



President: Noel Kemp
☎ (03) 6243 6296

Secretary: Anita Shanahan
6 Claude Street
New Town, TAS 7008
☎ (03) 6228 1281
E-mail: anita_shanahan@yahoo.com.au

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 253 August 2014

Vice President, Ambrose Canning opened the July meeting at 7.35pm with a welcome to 21 members. Chris brought his wife, Koula, as a visitor, indicating she is also likely to become a member. Apologies from Noel (still travelling), Rob (presumably making the most of Italian cuisine), Sue Cerutti and Ruth Rees.

Sunday 27th July was decided for another dig to the same area as before with members to meet at the Huonville hotel at 10am. (see *report beg. Page 2*).

A reminder that the Daffodil, Camellia & Floral Art Show, will be held on **Friday 12th & Saturday 13th September** at City Hall, with members requested to indicate willingness to assist for an hour or two on either day. The Show is open to the public on Friday between 1pm & 6pm, and on Saturday from 10am – 4.30pm. Bonsai demonstrations are proposed for Saturday, as well as a raffle, and items for the sales table which can be any kind of plants, bulbs, pots etc. And, as always, members are invited to display a bonsai. Please ensure it has been well watered (misting will be done during the Show), it is free of weeds and debris, the pot is clean and, most importantly, your bonsai is looking its best! Sales items and bonsai to be delivered on Thursday between 4 – 6pm to set up. Please ensure a named list and sale prices is available with your items. The committee is looking at this as a fundraising exercise and is asking for 20% on all sales.

Your committee held a meeting on 8th July – intended visit by Bjorn Bjorholm has been delayed, with August or September 2015 now a possibility; our 2015 Exhibition dates have also been changed to May 30th – 31st, as the earlier dates clash with the national bonsai exhibition in Adelaide, to which several experienced members will be attending. Our January barbecue was discussed, and the date set for Sunday 18th January 2015, with Will to find out if the Waterworks has a site available; also discussed arrangements for the City Hall show in September.

SQUAT PLASTIC GROWING POTS – Gill still has 3 of the large for sale, as well as some medium and small. Small: 18.7 cm diameter \$1.40; medium: 22.0 cm diam. \$2.30 and large: \$2.80.

Raffle: Azalea won by Leslie, Koula won a pot and Evelyn string dispenser.
(Apology re error in last month's newsletter – Stuart won the Bunnings' voucher.)

Display Table: Robyn asked how to improve her Wisteria - suggested it needs to be cut back hard, but wait until green shoots can be seen before cutting, as they shoot back on old wood; Cameron is training a silver birch as informal upright, and Tony H. suggested weeping willows can be re-potted twice a year; Chris showed us a 40 year old *Chamaecyparis* (Hinoki Cypress) in an informal upright style and his Pt Jackson fig which he displayed at our 2013 Exhibition; Gill's informal upright Larch has some nice ramification and tapering, she also brought in a cotoneaster group on a flat rock, a tea tree displaying small pink flowers, a Chinese elm in a broom style with good ramification which Chris suggested she replant into a shallower, less chunky pot, her NZ Corokea in a windswept style is looking much healthier, and her Japanese maple.

Following closure of business: Ambrose re-potted his *Wisteria chinensis* which has been grown from seed and is about 30 years old. *Wisteria* like water, and many owners sit their pots in trays of water during the warm weather. In summer, Ambrose keeps it in full sunshine. Ambrose has re-potted his *Wisteria* every year except last year, with time for root pruning now through early spring. In answer to a question, they readily grow from cuttings, so should also adapt well to air-layering.

Removed from the pot, it displayed a well-developed root system which was pruned before being returned to the pot. Some 4-7mm bluestone was placed in the bottom, the roots wired in and replenished with a fresh potting medium consisting of one-third crusher dust, one-third coir peat (wet to expand) and one-third Turface (a fired clay product). At this stage, Ambrose has no plans to change its present style. (Ed. I understand there is more information on our website.)

Forest Dig:

A successful day, five people, four plus me. We headed up to the same place we visited in March and had lots of success collecting Myrtles and a couple of other things. We drove directly in, the way we drove out at the March dig, and went directly to the second last and last spots we visited in March. The lower part of the uphill dirt road had been graded and had a lot of use, so being winter was quite wet and a bit muddy. But the upper parts of the road were OK, the same as when we last visited. After leaving Hobart in fine morning sunshine the Huon Valley was full of cold fog. As we drove up to the dig site we came out into the sunshine and it stayed fine all day, but with some clouds later on.



As we drove out I could see patches of snow up on the Snowy Range above the dig site. But we were lucky with the weather and it was relatively mild all day, for mid-winter at 500m above sea level. In addition to collecting a few small plants and some moss and lichen for myself I also collected two larger, and two mid-sized Myrtles as potential demonstration trees for the 2016 convention.

Robyn & Heather – success at last!



Jarryd & John looking guilty



And Heather has a full boot!



When collected all my trees had their root balls wrapped in plastic, complete with as many roots and soil as I could practically get. When I got home I potted them all into plastic pots with a mixture of their original collected soil and commercial potting mix, then well watered in with Seasol seaweed solution.

There were members unable to go, so do we have a member who wants to lead a trip on another date. It really just needs someone who knows where to go, and can be any member, not just committee. Alternatively, when Tony and Chris go to the dig site in late August would they be able to take some other members with them?

Ambrose.

Events & Diary Dates:

August Meeting: Tuesday 19th at 7.30pm AGM and election of committee for 2014/15, after which a presentation by Chris Xepapas on the **Japanese Bonsai Scene** – what's going on in bonsai; what's in and what's not style-wise!

August Workshop: Saturday, 24th August commencing at 1pm at the Bellerive Community Arts Centre.

Tranmere Hall became the venue for last month's workshop due to a mix-up between the Arts group and Council. 11 members worked on trees with advice and assistance supplied by Tony and Chris. Ambrose had a number of very healthy, vigorous acacias which, during the course of the afternoon, he reduced substantially in size. It will be interesting to see their future development. 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!



September meeting: Tuesday, 16th – Will's Pencil Pine presentation

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.

January BBQ – Sunday 18th January 2015 – a booking has been made to hold this function at the Waterworks Reserve, Site 1 from 11am-4pm.

Society Matters:

Election of Committee for 2014-2015 – nominations please. 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.

Dates for our Autumn Exhibition have been changed to 30th & 31st May 2015, with the 2016 Convention to be held 12 months later. We also intend holding 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, Rob will be back for the August meeting.

Website: Don't forget to check it out for the latest updates.

A timely reminder to all members – Tony Hewer had misplaced his tool kit. However, after making some enquiries on Tony's behalf, it was discovered the kit had been found by members of the Arts Group and safely put aside. As our bonsai tools are quite expensive, please ensure yours are marked with your name and perhaps your storage pouch could include a telephone number.

Chris Xepapas and his family are slowly settling into life in Dysart. News is that the nursery has made good progress – hopefully the trees and seedlings survive the cold Dysart winters compared to the milder climate of Moonah. We wish them many happy years in their new abode.

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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| President: Noel Kemp – Tel. 6243-6296 | Email: noelkemp@internode.on.net |
| Vice Pres.: Ambrose Canning – Tel. (H)6225-4002 | Email: ambrose.canning@internode.on.net |
| Secretary: Anita Shanahan – (See top of newsletter) | |
| Treasurer: Rob White – Tel.(H)6223-2069 | Email: rob.white@utas.edu.au |
| Will Fletcher- Tel. 6239-1473 | Email: will@islandbonsai.com.au |
| Tony Hewer – Tel. 6239-0096 | Email: anthony.hewer3@bigpond.com |
| Cameron Wadley: Tel. 04389 23539 | Email: crazywadley@gmail.com |
| Evelyn Black: Tel. 6229-5741 | Email: e.black@bigpond.com.au |

Ed. Note: A brief email from Noel who's back in the country (exact whereabouts unknown) and may be attending the August meeting.



After being lulled by the mild and very pleasant days of the last couple of weeks, we were given a reminder that winter is well and truly with us. Fierce winds and heavy rain, particularly in the west and across the state's north, created chaos and damage in some communities, with the SAS out in force making temporary repairs to damaged homes and premises. (31st July rain stopped, clouds cleared and Mt Wellington appeared – covered in snow!)



Despite, or perhaps because of, the fickle weather, I'm already noticing tiny green "dots" here and there as I check my trees. Buds can be seen on larch, oaks and maples, elms and viburnum foliage is already open, while others still appear to be slumbering.

If you haven't commenced re-potting – take heart. With the exception of spring-flowering trees, which are best pruned and re-potted immediately after flowering, according to the following information, the very best time is early spring, just as the new buds swell and start to grow. Towards the end of August, a start can be made with deciduous trees and then, over the next month, continue with conifers and other evergreens.

Although some bonsai can and do survive for many years without re-potting, eventually the time comes when something must be done if the tree is to live. If the root ball is a mass of tangled roots, many of them dead, the chance of the tree recovering is small. The two main reasons for root pruning and re-potting are:

- To improve drainage and aeration and to renew the depleted food supply;
- Just as the top of a tree is renewed by pruning, so the pruning of roots encourages the growth of fine new feeding roots and keeps the root system young.

This is the reason why a bonsai can live to a very great age bearing flowers and fruit, changing colour with the seasons, in every way like its counterpart in nature – except size.

Potting Mix:

To keep a tree healthy in a small pot, the kind of mix used is most important. It should hold moisture well, contain a good food supply, and at the same time give perfect drainage and aeration. (*Ed. Note: As you may recall at our June discussion on bonsai potting mixes they vary between bonsai enthusiasts – some may include soil, others do not – but gravel, mulch, compost, sand, zeolite, diatomite, crusher dust and fired clay products have all been mentioned, with perhaps 3 or 4 of these in combination as a mix. Speaking with individual members and asking questions about their experiences is worthwhile if you're unsure what to use. Don't forget - not all species like the same potting mix, or fertilizer.*)

Choice of fertilisers also varies and again, it's worth asking experienced members what they use and prefer.

Bonsai need re-potting when the roots have filled the container and started to wind around the edges. Cut the wire tying the tree into the pot. Put your hand over the soil and turn the pot over. If the tree will lift out with the root ball intact, then re-pot and root prune. If there is 25mm (1 inch) or so of loose soil around the rim of the container not filled with roots, then it is not "pot-bound" and it can be replaced and left for another season.

Do this test a day or two before the actual potting session; then let the soil dry out a little – it will fall away from the roots more easily. Work in a sheltered place away from the sun and wind, and get everything you will need ready before starting work, so that roots will not be exposed for longer than necessary. (Keep a bottle of water handy to spray the roots to reduce drying out and, in the case of a root-bound tree, standing it in water for a while will help loosen soil and roots.)

If re-potting into the same pot, take the tree out and cover it while scrubbing the pot clean. Always use a clean pot – this reduces the possibility of transferring pests or diseases to your tree.

It is necessary for root development that the tree should be held firmly in the pot and, as there is not enough soil in a shallow container to hold the tree steady, a length of copper wire is passed up through the drainage holes and fastened across the root ball – NOT around the trunk. (*Ed. note: I understand there is another method – ask Chris about this one!*)

The usual method of placing a crock over the drain hole takes up too much room; use a piece of screening which will prevent particles of the mix falling through the hole. Place a layer of coarse gravel in the bottom for drainage, then a layer of potting mix over this, ready for the tree. Take the tree from the pot and, with a pointed stick (sharpened wooden chopstick is ideal, or a root hook if you have one) loosen the roots from the outside of the root ball, working towards the inside. Remove some of the surface soil until the surface roots can just be seen. Loosen approximately two-thirds of the outer mass of the root ball and about half the depth. With a pair of sharp, clean scissors trim the roots that have been exposed. Set the tree in place and fasten the copper wire. Fill in the potting mix, using the pointed stick to work it in among the roots. Add more mix as needed, leaving enough space for watering. The level of the mix should be below the rim of the pot. Pack the mix to a uniform firmness throughout the pot ensuring there are no air pockets left and water can penetrate evenly.

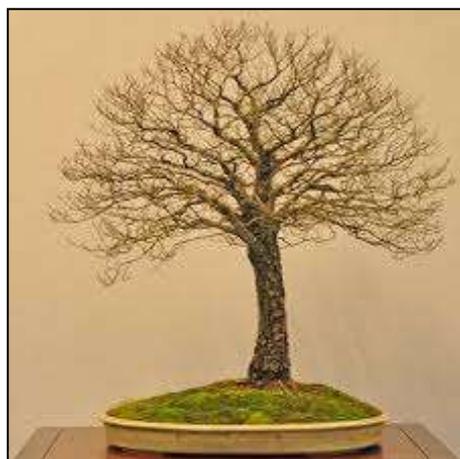
Spread finely sieved potting mix across the top, dust on some dried moss and press gently on to the surface. (Collected moss can also be used, but ensure it's free of weeds.) Water thoroughly so the soil is wet through – this can be done by standing the potted bonsai in a

dish of water with the water level just below the rim of the pot. (This method of water immersion is also useful when a pot has dried out completely). Keep in a lightly shaded area for a few weeks to allow the tree to recover.)

The top of the tree must always be pruned at the same time as root pruning to compensate for the loss of roots. This can be done just before re-potting, or even the day before if more convenient. Keep the newly potted tree sheltered from wind and sun before gradually returning it to the open.

Fertiliser should not be applied to newly potted trees, allow them to settle for 3 – 4 weeks before commencing the normal feeding regime.

(Ed. Note: most of the above courtesy of an article from Bonsai News "The Best Time to Re-pot" by Peggy Kent.)



(Google website: Images for Broom style bonsai)



Secretary
Bonsai Society of Southern Tasmania
6 Claude Street
New Town Tas. 7008

Committee Nomination Form

Date.....

I hereby nominate.....for the position of.....

.....in the Bonsai Society of Southern Tasmania.

The nomination is proposed by.....and seconded by

.....

I hereby consent to being nominated for the above position.....(nominee)

(The nomination form should be signed by the proposer, seconder and nominee)