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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 233 – October 2012

Our September meeting was opened by President Noel Kemp at 7.30pm with 22 members in attendance, and visitors Sue Cerutti and Cameron Wadley. Sue is very interested in bonsai, so we hope to see more of her, and Cameron is becoming a regular visitor to our meetings. Apologies from Secretary, Evelyn and thank you to Heather acting as replacement for the evening.

Your Committee held its first meeting for the new financial year on 11th September, during which the following matters were discussed:-

Our participation at the Huon Flower show which will be held at the Palais Theatre, Franklin on Saturday, November 10th. We need to have our display set up by 9am as the show starts at 10am. This will also include a dig for native species, so if you would like to participate please let the Committee know.

The logistics of hosting the AABC convention in either 2016 or 2017.

Confirmation of Christmas barbecue at Risdon Brook Dam on Saturday 24th November.

Booking The Barn for our 3rd Bonsai Exhibition to be held 19th & 20th October 2013

Possibility of holding a workshop at Island Bonsai on Sunday, 25th November – will depend on interest of members.

Possibility of a get together with bonsai groups from the north of the state – will depend on interest from members.

This Month's Meeting: Tuesday, 16th October commencing at 7.30pm. Our wandering president, Noel will be presenting a discussion on bonsai pots – size, shape, colour, glazed, unglazed – which to use, and the do's and don'ts. Members who worked on trees at Andrew Ward's workshops are asked to bring them along for a progress report. And, of course, don't forget our display table – with Spring well and truly in the air there should be some lovely fresh foliage to display.

Next Workshop: Saturday, 20th October at Island Bonsai - start time and what can be worked on will be discussed at our monthly meeting. And if you would like to have a workshop in November, that will be decided at this month's meeting.

Events: Rose, Iris & Floral Art Show to be held at the Town Hall on 2nd & 3rd November – plants to be delivered on Thursday late afternoon, and can be picked up on Saturday around 4.30pm.

November Meeting: Tuesday, 20th November, Noel will regale us with some of his adventures from his latest trip to the "stans". We would especially like our new members to bring in trees they have worked on at our monthly workshops – so Heather, Alison, Alex, Jan, Chris, Simon – it's your night too!

Raffle: 2 prizes drawn and won in the raffle.

Happy Birthday: to those of you celebrating birthdays during October. Birthstones are opal and tourmaline. Libra is an air sign, and those born under it are described as mentally active, rational and communicative (hopefully that means you talk nicely to your bonsai and never lose your “cool”). Scorpio takes control from 24th October – regarded as highly sensitive, compassionate with a fierce pride and determination (if I want to bend the trunk this way – it will bend this way!) Sir Christopher Wren was born 20th October 1632, and English poet John Keats came into the world on 31st October 1795.

Display Table: A lovely display of plants on the display table some in full bloom:

- * Noel , Crab apple in cascade style and 2 crab apples in literati style all from root stock in '02
- * Noel, deciduous Chinese elm, very attractive
- * Noel, one of Betty Ford’s azaleas, he had cut it right back and now it is in full bloom
- * Noel, Pinus radiata literati style (nice pot Noel - not!!!)
- * Tony Brown, Rosemary, from garden, nice branch placement.
- * Noel, Monterey cypress, 9 plaited together and secured with raffia. Coming along well.
- * Gill, Corokea New Zealand , pretty flowers
- * Rob, Silver Birch, "group" pale blue pot,
- * Gill, Crab apple, magnificent display
- * Noel, Azalea, pink blossom lovely delicate tree
- * Gill, Satsuki azalea - pale pink flowers with vigorous growth
- * Noel, Monterey Cypress, seed from a tree in garden 1989, Shari, bark has grown into the crack
- * Gill, 2 Maples, both have been in leaf for 3 weeks already, lovely well placed branches.
- * Heather, Chamaecyparis *pisifera* ‘Boulevard’ (Sawara Cypress), in the middle of wiring for the second time
- * Trish, Juniper *horizontalis* in cascade style, lovely shaping
- * Simon brought in some more pots that he learnt to make at an adult Ed course. They are very, very nice

Meeting closed at 8.35 after which Ambrose brought us up to date on his aerial layering

Ambrose had previously aerial layered a broad leafed variegated maple, and after 1 year of aerial layering it had only produced roots on one side. He could not find a pot that suited and eventually found one at Island Bonsai, it is a small but deeper pot, however it suits the maple and gives it character.

The Winter Sweet, which he calls a " bundle of sticks" will flower on bare wood in mid winter. The aim, inspired by the book "4 Seasons of Bonsai", is multi-stemmed, high, with flowers at top. The pot is a nice pale green one with a lovely glaze purchased in Thailand.

His third example is a Yew, commonly grown around English cemeteries. This one will be kept very small and has grown on an angle by itself.

It has a good root base and he carefully worked with a brush so as not to damage any surface roots, then used a bonsai fork and scraped away excess roots on the base. Moss removed to allow surface roots to be seen. Ambrose will repot into a darker unglazed pot but has put it back into the old pot for now. We were given a lesson on how he wires the tree into the pot, and showed us the soil mixture that he has been using (which he finds absorbs water well):

Turface, this is a baked clay product
Propagating sand large grain
Coir peat made from coconut fibre
Fine blue metal

The final aerial layering was an evergreen native Sassafras, it ended up with 4 trunks, Ambrose raked out the roots and was left with a very neat root ball. He then drastically pruned, starting with the top, until it was a different plant. The Sassafras was replanted into the plastic pot with fine crushed rock in the bottom as a filler and for good drainage, then his pre made soil mixture. It will not be fertilized initially, but he will give it some Seasol.

Editors Note: The following information comes courtesy of SA Bonsai Society magazine Volume 21, Issue 2 (April/May 2012)

John Yoshio Naka "Principals and Teachings" (from "Bonsai Master Class", by Craig Coussins)

A bonsai should look like a tree

Always mark your front with a marker in the soil e.g. piece of wire

Start wiring from the base up, and style from the base up

Refine your tree from the top down

When working on the apex area, style that into a separate tree, and then work that apex into the overall structure afterward. Otherwise, the apex will not have definition

The apex should be about 3 times the diameter of the trunk

The apex, as a general guideline, should not be bigger than the dimensions of the pot

Increase taper by allowing the branches to grow out

When working on a twin trunk tree, make the front off-centre and not face-on. This will give you a more 3 dimensional image

Do not have too many branches as that would be out of proportion to the size of the tree

Cut out water for 2 or 3 days prior to styling or wiring deciduous trees

A small branch under a main branch is called an accent branch

Back branches are best kept longer, and front branches should be kept shorter. This is because, in an ideal bonsai shape, the tree should be leaning, or bowing, toward you. If the front branches are too long, that will entail too much "lean".

When creating a cascade, cross some of the branches over the trunk to avoid having a bare trunk

Using a hexagonal (6 sided) container can be a powerful addition to a cascade style

Do not repot and style at the same time

When removing branches from, as opposed to styling, a bonsai, you may be able to remove some roots too.

(John Yoshio Naka, described as one of the great bonsai teachers of the 20th Century, died in 2004 –three months short of his 90th birthday.)

(Editor: The following information has been obtained from "*The Complete Practical Encyclopaedia of Bonsai*", Ken Norman) which might be a helpful reminder of what to do during Spring.

Root pruning & Repotting:

- Root-prune and repot any deciduous trees as soon as possible, although most should have been done in late winter. Make sure that all repotting is done before the buds break.
- Never apply fertilizer to recently root-pruned and repotted trees, as this could damage roots pruned during the repotting process.
- Protect freshly repotted trees by placing them in a sheltered area until really cold conditions have passed.

Pruning:

- Tidy up deciduous and coniferous trees. With deciduous trees, it is easy to see twigs or branches that have died back or need removing before the buds burst. Trimming them now means they start the year in good shape. When shoots begin to extend, cut back to one pair of leaves to maintain compact growth. With some conifers, such as juniper (*Juniperus*) or larch (*Larix*), pinch out any new soft shoot tips. This encourages more shoots to grow and the process can be repeated. With pines (*Pinus*), pinch back new candles by about two-thirds when they reach about 2.5cms (1 inch).

Wiring:

- Apply the wire for shaping to conifers such as *Pinus* and *Juniperus*, but preferably not to deciduous trees. These should not be wired until a little later in the year when the sap is flowing freely. This means that the trees will be more flexible if the branches need to be bent during the shaping process.

Watering:

- Water moderately when required, increasing the amount as the weather warms up, but never over-water freshly repotted trees.

Seasonal feature Plant: Wisteria:

- Wisteria is native to China and Japan and can provide some of the most spectacular spring floral displays in its native habitat or in a garden. The flowers, which appear in late spring and early summer vary in colour from white and mauve through to blue and are often at their best when the new leaves are just beginning to break behind them.
- Because of its pendulous appearance when in flower, wisteria grown as bonsai is best grown as informal upright, slanting, weeping, semi-cascade and cascade style. They are normally grown as fairly large specimens because of the size and scale of the flowers.
- They need protection from frost in winter as they have rather thick, succulent-like roots that can be very easily damaged if the temperature drops below about -5°C. During the summer months, a wisteria bonsai will need copious amounts of water and, during the really warm parts of summer, it is advisable to stand the pot in a shallow tray of water so the plant has a continuous supply through the hot period – they should never be allowed to dry out.
- Feed wisteria bonsai about once a week following flowering until mid-summer, commencing again in early autumn through to late autumn.
- Repot every two to three years and prune back to two buds following flowering in summer, as well as in autumn.
- To obtain good flowering plants, propagation should be carried out using hardwood cuttings or grafting in early spring, or by air layering from late spring to early summer. Propagation from seed produces plants very quickly, but they do require anything from seven to ten years to produce flowers, whereas the other propagation methods should produce flowers the following year.



Every picture tells a story.
16 members braved the elements
and made the trip to Island Bonsai
for our September workshop.
The following photos are courtesy
of Ambrose Canning.

Everyone
very
hard
at
work!



They do say
two heads are
better than one!

Some very
serious consideration
being given
here!



I think some come
just for the lovely
afternoon tea!

(And to think I missed out!)

If anyone requires “sandflex” cleaning/polishing blocks, I still have some available in medium and fine, at \$7 each.

As Will Fletcher has been so accommodating to our Society, I think it’s only fitting that we regard him as our sponsor. So, Will, if you have no objections, your logo will grace the pages of our newsletter each month.

ISLAND
BONSAI



Tasmanian native plants as bonsai