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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 236 – February 2013

According to the scientists, climate change is certainly having an impact on our weather with very high temperatures being experienced over much of the country, including our own state which had its highest temperature in 130 years. Hot winds fanned the flames of several bushfires with the Tasman Peninsula being hardest hit, in terms of loss of homes and businesses. There has been no loss of life and we can only wonder, when faced with such dramatic photographs in the newspaper, how this was possible in the aftermath of such destruction. Hopefully, the remainder of our summer will remain bushfire free.

I, for one, am looking towards the heavens for any sign of rain. Not that they're short of it in other parts of the country, with major floods (again) in Queensland – also impacting on NSW. One can't help feeling sorry for those who, having rebuilt after the floods of two years ago, are again either threatened or inundated by raging torrents of water bearing down on them.

Welcome to 2013! One wonders what else could possibly be in store for us with such dramatic beginnings to the year.

First Meeting for this year: Tuesday, 19th February 2013 commencing at 7.30pm. The topic, "Pond Experience" to be presented by Will Fletcher, being a landscape featuring a waterhole under a spreading tea tree. Then, in memory of the late Brian Sampson, the landscape will be embellished accordingly! All will be revealed on the night.

(Ed. Note: Brian Sampson passed away on 16th December. Will met Brian many years ago when attending a conference in Melbourne, and to quote from Will: "He was quite a character, large of stature and personality, and he specialised in BIG Aussie style landscapes, sometimes with little kangaroos leaping around!")

Workshops: First one will be at Island Bonsai on Sunday 24th March 2013 commencing at 12 noon. Those who would like to participate can bring along native species, as well as any of the ficus for re-potting etc., anything else they might like to work on, get some advice about, or just look at what others are doing – AND ASK LOTS OF QUESTIONS!

From the Library: Hopefully we will be able to access our collection (problem of a missing key at our November meeting meant books could neither be borrowed nor returned). So any books that should have been returned then can be brought along on the 19th February.

Events: March 8th -9th – Dahlia, Gladioli & Floral Art show at the Town Hall. Members who would like to display bonsai, please ensure they have been well watered, soil is free of weeds, pots are clean and shiny and plants looking their best! Bonsai can be delivered to the Town Hall from around 4pm on Thursday 7th March, and picked on Saturday 9th around 4.30pm.

May 3rd – 5th; Chrysanthemum & Floral Art Show at the Town Hall.

May 17th – 20th; AABC National Convention in Canberra.

September 6th – 7th; Daffodil, Camellia & Floral Art Show at the Town Hall.

October 19th – 20th; 3rd Bonsai Exhibition at The Barn, Rosny. Start working on those bonsai now!!!

January Barbecue – again the weather behaved itself with sunshine and blue skies dominating our visit to Island Bonsai. Will has been extremely busy and the landscaping of pools, rocks and plants looks very tranquil. There was plenty of lovely food on offer, with a good selection of salads and sweet treats to tempt the palate of the most discerning! While bonsai wasn't the most important item on the agenda, there were several trips out into the nursery and members seen taking away their pots and plants. No doubt a few will make their appearance on our display table during the year.

Old French Proverb: *Rain in February is as good as manure!*

Below are three of the trees Will Fletcher has given to the National Collection: left *Nothofagus gunnii*, Deciduous Beech; right *Leptospermum lanigerum*, Woolly Tea Tree; and bottom *Lagarostrobos franklinii*, Huon Pine. Not shown is a *Eucalyptus vernicosa*.



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.

Aussie Poem:

The sun was hot already - it was only 8 o'clock
The cocky took off in his Ute, to go and check his stock.
He drove around the paddocks checking wethers, ewes and lambs,
The float valves in the water troughs, the windmills on the dams

He stopped and turned a windmill on to fill a water tank
And saw a ewe down in the dam, a few yards from the bank.
"Typical bloody sheep," he thought, "they've got no common sense,
"They won't go through a gateway but they'll jump a bloody fence."

The ewe was stuck down in the mud, he knew without a doubt
She'd stay there 'til she carked it if he didn't get her out.
But when he reached the water's edge, the startled ewe broke free
And in her haste to get away, began a swimming spree.
He reckoned once her fleece was wet, the weight would drag her down
If he didn't rescue her, the stupid sod would drown.
Her style was unimpressive, her survival chances slim
He saw no other option, he would have to take a swim.

He peeled his shirt and singlet off, his trousers, boots and socks
And as he couldn't stand wet clothes, he also shed his jocks.
He jumped into the water and away that cocky swam
He caught up with her, somewhere near the middle of the dam

The ewe was quite evasive, she kept giving him the slip
He tried to grab her sodden fleece but couldn't get a grip.
At last he got her to the bank and stopped to catch his breath
She showed him little gratitude for saving her from death.

She took off like a Bondi tram around the other side
He swore next time he caught that ewe he'd hang her bloody hide.
Then round and round the dam they ran, although he felt quite puffed
He still thought he could run her down, she must be nearly stuffed.

The local stock rep came along, to pay a call that day.
He knew this bloke was on his own, his wife had gone away,
He didn't really think he'd get fresh scones for morning tea
But neither was he ready for what he was soon to see.

He rubbed his eyes in disbelief at what came into view
For running down the catchment came this frantic-looking ewe.
And on her heels in hot pursuit and wearing not a stitch
The farmer yelling wildly "Come back here, you lousy bitch!"

The stock rep didn't hang around, he took off in his car
The cocky's reputation has been damaged near and far
So bear in mind the Work Safe rule when next you check your flocks
Spot the hazard, assess the risk, and always wear your jocks!

(Ed. I don't know the author, but it raised a lot of laughter – I hope it brings a "smile to your dial". Enjoy.)