



NEXT CLUB MEETINGS

Green Square Community Church
182 Victoria Street
(Cnr Collins Street) Beaconsfield

7pm Tuesday 11 December

Bonsai Assessment Clinic & Christmas Party, food & drinks will be provided by the club, please come along & join us.

7pm Tuesday 12 February 2008

Bonsai workshop – can still work on Figs, Lillypillys, Junipers, Privets, Melaleucas, Bottlebrushes and other natives

CONTACT DETAILS

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COMMITTEE

Patron Dorothy Koreshoff
President Neville Althaus
Vice President Sue Brennan
Secretary Lee Wright
Treasurer Neville Althaus
Public Officer Max Blanco
Newsletter Editor Tony Wilson
Librarian Philip Bell
Committee Philip Bell
Gary Graham

MEMBERSHIP

Full Membership \$30.00
Concession \$20.00
Couples \$45.00

Welcome to the December Newsletter

December meeting:

Our December meeting will include:

a bonsai clinic, (bring along any trees you would like critiqued)

&

a party to celebrate another year of bonsai comradery

To see the club member's trees that were displayed at our November Club Meeting turn to pages 2 & 3

Sue Brennan restyles a Port Jackson Fig on page 4

For an article on Shohin Bonsai (bonsai under 20cm) turn to pages 5 & 6



Shohin Juniper

Turn to page 6 for the Bonsai Events Calendar

MEMBERS TREES AT THE NOVEMBER MEETING



← Neville Althaus's
Gardenia bonsai

Sue Brennan brought this *Ficus rubiginosa* bonsai to the club meeting. This tree belongs to one of Sue's clients – turn to page 4 to see the restyling Sue gives this tree
↓



Glen Tindale's
Ficus benjamina
'Baby Ben'
bonsai →



Neville Althaus's
Callistemon viminalis
Weeping Bottlebrush
bonsai
↓



← This Black Pine is having some interesting curves put into the trunk using a clamp specially designed for bonsai use

John Ironside's
Ficus macrophylla
Bonsai →



MEMBERS TREES AT THE NOVEMBER MEETING



← John Ironside's
Buxus harlandii



Lee Wright's
Ficus rubiginosa
bonsai →

Lee Wright's
Lonicera nitida
Box Leaf
Honeysuckle
bonsai →



← Paul Roy's
Ginkgo biloba
bonsai



← Sue Brennan's
Ficus rubiginosa
Port Jackson Fig

Another of Sue Brennan's
amazing *Ficus rubiginosa*
Port Jackson Figs →



SUE TAKES US THROUGH THE RESTYLING OF A CLIENTS BONSAI



Less is more

Text and photos: Morten Albek

Should a shohin or mame bonsai look like a big tree that is scaled down to miniature size? Will a bonsai look like a small-scale copy of a big tree? No, is the answer. But it sure has to make the viewer think they see a tree. Not a copy, but a picture of a tree.

Bonsai is imagination and fantasy. You can't just scale down a big tree, and put it in a pot. You have to paint the visions held in peoples' minds. Of course it is much easier to create this picture with a bigger bonsai. But when you make Shohin or Mame bonsai, you are forced to use a minimum of material to form the image.



Rockspray Cotoneaster - *Cotoneaster horizontalis*
Height: 9.5cm / 3.7 inches. Nursery stock. In training since 1998.
Age app. 1990. Pot: John Pitt.

The art of shohin

Open spaces and few leaves have to suggest the crown of the Shohin tree. The small trunk carries the soul of the tree and suggests the size, age and living conditions. A few roots will be enough to show that the tree is well secured in the ground. The entire story must be told with less material than is normal for larger bonsai. This constraint demands something more from both the artist and from the audience: imagination.

This is why it is art when you succeed in communicating a vision into the mind of the viewer. And that makes Shohin and Mame so extraordinarily fascinating as compared to bigger bonsai. It is simply an extra challenge for the mind.

Another reason to enter the world of these tiny trees is that you can take them in your hands and just drink them in. It is an intense and very satisfying experience to sit with a tree in your hands, turning it to every possible angle, observing all details of the trunk, the nebari (root base), and the fine ramification. Imagination and visualization must be primary tools for forming the tree and the result should coax imagination from the viewer

Bonsai Size Classifications:

MAME bonsai less than 7cm in height
SHOHIN bonsai up to 20cm in height
KIFU bonsai between 20 and 40cm in height
CHU bonsai between 40 and 60 cm in height
DAI bonsai over 60cm in height ..

The extra dimension

Larger bonsai can impress with their strong and powerful trunks. They can overwhelm our senses by their size, impressive branch structures and fantastic jin and shari alone. These advantages are out of reach for small bonsai. Shohin have to evoke the image of a much bigger tree with a stroke of a pencil rather than the swath of a wide paintbrush.

The art of Shohin requires an audience that is willing to engage in fantasy, receptive to the image painted in the mind by the tree. The viewer must be willing to participate because the simplified forms of Shohin are suggestions more than illustrations. The important extra dimension is what you don't see, but imagine without hesitation. This suggestion is what fills in the rest of the picture of the tree. It is the very essence one has to bring out of Shohin and Mame.

Breathing emotion into tree and mind

Experiencing Shohin is quite different from viewing other bonsai. Shohin require effort for you to see them properly. You have to bend down to view them at the right level, and you have to get close to see the rich details of the ramification, the nebari, the structure of the bark and the precise positioning of the foliage.



Japanese Maple - *Acer palmatum*
Height: 7cm / 3 inches. Age app.: 1995. Pot: Housen, Japan.

Some of the feelings one gets from nature have to be present in the tree. For me, it might be the feeling of the big oak I climbed in as a child. It still stands nearby the shore and I go there for walks on occasion. It might bring back memories of the sun playing on the foliage and of the view down to the ground while I sat on a branch dangling my feet. I get these feelings when I look at my small Cotoneaster. Of course I can't expect others to get the same feelings. But if the tree is able to bring this memory of nature into my mind, it might well wake similar memories in others who view it. We all are not so different.

The elements that evoke these feelings are to some degree inexplicable. The following may provide some insights.

In part, it depends on what kind of relationship you have with nature, your culture, the area in which you are living, and how you approach life. What does the moss in the pot mean to you? Is it just moss put in the pot to cover the earth to look nice? Or do you see the low grass underneath your childhood tree? Are the branches just neatly arranged or do you actually see a tree with the wind blowing through the leaves, making them dance in the sun?

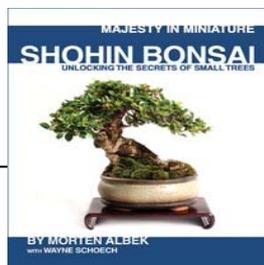
It all depends on how you approach the tree in the pot. You have to have an open mind in order to receive the greatest benefit from meeting a bonsai. And in the case of Shohin and Mame, it is a challenge to receive and express these emotions.

Measured from the rim of the pot, a Shohin may not extend more than 20cm / 8 inches - 25cm / 10 inches in height and only 7cm / 2.5 inches is the limit for Mame.

Man or tree

At the WBC exhibition in Munich, Germany a few years ago I had the pleasure to see some nice bonsai exhibited. While I was preparing to take a picture of a bonsai made by a skilled and well-known European bonsai artist, he recognised me. He approached and asked me to take a picture with him standing in front of his tree.

This little story illustrates the difference between a man devoted to his tree, and a man devoted to himself. You will never be able to create a tree with convincing naturalness if you put yourself in front of the tree.



Majesty in Miniature Shohin Bonsai Unlocking the Secrets of Small Trees

by Morten Albek
with Wayne Schoech

Shohin bonsai cost less, take less time to develop, take less space, are easier to move, are less apt to be over watered, and are a delight to behold. This thorough and beautiful exploration of the art of small bonsai is for experienced bonsai enthusiasts and daring beginners. If you already practice shohin, it will deepen your understanding. If you don't, now is the time to unlock the secrets of small trees.

Softcover. 7.5" x 9.5" 198 pages

B1SHOHIN \$24.95 prepaid order \$19.95 should be available in March

<http://www.stonelantern.com/booksbonsai.html>

And the tree will neither gain nor express the emotions that lead your thoughts out of the room and into nature. You might be impressed. Not by the tree, but by the skills of the creator.



Chinese Elm - *Ulmus parvifolia*
Cascade Style Shohin.

Naturalness

The naturalness that is expected from the tree is not always present when you look at all the bonsai presented in exhibitions. Often they are artistic and powerful, but they lack naturalness.

In 1999 I travelled to Omiya, Japan, primarily to visit the bonsai garden Seikou-en. Seikou-en is owned by Mr. Tomio Yamada, President of Omiya Bonsai Union. The naturalness of the bonsai there was utterly striking. The bonsai looked as though they were just placed in a pot without even the touch of human hands. Also, the harmony between pot and tree was striking. Every detail was carried out in respect for the tree.

Ever since this visit, I have searched for this quality in my trees. And I am first and foremost finding it in Shohin. Because of the necessity of using a very little amount of material, I am not encouraged to overdo my expressions. With Shohin, I find the "natural naturalness" without artistically disturbing and overdone show-offs. I try to bring this habit to my bigger bonsai, and this way my small trees teach me to grow the larger bonsai with better results.

By the way, Seikou-en means the sound of the very green garden. This tastefully expresses the approach to nature taken by Mr. Yamada. Listen to that sound and you will create Shohins worth viewing.

REMEMBER BRING A TREE TO EVERY MEETING

Date	Event	Details
Chinese New Year January / February	Sydney's Chinese New Year celebrations are the biggest outside Asia and run for three weeks each January / February, attracting crowds to the street parade through the city centre and to the dragon boat races at Darling Harbour. It is one of the city's most popular and colourful cultural events.	Highlights include the tours of the Sze Yup Temple in Glebe and Evergreen Taoist Church in Redfern, and the Chinatown markets. The Chinese Garden of Friendship in Darling Harbour highlights the art of <i>penjing</i>, or Chinese bonsai, throughout the festivities. The Chinese New Year's day falls on 18 February 2007, start of the Year of the Pig. www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/cny