



NEXT CLUB MEETINGS

Green Square Community Hall
3 Joynton Avenue
Zetland

7pm Tuesday 10 February 2015

Discussion on progression of Chinese elm from stump by Sue. Discussion on getting trees ready for showing at the Easter Show. Member workshop – bring in your trees.

7pm Tuesday 10 March 2015

Feature Tree: Junipers. Timetabling staffing for participation in SCBC Royal Easter Show stand

CONTACT DETAILS

 0432 461 025

 info@sydneycitybonsai.org.au

 sydneycitybonsai.org.au

 PO Box 486
Summerhill NSW 2130

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 February Newsletter

February Meeting

- Feature Tree: Sue will discuss progression of Chinese elm from stump.
- Discussion on getting trees ready for showing at the Easter Show
- Members workshop – bring in your trees

In this issue:

- Bonsai accent plants and companions – page 2
- Accent plant (Kusamono) workshop by Brenda Parker at the Tops Weekend- page 3
- Magical Accents Exhibition – page 4
- Spotting potential (Quercus suber – cork oak) – page 4
- Summer in Sydney is Hot....Tips for managing bonsai is summer – page 5
- Contoneaster Progression by Lee – page 6
- International expert Chen Wenjuan demonstrates mounting and planting Juniper on rock – page 6
- Bonsai Events Calendar – page 6

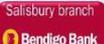
Bonsai - A Growing Art
28th Australian National Bonsai Convention
Friday 15 - Monday 18 May 2015,
Hotel Grand Chancellor Adelaide on Hindley

International Headliner
Koji Hiramatsu
Fourth generation Japanese Bonsai family

Friday 15 May
Exhibition Workshops with
Koji Hiramatsu and
Marketing Strategies with
Andrew Ward
Or
Adelaide Hills Garden Tour

Monday 18 May
Workshops with
Koji Hiramatsu
Tony Bebb
Joe Morgan-Payler
Spaces for Participants and Observers

also featuring
Bonsai Exhibition,
Retail Trade Area,
Welcome Reception and
Convention Dinner
For further details visit:
www.aabcltd.org

*If you can, it is well worth the time and effort to go
to the 2015 AABC National Convention*

BONSAI ACCENT PLANTS AND OTHER COMPANIONS

Bonsai accent plants and other companions (Kusamono or Shitakusa¹)

Bonsai are traditionally displayed in a *Tokonama* which consists of a bonsai, a scroll and an accent plant – representing man, heaven and earth. In bonsai exhibitions and displays exhibitors are encouraged to use accent plants to compliment their tree.



This large Japanese White Pine was exhibited at the UK Bonsai exhibition where it was decided that a Tokonama style display would be executed. The scroll depicts an early, misty Spring morning in the mountains, perhaps where the tree may live. The small Hosta with flower buds about to burst is redolent of early spring, growing in the foothills of the same mountains. Note the miniature tatami mat supporting the display of the accent plant. (<http://www.artisticbonsaicircle.co.uk/tokonoma001.htm>)

An accent plant can be a flowering plant, bamboo, grass, ferns, moss, even weeds can be used effectively. Accent plants can be chosen to compliment the season, the style of the bonsai and a host of other factors.

Rugged bonsai should be accompanied by hardy plants – nothing too luxurious or out of keeping with the tree. Taller trees can have grasses which can be unsuitable for smaller bonsai as the accent plant would be too dominant and spoil the visual balance. If the bonsai has flowers the accent plant should not – always remember... **the accent plant is complimenting – NOT competing for attention**

¹ **Kusamono** (literally "grass thing") and **shitakusa** (literally "undergrass") are a potted collection of plants designed to either be viewed in accompaniment with [bonsai](#), or alone. Normally the term *kusamono* is used when the planting is displayed as the center of attention, while the term *shitakusa* is used for plantings that accompany bonsai displays. In contrast to underplantings (which are potted in with the bonsai), kusamono and shitakusa are displayed separately in special pots, driftwood, or even stones.

Plants used are typically moss, grass, lichen, small flowers, bamboo, or bulbs, which may heighten the beauty or reflect a certain season. While traditionally in Japan, plants gathered from mountains contributed to the bulk of companion plantings, modern use has extended to more creative and artistic design. (from Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kusamono_and_shitakusa)



Examples of accent plants

If the accent plant has flowers they should be subdued and not too many. Again, the tree always has the greater importance and the accent plant should be of a type and size that compliments this. Flowering and fruiting bonsai should have non-flowering accent plants and deciduous trees look great with flowering accent plants.

Accent plants are normally displayed on their own stand or can be placed at the end of a slab. Pots for accent plants can be all those very small bonsai pots that an enthusiast collects as well as special additions that have a particular charm or character and because of their much smaller size, add interest without dominating.

Accent plants are placed on the directional side of the bonsai and, in turn, if they have a direction it is toward the bonsai so the tree 'points' to the accent plant and the accent plant points back to the tree.

Suiseki [viewing stones] can also be used to accent a bonsai. Again it is important that they compliment the feeling of the tree and don't compete - it is very important that the tree always has dominance. Small figurines can be used and, with larger bonsai, a small bonsai can be the accent plant.



Example of use of a figurine as a companion to a bonsai

There is a huge variety of plants, stones, wood and figurines that can be used to compliment a bonsai display. The most important considerations are always size and suitability. The tree must be the dominant item in the display and the accent plant must be in keeping with the tree.

Accent plants are easy and inexpensive and as well as improving your tree display can also brighten the bonsai benches at home with their various textures and colours.

ACCENT PLANT WORKSHOP BY BRENDA PARKER AT TOPS WEEKEND

Accent plant workshop at Tops Weekend

President of the Illawarra Bonsai Club undertook workshop on 'Accent Plants', that is plants set in little pots or trays that compliment bonsai.

She explained that in most Japanese houses there is a Tokenama where a scroll, bonsai pot and accent plant or companion is placed. You must be accurate in your display – that is if a season is presented then all three items must reflect that season. The accent plant must point placed opposite to the bonsai and point into the bonsai tree. It is usual to display the accent plant on its own flat wooden or ceramic stand designed with curved edges to create more interest.

In Japan the use of accent plants and scrolls with bonsai is promoted as an art form. Some antique pots for Kusimono (the accent plant) are worth more than antique bonsai pots!

In Australia we are still trying to understand how to present accent plants. For example a juniper bonsai and a fusia accent is not correct. We have to think about what plants are likely to be found near the tree in nature.

If we use say three different species of plant as an accent, you need to place the tallest plant at the back to represent heaven, the middle-sized plant in the middle to represent man and the lowest plant in the front to represent earth.

Grasses are the simplest to generate as accent plants. Simply sprinkle budgie seeds in a small amount of bonsai potting mix that is sitting in $\frac{1}{2}$ " of water and you can have an almost instant mix of grasses to accent an appropriate bonsai tree. It is important to note that you should never allow the actual soil to show in an accent plant.

The way to display accent plants is endless. You can use shallow free form pots, small shallow pots, glazed clay and even sushi dishes or not pot at all. Similarly you can use a small piece of wood with an orchid; make a grass from micro mondo grass.

However in thinking about combinations of plants you should make sure that the types of plants you choose actually occur in nature. For example you should never use a succulent with a fern. As an accent plant is meant to compliment a bonsai, if you are displaying a flowering azalea bonsai, the accent plant should not be flowering as this will detract from the bonsai.

When using no pot, you can display in a little tray of water something like duckweed and have a tiny bird or water buffalo figurine standing in the water near a carefully placed rock

Another idea is the use of Japanese moss balls where sphagnum moss or small grass is layered onto a wire ball and grown in water.

Selection of Kusimono (accent plants) from Brenda Parker's workshop at the Tops Weekend



MAGICAL BONSAI ACCENTS EXHIBITION & SPOTTING POTENTIAL

Magical Bonsai Accents Exhibition – first exhibition dedicated solely to Kusimono (Accent plants and accoutrements).

Below are pictures of some of the plants that were on display at the UK's Magical Bonsai Exhibition (see <https://magicalbonsaiaccents.wordpress.com/news/>)



Spotting Potential -*Quercus suber* - cork oak By Lee

When you see a tree that has 'something' you have to go with it... even if you 'have too many trees'. Took a nursery run on Friday and my friend spotted this cork oak [*Quercus suber*], felt it had something special but he wasn't convinced. I have too many trees so I didn't bite. On Sunday I drove back to the nursery - a 3 hour round trip - and found the small selection of cork oaks, looked them all over but this was the only one with 'magic'.



SUMMER IN SYDNEY IS HOT.....

Tips for managing your bonsai through Sydney's summer months

Summer in Sydney is long, hot and generally dry. A Sydney Summer presents unique challenges to bonsai enthusiasts.

Keeping in mind the variations due to each tree's size, variety, age, health and microclimate positioning, the following are tips to help your bonsai survive:-

- Grow native or naturalized plants
 - Use the recommended course soil mix
 - Keep your plants healthy and pest-free.
 - Rotate each plant a quarter of a turn every week. This gives even exposure to the sun and fresh air, plus allows you to check on the health or disease from all sides.
 - Don't let your plants get out of control, especially faster growers like junipers, figs and elms.
 - Keep your new growth pinched after it gets only so long. Don't lose the shape you've spent time working on. Thin any tight growth to allow air and light flow.
 - Be aware of the water-retention of each pot of soil mix. Slight differences in soil materials when each plant was potted up; the requirements of each species of tree, the position of each pot (microclimate) mean that all these factors prohibit a "one-method of watering fits all". Learn to customize to your plant's needs.
 - Provide shade cloth overhead if necessary, especially when plants are directly exposed to the sun in the hot afternoon. You can site you bonsai under landscape or trees but be aware that the droppings from this canopy can introduce pests and diseases.
 - Set posts on low stands or slatted workbenches over a lawn, mulch or gravel. Concrete is less preferable as it acts as a heat sink and may over-heat the soil in your pots. Soak the ground thoroughly in the morning. Give the trees an occasional good-strength shower.
 - Overpot your trees in the springtime. The extra room will be much appreciated. Or, sink your potted trees in a layer of mulch or sawdust. Check every now and then that the roots haven't grown out of the drainage holes and into the ground!
 - Set pots near a swimming pool or pond and if you pop them in pans of water, take them out of the pans overnight so that roots can respire at night.
 - Keep trees a little way away from north or west facing masonry walls or windows.
- Group plants together, but not touching one another. Allow room for good air circulation.
 - Sturdy trees such as pyracantha, contoneaster and pines can take full sun.
 - Don't let you more delicate trees get unfiltered west/afternoon sun or strong westerly wind.
 - Water maples and other plants bearing thin-edged leaves with collected rain water. Remember to fertilize half strength regularly.
 - Overpot fast rooting or water hungry species (pyracantha, privet).
 - If a bonsai has wilted leaves, soak tree until soil is saturated then allow to drain and keep in morning sun until it is recovered.
 - When established – not recently repotted or root-pruned - -- larger specimens of the following can take full sun: bougainvillea, olive, lantana, junipers, myrtle, figs.
 - In the late summer and throughout the autumn use a high phosphate fertilizer (must be an organic fertilizer not chemical) for the flowering trees. This allows the plant to build up reserves and rudimentary buds for next spring.

(reprinted with permission from The Bonsai Study Group: article adapted from Phoenix Bonsai Society internet and altered for local conditions)

Leaf cutting at its best

Omid Asadi from the UK creates beautiful and creative art from fallen leaves using a craft knife and needle.



Carriage cut from single leaf

"I believe that we look at many things every day but don't SEE them. For example, apples have been falling from trees for thousands of years, but only Isaac Newton truly saw that and, thanks to him, our lives have changed forever."

-Omid Asadi

COTONEASTER PROGRESSION; CHEN WENJUAN AT AABC & BONSAI EVENTS CALENDAR

Progression – Cotoneaster shohin By Lee

In July 2014 I bought this cotoneaster horizontal 'bonsai' from a bonsai nursery because of the movement and thickness of the trunk.

At this stage it had been "styled" for people who didn't know bonsai....or someone with a good eye.



Cotoneaster shohin in July 2014

A lot of the heavy top branches were removed and it was allowed to rest over winter. In late spring more branches were removed and also some surface roots to accentuate the trunk curve.



Gracefully restyled cotoneaster in January 2015

In December it started to shoot and has since developed a grace it never possessed. Wiring and shaping were done and it is well on its bonsai journey.

Chen Wenjuan demonstrates mounting Juniper on rock at AABC, Gold Coast August 2014

Ms Chen Wenjuan is the Bonsai Curator for Mr Xin Changbao's Bonsai Park in Changshou, China. She has won many bonsai awards including winning Best creativity Award in Dow Cup, Chinese Penjing Competition and won two Golden Prize awards in Guangzhou International Invitational Exhibition. This photo article shows demonstrates key steps in attaching a Juniper to a large rock.



Rock prior to Juniper attachment



Chen wires the Juniper into position and uses some of the holes in the rocks to direct the branches through the rock.



Final attachment of Juniper to the rock, planted and with moss and grass added

BONSAI EVENTS CALENDAR

Date	Event	Details
2-3 May, 2015	Illawarra Bonsai Annual Show (Autumn)	Sutherland District Trade Union Club (Tradies), Kingsway, Gympie
15-18 May, 2015	Bonsai – A growing Art. 28 th Australian National Bonsai Convention	The Hotel Grand Chancellor Adelaide on Hindley. 65 Hindley St, Adelaide