



**President: Noel Kemp**  
☎ (03) 6243 6296

**Secretary: Evelyn Black**  
12 Clearwater Court  
Blackmans Bay, TAS 7052  
☎ (03) 6229 5741  
E-mail: [e.black@bigpond.com](mailto:e.black@bigpond.com)

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 232 – September 2012–**

Our August meeting, which also included the AGM, was opened by Vice President Ambrose Canning, who welcomed 18 members and visitor, Jon Bouffard. There were 3 apologies.

As there was no business arising from the minutes of last year's AGM, and the President's report had been published and accepted, Treasurer Stuart Clutterbuck presented his report for the 2011-12 year. This was accepted and the committee for 2012-13 was duly elected consisting of the following:

President, Noel Kemp; Vice-President, Ambrose Canning; Treasurer, Stuart Clutterbuck; Secretary, Evelyn Black; committee members Gill Roberts, Will Fletcher, Tony Brown, and Heather Wiggers who is our new librarian.

Under general business, Vice President Ambrose thanked the outgoing committee for its work of the previous year, with a special thank you to Will Fletcher for the use of his Island Bonsai premises for our workshops and generous discount to members on purchases. Rob White proposed a special thank you to David Budd for his efforts in keeping track of our library collection, and to past Vice President, Herbert Harding for his years of enthusiastic service to the Society. Treasurer Stuart asked that a special resolution be moved that the Society apply for an audit exemption, and an auditor not be appointed for the coming year, as per Clause 9 of our Constitution. This motion was passed.

The AGM closed at 8pm and was followed by a normal monthly meeting, at which the following issues were discussed and decisions made:

- Beginner's classes –request for expressions of interest from members – agreed to start workshops 1 hour earlier with an experienced member available to those requiring assistance;
- Members concur that workshops are invaluable to enhance the bonsai experience, and it was agreed that an additional workshop will be available on Saturday, 20<sup>th</sup> October at Island Bonsai, with the possibility of another in November (to be decided by show of interest);
- Christmas barbecue and January get-together – due to lack of interest should we still have them – barbecue has been brought forward to the last weekend in November to avoid clashing with Christmas – a booking has been made for Saturday, 24<sup>th</sup> November at Risdon Brook Park. And a get-together will be held at Island Bonsai on Sunday, 20<sup>th</sup> January 2013.

Other matters included a reminder to those who have not yet paid their membership that it is overdue.

It was noted that former president of the Hobart Horticultural Society, Graham Verrier, when giving his final report, included a thank you to our Society for our ongoing bonsai display at each of the Flower Shows held throughout the year.

**This Month's Meeting:** Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> September 2012 commencing at 7.30pm. Ambrose will be our presenter on the night and will provide an update on his aerial layering (see page 2).

**Next Workshop:** Sunday, September 23<sup>rd</sup> at Island Bonsai. Don't forget the earlier start of 12 noon for those who would like some form of assistance or advice. An experienced member will be available.

**October Meeting:** Will be held on Tuesday, 16<sup>th</sup> October – topic and presenter to be advised.

**Events:** November 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> Rose, Iris & Floral Art Show to be held at the Town Hall.  
November 10<sup>th</sup> – Ranelagh Flower Show (venue may be shifted to Franklin), but we have permission from Forestry to go on a dig for native species.  
November 24<sup>th</sup> – barbecue at Risdon Brook Park

**Raffle:** A pot (donated by the Society) won by Heather; wire (donated by Rob White) won by Stuart; and a set of spray nozzles won by Alison.

**Birthday Greetings:** For those born in the month of September, your birthstone is sapphire. Virgo remains your star sign until 24<sup>th</sup> of September when Libra takes over. Virgo being an earth sign is described as practical, realistic and restrained, while Librans are portrayed as seekers after perfection and harmony, passionately believing in fairness and equality – full of charm and style. Libra is a positive or masculine sign, having the tendency towards self-expression and spontaneity. King Richard, the Lionheart was born 8<sup>th</sup> September 1157, and Sophia Loren was born on the 20<sup>th</sup> September 1934. British admiral, Horatio Nelson was born on 29<sup>th</sup> September, 1758.

**Display Table:** Heather brought in a juniper which is showing good potential, also a box being trained in a broom style, which had been recently removed from the garden – originally nursery stock from 1993. Gill showed us the azalea which had nearly died last year, but seems to have recovered well, she also had a grevillea *australis* (prostrate form) and a plum in a windswept style beginning to show its pretty pink blossom. Will's mountain berry displayed pretty pink ball-shaped flowers. Diana brought along a Huon Pine and a creeping strawberry. And Alison's banksia serrata, which she deliberately burnt a few months ago, now has new shoots appearing. Simon brought along some small pots he made himself, which would be very suitable for companion planting to display with bonsai.

**Tip:** repot Azaleas when they have finished flowering, or by December if they haven't flowered.

**Meeting closed** at 8.45pm after which Will Fletcher talked about the use of *Melaleuca ericifolia* (Swamp paperbark), and *Melaleuca squarrosa* (Scented paperbark) as bonsai subjects. Will has travelled widely throughout Tasmania observing the island's native species in their many diverse forms, subjected to a range of weather conditions, which have all played their part in creating weird and wonderful specimens that we, as bonsai enthusiasts continue to strive for. Nature's art forms are all around us – we only need open our eyes to see!

**A reminder to all members** – if you have something of interest or an experience you would like to share, something about bonsai you would like answered or would like to pass on to others, it can be published in the newsletter. I'm happy to receive via email, or post (my typing speed is still pretty good, and I think I can still decipher handwriting!)

### **Ambrose's September Demonstration:**

This is a continuation of my torturing of some unsuspecting little plants, or should I say carefully developing and training future bonsai masterpieces. You can choose which. You can also refer back to newsletter numbers 202 (late 2009), 218 (June 2011) and 219 (July 2011) to follow their past work and development. The trees I will bring along are:

- Winter Sweet (*Chimonanthus praecox*), a deciduous shrub from China, flowers on bare wood in mid-winter

- Sassafras (*Atherosperma moschatum*), a Tasmanian native tree from the wetter temperate rainforest areas of our State
- Variegated Maple (*Acer* -----) – although I will already have had to repot this I will bring it along so you can judge its progress.

The Variegated Maple was previously air layered to reduce its trunk length, to remove a bulge in the trunk and to improve its root base or root spread. It had been successfully separated from its old roots after layering, but it only had developed roots on three sides, so one side had a hole in the surface root spread. I had cut the trunk and applied rooting hormone in the area of missing roots and I am about to remove it from the pot and soil to see if it has developed more roots. But as it is starting to shoot already I can't wait for the next meeting and have to repot it already. But I will bring it along and describe the results. I may or may not put it into a bonsai pot, it all depends on how happy I am with it and whether I happen to have a pot which suits it.

The Sassafras has grown well after being aerial layered to improve its trunk base and surface roots, and remove a large pruning scar on the trunk. In the June 2011 demonstration it was separated from its old lower trunk and replanted back into a black plastic pot. This first photo shows it in May 2011 before separation from its lower trunk while the second is a detail of the new root growth above the aerial layer. Notice the good spread of new surface roots.



I am interested to see how the roots have developed over the last year. I expect to see more thickening and maturing of the new roots, and hopefully thickening of the trunk base as well. But we will see how it has gone when I bring it to the meeting and get it out of its pot. It is also due for a little bit of top trimming as well to keep it compact and retain the smaller leaves.

Last but not least is the Wintersweet. It was also aerial layered to overcome a bulbous swelling on its little trunk and also to develop surface roots. You can see that I keep consistently mentioning the development of good trunk base and surface roots, or nebari as the Japanese would say, but I am not turning Japanese and will stick to calling a spade a spade. In the ongoing endeavour to create the illusion of age and maturity in a bonsai some of the key features are the combination of lower trunk dimensions and taper together with its transition to roots and the spread of surface roots. The trunk base dimension is important relative to the bonsai's size. When we glance at a tree in a garden, park or in the bush we often subconsciously note these characteristics and classify a tree as young or old, immature

or mature. Back to the Wintersweet, I notice that the stump of a trunk on one side appears dead and so needs to be cut off, but because it is destined to be a multi-trunk it has other trunks. A multi-trunk style is one of its natural characteristics, a more formal style would not suit it. Also, this gives plenty of trunks and branches on which to develop flowers.

The Wintersweet still has relatively large leaves for a small bonsai destined to be only 10 or 15 cm high at most. It is deciduous so no leaves at the moment, and I hope that over time the leaf size will reduce. However, the best display time will be in mid-winter when it is bare of leaves but for perhaps 2 or 3 weeks has flowers. The first following picture shows the aerial layering before separation over a year ago, while the second shows it immediately after separation and showing good new root development.



As a bonus to complete this article I have included a picture of a native mosquito orchid that appeared in a pot beside a eucalypt potential bonsai in training. This photo shows it larger than life size, it was really tiny with its leaf about little finger nail size. If only I could find it again and get it growing in a tiny pot as an accent plant!

