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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 243 - September 2013

Vice President Ambrose Canning, welcomed members to our August meeting which included the AGM and election of our new committee. Congratulations and best wishes for the year ahead – with planning of the 2016 Convention in its early stages, there is much to do.

At our October meeting all those members with small (Mame and Shohin) bonsai are invited to bring them along for a special night. And for our November meeting, all members are to bring along **one tree** – it doesn't have to be in a bonsai pot, as long as it is in training as a bonsai. A ten minute discussion on each tree will ensue, with the owner able to seek advice, suggestions re its training and subsequent development.

Andrew Ward will be holding workshops on 12th & 13th of April 2014, followed by a demonstration at our Society meeting on Tuesday, 15th April. We hope as many members as possible will participate in these workshops which provide the opportunity to enhance our bonsai skills. Think about a specific tree you would like to work on with Andrew – it may be one you've neglected, or had for a while but are undecided how to develop its potential, or it may be an existing bonsai you feel needs improvement. It might also be the one he gave you assistance with at last year's workshops!

A reminder that a roster has been set up for our October Exhibition so, if you haven't yet offered help, but are able to assist in any way – even for a couple of hours – it would be most appreciated. The roster will be available at the September meeting. Our trees are coming out of hibernation and those displaying will be ensuring they look their best.

This Month's Meeting: Tuesday, 17th September commencing at 7.30pm. will feature a member of our State Quarantine department who will be discussing plant quarantine issues, hopefully providing a clearer picture of what and how plants can be brought into Tasmania, as well as taken to other states. There are one or two newer members who have chosen to live on our beautiful island, while their bonsai remain on the mainland. Perhaps they can find a safe way to bring them over.

And don't forget a tree for the display table.

Workshops: Our next workshop will be held on Sunday 22nd September at Island Bonsai commencing at 12 noon. Cost is \$3 and a plate of something to share is always welcome. Preparation of plants for our October exhibition should be in full swing, so if you need advice about those you plan to exhibit (or any other) bring them along. These workshops are worth attending – even if you don't have something to work on – talk to others about what they are doing, ask questions, observe and learn. This will probably be our last workshop for this year.

Other Events:

October 15th – Society monthly meeting – finalising details for Exhibition

October 19th & 20th our Exhibition at Rosny Barn, so take advantage of our workshops and get working on those bonsai!

Tony Hewer has been making spatula tools used for tamping down soil when repotting – these are available for \$10 each. Evelyn still has sets of plastic waterers for \$2.50 a set of 3, as well as fine and medium Klingspor Sandflex cleaning/polishing blocks for \$7 each.

Display Table: Herbert - Cyprus with a lovely trunk, small leaf Fuchsia, a young Yew, micro mini rose called popcorn and a Teatree, small and likes plenty of water;

Diane – Huon pine it will be one of many for sale at the Barn;

Ona – Cotoneaster , semi cascade style, Ivy miniature;

Anita – Pine with edible pine kernals purchased at Sorell market, Teatree, Cyprus 2 in a pot with rocks;

Ambrose – Flowing dogwood that wont flower;

Andrew (visitor) – Chinese Elm collected from a building site, Macrocarpa collected from seed.

Meeting closed around 8.15pm, after which Tony Hewer provided some useful tips and ideas covering several bonsai topics:-

Display stands

You can use your imagination and use old fence palings

Bamboo tied together to make a mat

Some lovely examples of Japanese stands

Radiata pine painted with black japan

Lovely stands suitable for cascade style pots

Tasmanian myrtle x 2 hand crafted by Tony

Elaborate round table

Large radiata pine table

Wiring

Use half the thickness of branch

Keep checking every few weeks that wire is not too tight

Bonsai today No 1 has a good article on wiring

Cleaning pots

Baby oil or white oil

Selecting pots

Check picture books. There is a right pot for your tree like a picture and a frame

Best to take your plant when choosing your pot

Diary - Keep a diary of all your plants

Wire straightening

Use a vice with a block of wood, bend wire over block and hold with another block and pull wire through

ISLAND
BONSAI



Tasmanian native plants as bonsai

Launceston Bonsai Workshop with Tony Bebb

by Ambrose Canning

As part of the AABC visiting tutor program Tony Bebb came to Tasmania from his home in Brisbane and luckily on a warm Launceston day. A demonstration and workshop were arranged at Lynne Farrell's bonsai nursery in Riverside, Launceston.

Tony began working with bonsai when he was 13 years old at his father's bonsai nursery in Brisbane. Tony is now a nationally accredited Level 1 Tutor and has travelled extensively within Australia and New Zealand conducting demonstrations and workshops, including at national conventions in both countries. He also has the honour of demonstrating at the World Bonsai Convention in China later this year.

Tony performed a demonstration on a provided tree in the morning, and then worked with participants on their own trees during a workshop in the afternoon. Eighteen people took part with three from Hobart, a group of regulars and some new participants from Launceston, and a third group came across from the North-West Coast. The Launceston organisers provided morning and afternoon tea as well as salad sandwiches for lunch.

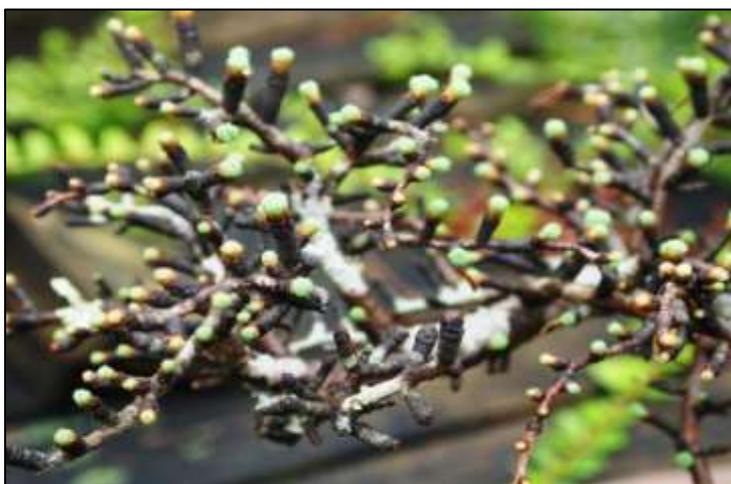
Lynne Farrell has a property on the edge of town siding onto bush and with plenty of space for a large bonsai enclosure surrounded by netting to keep out birds and animals. As well as her own bonsai collection Lynne has bonsai for sale ranging from small starter material to large untrained material through to mature refined bonsai. Beside the bonsai area has been built a large timber studio designed specifically for bonsai work and where this workshop was held.



Cam inspects bonsai in the nursery



A beautiful Japanese maple coming into leaf



Larch buds about to pop open

I had not met Tony Bebb before and had not seen him present or demonstrate before. He was quietly spoken but very self-assured and definitely knowledgeable about bonsai. He started the day with a 2 ½ hour demonstration using a number of black pines provided for him and owned by Launceston club members. Although I don't actually have any black pines I still found his demonstration very engaging as many of the techniques and advice were applicable to all other bonsai.

Tony started by talking about some young and immature pines and methods to develop them into bonsai. In particular the method of using long sacrificial branches to speed up trunk development before the bonsai is refined and planted into a bonsai pot. I know that I have shown bonsai before that have looked lush and overgrown because I am letting it all grow out to speed development of the trunk and branches. But Tony pointed out that this obviously fattens both trunk and branches equally whereas for a classic bonsai we want only the trunk thicker and more powerful. Letting one or a few selected branches grow long feeds strength into the trunk below their attachment point and when development is finished they are cut off completely, job done.

Tony then worked on a large mature black pine belonging to Lynne Farrell which had become overgrown. He increased the relative size of the trunk and made it more powerful by decreasing the volume of the branching and foliage. The picture I took after his work does not do it justice, it really was an improvement although it will take a couple more years to redevelop the branching and foliage. Although visually stronger the bonsai was now smaller and could be transplanted into a smaller pot.



Tony describes the role of sacrificial branches



The demonstration pine before the first cut



The afternoon workshop begins inside Lynne's bonsai studio

After lunch participants brought in their trees and tools for the workshop with Tony. The bonsai ranged from new to developed pines, junipers, deciduous species, a lanky Huon Pine, a fat platted fig and my big Yew. Tony works with all levels of bonsai enthusiasts and is happy and adaptable to work with all styles and types of trees. He moved from tree to tree considering the owner's vision and discussing possibilities, providing his ideas and demonstrating his techniques. Many participants actually stood around other trees observing Tony's work and to pick up tips and ideas.

Chris had brought up a large sized juniper of his from Hobart already with good structure and with fantastic potential. He had thought of cutting off the heavy first branch but Tony suggested it was possible to bend the thick stiff branch down with a guy wire anchored through to a pot drainage hole. He also proposed removing a lot of surplus foliage to reduce the volume and outline of the bonsai, and again it had the effect of making the lower trunk relatively bigger and more powerful in comparison.



Tony discusses Chris's juniper at the start



Tony returns to the juniper to inspect progress



Enthralled workshop participants listen in and look on

Tony was obviously busy all day because, although from Queensland, he worked in a shirt with his sleeves pulled up. My own massive two-man-yew I thought might stump him but he immediately raised a very good point about the sap flows within the trunk that I had not thought of, and how my plans could lead to partial trunk die back. A change of plan was needed. The yew had grown vigorously and so I spent time heavily cutting back the foliage and small branches to make the structure more visible.

Working with Tony's ideas I am now considering turning the tree ninety degrees to make a new front from what was the side. We chalked marked some major trunk cuts but I did not do them on the day. I will use a small electric chain saw and make a mess outside at home, and with the right safety gear on.

So another fantastic demonstrator visits Tasmania again, Tony had actually visited the Launceston club once before a few years ago.

No two AABC visiting tutors are the same and each bring their unique perspective of bonsai to their demonstrations and workshops. However, some fundamentals remain the same and a key is to have a future vision for your bonsai before developing them according to that plan. Don't try to short cut the process, miss the development phase and jump into a bonsai pot too quickly as Australians tend to do. That is unless you already have a young tree that can't wait to turn into an instant bonsai, or a good short cut is to let someone else do the preparatory work before you buy the bonsai.

Anything is possible as bonsai can work as young, slender and feminine as an alternative to old thick and masculine. A good demonstrator of this is Andrew Ward from Adelaide who is visiting our club again in Hobart next year. Andrew is also an AABC visiting tutor and I am looking forward to his visit planned for April 2014, subsidised in part by the AABC visiting tutor program and also by profits from our own Rosny Barn exhibition.