



NEXT CLUB MEETINGS

Green Square Community Hall

3 Joynton Avenue Zetland

No club meeting in April 2017

SCBC Easter Show stand

7pm Tuesday 9 May 2017

Basic Styling Principles for Beginners.
Feedback on Royal Easter Show. Work on your own trees.

CONTACT DETAILS



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COMMITTEE

Patron	Dorothy Koreshoff
President	Bryan
Vice President	Sue
Secretary	TBA
Treasurer	Chris
Newsletter Editor	Roz
Librarian	Les
Committee	Lee & Frank

MEMBERSHIP

Full Membership	\$40
Concession	\$25
Family	\$55
Pensioner	\$25

SCBC wishes to thank Sydney City Council for their continued support for our club by providing the hall at a reduced rate.

No meeting in April because of Easter Show

Easter Show arrangements -

- All trees for SCBC show stand to be at Chris's place on Monday 10 April.
- Volunteers should have received their entry ticket, timetable for your attendance and safety information. If you still have any questions please call Chris on 0439 401572 or email mcdent@optusnet.com.au

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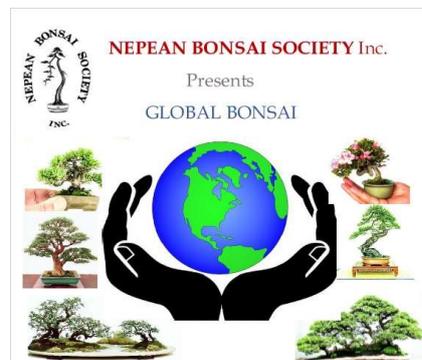
Two Coming Events not to miss



BONSAI EXHIBITION

Saturday 6th May and Sunday 7th May
10 am till 4.30 pm both days
Sutherland District Trade Union Club
cnr Kingsway and Manchester Road, Gynea
Admission – Adults \$5.00 (includes raffle entry)

Includes a magnificent display of exotic and Australian trees together with suiseki (viewing stones); sales of bonsai tree stock, pots and accessories at reasonable prices; clinic: bring your tree and expert tutor will help with any problems; potting service (starting at \$5) & Mothers Day: for \$10, children make a bonsai with everything supplied.



Hold the world of trees in your hands

You are invited to a display of Bonsai, representing trees from around the world

Saturday 8th and Sunday 9th April - 9am - 4pm.

GLENBROOK COMMUNITY HALL

Great Western Hwy, Glenbrook, next to the Picture Theatre
Admission: Adults \$4, Concession \$2, Children under 12 free

Sales area – Demonstrations - Bonsai clinic, bring your bonsai for advice. A small fee may apply for wire and potting mix.

BONSAI BASICS – THE ‘GREEN BELT’

Bonsai for Beginners – The ‘Green Belt’ - Trunk – Branches - Foliage

BY SUE

This is the second article of our series “Bonsai for Beginners”. Bonsai is an art form, your canvas is the tree. The art of bonsai is done by controlling where the branches will grow, where the foliage grows and at what angle the trunk grows in an effort to create the illusion of a full size tree growing in miniature form in a pot.

People are amazed by the mystery surrounding bonsai when really they are nothing more than ‘real’ trees cut very small. Trees trimmed into perfect symmetrical shapes are called topiary, not bonsai.

If you look at a tree growing in the ground and try to imagine it shrunk down to 30 cm and growing in a bonsai pot, most trees wouldn’t make well styled bonsai.



Most trees wouldn’t make well styled bonsai

When seeing their first true bonsai, most people will say ‘wow, it looks like a real tree’, without realising how far from accurate that comment is. Although it has the same horticultural needs as a tree in the ground, a good bonsai should stimulate the imagination and is perceived as a miniature full grown tree.

The famous saying, ‘Rome wasn’t built in a day’ is relevant in bonsai. The dimension of the art form that is most overlooked is time. A beautiful bonsai takes time to grow and with some the slower varieties many years are needed.

When dealing with trees in bonsai form it is imperative that you have a reasonable understanding of how the top of the tree works. When a seed germinates and sends down a root system it also sends up a shoot that will become the trunk of the tree. This shoot will grow up and out in harmony with available moisture and nutrients being sent up by the root system.



Cryptomeria japonica progression from seed:

Top Left: 2 year seedling

Top Right: 5 years

Bottom Left: 15 years



<https://www.bonsaiempire.com/basics/cultivation/from-seeds>

In turn this shoot will form solar panels (leaves) to collect food and energy to grow and send food to the root system. The top and bottom of the tree look after each other’s needs. The trunk and branches provide a framework for the solar panels (leaves) to grow.

As the shoot on a tree grows, it thickens up and keeps growing from the tip (lighter green). As the leaves along the shoot mature (darker green) they reach their full size and provide solar panels to help the tip of the shoot to keep growing.

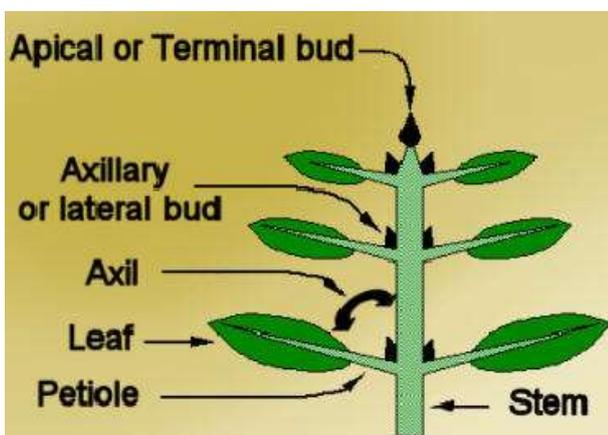
The ‘growing tip’ (apical meristem) is actually undifferentiated tissue whose main function is to trigger the growth of new cells.

During the growing season a tree almost seems to take steps as the shoots grow for several weeks then rest, grow again for several weeks and rest. This can be seen by the leaves at the growing tip maturing to darker green and the shoot looking woody. For example a Chinese elm will vigorously grow new shoots in spring for about 6 weeks then rest. I may have to trim my Chinese elms 4 times between spring and autumn. Between trimming sessions the bonsai goes from a neatly trimmed bonsai to a shaggy tree.

BONSAI BASICS-THE GREENBELT *CONTINUED*

The 'have a rest' in the shoots coincides with 'an afternoon nap' of the feeder root system. If the bottom is not actively growing then nor is the top. This 'rest' period may last several weeks but varies widely with every variety and is also dependent on the local environmental conditions (e.g. soil nutrient and water availability, temperature etc.).

As the tree shoot is growing and reaching maturity more meristems (potential shoots) are created and laid down within the shoot so that it can grow from other areas of the shoot rather than just the growing tip. These are found in the axillary buds, just above where the leaf meets the stem.



Meristem tissue is laid down in the axil of the leaf as the shoot matures. When the apical bud is cut, these lower meristems can be woken to form new branches.

The meristems in the axillary buds can grow to form branches. Different plants obviously make different numbers of branches, but there is a common control mechanism known as apical dominance, where the meristem at the tip of the shoot suppresses the growth of the lower axillary buds. This is why a shoot with no branches can be made to grow branches by cutting off the tip.

As the tree matures the meristems on the trunk and thick branches become invisible, however they are still viable and are just waiting for a chance to wake up. If the branch is cut in half and the tree is a variety that holds meristems, it will not be long until you see shoots appearing from old looking wood. A tree that holds meristems along its branches will bud back following pruning allowing the bonsai artist to keep the tree compact. However the amount of potential budding back varies widely from species to species.

It is vital to allow a shoot on a bonsai to set properly before cutting it. If you continually cut soft green shoots on a bonsai you will eventually kill it. The feeder root system needs what the top leaf growth (solar panels) provides. If you do not give the growing tip time to lay down the meristems along the branches properly, they will not function or shoot. So make sure you are patient and wait until the tip growth has matured and the shoot has turned from green to a woody appearance.

When the tree "wakes up" for its next cycle and finds the growing tip cut off, the lower meristems in the shoot are activated and new shoots start to grow where there was only a leaf. This is how you increase the foliage on the tree whilst keeping the tree compact.

Trees have a preference to grow more strongly at the top. This is so the tree can reach its genetic height and sunlight. When we do bonsai we have to control this top growth as it takes the energy away from the lower branches. You must also be aware that a shoot that grows vertically will grow more vigorously than shoots growing in a more horizontal direction.

Growing a tree for a bonsai is done in stages. The most obvious thing that gives a tree its dimension of size and its appearance of great age are the trunk and buttress of the roots. In bonsai we first go for trunk thickness and then concentrate on growing the lower branches first. Working our way up the tree with the branches, etc until the tree reaches the desired height.

"Bonsai take time. Patience is a must!"

When starting out, it is hard to understand how far ahead you have to imagine a little 10cm tall, 2 year old seedling is going to grow. You need to imagine what this young seedling will look like in 5 years time at the height that you envisage as a bonsai.

Points to Remember

1. Don't trim shoots until they have matured.
2. Grow your bonsai in stages from the bottom up.
3. Trunk thickness and good root buttress (nebari) is key give the tree an aged appearance.
4. Control the top growth so that the lower side branches remain healthy and strong.

Next month's Bonsai Basics is on "Styling – guidelines and hints.

JUNIPER & OAK PROGRESSION

Juniper & English Oak Progression

by Roz

At the March meeting, the development of three trees was shown taking them from stock to bonsai.

Juniper

This Juniper was developed from stock purchased in November 2012. I chose this plant because of its curving trunk. After cleaning out the dead and excess branches, I used the basic styling principals to start this tree on its journey.



November 2012, Juniper starts its bonsai journey

Given that this was my first tree for bonsai, after 6 months, I took it over to Sue's to get help the next steps. Sue explained that I had too many curves in the trunk and so in April 2013 the top was cut off.



Being new to bonsai, losing half the tree was a bit of a shock

I moved the tree into a bonsai pot, and over the next few years nurtured it, tip-pruning during its growth cycles, fertilising it and repotting it twice more. So in March 2017 it now looks like this....



The tree is healthy due to lots of sun, watering, fertilising and tip pruning. The pads have now developed to the point that I can shape and contour them to look like a mature tree. The full development has taken 5 years.

English Oak

This English Oak was rescued when it was on its last legs. It had been kept in a concrete pot for many years with irregular watering. The main trunk had died and there were a couple of twigs of green re-shooting at the base of the trunk. I spent the first year, just watering and fertilising it. I didn't even risk repotting it.



After a year of care, the shoots at the back of the oak are vigorous and healthy. The front of the plant has a dead trunk which I hope to make a feature in the future.

JUNIPER AND OAK PROGRESSION *CONTINUED*

In April 2013, I started the styling. I needed to bring the future trunk to an upright position. Because it was relatively thick, I put a chain in some bicycle tubing and used the original dead trunk as an anchor to turn up the bottom section of the trunk. I then wired the upper part of the trunk and main branches.



April, 2013, first wiring of the oak

By July, the oak had lost its leaves, was beginning to bud and thus was ready to repot. I chose a polystyrene fruit box to give the roots plenty of room to grow. I still kept the bottom chained to its old trunk as oaks seem to take a long time for branches to set.



July 2013 - the first repotting



June 2015-whilst branches are thin the form is beginning to develop

July 2015, after 2 seasons in the polystyrene box, the oak was put into its bonsai pot and by September, the foliage dressed the tree.



Left: Oak in July 2015; Right: Oak in September 2015

The tree still had a large gap in the middle of the tree and I contemplated whether I should cut the top off and regrow or hope that the visible buds in this section might shoot to form middle branches. I also had my first go at carving the original remnants of the trunk.

Well, patience and 18 months on, I was able to fully work on the carving and yes a small branch in the middle of the tree did form and I covered the rest of the gap by wiring down the foliage.



Left: Carving July 2015; Right: Carving Jan 2017



Jan 2017, Oak will be reoriented in next repotting

The tree still needs more work on thickening the trunk and lower branches and I really have to keep the top in check so the oak does not get too tall. However this tree has come a long way in 5 years.

I DID CUT IT! & EVENTS CALENDAR

Sequoia – I did cut it!

BY ROZ

Originally from the raffle table, this Sequoia was acquired in April 2016. I used a cloth to work out where I should cut it. After a year the Sequoia grew into a nice shape.



*This Sequoia has two heads
and is far too tall
(April 2015)*



However, given that this is one of the tallest species of tree in the world, I knew I needed to cut the top off again. Whilst I did not have the nerve to cut it at our meeting, I did so when I returned home. You need to grow your bonsai from the bottom up even if your top looks pretty. It will soon get out of proportion if you don't.



March 2015 – Sequoia grew a new top



*Although the top looks flimsy now, it will grow strongly
by late Spring (6 months) creating a robust new top
without compromising the desired height of the tree.*

Bonsai Events Calendar

Date	Event	Details
8-9 April 2017	Nepean Bonsai Society Show	Glenbrook Community Hall, Great Western Hwy 9 am-4 pm
12-19 Apr 2017	SCBC Royal Easter Show Stand – Bringing Bonsai to the Public	SCBC members and other bonsai clubs invited to participate. Enquiries: Chris – mcdent@optusnet.com.au
6-7 May 2017	Illawarra Bonsai Society Annual Show (Autumn)	Sutherland District Trade Union Club (Tradies) Kingsway, Gymea
19-22 May 2017	National Bonsai Convention, “Art by Nature”	www.aabcltd.org www.bonsaisocietyqld.asn.au