



## NEXT CLUB MEETINGS

### Green Square Community Hall

3 Joynton Avenue Zetland

#### 7pm Tuesday 14 August 2018

Tony Wilson – horticultural specialist will help you identify tree species and answer horticultural questions

#### 7pm Tuesday 11 September 2018

Jamie Milner, a specialist in Japanese Black Pines will provide a talk on what to do and when with JBP.

## CONTACT DETAILS



0432 461 025



[info@sydneycitybonsai.org.au](mailto:info@sydneycitybonsai.org.au)



<http://sydneycitybonsai.org.au>



PO Box 486  
Summerhill NSW 2130

## COMMITTEE

Patron	TBA
President	Bryan
Vice President	TBA
Secretary	David
Treasurer	Chris
Newsletter Editor	Roz
Librarian	Les
Committee	Frank & John

## 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.

## August Meeting

- Tony Wilson-horticultural specialist will help you identify tree species and any questions you have on plant diseases & horticulture. Bring in trees that you want an opinion on.
- Member Styling Hotspot and work on your trees.



*Yamadori English Elm featured at the 2018 AABC Conference Exhibition in Melbourne.*

*The initial shaping of this semi-cascade was done by cows. The tree was dug up in 1977. Training has been to reflect the original form, whilst refining the branch ramification.*

## In this Issue:

- Bjorn Bjorholm Styles Japanese Black Pine at AABC– page 2-3
- Leptospermum – A Great Find by Lee – page 4-5
- 2018 AABC Bonsai Exhibition - page 5
- Root Pruning Tips when Repotting- page 6
- Bonsai Events Calendar – page 6

## SCBC Stand at Cherry Blossom Festival 21 August

We are looking for-

**Trees and pots to sell at the stand:** If you have and trees or pots you wish to sell, bring them to the August meeting. Neville will organise the identification numbering with the pricing. 10% of sales goes to the club.

**Display trees:** See Chris if you can offer a display tree. Trees can be dropped off at Chris's place at Concord on the weekend prior (18/19<sup>th</sup>). Let Chris know if you can get a display tree to the stand on the day or by some other arrangement.

**Volunteers on the day:** Although the Cherry Blossom Festival is on a Tuesday, the Auburn Gardens is a fabulous place to visit if you do have a free day. See Bryan if you can spare a couple of hours to help at the stand.

**Membership: Fees are now overdue!** If you have not yet paid please see Chris at the meeting.

# BJORN STYLES JAPANESE BLACK PINE

## Bjorn Styles JBP at 2018 AABC

Bjorn BJORHOLM is a celebrated American bonsai artist and teacher who completed apprenticeship under the Japanese Bonsai Master Keiichi Fujikawa in Osaka, Japan in 2015. Bjorn has styled bonsai for the Kokufu-ten, Taikan-ten and Sakufu-ten exhibitions as well as many exhibitions in the United States. His approach to styling has been shaped by his master and reflects a highly refined mastery of the art of bonsai. Check out his bonsai U-Tube tutorials- "The Bonsai Art of Japan."

At the 2018 AABC, Bjorn's first demonstration was styling 30-40 year old Japanese Black Pine where he took us systematically through the steps of styling.



*30-40 Year Old Japanese Black Pine*

### Basic Tree Shape and Viewing angle

You need to start with the base – clean off the dirt with a wire brush to expose the widest part of the nebari. There are two potential fronts for this tree.

From the base you work up the trunk noting the features and flaws. The trunk has an exaggerated bend and a huge scar. When turned around you hide the scar but expose a "pigeon breast" trunk and a very straight section in the lower trunk and from this direction it will be much harder to balance the tree. Whilst examining the potential fronts, and tilts you also need to look at the angles of the branches and look for potential placements or removals to give the tree balance and a direction.

So using the first choice, the tree still has a problem of parallel and perpendicular in the "s" shaped trunk. This problem can be removed by tilting. If you lower the tilt angle, then the tree looks like it points backward so it is better to raise the tilt angle. However when you do this

you will have to bring down the apex of the tree. Whilst Bjorn has generated a mental image of the ultimate design, other designers often draw the basic outline of the design and then work to it.

Once the viewing angle including tilt has been selected, then you need to remove all unnecessary branches and cut back overly long branches such as the back branch of this tree. JBPs grow in a whorl leaf pattern with 3 or more candles emerging at the tips. If you leave 3 or more candles on the tips you will end up with branch swelling at this point so you always need to cut back to 2 candles.

### Cleaning and Balancing the Tree

The tree needs to be "cleaned" in preparation for wiring. Work from underneath when cleaning and wiring so you reduce the chance of damaging needles which will go brown if damaged.

Eliminate small branch stubs. Along the branches you need to remove any branchlets that protrude vertically from the top or bottom of the branch stem. You then need to "balance the foliage". Leave weak buds alone; reduce needles to 10-12 pairs for medium strength buds; and reduce needles to 6-8 pairs for strong buds.

So should you pull or cut needles when balancing the tree? Pulling needles is OK when the tree is not growing. However it is better to cut needles leaving about 1mm when the tree is in strong Spring and Summer growth. The bottom mm will fall off and cutting this way will stop the sap from bleeding. Don't cut the needles in half – as it makes the tree look like it had a hair cut and the tips will go brown.



*After cleaning and balancing the tree, Bjorn starts to wire the main branch.*

# BJORN STYLES JBP AT 2018 AABC *CONTINUED*

## Wiring

You need to have in supply a wide range of gauges of wire and you need to wire to the branch tip changing wire gauges as the branch slims down making sure you do not cross wires. If you are using copper, then use 1/3-1/2 the diameter of the branch. If you are using aluminium then you need to use 1/2-1 diameter. In Japan copper wire is generally used for JBP. Wiring a complete tree is tedious and time consuming and it may take 8 or more hours to fully wire a large tree.

When wiring you need to put the large structural wire on first. Anchoring is important and you may need to double up on the wire. You plan to rotate the wire in the direction you want to move the branch. An easy check is for the end of your wiring to finish in the direction of movement on your last loop underneath. Many books say that you should wire at 45°. It is better to do a wider angle so that the branch position will hold. Always wire towards yourself and ensure the rotations are even and the wire snugly fits the branch with no gaps. Avoid crossing wire and transition down as the branches get thinner.

## Branch Placement

Always set the main branch first as it sets the direction of the tree. When setting the branch you want to have up and down and sideways movement no matter how subtle. You also want to have the branch layered – the first layer slightly higher and nothing to end in the same vertical plane. Similarly nothing should end in the same horizontal plane. The layering idea reflects nature as each branch tip is seeking light.

## The Apex

In the overall design of this tree the apex needs to be brought down. This can be done by bending it back as far as possible. Such a sharp bend downwards could result in snapping off the apex. Hence Bjorn chose to wrap the branch in water-soaked raffia first anchoring it then rotating it in the same direction as the wire on the branch ensuring that the areas of the branch that will take the most strain are wrapped more heavily. For the 1.5cm thick branch Bjorn used 8-10 strands of raffia tied at one end for the anchor and overlapped the wrapping 1.5 times each turn. If he was working with a larger branch he would use 15-20 strands of raffia and if it was a harder bend he would cover the raffia with black plastic tape or splicing tape to hold the moisture.

Once the raffia was on, he used 8 gauge copper wire and double wired the branch and then he used guy wires to pull the branch into place. Before the big bend Bjorn finished the wiring of the apex.



*After protecting with raffia and wiring, Bjorn anchored a double length guy wire and brought down the apex*

When setting up the guy wires, he cut a double length of wire and secured the top of the tie wire in position and evaluated where the bottom would be attached for the bend. Then little by little he pulled downwards and waited a few minutes before pulling down further always listening for cracks. He explained that sometimes you may have to apply several guy wires before the bend is complete removing the earlier guy wire which can become ineffective as you increase the bend. With the bend complete (with no cracks or breaks).

Bjorn completed the setting of the apex to complete the styling. He explained that this tree will require a little bit of grafting to develop a rounded top by creating small branchlet lines at different heights.



*Basic style completed – Apex needs to be developed further*

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# LEPTOSPERMUM – A GREAT FIND

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## Leptospermum from Nursery Stock

BY LEE

Flowering bonsai aren't a favourite of mine but recently the Leptospermum has really taken my heart. There are a heap of hybrids - trees with tiny leaves, medium leaves, larger leaves, flowers in varying sizes and a range of pastel colours from white blushed with pink to pink to burgundy and shades in between. Leaves range from silvery grey to green to deep purple. How can you lose? Especially since the flowers last for weeks and bud all along the stems.

I stopped at Flower Power in Enfield because I have come across some interesting natives there and keep checking for more. Nothing new today but I checked out the leptospermum and culled my selection from 3 to one and took home what turned out to be a beauty.



*Before styling- Note the root crossing the trunk*

You have to watch a lot of natives. The roots left untended can get very woody, thick and circle the pot with great energy. Trimming them can be an awesome experience, especially those that wrap roots around the trunk. It is also important to do the finger dig and see how far below the nursery soil the roots start to flare and how straight the trunk is, and how confused the surface roots are.

Some natives can be touchy about a major root prune so care must be taken and it is better to do a full root prune over two seasons to ensure the tree survives and do it in late spring when the days are warm is the best time.

Today's tree is *Leptospermum Wiri Shelley*, medium small leaves from green to claret and a pink flower with salmon undertones. The main draw was a trunk far larger than one usually finds in a nursery plant and with a lovely curve. I was ready to gamble \$24 on it.

Having just stated that the best time to work on a native is late spring I could not keep my hands off this one. I removed about 2 cm of soil from the top to lower the level to see what the roots were doing, reduced the bottom to fit in a shallower training pot and scarified the sides a bit but not much. This was countered by removing over 3/4ths of the upper growth so there shouldn't be a problem.

I cannot overstate the importance of lowering the soil level to fully reveal the surface roots. Native roots can get in a great tangle that is unattractive and they have to be culled. Sometimes you can, sometimes you can't. I spray the surface with a jet spray from my hose to remove soil from around the nebari to get a full picture of the area and then start to work out what I want and what I have to remove.

This tree had a major root that was coming from midway up the trunk, obscuring the main trunk below it and disrupting the visual movement of the trunk. Clearing the soil away proved that it could be removed without damaging the styling and it was cut off close so the cut blended in with the trunk. Definite improvement.

A couple more curly above surface roots were consigned to the bin and there is another clump at the back that may or may not be removed at a later time. They don't add anything to the design but are not visible from the front so I will let caution reign and leave them for the moment.



*The questionable roots washed and exposed*

*continued on page 5*

# 2018 AABC BONSAI EXHIBITION

## 2018 AABC Bonsai Exhibition

Titled "Bonsai Exposed", this year's AABC Bonsai Exhibition brought together some exceptionally high quality trees from around Victoria.



Quentin Valentine's English Elm (*Ulmus procera*) won both the Bonsai Clubs International and AABC Awards. Dug from a paddock in mid 1980's. Grown in a box until 2002 then potted into a bonsai pot. Current front and pot selected in 2006.



Hawthorn (*Cretagus monogyna*). Dug from the bush in 1991. Just the bare stumps were retained. First two years after digging the plant allowed to recover in a large wooden box. All branching and ramification has been developed since then.



Japanese Black Pine (*Pinus thunbergii*). Started from seed in 1951. First trained in 1976. Shaping and refinement has continued since then.



Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinale*). Dug from a garden in 2015. Only one of several trunks survived. Designed by Taiga Urushibata in July 2016. First potted into bonsai pot March 2017

## Lee's Leptospermum *continued from P. 4*

Even before tackling the roots I removed a lot of the upper structure by first lowering the growth and then removing the branches that were too thick or cluttering the design. Always remember, taper, taper, taper. Try to keep the branch size in proportion to the trunk size. Just because a branch is big does not mean it is the right one for the tree.



Great potential -looking forward to full flower next year and glorious on my bench.

It was a fun exercise because the more I judiciously removed the more the tree revealed its potential. After its ordeal and its move to 'bonsai in training' I settled it in a training pot and left it to rest. Once the branches start to put out shoots and lengthen I will probably lower the main trunk and go with a side shoot in order to improve taper.

On the other hand, if the foliage grows enough it might not be necessary as it could obscure the thick trunk at the apex. Time will tell and for the time being the tree can recover and grow. I will do a better root prune in the proper season as the soil does not allow sufficient air for breathing but that's for late October.

# ROOT PRUNING WHEN REPOTTING & EVENTS CALENDAR

## Root Pruning Tips When Repotting

Although repotting of deciduous trees should be almost complete, mid August to mid September is a good time to repot evergreens such as Buxus, Pyracantha, Olive, Privet, Cotoneaster and some Camelia. Natives and be done from now and with their multiple growth cycles do the repot just before the new buds burst. With conifers, Junipers and Cryptomeria I usually wait until September although they can be repotted from now.

When repotting and root pruning it is important to carefully examine the roots and correct faults or make adjustments to improve the nebari.

Here are a few tips:

- Jet spray the nebari area and see if you can lower the soil level to reveal more interesting roots
- Take the opportunity to improve the nebari by removing crossing roots, ugly roots, roots that are too large, roots going in an awkward direction
- Toothbrush the trunk to remove moss and remove moss growing around the roots, leaving clear space around the nebari

With no pot attached, on heavily branched trees turn them upside down and clean up the inside, removing excess branches, thinning clusters of branches, remove branches growing from one side of the crown to the other, and open up the crown. The health of the tree is improved by allowing air and light into the interior. As you snip branches be sure to remove them so you can keep an eye on the effects of the removals on the shape of the crown

Root pruning is not just about cutting the roots and putting in fresh soil. It is the ideal opportunity to ensure the roots are as artistic as possible, the trunk is free of moss, the crown is open and airy and the tree is ready for another season.

After a root prune and repot it is a good idea to soak the pot in a solution of Seasol firstly to remove any remaining the air pockets and give the plant a tonic. Then you need to place the tree in a sheltered spot for a couple of weeks to allow the new roots to grow. Once the initial after care is done then progressively move the tree into sun for longer periods until it can be returned to its normal bench.



*New growth on Chinese Elm repotted 3 weeks ago*

## 2018 Tops Weekend 24-26 August



*For a great weekend of bonsai learning and fun why not go to this year's Tops Weekend.*

*Where else can you get accommodation with all meals included (except Friday evening) along with great bonsai demonstrations, workshops and a chance to work on your own trees with like minded people for around \$200.*

[www.illawarrabonsaisociety.org](http://www.illawarrabonsaisociety.org)

## Bonsai Events Calendar

Date	Event	Details
24-26 Aug 2018	The Tops Weekend 2018	Illawarra Bonsai Society, Tops Conf. Centre, Stanwell Park
25 Aug 2018	Bonsai Society of Sydney Show	Forrestville Community Arts Centre 5 Darkey St Forrestville
8-9 Sept 2018	Central Coast Bonsai Annual Show	Erina Room, Erina Fair (next to the library)
15-16 Sept 2018	Bonsai Soc. of Australia Annual Show	Castle Hill Showground, Castle Hill
18-20 Sep 2018	Universal Penjing Conference, Canberra Arboretum	For details and registration go to <a href="https://www.nationalarboretum.act.gov.au/universalpenjingconference">https://www.nationalarboretum.act.gov.au/universalpenjingconference</a>