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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.bonsai-southern-tasmania.org.au

Newsletter No 245 November 2013

The October meeting was opened at 7.45pm by President Noel Kemp who welcomed 25 members. There were two apologies.

Our 2013 Exhibition has come and gone, and it's appropriate that a vote of thanks go to Committee and Society members (and some partners), who all pitched in prior, during and afterwards, for their help and enthusiasm.

Those members who took the opportunity to attend, would have been impressed with the array of bonsai on display – it's not every day we have the chance to view so many of our trees in one place and, taking time to observe what is possible, is inspiring. Six demonstrations over the two days kept visitors and members interested, with Noel, Will, Tony, Ambrose and new member Chris Xepapas presenting and answering many questions. Although numbers were down a bit, there were plenty of sales with a big selection of plants and bonsai items finding new homes. (*Photos on pages 3, courtesy of David Budd & Rob White.*)

Having received an invitation to speak about bonsai to the Huon Garden Group, VP Ambrose and Evelyn headed to Ranelagh on a rather wet, miserable night in early October. Flood warnings had been issued for the Huon and upper reaches of the Derwent, but our trip was uneventful. Ambrose had provided some of his trees and spoke in general terms about bonsai. A lot of questions followed, with expressions of surprise at the age of the trees in particular, his 13 year-old azalea, which was also on display at our exhibition. It was a pleasant evening, during which we were made very welcome. Thank you for your hospitality.

New Treasurer, Rob White, has been working on our website. I don't know how many of you have visited it yet, but it's well worth a look:-

www.bonsai-southern-tasmania.org.au

There is still information e.g. newsletters, photos etc to be included and Rob has plans to create a forum, which members can access to put forward bonsai related issues and questions. It will be a work in progress for a while, so check it out for updates. The more "hits" we get the sooner we get "Google recognition", as a newly listed site usually takes a little while to come up automatically – so make your "hits" count!

Secretary: Anita Shanahan has kindly offered to take up this position (appreciated very much by Evelyn) and will commence from January 1st 2014. I'm sure both Committee and members will give her every support as she familiarises herself with the role.

On a sad note, a group of Society members attended the funeral for Glenn Roberts, which was held on 23rd October. Glenn (husband of Gill) lost his prolonged battle with cancer but, given the love and respect shown for "El Magnifico", he won't be easily forgotten! Vale Glenn. Our thoughts are with Gill and her family at this most difficult time.

This Month's Meeting: Tuesday 19th November commencing at 7.30pm.

For this meeting, all members are to bring along **one tree** – it doesn't have to be in a bonsai pot, as long as it is being trained as a bonsai. A brief discussion on each tree will ensue, with the owner able to seek advice and suggestions for its future development. You might already have some ideas in mind on how you want your tree to look – getting there can sometimes be tricky. Might be an idea to bring a notebook on the night – just in case!

Events:

Huonville Auxiliary for Eldercare will hold its Annual Garden Walk on 20th November commencing at 10.30am For bookings contact Di Clark 6264 1034.

19th January 2014 – Barbecue at Island Bonsai – commencing at 12 noon. A get-together before resumption of our monthly meetings, providing an opportunity to talk about anything besides bonsai! Well, it does give our “other halves” a break, I suppose! So, bring along a salad/sweet to share, wine (if you prefer) and a spare chair. The Society will provide meat and soft drinks. I'm sure there will be time to check out Will's supply of natives – should the conversation bring “bonsai” to the fore!

April 12th & 13th, 2014 - Andrew Ward will be holding workshops, followed by a demonstration at our Society meeting on Tuesday, 15th April. This is an ideal opportunity to continue with the tree you worked on at his last workshops; get advice and start on something you've been thinking about but haven't taken the plunge; observe, learn and pick up new ideas from someone with a lot of knowledge to impart and who does so with tremendous enthusiasm and a good sense of humour. (see attached nomination form)

August 21st – 24th, 2014 Bonsai Convention International, Gold Coast, Qld. You can find all the details at the following websites:

www.goldcoast2014.bonsai-bci.com

www.aabcltd.org

Reminder: A request from our Librarian that all library books need to be handed back at the November meeting please.

Raffle: Rob chose the pot, and Robyn won the fertilizer.

Display Table: This was a night for our small bonsai – Mame and Shohin - to be in the spotlight and, while there were a few slightly bigger trees, they didn't detract from their smaller friends:-

- Fuchsias, Elms, Maples, Sergeant's juniper, Tree Violets, Larches including a forest, Ivy, Cedrus, a Yew grown from seed, Pinus Mugo, weeping Birch, deciduous Alder and Ficus graced the table. Thank you to everyone for participating!

Meeting closed around 9.00pm.

Tony Hewer has been making spatula tools used for tamping down soil when re-potting – 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.





Some information for November & December - Watering

At this time of year bonsai need not take much of our time except for daily watering. Clean healthy trees will stand up to all the hot weather we get, providing they get enough water. Regular fertilizing, spraying and pinching of new shoots are needed for general maintenance, but this can be done at a convenient time and, even for a large collection, will not take more than one day each month.

Watering once a day is enough except during heat-wave conditions or on very windy days. The amount of water needed depends not only on the state of the weather but on other factors: the age and size of the tree and the pot, the kind of potting soil, the condition of the roots and the type of tree. An open, well-drained potting mix with peat in it will hold moisture. Trees just re-potted will not need as much water as pot-bound trees. Trees with large leaves need more than small-leaved or needle trees. Some trees are moisture lovers while some pines and conifers prefer much drier conditions. Willow and wisteria use a lot of water; they can both be left standing in a saucer of water in hot weather.

With a suitable potting mix there is no danger of over-watering. With a fine rose on the hose water thoroughly, going over each pot several times so that the water runs freely from the drain holes. Then allow the soil to become half dry before watering again. In this way roots will grow evenly through the pot and an occasional dryness of the top soil will do no harm. Frequent light sprinkling will do more harm than good: the roots are attracted to the surface, where they are easily scorched and killed by the sun.

Trees should be watered when they need it whether the sun is on them or not; on a hot day a thorough wetting of the trees, tables and surrounding areas helps to reduce the temperature and refreshes the trees. For those who have to be away all day in hot weather, any trees that dry out quickly can be left quite safely for the day in a small amount of water in a dunking tray, but be sure to take them out at night.

Miniature bonsai in tiny pots will dry out quickly. The Japanese say they need to be watered five or six times a day in summer, but for most people such time-consuming care is impossible. A large flat dish or tray, with drain holes covered with mesh and filled with coarse sand, will provide enough moisture to keep tiny pots from drying out too quickly. The dish needs to be placed so that there is some shelter, especially in the afternoons.

Thorough hand-watering is a good way to keep a check on the condition and progress of each tree and its watering needs. However, there are other ways of watering. Very dry dishes should be placed in a soaking tray until thoroughly wet right to the top soil. There are overhead watering systems which work very well. Most of them are controlled by a time switch and the trees are watered automatically at set times. This can be a great help during holidays, when it is only necessary for someone to keep a check that there is no breakdown in the system. Various kits are also available which enable a handyman to set up a watering system to suit his needs.

(Supplement to Bonsai News, Oct/Nov/Dec. 1984 Reg. Publication VBH 6369)

(With Summer on the way, the above information is worth noting – how often have we heard someone say: “My bonsai died because I forgot to water it!” Don’t lose your bonsai!)