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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 229 – June 2012

President, Noel Kemp, opened the 15th of May meeting at 7.45pm welcoming 19 members, with an apology from Will Fletcher. Visitors included Rodney Anderson, as well as Jan Fleming and Simon Marshall who have joined our Society – welcome to both of you.

Members who had indicated their intentions to participate/observe at Andrew Ward's workshops were asked to pay their dues, and everyone was reminded of the demonstration at St. Marks Hall. The Secretary reported that a notice of the event was placed on the Southern Cross Community Noticeboard, and it had also appeared in the Mercury's Community diary.

In the absence of key committee members Noel, Ambrose and Will, it was agreed that the AGM would be put forward to August 21st in lieu of July 17th's meeting. Members are reminded that all positions are declared open, and nomination forms will be available at the June and July meetings. Membership renewal is also due from 1st July – single fees \$30, couple/family \$40. Both forms are attached at the end of this newsletter.

From the Library: David Budd has decided to take a well-earned break, having performed his librarian duties since 1995. However, he will be available to assist his replacement. A big thanks to you David for a job well done!

This Month's Meeting: 19th June 2012 – would members who worked on trees at Andrew's workshops like to bring them along for discussion. There were some dramatic results and it will be interesting to see how they develop over time.

On the Bonsai Calendar: June 19th Meeting
June 23rd Workshop at Island Bonsai

Raffle: Prizes were won by Heather (a pot); and Rose won a pair of wire cutters.

Birthday Greetings: Although it's our first month of winter, that's no reason not to enjoy your birthday - so very warm greetings to all those celebrating birthdays in June. You have a choice of agate, pearl, moonstone or alexandrite as your birthstones. Libra is an air sign. Air signs are mentally active, rational and communicative. Gemini is a mutable sign. These signs are changeable and supremely adaptable. (Editor's Note: I have two connections with June - my mother will be 92 on the 11th, and on our voyage to Australia, my father gave me a moonstone necklace which I think he bought during our visit to Sri Lanka (known as Ceylon in those days).

July Meeting: will be held on July 17th commencing at 7.30pm. Stuart will be giving a presentation, details of which will be announced in next month's newsletter. (Members, please remember that the AGM will be held at the August meeting.)

Display Table: Rob White brought in a pomegranate complete with flowers and fruit, also a lovely pyracantha; Stuart's Chinese Elm displayed pink autumn foliage, and he had a Hemlock in a literati style; Diana had drastically pruned her fuchsia and she showed a lovely pink azalea; Ambrose brought in a small Tea Tree; Richard displayed a podocarpus; and Noel had a variety of

maples and cotoneaster. He also had a Snake bark maple which tends to have fairly large leaves. The best time to defoliate these is at the end of spring by removing the leaves NOT the stalk.

Rob White spoke briefly on his research into the various fertilisers, liquid, soluble powder, organic and inorganic used in growing bonsai. He also provided a print out to members which should prove useful when deciding what to feed, when and how much.

(Editor: If there are any members who didn't receive the print out, and would like a copy, could they let me know.)

Meeting closed at 8.50pm

Literati style:

During the Sung dynasty in China, landscape paintings by scholars of Confucianism, philosophy and the arts – the Literati, or men of letters –often depicted tempest-gnarled trees growing on mountainous terrain. These trees had very few branches and those they had were usually growing at the apex of a long slender trunk.

Literati style is unique because the conventional rules applied to the shaping of an ordinary bonsai cannot be properly applied to a tree with very few branches and a long slender trunk. It truly requires personal artistic expression.

(The above comments from Chye Tan's book "The spirit of Bonsai Design – Combine the power of Zen and Nature".)

On researching further information about literati or bunjin, the following information describes some common characteristics which may help provide a better understanding of this bonsai style:-

the pot used is generally round, drum-shaped on edge, and is raised on three legs;

the front of the tree tends to be less important than it is in other styles;

planting is light, airy, sparse and abstract;

branches are delicately positioned to elevate this fragility;

the slender trunk is free of scars or projections, and the curves are restrained, not exaggerated;

the foliage mass is sparse and compact, and does not usually find itself within a compact foliage triangle.

(The above comments attributed to Herb L. Gustafson in his book "The Bonsai Workshop")

Having read the above, one can understand Noel's comment that it is the most difficult to train. For his demonstration Noel chose a Monterey Cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa*).



Noel wrapped the slender trunk in wet raffia to protect it and reduce the risk of it cracking during shaping. He used 3 wires up the tree, and one which was wrapped round the trunk in the usual way (the main problem at this point was being able to keep the three wires evenly spaced while wrapping the fourth over them and round the trunk). Then he began the task of shaping and twisting the trunk as he wanted it. He may leave the wire on until November, but will need to check it in the interim to ensure it does not cut into the slender trunk.

Aerial layered Red Barked Dogwood (*Cornus alba*)

Ambrose commenced this technique at the July 2010 meeting, and followed up at the July 2011 meeting to show us the results. The experiment consists of a multiple group of cuttings planted through holes drilled in an aluminium plate. The idea being to force the trunks to fill the holes then swell out above them, developing new roots above the holes which, hopefully, would fuse together, resulting in a multi-trunked tree with wide trunk base and great surface roots. The clump is now forming quite well, and Ambrose trimmed the branches back to encourage new growth, as well as thinning out those he considered unnecessary. This particular style is not often seen in bonsai, and the aim of the exercise is to grow a medium sized, multi-trunked bonsai, in particular to show off the attractive red coloured trunks and branches.

Ambrose also talked about his bonsai feeding regime, starting off with a low nitrogen fertiliser such as Seasol, then using Charlie Carp, followed by Aquasol during the summer.



Top L: Rob White's pomegranate; R: Lovely autumn colour
Bottom L: A packed house! R: Stuart's Chinese Elm
Photos courtesy of Ambrose Canning



May has been a busy month as far as bonsai is concerned.

The Melbourne Convention was most interesting and there will be more on this in next month's newsletter.

Our normal workshop, which was held on the 20th May.

And, of course, we also had a weekend of workshops with Andrew Ward which, I feel sure those who participated, and those who observed, found very informative and full of surprises. There were one or two who seemed a little startled at so much loss of foliage in the process of styling their tree! Others surprised at the dramatic effect after the last wire and bend were in place! As one person commented afterwards, "It was like a breath of fresh air!"

The following photos are from the stunning display at the convention.



Rose She-oak (*Allocasuarina torulosa*)
13cm nursery pot purchase in 1989.
Trained in a box for 5 years then styled
in 1996 and put in a bonsai pot.

English Elm (*Ulmus procera*)
Collected mid 1980's, grown in a
box until 2002 then potted into
bonsai pot. Current front and pot
selected 2006





Hoop Pine (*Araucaria cunninghamii*)
6 year old starter stock in 1966. Twisted roots were already established. A major restyling done in 1992 to remove one of the two forked leaders.



This one marked the entrance to the convention display.
English Elm (*Ulmus procera*) Cow chewed elm collected in 1977. Training has been to reflect the original form, Semi-cascade style