: “A Rude Awakening!”

“I was driving along happily enough, at about 70km/hr (as is my want, on smaller roads), south of St John’s (the capital of NfL), when suddenly, apropos not being particularly tired or sleepy, I went to sleep!

I awoke – and I found out the in between bits, by retracing my “steps” when I came to a rest/halt – roaring along at 70km/h, still, 2 m below road level, in a culvert!!

In front of me I could see a big pipe coming into the culvert, from under the road, “oh, oh” I thought “that is going to take out the undercarriage” as I careered along. That’s the trouble with automatics, when your foot comes off the accelerator the engine doesn’t slow the car down.

Finally I must have awoken fully and though “I had better try and get out of here” but as I started steering up the 45-50 deg edge of the culvert I realized that I had Buckley’s and the car stalled.

On opening the driver’s door – on the downhill side of the car – it hit the bottom of the culvert, which was actually a stream, with 10-15cm of water flowing in it – I could hardly get out. Scrambling up out of the culvert I stood a bit bewilderedly on the road and pondered my next move. A couple of bikies came along and seeing that they could help getting the car out, they offered to get help at the next town.

To cut a long story short: every car that went past stopped to see if they could help, one car with two fellas in it, went off to get their big Ford ute (and they are huge vehicles here) 4X4, and meanwhile, being a pleasant, sunny, Saturday arvo, there were now about 8-10 fellas, mostly older, with accents I could hardly decipher! They were so friendly and helpful, asking how things were, where I was from, lucky how nothing was damaged, or injured, and so on.

Your man the bikies had seen arrived with a tow rope and a big Chev 4X4 ute (the Ford fellas, didn’t have a good connection to fit underneath my car – a Dodge Caliber [sic]). I drove another 100m along the floor of the culvert to where the drop off was neither so high, nor so steep an angle, and with my engine going, as well as your man pulling, out I came! Phewww!

Then came all the “what ifs”. I was amazed – nothing untoward happened as a result of my rapid descent off the road. When I looked at the set-up I could not believe it! Not a scratch or a dent on the car, nothing happened to me – except I was rudely awoken!”