



sydney city
bonsai club inc.



NEXT CLUB MEETING

7.30pm Tuesday 11 April

Do-it-yourself Juniper Workshop 2

Doors open 7pm for 7.30pm start

Green Square Community Church
182 Victoria Street (cnr Collins St)
Beaconsfield

CONTACT DETAILS



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Welcome to the April 2006 Newsletter

Workshop Preparation for DIY Juniper

The workshop will be on repotting the juniper you worked on last month. Don't forget to bring your soil, pot/s, water spray bottle, gloves, plastic bag for old soil, potting stick (a chop stick) and root teaser (an old fork works as well). There will be some soil for sale on the night.

Congratulations to Lee!

The Castle Hill Agricultural Show was on late March and Lee, a member of the SCBC, entered 9 trees in the bonsai exhibit and received 3 firsts and 3 seconds. The horticultural staff were absolutely amazed, there were 55 exhibits in this year's show and the majority of quite a good standard. It was particularly pleasing to see that the largest class, by far, was the one for Australian natives and the Champion Bonsai of the exhibit was a stunning callistimon styled by Colin Hugo of the Bonsai Society of Australia. The tree was imposing, elegant and definitely native styling. It is fair to say that the bonsai dominated the 3 day horticultural exhibit and the staff had to bring in three extra tables to be able to display them all.

If anyone is interested in exhibiting at Castle Hill next March, phone for a catalogue late in the year. Unlike the Royal Easter Show, the Castle Hill show is friendly, accessible, you can park on site[!!!!!!!] and unload/load just outside the pavilion. The trees are benched and judged Friday morning and have to remain on exhibit for the three days, collection being between 5-5:30 on Sunday. But it is nowhere near the logistical hassle of the Royal.

Speaking of the Royal, it is too late to get an entry in but support bonsai by attending on Monday 17 April and give the display a decko.

Membership Renewals

Membership forms have been included. Don't forget to renew by 30 June 2006 or earlier!

ONGOING RAFFLE – YOU COULD WIN A BONSAI DISPLAY TABLE!

3 display tables will be the Ongoing Raffle that will be drawn at the December meeting. All raffle tickets from each meeting April – November will go into a box and 3 winning tickets will be drawn at the December meeting. When you buy raffle tickets at the club meetings, put your full name on the stubs. Winners have to be present on the night of the draw to win. If a ticket holder is not present, that ticket will be discarded and another drawn. You not only 'gotta be in it to win it', you gotta be there to have a chance. So continue to support the monthly raffles and December could be good to you.

Browsing my Benches - Carving with a Dremel

By Lee Wright

I'm not a carving nut and I do not have a workshop so I don't want a lot of equipment. While I would prefer a tool a bit more powerful than a Dremel, I'm not doing huge trees and it will have to suit.

I've done carving in the past but very unsatisfactorily. Like all sports, practice is the essence and since I don't have a large selection of carveable trees, practice is limited. March 2005 I brought home an *Agnosis flexuosis*. It didn't take long before I realised this tree was harbouring ants, thousands of them. In a 2.5 day marathon I eradicated them all and a large portion of the trunk, now not just beautifully hollow, but 2/3rds carved by masters. I set out to duplicate their work in the top third that they had not ravaged.

It took three sessions but I honestly believe that anyone would be hard put to say where the ants left off and I started. Bolstered with that experience, I worked on two *pyracanthas*. One had a large and ugly jin and it now has a smaller, quite attractive jin and a large double hollow completely through the belly of the trunk. The job exceeded my expectations of my abilities. Again, three sessions to do it and refine it but there is no rule that says you have to do it all at once. Better to take it slowly. I worked with the new knowledge of how ants tunnel and I think they would smile on my work.

My very first bonsai was an incredibly ugly elm that only familiarization with stock plant selection showed how wrong this choice was. With nothing to lose I removed two of the 3 large branches emanating from one point. The resulting large scar was elongated several years later to run in a curving path down the trunk. My carving job was crass, shallow, amateurish and ugly and by now the tree had gained some grace and elegance and promised to be nice. So, with my new found confidence and experience, I started to refine this tree. And you know what... it's easy! Follow the ants' golden rules:

- Never tunnel in a straight line, or solely in one direction - you may be right or left handed but ants aren't
- Hold the Dremel so the dirt doesn't blow in your face and ALWAYS wear eye protection
- Invest in at least one of the tungsten bits - The \$50 cost is well worth it
- Keep your coffee away from the fall out.
- Use pliers to tighten the bits so they don't spin out
- Olive and elm are quite hard, the Dremel will handle them but slowly and carefully. The extra time spent working more slowly with hardwoods saves the Dremel from burning out.
- Ants don't carve tunnels in the shape of your bit, modify the grooves so they look natural.
- That's the key to success... your work **MUST** look natural
- When you are carving you will quickly know which tree has soft wood and which has hard... don't do too much fine refining on softwood as it will deteriorate more quickly.
- Use the edge of your bit to remove any wood curls and unnatural looking or sharp edges of carving. You can invest in a Caramel Burner but I don't have \$50+ to spare for a very occasional tool so I try to do mine on the cheap. Care is the secret to success.
- Branches will get in the way (constantly), don't break them
- Make sure all carving has a drainage path so water does not stand in the wood to minimise rotting
- As you carve think how water would run down the carving and leach it out and exaggerate your hollows and tunnels in that way
- Ants excavate hollows to build nests so make some deeper indentations in appropriate places to mimic this.
- Take great care around branches so you don't damage the cambium from the inside.
- You can hollow out branch scars but watch their location so they don't end up looking like portholes.
- Less is more so don't overdo your work. This is another reason to carve a tree in several sessions so you can have time to sit and study what you have done and what you might want to do and how it will look in the end.
- Don't just do shallow carving. Carving needs depth and shadow to reflect reality.
- Never carve a newly repotted tree. Carving generates a lot of pressure and the roots have to be solid in the pot to ensure they do not suffer. If you want to do the two at once, carve first and then repot. But then your refining will have to wait. It is really better to allow a newly repotted tree to solidly establish itself before carving it.

I have never gotten a tree simply to carve. I have used carving to beautify a natural defect or emphasize a feature [or got carried away with a possibility]. If you are serious about working with bonsai a talent for carving is reasonably necessary. You could get a healthy looking entire tree like my zigzag pyracantha and then discover that 50% of the trunk is rotten - not as a hollow centre, but sliced straight down the middle... one side good, one side gone. Carving was essential to make the area presentable and since the tree, necessarily totally restyled to compensate, has character and potential... it was important to do a good job.

Carving and deadwood has pitfalls. It is HIGHLY recommended NEVER to take carving to the soil line as the moisture will move up and rot the deadwood. Also, when you lime sulphur to protect the deadwood, getting the chemical in the soil around the roots can prove deadly to the tree. My zigzag pyracantha has deadwood all the way down.. a lot of it. The tree won't live forever, but while it does I can enjoy it.

Once your carving is finished it is important to let the tree stand for several months to let any damaged cambium on the edges heal so applications of lime sulphur are not absorbed into the living tissue. If the area surrounding your deadwood is already calloused you can lime sulphur immediately.

The first step is to spray the deadwood with water several times over half an hour period to allow the water to soak into the timber. This stops the lime sulphur from colouring the wood orange. It will be yellowish when you apply but go grey quickly. If you apply lime sulphur to dry wood the wood will age to grey over the months. I find there's another good reason to moisten the deadwood first. Lime sulphur is as runny as water and you do not want to get it on the cambium or in the soil. Damp wood seems to absorb better and as long as you are careful in your application, it does not run so badly.

I keep a rag at the base of the trunk or hold it at the base of a jin to prevent the lime sulphur from getting on the live wood. Lime sulphur is applied full strength when you are treating deadwood. It is applied 1 to 20 when you are spraying deciduous trees in the winter to kill pests lodged in the bark and buds. Never apply lime sulphur full strength to a living tree and don't waste your time applying watered down lime sulphur to protect deadwood.

If your tree is large bonsai then you have to get more powerful equipment to get the work done in reasonable time but if you are into smaller bonsai a Dremel can do quite a good job on small to medium size trees. Good luck!

WHAT EXACTLY IS A SPECIES???

A species is a population that interbreeds and is reproductively isolated from other populations. Seedlings from such isolated species populations look like the parents, or 'grow true from seed'. Hybrids are crosses between other species or hybrids. Hybrids will not grow true from seed and may be faithfully reproduced only from cuttings, which are clones of the parent plant. A cutting has the same DNA as the parent but each seed has its own DNA code.

Here's a Sweet Tip...

1 dessert spoon to 1 litre of water minimises shock and supplies nutrients.

Spray foliage with sugar water as well as plants can absorb carbohydrates through their leaves and this increases their chance of survival.

The sugar is converted to complex carbohydrates and that feeds the cutting or a tree that has been collected with minimal roots.

EVENTS CALENDAR 2006

Date	Event	Details
8-9 Apr	Western Creek Bonsai Show	Weston Creek shopping Centre, Weston Creek, Canberra
17 Apr	Sydney Royal Easter Show Bonsai Day	Enter your best bonsai in the Easter Show! Visit www.eastershow.com.au for more information.
April (Easter)	Bendigo Bonsai Club Autumn Bonsai Show	The show will be held from Easter Saturday to Easter Monday at the St Pauls Anglican Hall, Myers Street. Contact David on (03) 5439 5605 for more info.
22-23 Apr	2nd Collectors' Plant Fair	10am - 4pm at "Woodgreen" Powells Road, Bilpin.
7 May	Nepean Bonsai Society Show	Glenbrook Community Hall, Glenbrook.
20 May	Bonsai Study Group Show	Community Hall, Lofberg Rd, West Pymble.
26-29 May	19th AABC National Bonsai Convention	Legends Hotel, Gold Coast, QLD. The biggest bonsai event of the year with international demonstrators Robert Steven and Budi Sulistyono and much more. For more information download the flyer , visit www.aabcltd.org or call Carole on (07) 5530 5452 b/h or (02) 5525 1428 a/h.
2-4 Jun	Timber and Woodworking Show	Fox Studios, Moore Park.
1-2 Jul	Bonsai Federation of Australia Convention	Will be hosted in Ballarat with Hirotohi Saito as principal demonstrator. The program is not yet finalised, but will include workshops on the Saturday and Sunday. More details will be made available later.
21-23 Jul	The Tops Weekend	Illawarra Bonsai Society live in weekend workshop at the Tops in Stanwell Tops.
25-27 Aug	ABC Gardening Aust Expo	Sydney Showgrounds, Sydney Olympic Park.
7-10 Sep	Special demonstrations by Mr Kobayashi at the Gosford Flora Festival.	More details yet to be announced.
7-10 Sep	Central Coast Bonsai Society Show	Flora Festival at Mt Penang.
16-17 Sep	Illawarra Bonsai Society Annual Show	Stapleton Community Centre, Stapleton St, Sutherland.
22-24 Sep	Bonsai Society of Australia Annual Show	Baulkham Hills Community Centre, Showground Rd, Castle Hill, both retail and member's sale tables.
22-24 Sep	New Zealand 14th National Bonsai Convention	Hosted in Auckland with key demonstrators Reiner Goebel, Robert Langholm, Mick Balzary, Mr Yang and Louis Buckingham. More more information download the flyer .
14-15 Oct	School of Bonsai Show	Ray Nesci Nursery, 26 Sagar Rd, Kenthurst/Dural.
28-29 Oct	South Coast Bonsai Society Show	Figtree Community Hall, Figtree.

A TIP FROM ROGER, ONE OF OUR READERS

Thanks for another good newsletter edition. Much enjoyed reading it. Sorry to read about Lee's encounter with a biting invertebrate creature. I'm happy to have spiders amongst my bonsai as they help keep other invertebrates under control and thus reduce the need for spraying. I never try to squash them. When they make too many webs, I just take a small stick and gently wind and wipe the webs from the trees. It seems to work well and no one gets hurt either.

MEMBERSHIP FORM



SYDNEY CITY BONSAI CLUB

The Secretary,
PO BOX 329, DARLINGHURST NSW 1300

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Mobile: _____

Email: _____

Membership 1 July 06 —30 June 2007
\$25 or \$15/Student \$ _____

The Sydney City Bonsai Club meets 7:30 pm every second Tuesday from February to December at Green Square Community Church Hall, Victoria St at Collins St, Beaconsfield. The meetings feature a speaker or a bonsai related activity. Attending the meetings is an ideal way to increase your knowledge of bonsai and chat with other bonsai aficionados.

The club meetings present the opportunity to bring in your trees for advice or assistance in styling and shaping.

Visitors Are Always Welcome

For more information phone

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