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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 252 July 2014

Vice President, Ambrose Canning opened the June meeting with a welcome to 19 members. Apologies were received from Noel (somewhere in the “dark continent”), Rob (soaking up the Italian sunshine), Sue Cerutti, Yvonne Rush and Ruth Rees.

Ambrose provided an update on the amount of planning which has already been done towards the AABC Convention. He is also awaiting information on costs for a possible Tasmanian visit by bonsai expert, Bjorn Bjorholm, who will be in Australia in March 2015.

Forestry has responded positively to our request for an extension to 31st August, so arrangements will be made for a planned dig to the same area.

A reminder to members to grow plants on, and prepare items they would like to sell from our stand at the September Daffodil, Camellia & Floral Art Show.

Your committee’s next meeting is the 8th July, a report of which will appear in the August newsletter.

SQUAT PLASTIC GROWING POTS

Many of us like to grow on our potential bonsai in plastic pots before selecting those to be transferred to expensive bonsai pots. The problem with standard plant pots is that they are relatively deep and it can be a problem trimming back the roots to place the tree into a shallow bonsai pot or tray.

The Society has recently made a bulk purchase of squat plastic orchid pots which should be ideal for developing bonsai. They are only about 10 cm deep, almost straight sided and have plenty of drainage openings.

They are available in three sizes: small: 18.7 cm diameter, medium: 22.0 cm, and large: 25.00. Cost to members is \$1.40 for the small, \$2.30 for the medium and \$2.80 for the large pots.

Gill Roberts will have some for sale at our next meeting and workshop.



It may be a good idea to contact Gill if you require more than just one or two pots so that she has stock on hand for you.

Raffle: Bunning’s gift voucher won by Tony Brown.

Display Table:

Anita brought in a cotoneaster; Diana displayed a camellia, and a correa which had been a cutting from Gill’s; Heather showed her Juniper *procumbens*; Cameron’s azalea has been re-designed into a semi-cascade; Ambrose had an interesting arrangement consisting of several varieties of moss,

native myrtle and laurel, and pandana arranged on a large flat stone; Will brought in a banksia with exposed roots displaying its first flower for many years.

Herbert's 12-15 year old Fuji apple was critiqued on its future development. Fruit dominates at this time of year and, with the number of apples (around 12), they weighed down the branches. Chris suggested removing the dominant branch and perhaps, during future training, remove most of the apples to allow energy to flow back into the tree. He also suggested turning it round so the back becomes the front.

It was suggested to Anita that her cotoneaster could benefit from being grown on in a plastic pot for 2-3 years to encourage thickening of the trunk.

Tony suggested it's better to wire trees when they are young because they're more flexible, and leaving the lowest branch as a sacrificial one encourages thickening of the trunk. When asked how long the branch should be left to grow, he replied 2-3-5 years might be necessary until the trunk is as thick as you want it to be.

Following closure of business at 8.20pm, a forum on bonsai potting mixes created some discussion. Led by Tony and Chris it was acknowledged that probably, for as many bonsai enthusiasts, there are almost as many potting mixes. Chris favours a fairly coarse mix which he considers better for the pines and conifers he specialises in. Tony will be making up 5kg bags of his mix which he's happy to sell to interested members for \$7.50/bag. Because our trees are grown in shallow pots, it's the fibrous hair-like roots we need to encourage and keep, and gradually over time remove thick heavy ones. Chris, in his mix uses de-composted pine bark, peat, propagation sand and a coarse aggregate which he finds better for root development. In Japan they use a mix consisting of 1 part akadama (baked clay), 1 part pumice and 1 part crushed lava rock – there are no organics included. As Chris pointed out, the disadvantage of this is that very regular watering and fertilising must be carried out to enable the tree to achieve its full growth potential. Both Diana and Evelyn use fern mulch in their potting mixes, samples of which they passed round.

Events & Diary Dates:

July Meeting: Tuesday 15th at 7.30pm Ambrose's presentation will be on Wisteria as bonsai subjects. Some of you will have seen the beautiful *Wisteria sinensis* (Chinese Wisteria) displayed by Ambrose at one of the Horticultural Society's shows at the Town Hall. It was very much admired by visitors.

July Workshop: Saturday, 19th July commencing at 1pm at the Bellerive Community Arts Centre. The June workshop was a quiet affair with 7 or 8 members working on trees with advice and assistance supplied by Tony. These workshops are a good way to observe, discuss and get advice from experienced members on shaping, wiring and styling, helpful tips on pruning both roots and foliage, and to enjoy the camaraderie of the afternoon with a friendly group of people!

August meeting: Tuesday, 19th August – AGM followed by a presentation on the Japanese Bonsai Scene – what's going on in bonsai; what's in and what's not style-wise!

Bonsai Convention International, Gold Coast, Qld. August 21st – 24th, 2014. Details at the following websites: www.goldcoast2014.bonsai-bci.com or www.aabcltd.org

Daffodil, Camellia and Floral Art Show 12th-13th September to be held at City Hall. We will be holding bonsai demonstrations and running a raffle, and there is the possibility of a sales table.

Society Matters:

Election of Committee for 2014-2015 – all positions are declared vacant, so it's time to think about who you would like to nominate for next year. Perhaps you would be interested in being

part of the committee to help guide our Society over the next 12 months, which will become very busy as the year proceeds.

Our Autumn Exhibition will be held on 23rd & 24th May 2015, with the 2016 Convention to be held 12 months later. We will also hold our Spring Exhibition in October 2016 as normal. Planning and organising must be done to ensure the success of all these events, and for that the committee needs **YOUR** support.

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2014-15

Membership subscriptions for 2014-15 are now due. The rate is \$35.00 per person (\$45.00 for couples at the same address). Members with an e-mail address registered with the Society have been sent an e-mail by Treasurer Rob White on how to pay their subscriptions by fund transfer directly into the Society's bank account.

For members who would prefer to pay cash, Stuart Clutterbuck is looking after finances during Rob's absence overseas and should be at the July meeting. Rob will be back for the August meeting.

Website: Don't forget to check out our website.

Library Collection:

The Society's selection of books and journals is available for members to borrow for a month at a time, at no charge. It's regarded as a further source of gaining information and improving our bonsai skills.

New members in particular might find copies of "Bonsai Today" especially helpful on re-potting, shaping and pruning, see numbers 50 – 52, 57 -60, 63, 65 and 66. The first 49 copies also include some useful information, with bonsai enthusiasts such as Peter Adams looking at optional designs for particular trees.

If you have something interesting you would like to share with other members, or a request for information, let's hear from you. And if you'd like to tell us about yourself and how you became interested in bonsai, it gives everyone an opportunity of getting to know you better.

Committee Members & contact details:

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ISLAND
BONSAI



Tasmanian native plants as bonsai

The weather seems to be playing with us this winter – not a lot of rain around and mild temperatures makes one wonder what the remainder of the season will bring, and what we might look forward to come spring. Presumably most of our deciduous trees have dropped their foliage unless, like European beech, being marcescent some of the leaves remain on the tree throughout winter, not falling until the new shoots burgeon in spring. The following notes might be useful as we work our way through the month.

(Ed. Note: 6th July – lovely surprise - 33mms in our rain gauge this morning!)

Bonsai Notes for July

The main potting period is late winter and early spring, this being the only time when it is really safe to disturb the roots of deciduous trees. Some deciduous trees break into leaf earlier than others. The Japanese Maple, is an example, being among the first to do so. Over the following weeks different varieties of trees will follow suit well into spring. Australian native trees can be potted in spring, making sure this is done before new growth starts.

Pruning or shaping of the branches of the tree is best carried out before working on the root system, and if you intend wiring at re-potting time, this should also be done prior to removing the tree from its pot.

Gently remove the tree from the old pot by turning the pot upside down and tapping the rim on a solid object. While the pot is upside down hold the tree so that it does not fall to the ground. Carefully remove the soil from around the roots and trim and clean out any dead or broken ones. Shorten the remaining roots so that they will fit into the pot. The root system of your tree must fit into the pot without being doubled up or twisted. The roots should radiate away from the trunk as evenly as possible. Place your tree in the pot, not in the middle of the pot but off centre and a little to the back. Cover the roots with soil, firm down and water at once. Place the tree in a sheltered, shaded position for a few weeks until the tree has recovered and started to shoot. It may then be placed where it will get some morning sun preferably.

It is advisable not to feed newly potted trees for a few weeks after re-potting.

Wiring newly potted trees is not recommended – either wire up prior to removing from their pot, or leave them to stabilize in the new one. If you are wiring branches be very careful as trees become very brittle at this time of year and can snap easily. Do not apply the wire too tightly, keeping in mind the swelling of the branches in spring.



It is also worth considering a training pot to commence the tree's journey into bonsai development. In Japan, trees are planted in the field and, during their early growth, removed for root and branch pruning before being replanted. This method encourages good root development – nebari –and thickening of both trunk and branches.

Obviously, most of us only have our standard backyard – hence the “training pot” concept.

Photo: Kinashi Bonsai Village in Takamatsu (www.bonsaiempire.com)

It's a good time to gather moss for replacement and, with spring favoured for exhibitions, moss adds the finishing touch to any tree. It's amazing how many different kinds of moss are growing around the streets!

Growing your trees from seed is very rewarding, especially if you are interested in growing miniature bonsai. Spring is a good time to sow seeds.

Hardwood cuttings can still be planted at this time of year.

Shape of Pots

The following should prove useful when selecting a bonsai pot for your tree.

- A tree with a straight trunk (formal upright style) will look best in a shallow rectangular pot.
- An upright tree with a curved trunk will be shown to advantage by using a round, oval, round cornered or rectangular pot.
- An aged tree with a thick heavy trunk will have added character by using a solid looking pot in a rectangular style.
- A deep pot should always be used for cascade styles, keeping in mind the length of the cascading branch must be longer than the height of the pot to achieve a good balance.
- A bunjin style requires a small, round, shallow pot, which shows up the tree to perfection.

(Ed. Note: above Notes for July – courtesy of M Thomas)

Further information and advice for July:

Leave Pomegranates until their leaves have just opened. Zelkovas will not show any signs of buds swelling until well into spring, so don't repot them yet.

Beech are also later coming into leaf than most deciduous trees. As soon as the buds have opened and you can separate the leaves on the shoot, nip back to one or two leaves, depending on the amount of growth needed and the direction in which the buds are pointing.

Chaenomeles, better known as Cydonia, or Japonica or Flowering Quince, is easy to grow and develops interesting shapes with spiny, irregular branches. Even young plants begin to bloom on bare branches in early spring.



Mame Chinese quince



Informal upright Zelkova

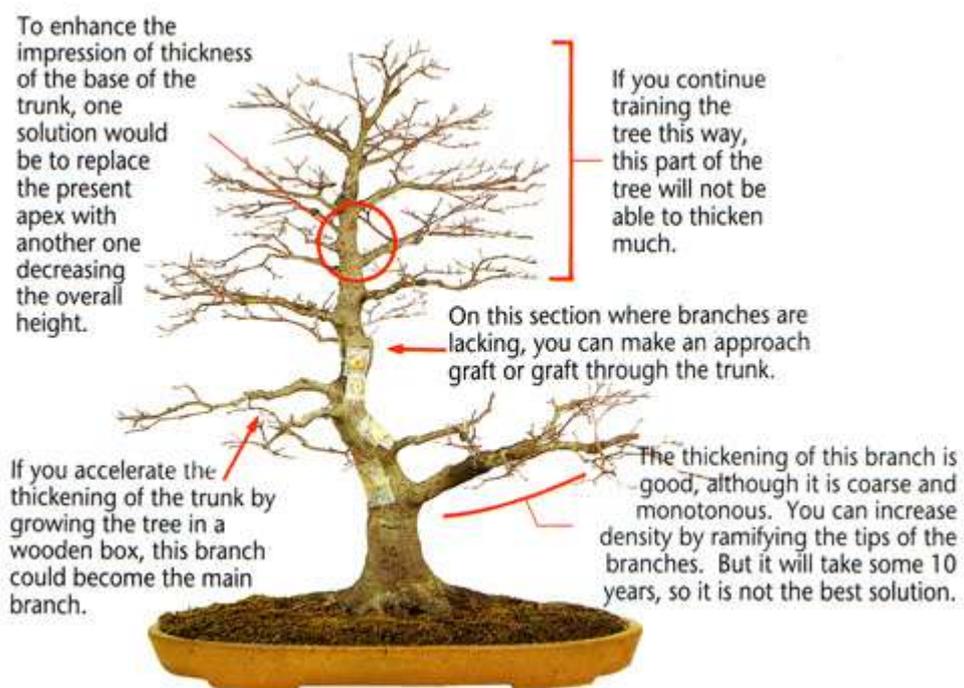
Above photos from Google: *Images of quince – from Chinese Bonsai Garden.com*

Google: *Images of Zelkova - from Zhong Wei Horticultural Products Co.*

July is a good time to visit nurseries to choose deciduous trees. While they have no leaves the shape of trunks and branches is more easily seen than at other times. When shopping for trees to style as bonsai, choose healthy trees with plenty of branching low on the trunk and placed on all sides of the trunk. It is easier to develop any style when there are plenty of branches in the right places, or which can be wired where they are needed.

A tree with an interesting old trunk and roots may have been neglected in a nursery can for a long time. Such a tree may not be very healthy. In order to bring it back to health before drastic pruning, plant it in the ground or in a good mix in a container such as a polystyrene box. In this way you can encourage root development and top growth.

(Ed. Note: the “homeless plants” section in a nursery is a good place to look - especially at the end of a season!)



(Photo from Google: *Images for nebari: In Search of the perfect Nebari* - bonsaibark.com)