



NEXT CLUB MEETINGS

Green Square Community Hall

3 Joynton Avenue
Zetland

7pm Tuesday 11 August 2015

Tool sharpening demonstration by John. For \$2 each tool, John will sharpen your favourite tool after the demo. Workshop own trees.

7pm Tuesday 8 September 2015

Lee will demonstrate carving bonsai. Tree of the month is Juniper.

CONTACT DETAILS



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COMMITTEE

Patron Dorothy Koreshoff

President Bryan

Vice President Sue

Secretary tba

Treasurer Chris

Newsletter Editor Roslyn

Librarian Naomi & Les

Catering Philip

Committee Lee, Naomi & Tony

MEMBERSHIP

Full Membership \$40.00

Concession \$25.00

Family \$55.00

Pensioner \$25.00

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

Welcome to the August Newsletter

August Meeting

- Demonstration by John on tool sharpening. John will professionally sharpen your tools for \$2.00 each tool. Initially there is a limit of 2 bonsai tools per person. If time permits then you may have the opportunity to have another 2 tools sharpened.
- Member Styling Hotspot led by President Bryan. One or two trees are needed each month for open discussion.

*Very elegant Juniper **Bonsai**,
in Literati style, breathtaking!
By: Jose Luis Blasco Paz.*

<http://www.bonsaiempire.com/blog/top10-bonsai>



In this issue:

- Member trees on display for July– page 2
- Tony Bebb refines Juniper at AABC 2015 – page 3-4
- Root cuttings by Lee - page 5
- Member trees for July & Events Calendar – page 6

Tell us what you want to learn about!

SCBC Committee wants to make sure that we provide interesting and relevant workshops and demonstrations that really meet the needs of our members. So we want all members to think about what they would like the club to do over coming months. President Bryan will be asking for feedback at the next meeting.

Here are a few ideas to consider for bonsai:

- a. Techniques –wiring and bending, pruning, repotting, grafting branches and/or roots, carving, root over rock
- b. Horticulture – pests & diseases, soils, plant feeding, annual cycles for major plant groups (i.e. what to do an when)
- c. Styling and Aesthetics – basic principles for good design, examples of styling/restyling, mentor workshop for newer members each with a plant
- d. Outside demonstrator

MEMBER TREES ON DISPLAY FOR JULY

Member trees on display for July

Thank you all for making the effort to bring in your trees for the July meeting. Lots of informal discussion around the benches really demonstrated how much we can all benefit from sharing our trees at club meetings whether they are ready for benching or works in progress.

I was personally introduced to a couple of trees that I had not encountered before as bonsai. For example Warwick's Hong Kong kumquat (*Fortunella hindsii*) brought in full of fruit excited me and I will surely be on the lookout for a good stock plant of this species in the future.



Warwick's Hong Kong kumquat (*Fortunella hindsii*)

Hong Kong kumquat, *Fortunella Hindsii*, is the smallest-fruited of the kumquats with round fruits that rarely exceed one-half inch in diameter. The tree is very small and very spiny and the leaves are small and narrow. The fruits are red-orange at maturity and hold on the tree well. The rind is thin, and there are several large seeds in each fruit; thus, the fruit is virtually inedible.

Kumquat trees are native to China and are a small slow-growing, compact, evergreen trees eventually reaching about 10'. Originally classified as a citrus tree, and they are related, however they were given their own genus *Fortunella*. Also known as Cumquat they are all the same thing, although four distinct species are available.

What distinguished them from citrus is that you can eat the skin, in fact the skin itself is reasonably sweet, the pulp is relatively sour, and this contrast makes the Kumquat unique.

Another plant that I had not encountered before was Les's Chinese Celtis (also known as Hackberry). Chinese Celtis is a native of China, Japan and Korea and was introduced into Australia as an ornamental and shade tree.



Les's Chinese celtis (Hackberry)

Chinese celtis is a large tree, growing up to 20 m tall, with a spreading, moderately dense crown. It has a smooth, mottled grey bark with alternate, elliptical shaped leaves that are 4–7 cm long. The leaf margins are finely serrated in the upper half of the leaf.

In northern NSW it is deciduous or semi-deciduous in late winter and the dry early spring period.

Chinese celtis produces thousands of fleshy fruits that are approximately 7–8 mm in diameter. The fruits turn reddish brown to orange when ripe in autumn and early winter. Chinese celtis fruits during the same period as camphor laurel and similar birds feed on both species. Chinese celtis seeds are spread by birds feeding on its fruit in autumn and early winter and because the tree becomes structurally dominant in bushland it is considered an invasive species in Queensland and Northern NSW.

I hope that members continue to bring in their trees for display each month as it makes for a richer club meeting:



Lee's Miniature Willow (left) and Contoneaster horizontalis (right)

(continued on page 6)

TONY BEBB REFINES JUNIPER AT SA AABC 2015

Tony Bebb refines Juniper

Tony Bebb, well known and popular Queensland demonstrator, was part of the entertaining line up at the 28th AABC National Bonsai Convention held in Adelaide in 2015. Tony demonstrates at many bonsai gatherings and his skill and ability to pass on knowledge makes him a very valued demonstrator.



This juniper needs more work. It was very dense and Tony had already spent 1.5 hours to lighten the foliage for the demonstration.

A lot of us are good at starting and designing our tree but not so good at ongoing refinement. We are trying to improve the age of the tree to make it look older. This tree is a Phoenix graft, i.e., attached to a piece of mallee. It is good to have a vein running up or around the deadwood to show life.

I will have to pull some branches around but I don't want to make the tree 'a flasher'. There is a piece of movement in the upper deadwood and it will compensate the straightness of the lower section to highlight the trunk at the point of movement.

The existing apex has a very old look so it will be thinned a bit to open up the tree but basically maintain the same silhouette. Opening the tree up shows the structure and increases the aged look because an older tree will have less foliage.

The faux trunk has had some black ink applied to get a colour contrast. Some of the lower right branches come down from high in the apical branches. The branch will be moved to the right and a branch on the left brought over to disguise the long fall of the branch.

A back branch is being brought around to the right to fill the excessive negative space. One thing bonsai enthusiasts love about junipers is their flexibility. Before doing bends on thicker material flex it to soften and extend the fibres to allow greater ease of bending.

The more fine wire you get in a juniper the better the pads will be and the time you spend doing extensive wiring gives you the opportunity to really get to know your tree. If you want really fine bonsai it is the fine wire more than fine pruning that gives the finesse you should be striving for.



The tree is beginning its refinement with the branches beginning to be repositioned and the layering at the lower level has commenced.

Space is good when it is layered through the tree. Strong lines are good if they are harmonious, not if they are fighting each other. Get as much shaping to the secondary foliage as possible before moving on to the tertiary.

The lower left branch is pom-pomish and while pompoms are great with cheerleaders they don't suit bonsai so the foliage pad has to be thinned and flattened.

If you want to do heavy bending it isn't a bad idea to let the tree dry a bit to open up the fibres. Water is good as well and using raffia adds moisture to the bend area and helps the tree bend easier. There are alternatives to raffia and raffia can be fiddly to apply but it is the superior product.

You don't want foliage on a primary branch. You want foliage on a secondary branch and more on a tertiary branch - that's what will give you the aged look.

The advantage of having so much growth and so much branching is that the growth will be slow and steady and not having long shoots springing out beyond the foliage line.

I've gone away from pinching and I prefer to cut off a lot. The thing with pinching is that you tend to pinch off all the growing tips. This is not so bad on a young tree but can be disastrous on an older tree. Therefore pinching should be used in moderation and cutting back more often employed.

TONY BEBB REFINES JUNIPER AT SA AABC 2015 *continued*

The scissors are used to cut between the needles so no needles are cut in half to brown off. If you are letting your tree grow out than you can cut the needles because when it comes to reshaping it you will be cutting in past the outer foliage to reshape the tree.



Tony points out how the primary branch does not have foliage whilst the secondary branch has some foliage and then the tertiary branches have most foliage.

Regarding the apex, it needs to be lightened and opened up without changing the silhouette. This means removing down growing foliage, foliage in the crotch of branches. Make more layers to improve the quality of the tree.

With junipers it is not necessary to worry about reducing the size of the foliage because it is naturally small. What is necessary is to develop and maintain the structure of the tree.

A tree is living, your design can be finished but the tree is never finished. Whatever we do on a bonsai today should always be looking toward tomorrow.



Note how the new positioning of the branches, the layering and the thinning of this tree has improved this bonsai significantly.

Maintaining an advanced Juniper bonsai

This tree is advanced enough that refinement is not about developing structure but you must clean out the structure. Twice a year you need to go through each branch and clean out the internal structure. Best time is late winter, early autumn before flushes of growth. This would vary depending on your climatic zone.

Rain is not a problem because the water will go straight through. It is when the rain stops that the problem with phytophthora starts. The constant humidity doesn't allow the soil to dry and the phytophthora gets in and starts. Too much compost in conifer soil can lead to problems. Always use an open free draining mix with conifers and keep the soil on the dry side.

Feed trees right up to dormancy. It needs the strength in spring and you do the tree a disservice by not feeding. The closer to dormancy the weaker the feed. Be sure to feed after heavy rains to replace nutrients that have been washed out.

Trees, like us, need a holiday. Depending on the tree species every 3 to 5 years let the tree grow out. Let the tree grow out and then cut back. If you always cut to a refined shape you will weaken the tree. More foliage is more strength.

People have trouble because they are always pruning and they end up with pom-poms. The foliage needs to be allowed to grow to create branches that then can be wired out for shape. We are too fixated on controlling growth when we need to create branches. All of that growth fattens trunks, develops structure and contributes to the health of the tree.

If you are in doubt about removing a branch leave it, let it grow out, wire it, shape it, design it and in a year or so consider it again.

The pot is too heavy. The pot has served its purpose in allowing the tree to develop. Now is the time for a smaller, shallower pot. The shape is good. Definitely not a straight sided pot.

Over potting is good as it is easier to keep the tree alive. But when you show the tree the pot should be one that is the right size. And if you over pot the tree do it in a pot that is suitable but just a bit larger as opposed to any old pot.

"The apex of a tree should never extend over the edge of the pot. Use a longer pot, change the angle of the planting but keep the apex within the confines of the pot."

ROOT CUTTINGS

Root cuttings by Lee

One of the ways of getting some interesting bonsai underway is to use root cuttings. Not every species will grow from a root cutting but there are enough that do to make this an interesting proposition.

What is a root cutting?

Tree roots can grow in wonderfully curvy and sinuous ways that can create a striking bonsai. When these are removed from a stock plant or a bonsai the more interesting roots can be used to establish a new tree.

This method is more effective if the tree being root pruned is older, larger and has not been root pruned for a while so the roots are thicker. The finds under the soil can be treasures. But finer roots can create wonderful minis.

What trees can be used?

Elm, celtis, hawthorn, crabapple, Ficus nerifolia [willow leaf fig] and ginko are ideal candidates. Not every species will grow from a root cutting.

How is a root cutting established?

It is standard practice to remove larger roots when root pruning. If any of these show any interesting shape characteristics they can be put aside and potted up.



Interesting roots removed during root pruning of an elm.



Roots with feeder roots on the 'trunk' area removed and wired

Be sure to pot with the top end of the cut root upwards and the feeder roots in the soil of the training pot. Roots as thin as spaghetti can be used. Wire them and twist into interesting and unusual shapes. Thicker roots will have established their own erratic growth pattern which can be amplified with wire.



Potted up to start growing. In time the pale trunks will darken.

Typically a root cutting will sprout new growth only from the cut edge, not along the root that now forms the trunk. It is important to ensure the cut is at an appropriate spot for branching to occur to create a good design.

The cuttings are treated as normal, kept moist and in the sun to allow the new growth to develop. Once the branchlets are strong enough for wire styling the upper structure can start.

Root cuttings do not produce your standard informal upright bonsai. Their 'trunk' shapes are usually weird and wonderful and can be used to create a bonsai that is funky and interesting.



Mini elm root cutting with superstructure developing

From now on whenever you are root pruning the species listed above be on the lookout for interesting roots that can become new trees in their own right.

MEMBER TREES FOR JULY AND EVENTS CALENDAR

Member trees (continued from page 2)



Two completely different styles of Sargent Junipers from Jamie and Reece



David's Olive and Chris's root over rock Fig



Reece's Lebanese Cedar (left) and James's Juniper (right)



Bryan's Juniper cascade and David's Juniper



Neville's Lilly Pilly



NEW ENTHUSIAST

New neighbours moved in and they were stunned and thrilled to realise that a serious bonsai enthusiast was next door. While the keen enthusiast is in the early learning phases the depth of his interest is quite marked. You can hardly flaunt your passion louder than this.

BONSAI EVENTS CALENDAR

Date	Event	Details
8 August	Australian National Bonsai Association Annual Sale Day	Gladesville Scout Hall, Cnr Ryde Rd & Westminster Av, Gladesville
28-30 August, 2015	16 th Annual Illawarra Bonsai Society Tops Weekend Workshops	Tops Conference Centre, Stanwell Tops
18-20 August	Bonsai Society of Australia Show	Federation Hall, Castle Hill Showground, Castle Hill