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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. 261 May 2015

President Ambrose opened the April meeting at 7.35pm pm with a welcome to 17 members including new member Tim Walpole, and 3 visitors – Linda Hoffman, Anthony King and Shane Hollis. There were also 2 apologies – Secretary, Anita (on the sick list) and VP Chris (on location in Victoria!).

Ambrose reminded everyone of dates for workshops (26th April), and our next meeting which will be held on 19th May. Members were again reminded of our Exhibition on 30th & 31st May, and rosters will be available on 19th May. **Please** let a committee member know how you can assist (raffles, admission, sales, observing etc.) as it's a very important weekend for our Society, giving us the chance to publicly display our bonsai, as well as raising funds. And, of course, this year's event is also a practice run for the 2016 Convention in 12 months time!

To All Members: An invitation is extended to bring potential trees for the 2016 Convention, and our 2015 Exhibition, to the meeting on 19th May. This will allow feedback and suggestions on what work needs to be done during the period leading up to both events. We would like **ALL** members to show at least **one tree** at the Exhibition.

President Ambrose confirmed the September visit by Bjorn Bjorholm, and that half-day workshops will be run on Saturday 12th and Sunday 13th. It is likely they will be held in one of the University of Tasmania's laboratories with details available once this has been agreed. Participation and observation places are still available, if you haven't already put your name to the list. This is a worthwhile opportunity to hone your bonsai skills further – whether you are a novice or feel you know it all! A demonstration is also being planned for Friday 11th September

Any member who doesn't have their new name tag, could you please let the editor know.

Raffle: David Budd won the book donated by Will (written by Brian Sampson it is probably best described as his bonsai journey working with native species).

Display table:

Don't forget our monthly display table. No matter what time of year, our bonsai (be they bereft of foliage, or covered in blossom) have their beauty. And one can always be sure of some advice if they bring along something "untouched". On the table at the April meeting:-

Herbert was very pleased to display his "Coles Bay compact" banksia complete with two candles! Diana sought advice on her 14yr.old Huon Pine which she felt was getting too heavy on top and the bottom seemed to be dying. Will had seen one at the Melbourne Symposium which had been pruned short, but there was a difference of opinion as to whether Diana should cut hers short.

Gill will bring her crab apple to Bjorn's workshop for opinion on re-styling; she also brought in three maples for their colourful autumn foliage; and her first bonsai (a larch) about to drop its foliage.

Tim had a lovely Juniper *shimpaku* multi-trunk in a windswept style; and a Scotts Pine, *Pinus sylvestris* (1986).

Over the last 2 years, Cameron has begun styling a 30yr old Birch which is developing lovely white bark.

Heather was hoping for some ideas on getting her Juniper to thicken up its trunk a bit quicker – it's not happening fast enough!

Jan also brought along a “Coles Bay compact” banksia.

Editor: I brought this Fuchsia to the April meeting. When I took the photo on 2nd May it had 12 flowers. Sadly the friend who gave me the original cutting in 2008, passed away on the 5th May.

Vale Klaus Effenberger.



Will gave a slide presentation and commentary on his observations while attending the recent Symposium on Australian Native Plants as Bonsai. See pages 6 & 7.

Our Bonsai Exhibition will be held on 30th & 31st May at Rosny Barn (please keep those dates free). Chris is co-ordinating, so let him or a committee member know how **you** can help during the two days. It might only be for an hour or two, but will relieve someone else. Set up will be on Friday 29th from around 10.30am. Perhaps you could sell raffle tickets or help with admission, be at the sales table, observing, or something else? The roster will be available at the May meeting. The following are some guidelines on preparation of your trees for display at exhibitions:

1. Make certain the tree is in a healthy condition and free from disease or insect infestation.
2. Make sure the tree is well groomed and trimmed properly. Remove dead branches, brown needles, damaged or bug eaten leaves. Trim excess growth. Clean and scrub the bark to remove dirt and algae.
3. Trees with excessive amounts of wire are not normally exhibited in shows. They are considered “in training” and therefore not yet ready for exhibition. A little wire here and there is OK since the truth of the matter is that all bonsai are “in training” all of their lives.
4. If your bonsai creation contains areas of dead wood (jin and shari) then you need to treat those areas with lime sulphur to whiten them up.
5. Make sure trees are thoroughly watered before bringing them to a show. Arrangements will usually be made to water bonsai on display, but it's a good idea to water them well beforehand, just to be safe.
6. Pull weeds, plant moss and sprinkle the soil surface with some decorative gravel or fresh bonsai soil to give the roots good delineation and to make the whole thing sparkle.
7. Use a fine piece of steel wool or a Sandflex block and remove any water salts which may have accumulated on the outside of the container. Then wash the outside of the container thoroughly and give the exterior surface a coating of oil. Baby oil works fine, as does a light cooking oil. After you have applied the oil you should use a lint free cloth and remove as much of the oil as you possibly can. The result will be a container which looks like a brand new pot. Make sure you remove as much oil as possible. The objective is to give the pot a pleasant patina, not to make it look greasy.
8. Finally, make sure you know the exact times the show committee would like you to drop off your tree and pick it up after the show. In the case of our Exhibition, could trees be dropped off at The Barn between 12.00 – 5.00pm

Bonsai Events & Diary Dates:

This month's meeting Tuesday, May 19th at 7.30pm – Fresh from the Adelaide Convention, Chris will be discussing/demonstrating Pine refinement and pad development.

Next workshop Saturday, 23rd May 2015 Bellerive Community Arts Centre from 1pm - 4pm.

11 members participated in the April workshop – a little disappointing, since there is plenty which can be done to our trees at this time of year, and an opportunity to bring a tree for review before it appears in the Exhibition display.

AABC Convention 2015: May 15th – 18th in Adelaide. A contingent of the committee will be attending this event to present our credentials as hosts of the 2016 AABC Convention! **It is going to be a very busy year.**

Bonsai Society Exhibition: Saturday 30th & Sunday 31st May 2015 at Rosny Barn.

June Meeting: Tuesday, 16th at Bellerive Community Arts Centre, commencing at 7.30pm, a report on our Society's 2016 Convention presentation given in Adelaide.

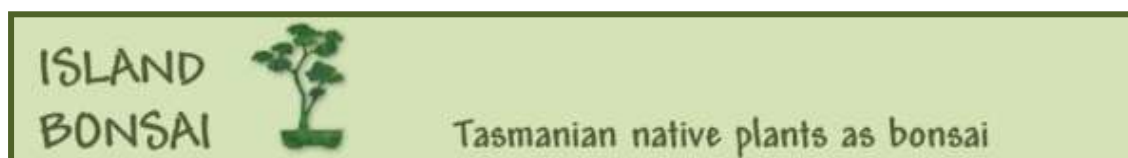
Other Diary Dates

Sept. 11th & 12th

Daffodil, Camellia & Floral Art Show at the Town Hall

Nov. 6th & 7th

Rose, Iris & Floral Art Show – Town Hall



Open on the 2nd weekend of the month, or by appointment . Tel. 6239 1920

Library Collection:

The Society's selection of books and journals is available for members to borrow for a month at a time, without 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.

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 your own "bonsai journey", it gives everyone an opportunity of getting to know you better. Photos are also accepted – whether they are your own or something from the internet (don't forget to include your source!).

Committee Members & contact details:

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Members might like to have the following information re the polo & rugby shirts, purchased from:

- TAS Workwear Group, 50D Browns Rd. Kingston. Tel.62292881 – contact Peter.
- Polo Shirt – short sleeve, cotton stretch, navy, size Small \$21.20 (Item No.PS55)
- Rugby Shirt – long sleeve, 100% cotton, navy, size Medium \$60.50 (Item No. Lakeport)

Prices include \$5 per item for embroidered logo. Alternatively, you can have your own shirt embroidered with the logo for \$6. I'm happy to deliver shirts for embroidering and return orders on behalf of members, but it is wise to try for size if you're intending to buy from them!

Bonsai, what is bonsai?

When pondering this question we often think of the famous karate kid movies. We think of little trees in small pots and how we would love to have one! But is bonsai merely a tree in a pot? The word “Bonsai” is translated into “*bon*” meaning a tree in a pot or shallow dish, and “*sai*” meaning “to plant”. But does the definition stop there? Can we just plant a tree in a pot and call it a bonsai or is it merely a potted plant?

The answer to that is often not an easy one at the best of times. Bonsai is a tree in a pot which follows a set of principles that have been developed over a thousand years in China and then perfected in the last 300 or so years in Japan. The level at where we choose to follow bonsai will greatly determine the quality of the bonsai you ultimately own, in other words, the more time you put into your bonsai in all developmental stages will determine your tree.

Acquiring a bonsai can be done in many ways. The first and most obvious way is to visit a specialist bonsai nursery and purchased a bonsai ready to go. This has advantages and disadvantages. You can have an instant bonsai with great enjoyment, lots of support from the specialist bonsai nursery, and possible after care. This situation would suit professionals who unfortunately wouldn't have lots of spare time on their hands, but the quality of the bonsai would vary greatly depending on price and the skill level of the nursery.

The next way to acquire a bonsai is to do it yourself, that is to purchase or dig up the appropriate material (*yamadori*) and create a bonsai from the "raw stock", then place it in a bonsai pot. This requires a whole new set of skill levels which in turn can give the prospective beginner a great sense of achievement. This method is by far the most popular method.

The last way is to propagate your own tree from seed or cuttings and slowly grow the tree over a number of years, training the tree through wiring and pruning as it grows. This is the best method to use if you are seeking perfection, but most beginners (particularly if not too young!) might become disheartened and lose interest if it were the only way. On the positive side, it might also be the only way if a particular species is desired.

Bonsai come in various shape and size categories. Size can range from miniature to one metre plus high! Their styles can also differ from formal upright to full cascade.

I also get asked, what tree do you use for bonsai? Quite simply any tree or shrub that produces wood can be a bonsai but of course some species are more suitable than others. My advice is to go with what attracts you the most, for example if you come across a pine tree at a nursery that has a nice curve or a good set of branches that you find appealing then that's the tree to buy!

So now we are getting a good idea about what a bonsai is. In the next article I will discuss the popular styles of bonsai, sizes and species used around the world not to mention our own Australian varieties.

HAPPY BONSAI

Chris Xepapas



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