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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](http://www.bonsai-southern-tasmania.org.au)**

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## **Newsletter No 256 November 2014**

Vice President Chris opened the meeting at 7.35 pm, welcoming 21 members, and visitors Lillian Wilson and Jeanette Petrusma. Apologies from President, Ambrose (overseas), and Sue Cerutti and Ruth Rees both on “extended leave”.

Members were reminded of our Society’s fund raising “**Bonsai & Garden Sale**” to be held on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> November from 10am – 3pm. Rob White is organising this event, the location will be 3/54 Quayle Street, Sandy Bay. All sales items to be delivered on Thursday, 27<sup>th</sup> or Friday, 28<sup>th</sup> in time for setting up. Rob estimates 5 or 6 people would be needed on the day.

Chris reported he and Tony visited Strathaven aged care facility and provided some of the residents with a demonstration and information about bonsai. It seems they may be interested in setting up their own club within the facility, so there may be a few more visits.

Your committee met on 28<sup>th</sup> October. A selection of suitable trees is being sought for the purpose of preparing them for the 2016 Convention. It has been pointed out that trees don’t have to be of a great age, nor do they have to be in the “large” category to be deemed suitable, nor is the selection exclusive to exotic species. As part of our theme, we are looking for something which represents an “island style”. Members are asked to contact either Ambrose, Will or Chris for further information.

Presenter Bjorn Bjorholm – 10<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> September 2015 are the latest dates for his visit. In order to work out costs, we would now like to receive indications from members on their choice of participating or observing at a workshop. Regardless of experience, even an opportunity to observe someone of his calibre at work, would be invaluable. A list will be made available for members to indicate their choice with a reminder that as a participant, one is required to have a reasonable tree to be worked on.

A suggestion has been put forward that, in order to promote ourselves better, we should organise polo shirts and/or caps displaying our logo, which can be worn at events where we represent the Society and/or display bonsai. Information is being sought, and will be made available at the November meeting.

Next year’s calendar is being fine-tuned and should be available with the first newsletter of 2015. It is the Society’s intention to have our Exhibition on 30<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup> May 2015 at the Barn. We are awaiting final confirmation from their staff.

A past member contacted our Secretary to advise she would like to sell many of her trees, and wished to give members the first opportunity before advertising them. The following information is from the present owner, who has set aside 2 days for Society members to visit and possibly select trees. (Might be a good idea for those intending to visit, to wear their badges.)

“Some of these trees are 30 plus years old. Trees that were grown in the ground were dug up and planted in large containers last July. All are doing well with the possible exception of two, but will certainly know about them by the end of the month. All other trees are healthy and have been root pruned and re-potted 2 years ago. Many have the beginnings of good bonsai but all will

need a good haircut. Lots will need more serious pruning, and there are plenty of young trees from cuttings to play with. All in all there are probably about a hundred trees to choose from.”

**Time:** 10am till 4pm. Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> November & Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> December

**Address:** 16 Beddome Street Sandy Bay, above Waimea Heights school, above Churchill Avenue and Waimea Avenue, off Cheverton Pde.

**Raffle:** Anita chose the blue bonsai pot; Evelyn chose the fertilizer; Hans opted for the Bunnings' voucher; and a pair of chopsticks was also won.

**Display Table:** Quite a selection of trees made their way onto the table. Cameron brought in the maple he won from the raffle we ran at the September Daffodil & Camellia show. It is now in full leaf, but obviously training is on-going. He also has a 2 year-old Silver Birch in a very tiny pot. Besides her sassafras display, variety of succulents and tiny accent plants, Heather has been creating bonsai of a different kind – made from wire! It takes between 3-5 hours to create one of these little “trees”, three strands of wire cut to exactly the same length, an artistic eye and a great deal of patience. She has created a few different styles including root-over-rock, informal upright and semi-cascade.

Robyn brought in a lovely wisteria; Gill's fuchsia is covered in tiny flowers, a copper beech which had been wired at a previous workshop, her pink-flowering hawthorn, and semi-cascade azalea displaying lavender-pink flowers.

Herbert also brought his deep pink azalea (azaleas should be clipped back when they have finished flowering).

Will brought in a Cheshunt Pine (*Diselma archeri*) native to Tasmania, which he's training in a windswept style. Described as a shrub or small tree, it is found in relatively high rainfall alpine and sub-alpine areas of central, western and southern Tasmania. It is fire sensitive and only grows in fire-free areas, in alpine conifer heath and montane rainforest. It is slow growing and may live for many hundreds of years. He also brought in a Hakea bearing lemon, honey smelling flowers.

Visitor, Lillian, brought her Azalea for some advice – Chris suggested she train it in a semi-cascade style similar to Gill's. (She came along to the October workshop and with some assistance, and advice on its future care, has a re-styled azalea.)

**Following closure of business:** Tony brought a range of plants suitable for accent and companion planting. Greenhood orchids (when the flowers die, clip them off); Clump daisies; Mondo grass; miniature irises; mounds of moss; blue lichen; common rushes; some native grasses; even certain weeds which can be planted in tiny pots, on, or in rocks which have holes or crevices.

(Historically, the plants came with trees collected from the wild, perhaps grasses or wildflowers, and the collector kept them as a reminder of where the tree had come from.)

ACCENT AND COMPANION PLANTS (KUSAMONO OR SHITAKUSA translated – *shita* = below or under and *kusa* = grass) [www.bonsaiempire.com](http://www.bonsaiempire.com)

Bonsai trees are sometimes traditionally displayed in a Tokonoma, consisting of a Bonsai tree, a scroll and an **accent plant** (representing men, heaven and earth respectively). Adding a scroll, or in this case an accent plant to the composition is done to accentuate the tree on display and create a sense of harmony.

## Types of Bonsai Accent plants

- Season, the accent plant should resemble the current season. This means the color of leaves and the presence of fruits or flowers is of great importance.

- Style of Bonsai, trees that resemble a struggle to survive (like a windswept or a growing in a rock styled tree) should be accompanied by a not too luxuriantly growing accent plant. Taller styles, like the literati, can be displayed with a tall grass variety.
- Contrast, Bonsai trees with flowers or fruits should be contrasted by non-flowering accent plants, and vice-versa.
- Origins, when combining several plants to create an accent plant, make sure these come from similar origins.
- Pots, companion plantings can be placed in small glazed or unglazed pots, but also on a tile or slate. In the latter case, moss should be grown around the soil to create a mature looking plant.
- A successful companion planting is beautiful in its own right, but should not become the dominant part of the three-pieced Tokonoma display.

Obviously these guidelines should not work to limit your personal taste; overall accent plants are rather easy and inexpensive to grow (and the options are endless). Be careful to water regularly, as the small pots and slates do not hold much soil.



White Rhodohypoxis



Pink Dianthus

(Ed.Note: The above information plus much more is available via the internet. At present I have a book from our local library “Keshiki Bonsai” which has some wonderful ideas and beautiful pictures of tiny pots containing mosses in various textures, seedling maples, pines & hornbeams; there are very detailed instructions to follow, ideas for pots and, of course, an emphasis on watering to prevent drying out!. Photos above from Website: ” images for accent plants for bonsai”)

**Website:** Don’t forget to check it out for the latest updates, and a reminder that Rob would like more input from members – articles or photos

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**POTS –**

Gill still has some of the black plastic training pots for sale. Mika pots at \$6 & \$10 each are also available. These are quite durable and shaped like bonsai pots, and would be useful when transferring your tree from a training pot for the first time. However, they are not for use in place of bonsai pots.

The Society has also purchased a range of ceramic bonsai pots in various colours, sizes and shapes, glazed and unglazed, and a batch of terracotta pots in various sizes which would be suitable for training. Anyone interested, contact Rob White. (Photos courtesy of Cameron).



### **Bonsai Etiquette:**

Chris reminded us that, just as rules of etiquette exist within society, they also exist in bonsai. And it's important to be aware of, and adhere to them. Here are two from an article titled: "Bonsai Etiquette" by Nancy Stacpoole.

Do not touch or handle another person's tree without their permission. This rule applies in workshop environments with regard to pruning, branch removal, wiring even removal of weeds, and also at exhibitions, shows etc – touching and feeling foliage is often a natural response when viewing trees and plants. However, bonsai connoisseurs are the ones with their hands clamped resolutely behind their backs!

Always find something nice to say – even the most hideous (to you) of trees has something good about it, a lovely bend here or healthy foliage there. A top-heavy sapling has a "youthful exuberance", an over-potted tree evokes the emptiness of a vast plain, etc. And what to say about a tree that has been hacked beyond all recognition? You praise it as a "battle-scarred warrior".

### **Events & Diary Dates:**

**November Meeting:** Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> at 7.30pm – described as "Revisiting trees from November 2013", I'm wondering how many of us actually recall what we took! Members were asked to bring one tree only, which had to be in training as a bonsai. There was a good response, and I can remember Noel introducing them, assisted by Stuart. So, if those little gray cells don't want to play ball, bring something you've worked on at an earlier workshop, or has been languishing in its pot since Andrew's first visit and needs some attention. Or something you just haven't had time to do anything with at all – I'm sure you will get a few suggestions!

### **Workshops:**

**Sunday, 23<sup>rd</sup> November** at Bellerive Community Arts Centre – note the change of time - **commencing at 12 noon and finishing at 5pm.** As this will be our last get-together for the year, perhaps our plate of goodies could suggest a Christmas "spirit". And if you don't want to work on a tree, join in anyway.

Our October workshop was attended by 14 members. Chris and Tony made their rounds, giving generously of their time with advice and a helping hand where needed. These workshops are vital in nurturing and developing our bonsai skills; providing opportunities to discuss (and sometimes debate) how best to achieve a particular style or shape; trunk and branch development; learn the why's and wherefore's of defoliation (which several of us did at the last workshop, Chris reminding us that it's necessary for back-budding); pot selection and much more.

**January BBQ – Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2015** – the Waterworks Reserve, Site I has been booked for this function from 11am-4pm. What you will need in the picnic basket– salad/sweet to share, drinks of your choice, cutlery, sunscreen, umbrella or raincoat (maybe). MEATS?????????

**February Meeting:** Tuesday, 17<sup>th</sup> February 2015 at Bellerive Community Arts Centre, commencing at 7.30pm, with a presentation on Cedars being the likely topic.

### 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.

**N.B.** As we are getting close to the end of the year, it would be appreciated if all books out on loan are returned to the Society at the November meeting.

### Invitation:

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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**LOST:** One pair of sharp bonsai scissors (similar to the ones in this photo) belonging to our elder statesman – Herbert. They were last seen at our October workshop, during which Herbert was using them to remove certain foliage from his maple. His usual good humour deserted him for a little while that day, but we won't say why!



The following guidelines have been provided by Chris, based on his experience with bonsai. Others may differ in their opinions, and he iterates they are guidelines – NOT rules, with a reminder that timing is different between ourselves, and the north of the state or the mainland. They have been set up on a separate page so that members can put it in a place where it will serve them best for reminders.

#### Some Guidelines on What to do & When

	Deciduous	Conifers	Native	Specific
January	1,2	6,2,3	1,2,3,6,8	Deciduous varieties can continue to be pinched and pruned back. Junipers and Cypress can be wired. Safe to do major work on all conifers . Keep eye on wire. Good time to defoliate Ficus.
February	1,2	1,6,3,5,2	1,2,6,3	As above. Pine needle plucking then wiring and styling if needles have hardened off. Cedars can be wired and styled.
March	1,6	6,5,2	1,2,6,3	As above, but last pinching for deciduous trees, natives and ficus. Avoid heavy pruning on deciduous. Can start wiring deciduous trees late March.
April	6	5,6	1,6	Finish needle plucking and wiring remaining pines. Still Ok to wire deciduous and natives.
May	6	6	6	Only light wiring for all trees if needed. Check wires on previously wired trees
June				Let trees rest
July				Let trees rest
August	4	4	4	Re potting except Ficus. V cuts on healthy Elms & Zelkova. Concentrate on nebari development.
September	7,1,2,6			Can start pinching, pruning deciduous but remove any old wire before growth becomes too dense. Can wire deciduous but must keep checking wire.
October	1,2,6,3,8	1,9	1	As above and you can defoliate or partial defoliate your maples. Major work can be done on deciduous. Keep beech new growth pinched back. Can start pinching natives , cedar, cypress or juniper varieties. Candle breaking commences on pines and thinning out masses of buds/candles.
November	1,2,6,3,8	7,1,9	7,1,6,2	As above. Re pot ficus. Remove old wire on conifers and native varieties if needed. Good time to prune back and partial defoliate Oaks.

#### KEY

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|--|-----------------------------|
| 1. Pinching  | 6. Wiring                   |
| 2. Pruning   | 7. Remove wire              |
| 3. Major work- large branch bending,<br>branch removal, re styling | 8. Defoliate                |
| 4. Re potting  | 9. Candle breaking on pines |
| 5. Needle plucking   |                             |