



sydney city  
bonsai club inc.



## NEXT CLUB MEETINGS

Green Square Community Hall  
3 Joynton Avenue  
Zetland

7pm Tuesday 14 August 2012  
Workshop, bring your trees.

7pm Tuesday 11 September 2012  
Workshop, bring your trees.

## CONTACT DETAILS



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## COMMITTEE

**Patron** Dorothy Koreshoff

**President** Bryan

**Vice President** Sue

**Secretary** Alan

**Treasurer** Chris

**Public Officer** Warwick

**Newsletter Editor** Tony

**Librarian** Marianna

**Catering** Philip

**Committee** Richard

## MEMBERSHIP

Full Membership \$40.00

Concession \$25.00

Family \$55.00

Pensioner \$25.00

## Welcome to the August Newsletter

### August Meeting

- Workshop – repotting deciduous tree bonsai
- Horticultural Tips (Tony)
- Talk about a tree & Raffle
- Annual General Meeting



Noel Summerell shohin *Coprosma x kirkii* 'Vareigata' bonsai

**We are back at 3 Joynton Ave, Zetland for the August Meeting**

Nomination forms have been included with this newsletter, please print off a copy and fill in the form if you wish to nominate for any of the Officer or Committee positions. All Officer and Committee positions are open to any financial member who wishes to nominate.

**FEES ARE DUE PLEASE PAY AT THE AUGUST MEETING**

### In this month's newsletter:

- Trees on display at the July meeting page 2
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TREES ON DISPLAY AT THE JULY MEETING



Sue's Elm bonsai



Alan's twin trunked Juniper bonsai



Privet bonsai



Japanese Maple bonsai

## WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

### Corky Bark Elm stock plant

Nicely developed trunk with lovely movement and some glaring faults!



#### Good points:

- A wide nebari that gives the tree stability and a sense of permanence
- Interesting trunk in its varied directional changes
- Corky bark that adds interest
- Reasonable size elm leaves that will reduce further under cultivation
- Trunk 20 cm tall, ideal for a shohin bonsai [under 30 cm]

#### Bad points:

- Left branch is thick, at a bad angle and bulges after the first branchlet. The robustness of this branch is thickening the trunk and starting to create reverse taper.
- There is a thickening of the trunk near the top
- The apical branch on the left is thick, ugly and straight
- There is an ugly knob at the top of the trunk
- The top right branch is getting too thick for its position.
- Back side – nice but grows away from the viewer so this is the most obvious front.

### DESIGN OPTIONS

#### Lower Left Branch:

- cut the left branch just after the branchlet growing forward. This will remove the ugly thickening and introduce taper to this branch.
- Or reduce the lower left branch back to the branchlet growing towards the back and wire that forward to become the new lower branch. This gives even more taper.
- Remove the entire branch and wait for new shoots to select a new branch.



#### APEX

- Remove the apical branch growing to the left as it is too thick, too straight and is badly positioned.
- Wire the thinner secondary apical branch to become the new header being sure to mimic the curves of the main trunk
- Reduce the lump of growth above the right branch to the header branch to give taper OR
- Remove the thick branch and the right branch and remove the stub back to the apical branch.



## WHAT WOULD YOU DO? CORKY BARK ELM ROOT PRUNE

In other words... most of what is hanging off the trunk is ugly and/or incorrectly positioned and the only way to improve it is to take drastic measures.

Elms are a robust species and an elm is alive with adventitious buds that lurk under the bark everywhere [except exactly where you want them] and burst forth regularly. Therefore stripping this tree of all or the majority of its branches will only encourage the adventitious buds to go into overdrive and careful selection will get branches pretty close to where they are needed.

Elms thicken their branches very rapidly and keeping an elm in good shape over a number of years could necessitate the removal of branches or the header when [not if] they get too large and growing on a new branch or header in proportion to the tree. This is important if you are working with a substantial tree but even more important when bonsaiing a shohin or a mini. Regardless of how good it looked last year if the branches are getting overgrown restyling needs to be done.

### IDEAL BRANCH LOCATIONS

- 1) Left - Up a bit higher to allow more visual impact for the lower trunk and to camouflage the reverse taper that is starting to develop. Reduce the existing branch to the first front branch as insurance until/and if a branch develops at the preferred spot.



- 2) Right - Pleasing distance from the lower branch and accents the angle. If a branch were to grow here the establish branch above would definitely be removed
- 3) Header - wired to a soft curve and branching developed off that for the apex. This maintains the angle of the trunk and it will thicken enough by the time the tree is ready to be exhibited to have a nice taper.

*Remember, if your tree died, ... you killed it. They don't commit suicide.*

*- Heo DeBrabant*

Because of the elm's growth habits

- 1) removing most of the branches will cause an outburst of adventitious buds and the most appropriately placed can be selected for branches.
- 2) It is necessary to control the size of the branch development and placement to avoid reverse taper
- 3) To develop this tree from an August severing of most of the branches to a bonsai will take about two years.
- 4) To continue to work with the branches as they are would be an affront to the quality of the trunk. It is hard to get such a nice trunk in an elm and to get such a lovely, thick trunk on a small scale tree is very difficult.
- 5) Sydney has such long summers that we can do what many regions can't because of the long growth period we are blessed with.

It is important to know how the species you are working with grows and develops to have the courage to strip a tree as I plan to do with this one. Elms have a fast, robust growth which makes them an excellent tree for novices and also challenging for more experienced enthusiasts.

### CORKY BARK ELM – Root Prune

It is mid June and I have just root pruned and repotted a Corky Bark Elm. Out of season? Yes. So why did I do it?

First of all it is an elm and elms are robust plants and with good aftercare; the root prune should not be a problem. This particular elm is very healthy, there is nothing weak or sickly about it that could indicate it would be best to wait for the start of spring. My yard is sheltered and sunny and will provide good recovery conditions.

The elm is for a major August workshop and I wanted it out of the deep pot and into a shallow pot and settled before it was transported and worked on. One should never style a tree before finding the actual ground level and best styling angle and with trees in deep pots you never know what is underground. It will eventually be in a tray pot so it is important to start training the roots to spread rather than grow to the bottom of a deep pot.

The tree had obviously been in good growing medium for a year and the pot was full of roots, some quite advanced. But there were no surprises, just a number of thicker than desired roots. Often when you get advanced stock plants you can start to repot and discover that there are one or more large roots that have been cut with a chainsaw and the tree put into a deep pot to compensate. This has happened to me and it took hours to get the large root stubs back to the base of the trunk so I could get the tree in a training pot.

When I root prune well rooted plants I prefer to remove as much of the soil as I can easily get away from the root ball and then use a strong spray of water to wash more soil off. To my mind this is easier on the roots than constantly pulling and dragging the soil away. I wash and then loosen and then wash again. It also gives a clear picture of what I have to work with.

## CORKY BARK ELM ROOT PRUNE



*Water washing shows what needs to be removed and there are a number of substantial roots that have to be pruned.*

Had it been spring I would have taken more roots but I removed the larger ones, especially thick ones growing straight down. It is important to have as much soil in a pot to bolster growth and if a tree has a lot of large roots they take up too much room. A bonsai does not need stabilizing roots, just feeder roots so I was careful to leave plenty of those.

I left one reasonable size root but put a rock under it to train it to grow horizontally instead of down and it will form part of the nebari.

It is important in your root pruning to work on the soil level of the roots as well. Crossed roots should be repositioned or removed; a thin crossed root gets thick and ugly quickly and annoys the visual harmony of the tree. Roots growing upwards, a lot of fine roots growing everywhere around and above the main roots should be removed to give a tidy nebari.

Stock plants are often planted deeper than we would plant them as bonsai. They develop a lot of roots that will not be covered and a lot of young roots give the tree a younger look and we are trying to age it visually.

When you water wash the roots as I do it is very necessary to ensure that soil fills all the holes. I pile the soil up, insert a chopstick and move the stick right and left to create a hole and fill it. I don't like the jab method of getting soil in. There's more chance of damaging roots that the tree needs after a major root prune.

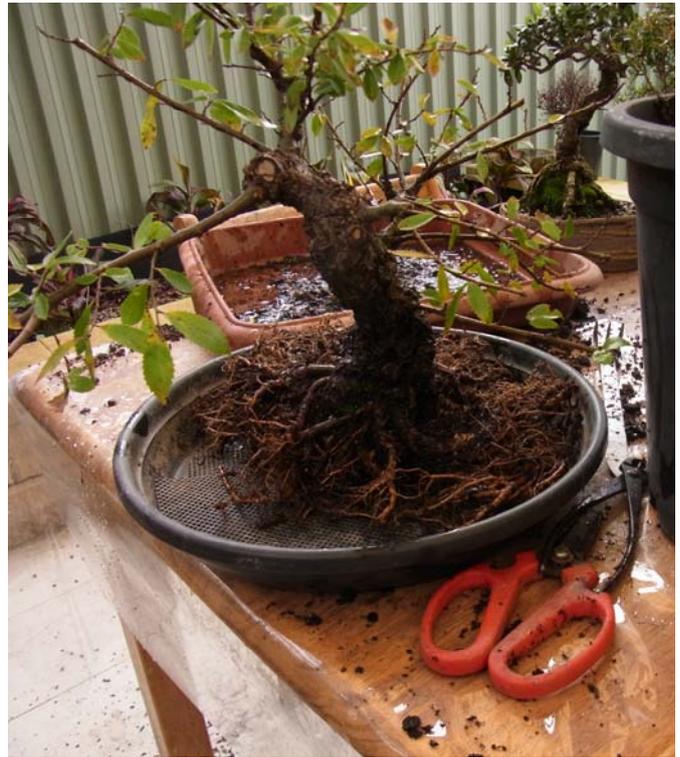
Keep inserting the chopstick and moving and filling until you can gently try to move the tree and it resists. This indicates that you have filled the air spaces around the roots well. If the tree is wobbly keep going.

*The result; that comes after. Your enjoyment is what is important.*

*-John Naka*

*The object is not to make the tree look like a bonsai, but to make the bonsai look like a tree.*

*-John Naka*



*The nebari cleaned up – all the odd growth roots [upwards, crossed, tiny] removed to create an older looking surface feature.*

*The elm root pruned showing the roots left. Had it been spring I would have taken more but what is left will spread easily into the flat training pot. This will start the bonsai process better than the pot it came out of on the right.*



Once the tree has been planted in a training pot at the right angle and at the correct level I water it with a root growth stimulant and let it rest.

When I take this tree to the workshop I can assure the tutor that 'what you see is what there is'. If an adjustment needs to be made to the angle the tree is sitting it is just a case of a slight movement and tamping more soil in under the roots to achieve the outcome.

I have lost a few trees over the years from repotting out of season and I would not do this to a native but elms are tough as old boots and I don't expect any setback. I did an early June major root prune on a pyracantha and the tree never lost a leaf despite the cold weather. Success is leaving enough feeder roots, ensuring good after care and knowing your species & what plants will cope with this.

# CALENDAR

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Details</b>
18-19 August	Bonsai Society of Sydney Annual Show	Checkers Resort, Terrey Hills
24 – 26 August	Illawarra 'Tops Weekend'	Marc Nöelanders, Tony Bebb <a href="http://www.illawarrabonsaisociety.org/tops-weekend.html">http://www.illawarrabonsaisociety.org/tops-weekend.html</a>
1 September	Bonsai Study Group Annual Show	Community Hall West Pymble
14-16 September	Bonsai Society of Australia Annual Show	Baulkham Hills Council, Castle Hill
29 September	Goulburn Bonsai Society Annual Show	CWA Rooms, Goulburn
30 September, 1 October	AABC and BFA Sydney Bonsai Spectacular	Merrylands RSL, Merrylands
20-21 October	School of Bonsai Annual Show	Ray Nesci Bonsai, Dural
27-28 October	Urrimbirra Bonsai Society Annual Show	Ribbonwood Centre, Dapto
2-4 November	Newcastle Bonsai Society Annual Show	Charlestown Bowling Club
24-25 November	Campbelltown Bonsai Society Annual Show	Campbelltown Arts Centre, Campbelltown