



NEXT CLUB MEETINGS

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

7pm Tuesday 9 December 2008
Christmas Party

January 2009

No meeting will be held in
January

CONTACT DETAILS

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COMMITTEE

Patron Dorothy Koreshoff

President Neville

Vice President Sue

Secretary Lee

Treasurer Rebecca

Public Officer Max

Newsletter Editor Tony

Librarian Philip

Committee Philip, Gary, Tani,
Jennie, Damian

MEMBERSHIP

Full Membership \$30.00

Concession \$20.00

Family \$45.00

Pensioner \$15.00

Welcome to the December Newsletter

December Meeting:

CHRISTMAS PARTY & SANTA TEAM STYLING CAPER

Members will be randomly selected in groups of 3. Each group will get a club supplied tree. At the word 'GO' styling will start and you will work together as a team to turn a shaggy juniper into a bonsai. Neville, Sue and Lee will be on hand to offer advice if required but no 'hands on help' will be allowed. Bring your own tools and wire.

At the conclusion of Team Styling [45 minutes] the members will judge the trees to choose the favourite one. The winning team will be suitably rewarded. The trees can be purchased or they will be held over for 2009 raffle prizes.

Everyone is asked to bring a plate for our traditional Christmas Supper after the styling fun. Looking forward to seeing all members on the 9th of December.

Lee Wright,
discussing initial
pruning and training
for Melaleuca's she
bought at Riverview
Nursery which is
closing down
(see page 6)

To learn more about
initial pruning and
training for Saotome
Azaleas read Lee's
great article on
pages 4, 5 & 6.



SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT: Marika Kahle has been nominated as a Life Member for her services to the club as our web-mistress.
The motion was passed unanimously

PLEASE RETURN ALL LIBRARY BOOKS FOR END OF YEAR AUDIT

- To see Members Trees in Training on show at the November meeting see page 2
 - Sue's fig buds in Tony's electric light bonsai garden page 3
 - For info on new Native Plant Bonsai websites turn to page 3
 - November meeting surprise & events calendar on page 6

TREES IN TRAINING ON SHOW AT THE NOVEMBER MEETING



Glen's Juniper bonsai.



Sue's Azalea mini-bonsai



Another of Sue's Azalea mini-bonsai

"From bonsai we receive peace of mind, health and a life's pursuit. We can also learn generosity, patience and even philosophy about life. We can also have the good fortune to make friends of all nationalities and races with whom we share a mutual trust and respect. This is all thanks to bonsai."

"Saburo Kato"



Sue's reworked this Cedar bonsai she bought from Doug – 'Uncle Doug' said he was sorry he had decided to sell the tree, after seeing what Sue achieved with it.

SUE'S FICUS HAS A VACATION – BONSAI WEBSITES



Sue's *Ficus rubiginosa* 'Little Ruby' bonsai at the November meeting. Sue said she has found that Little Ruby does not bud very well, especially lower down on the branches and trunk



This is Sue's fig after 3 weeks in Tony's artificial light garden. Tony has often observed his Little Ruby figs produce new buds low down on the branches and trunk under artificial lights – this little test seems to confirm this observation.



An old photo of Tony's electric light garden, there are two shelves each illuminated with 4 x 4 foot fluorescent tubes – 2 x warm white and 2 x cool white tubes to give an even spread of light wave lengths. The lights are on timers and are on for 16 hours a day, partly to compensate for the strength of the light, which is equivalent to bright morning sun light.

FREE BONSAI INFORMATION WEBSITES for AUSSIE NATIVES

www.ausbonsai.com and www.bonsaisolutions.com.au

Steven, a Sydney bonsai enthusiast, was disappointed at the lack of information on the internet for bonsaiing Aussie natives so he decided to do something about it. He has filled the gap and created www.ausbonsai.com and www.bonsaisolutions.com.au to gather and share information from enthusiasts who work with natives.

AusBonsai is an online forum where bonsai enthusiasts can ask questions, chat and post information about bonsai with Australian native plant and bonsai in Australia. There are also sections on Australian growing conditions, exotic bonsai as well as bonsai doings around the country, nurseries, potters etc. Clubs can promote their shows or special days and other items of interest that the bonsai community would find interesting.

BonsaiSolutions is a simple to use information site where relevant and proven information will be transferred from the AusBonsai forum so enthusiasts can learn about bonsaiing our natives and bonsai in general.

Both sites are completely free and people who submit information can use their full name, given name or remain anonymous.

This is a superb opportunity to spread information on our wonderful native trees however the websites will only be as good as the contributions received.

So if you are a native enthusiast, please support this information site by submitting profiles. By supporting this website and passing on your information and experiences with natives it won't be long before a large database of pertinent information is available for everyone.

SAOTOME AZALEAS – selection & initial styling – by Lee Wright

I previously dissected a *Pyracantha* to illustrate what to look for in a stock plant and how to do the basic styling. This time I am working on a Saotome Azalea – a \$25 stock plant from Bonsai South.

Saotome is a non-flowering azalea and shoots back on old wood profusely. It is forgiving as long as it does not dry out and is a great tree for beginners as a lost branch can be regrown in a year. The tree takes hard pruning well and has tiny leaves. Some plants do flower but the size of the flower overwhelms small trees and Saotomes are usually styled from mame [finger tip bonsai] to shohin [up to 30 cm]. The trunk thickens well and if you are hard at the beginning you can get a pleasing bonsai in a year to 18 months.

Assessing saotomes is not always easy as they tend to be thickets and it can be hard to see the details you need. But sit on the ground in front of the stock plant selection, get your dirt digging finger ready and go for it. You are looking for a plant with a trunk-like base rather than a lot of suckers from a short stub. After you have studied several stock plants you will know exactly what I mean.

You want a trunk with some taper, a branch that can carry the apex [so it needs to be near the centre of the trunk, not off to the side] branches of a compatible thickness so they look in proportion to the trunk width, some smaller branches off the apical branch. A number of branches will have to be removed – check to see how this will affect the styling – will the removal leave an ugly gap? Will it leave a big scar in the front?

Study the roots [which your dirty finger has exposed] and look for the possible front of the tree. How do the branches work, both those that will stay and what will be removed. When you have found a specimen you think you can work with go for it.



Saotome out of the pot as purchased. Gently lower the soil all around until the surface roots are nicely exposed. Start to thin the tree by removing those branches that you know you won't use. These consist of suckers at the roots and lower trunk, branchlets growing out of the crotches of other branches, tiny branches growing from wherever, branches growing straight down or straight up.

If you are not sure about certain branches, leave them for the moment.



Lower branches have been removed as well as one sticking straight out from the middle of the trunk. Also, some cleaning up has been done inside. You have to remove the forest to see the tree.



Surface roots are exposed, a number of inner unwanted branches have gone and the shrub is starting to look like a tree.



I've chosen Photo 4 as the front because the roots are nicer from this side, the left branch has movement and character, there's a nice right branch – as well as a large, straight ugly one above it. Remember, big is not always beautiful or right. A branch of this size on a small tree, especially so high up, is totally out of balance.

Always look for the balance, proportion & harmony in what you are leaving & what you are removing. The strength of that branch takes away from the trunk.

SAOTOME AZALEAS – selection & initial styling – by Lee Wright

Removing the large branch and working with the finer one immediately brings your tree into better scale. Be sure to seal cuts on azaleas as you work.



I have root pruned the tree. Saotomes can take a hard root prune as long as the aftercare is maintained. You can see the difference in the root ball between photo 1 and photo 5. Also, I have washed the roots because I use a gravelly soil and you never mix soils. Different soils will retain varying amounts of water and you can find that the tree can be too wet or dry in different places. When you use the same soil you don't have to wash the roots. If you are unsure, don't risk your tree by doing a severe root prune... leave more root at the first prune and take more next year. If you keep the tree alive there is always next year.



The large branch is gone and the tree now has a fineness about it that suits the 15 cm height I am working towards.



I am still nibbling away, removing branches as I work to get a skeleton to build my bonsai. And this is an important point.

You are not going to have a bonsai when you finish your first styling. You are reducing a thicket to a skeleton and from there you and nature will 'build' your tree. The joy of this species is that it fleshes out quickly after the buds start developing.



More branches gone and the tree is starting to look desperate. But I'm not finished. There is too much going on at the left. Not now, but the tree is just beginning. When the branches start to pad up you will have too much and will be removing more branches. So do it now. Save yourself some time later. If you are unsure... and all beginners are, it is not a hanging offence to wait and see what develops.



Now I have my skeleton. And doesn't it look dreadful. I have clipped foliage off all the branches but left tufts on the ends to give the tree a reason to send food up the channels.

You will find it will sit like this for a month or so before the action starts. Once each branch has buds that have opened into leaves and there's growth all along the length, I will nip each branch back to easily half the length. Basically I will reduce it to shorter than I want the final length to be so it can fill out. And it will.

"Words do not a bonsai artist make."

--Ron Martín

"I chicken, you chicken -- no bonsai!"

--John Y. Naka,

SAOTOME AZALEAS continued and CALENDAR

It is not quite a month since I styled this tree and the leaf buds are just starting to appear. It will probably be another month or two before I tackle it again. It depends on how fast the development is. You think I'm kidding? How can something this ugly and scrawny be anything???



This is another saotome that was skeletonised in October 2006 and was well on the way by April 2007. That is only 6 months. It did take over 6 more months to develop the apex and balance the design but it was still a pleasure to look at while that was happening.



There are all manner of trees rewarding to bonsai but I admit to a love of this small leaved azalea that offers plenty of challenge to style and develops to a miniature tree quite quickly. Skills you learn with this tree will hold you in good stead for other trees. If you make a mistake or break a branch [and being azaleas they are brittle] the tree will obligingly fill the gap and fatten the new branch quickly. You really can't go wrong. And all this for only \$25 or so. Definitely better than two bottles of wine.

NOVEMBER MEETING SURPRISE

Anyone who missed the November meeting missed an unexpected opportunity. A bonsai enthusiast arrived out of the blue and donated a large box full of nice bonsai pots from medium large to very small.

He did not want to be recompensed and he had thoroughly scrubbed all the pots so they were in excellent condition.

Thanks were given and Lee grabbed a marking pen and started pricing the pots for quick sale. The majority were older so their like will not be found on nursery shelves and they were quickly grabbed up.

The club coffers are fuller, there are a few left for raffle prizes and quite a number of pleased members.

The club sends a BIG thank you to Bob and his wonderful generosity.

To All and Sundry on my bonsai list....

Lean Lanky Larry passed on the news that [according to the current decision by 'She'] Riverview Nursery will close in December. He wasn't saying if it was sold but he did say that a nurseryman from Newcastle had been down and bought 600 plants and was coming back.

There's no truth to the rumours that all the good stuff is gone. The best stuff well might be, but I came home with 5 trees today and I am very pleased with them after the initial prune. 5 trees for \$30.... eat your heart out Flower Power. There are some interesting callistemons for demos for those of you who demo, hiding in a heap of tall weeds are some agonis flexuosa [West Aust Peppermint Myrtle] that can be cut down from 6' to 25cm and grown on from there. There's more but I was only interested in the natives and never got past the top rows. I bet the camellias are most of the 600 that went.

So, if you have room on your benches, give the old lady one last go before the developers hit the place.

Cheers
Lee

REMEMBER BRING A TREE TO EVERY MEETING

Date	Event	Details
Nil	Nil	Nil