



NEXT CLUB MEETINGS

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

7pm Tuesday 14 July 2009

TEAM STYLING CAPER - Members will form teams and style trees – prizes will be awarded.

7pm Tuesday 11 August 2009

Annual General Meeting
Neutrog rep. Mike Rimmer speaking on fertilising with sample bags for everyone present.

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COMMITTEE

Patron Dorothy Koreshoff

President Neville

Vice President Sue

Secretary Lee

Treasurer Tani

Public Officer Max

Newsletter Editor Tony

Librarian Philip

Committee Philip, Gary, Jennie, Damian

MEMBERSHIP

Full Membership \$30.00

Concession \$20.00

Family \$45.00

Pensioner \$15.00

Welcome to the July Newsletter

July Meeting: The TEAM STYLING CAPER is on again, this event was great fun last time. Please bring along your tools and some wire, the club has a limited number of tools and materials we can use.



Anna gave us a fantastic talk on the human back and taking care of our backs. After giving us a great overview of how the back functions, Anna explained the correct way to work and to sit so that our backs are protected.

A highlight for all was the stretching, warm up exercises – we all had great fun and did something good for our backs. (See page 3 for highlights)

Thank you Anna for giving us such an informative, interesting and entertaining talk.

← Anna holding Cyril the skeleton at the June meeting – with Cyril's help Anna explained good back management

At the June meeting Lee gave us a wonderful talk on 'Balancing Bonsai Growth'; this is an important facet when you are trying to develop certain areas of your tree. Turn to pages 3 & 4 to read the full article →

Thank you Lee for a fascinating talk

**Annual General Meeting in August,
please plan to attend**



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Members trees see page 2

For Wiring Alternative see page 5

Sharpening Bonsai Tools see page 6

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MEMBERS TREES IN TRAINING ON DISPLAY AT THE JUNE MEETING



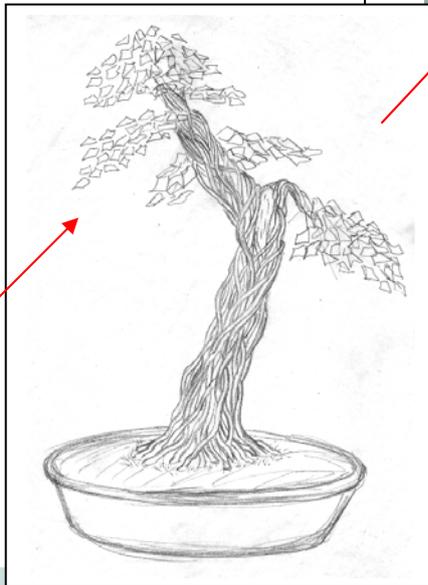
Sue's *Ficus rubiginosa* – Port Jackson Fig bonsai



Tony's *Ficus pumila* 'Minima' – Miniature Leafed Miniature Creeping Fig bonsai experiment

The idea behind this bonsai experiment is to use the twining stems of this tiny leaved creeping fig on a piece of driftwood to suggest a tropical strangler fig that has grown over the host tree – killing the host tree and taking its place in the forest.

The canopy in the sketch may change into a broad domed typical rainforest tree shape in the future if it is deemed by the bonsai masters at our club that a broad canopy would be more appropriate.



Lee's Saotome Azalea bonsai



Hector's Miniature Umbrella Tree bonsai

BEATING BAD BACKS & BALANCING GROWTH

Beating Bad Backs in Bonsai

Physio, Anna Lee using props such as artificial blood, 'pretend' muscles, blue tac and marshmallows, presented a fun evening explaining how you can damage your back with repetitive activities or prolonged positions such as those you participate in when tending your precious plants. It is clear that you can damage your discs, ligaments, muscles and joints easily whilst nurturing your bonsai so the evening covered ergonomics, education and exercise.



Anna used a PowerPoint presentation to illustrate her talk

The group played with Cyril the skeleton, checked out their personal posture using a picture guide and saw how easy it is to deprive your muscles of oxygen and nutrition leading to muscle pain and how easy it is to damage your joints as well as gaining the 'know how' to prevent these problems

The dangerous actions are prolonged positions, twisting, repetitive bending and heavy lifting with poor postures – how many bonsai fans do that! We also covered the benefits of exercise and how simple exercise and maintaining a good posture whilst working can prevent injuries to your back, neck, knees and other parts of your body.

If you have an injury, graded exercise programmes will help you relieve the pain and usually prevent it returning.

The talk was dotted with pictures of action with bonsais to which the audience could relate – lots of nodding heads here and Anna touched on aspects of your other day to day activities that could be improved to make your body last longer.

So if you want to be able to enjoy your bonsais for many years, make sure you look after your body!

Master Toshio Kawamoto's advice:

To develop a fine Bonsai collection, make one hundred and keep two or three.

Balancing Growth by Lee Wright

A bonsai stylist balances growth when initially styling a tree, removing excess and wiring to position the remaining growth in a harmonious arrangement.

When you are developing a bonsai from more primitive stock, balancing growth involves allowing specific branches to extend dramatically to hasten thickening and development and other branches to be kept short and close in order to limit their growth, sending the growing power to the areas where the stylist wants it.

Depending on whether your plant develops faster apically or basally depends on how you control growth. A bonsai of whatever stock ideally has tapered branching so the bottom branches are larger than the apical ones. As many plants develop stronger and faster towards the top, it is necessary to keep this growth under tight control or allow it to go ahead with full growth with the intent of removing it entirely when the lower areas are suitably developed and then redevelop the top.

It is important to keep in mind that if you are developing the lower branches more energy needs to be focused in those areas by reducing top growth. At the same time you have to balance the need for strong top growth to thicken the new leader to achieve a smooth transition from the cut off trunk to the upper layers. The two needs appear to be counter productive but it is a case of choosing the option that works with the predominant development needs.

In the case of my demonstration tree, the Melaleuca, the rapid thickening of the new leader means I can keep the top closely clipped to encourage the lower branches to grow.



The Melaleuca styphelioides [Prickly Leaf Paperbark]... was purchased as a 2.5 metre tree, selected for the lower trunk

The original idea was to have the plant develop an apical shoot that could be used as the upper trunk and the two branches remaining on the tree used as side branches.

BALANCING GROWTH

However, the tree refused to shoot as hoped, the smaller branch died and the choices were to leave it go and hope for the best or use the strong side branch as a new leader

Due to the speed this tree can develop, I opted for the second choice and the branch became the leader which necessitated changing the front and, as the growth developed, new branches were established.

It was only then that new shoots developed at the base of the leader, shoots that were bar branches but lowered the balance of the tree and thus became vital to the design

Due to their importance I did not want to remove either so in order to minimise and veil the barring,



I have wired one down and one up. While bar branches present a very jarring look to a bonsai, there are times when you have little choice but to try to adapt them to suit the design of the tree and this is the case with this Melaleuca.

The next hurdle is the fact that the upper branches are strong and robust and I must inhibit their development in order to allow the lower branches to increase to surpass them in size. This tree was reduced from 2.5 metres in November 2008 (see March 2009 issue page 5) and in only 8 months it has developed to this stage.

I am closely controlling the foliage development on the upper structure, allowing the two low branches to grow wild and only styling 10 -15 centimetres from the trunk outwards as the rest will eventually be removed to allow new secondary and tertiary branching to develop and create foliage pads.

With the upper branches, I am hoping to get new shoots in close proximity to the existing branches so I can allow the new shoots to develop and remove the strong ones. But no way am I reducing my options at this stage by eliminating the upper branching.

The rapid development of this Melaleuca caused severe wire marks on the leader within 4 weeks but this is not a worry as the paperbark will overwhelm these within the year but I am being very careful of all future wiring.

I don't believe this tree will ever be a show stopper because the foliage tends to have a higgly-piggly growth habit which will always give the tree an untidy look but the power of the trunk, the beauty of the bark and the ultimate development will ensure it becomes a pleasing Australian native bonsai. I envisage two years before it is ready for the bench. Two years for the leader to thicken to blend in naturally with the trunk join, two years for the branching to establish a mature tree look.

My goal is to have it at the Australian Native Plants as Bonsai Show in Canberra in November 2011. Even if it is not fully balanced by then it will still be a fine representation of what can be done with a mature trunk in two years.

The *Lorapetalum chinensis* [Chinese Fringe Flower] was purchased as a pencil sized plant and put in the garden for 5 years & dug up in September 2008. It did not appear to resent the move to smaller accommodation but did not really start any development, other than enough new leaves to know it was alive, until January 2009.



And then it took off. Again, the lower shoots which are vital for the design give a bar branch feel so I have wired one downwards & one up to counter this.

At this stage the top needs a reduction of the branchlets to direct development to the lower branches but I don't want to reduce the foliage at this early winter seasonal stage. Come spring when the tree starts to shoot the top will be severely thinned to encourage the growth of the bottom branches.

This is the first time I have worked with Lorapetalum and it seems to have limited growth periods and I don't yet know if this is the result of the transplant shock or the nature of this plant. I am proceeding cautiously as the trunk has unusual and pleasing movement and the green and purple leaves along with the shocking pink flowers in late summer could make this a striking bonsai.

You can achieve great things when you cut back hard on a mature trunk and develop the entire branch structure but the structure will not naturally develop logically. It is the stylist's part to clip and prune as required to direct growth to where it is best needed in order to achieve a balanced and harmonious bonsai.

Zen Saying:

Do not seek to follow in the footsteps of the masters; seek what they sought.

WIRING ALTERNATIVES

This article was written from notes and photographs taken by Lee from Bonsai by the Harbour

The standard way to wire is wrapping the various wire grades around branches and branchlets at a 45 degree angle until the wire has to be removed to avoid cutting into the branch or the branch has set.

Mick Balzary, a NSW bonsai master, showed one of his techniques at Bonsai by the Harbour weekend seminar in June 2009. Mick, well known as a pine and cedar specialist, fastens thick wires along the trunk with cable ties secured at close intervals and then bends the branch as he requires.



This is another way to get movement into your trees but care has to be taken as the cable ties can cut in. The good news is if the ties start to cut, they can be removed and new ties attached without removing the wire and thus, for trees that require a long time to set, this eliminates the need to remove and rewire, remove and rewire.



To learn how this piece of driftwood became this beautiful bonsai visit the website shown below:

<http://www.bonsai4me.com/AdvTech/ATTanukiProgression.htm>

Definitely an interesting aspect of shaping a tree.



WIRING FOLIAGE UNDER THE BRANCH

This concept is a bit difficult to grasp from a photo but at Bonsai by the Harbour in June, Mick Balzary displayed this juniper that he wired so the foliage is basically 'under' the branch thereby showing the movement and contortions of the branches rather than hiding this movement with the foliage styled on top. The principles still apply of no foliage growing 'down or under' the pads but the tips just touch the branches. This gives a busier look to the tree but also shows the development of the branching and gives a more rugged, aged look. It might not be to everyone's taste but it works and it is an interesting alternative styling method.



SHARPENING BONSAI TOOLS & EVENTS CALENDAR

From a demonstration by Noel Summerell at
Bonsai By The Harbour June 2009

Go to Bunnings and get a 'HONE & STONE', red plastic backing, Fine Grade. This inexpensive and fine grade sharpener is ideal for touching up your cutting implements after each session – don't wait until the cutting edge is dull. You can also get this product in a rounded head to sharpen the insides of Knob Cutters [that have curved blades].

Side cutters have one side that is a bit longer than the other - sharpen this side first by gently running the Hone & Stone over the blade edge but not directly across it.

Buy Japanese tools. They are dearer than Chinese tools but stronger, better cutting edges and will do the job far better. Spending money on cheap tools is simply a waste of resources!

When you use side cutters you hold the right handle between your thumb and forefinger and the left handle between your index finger and the other two. The right handle is held stationary and the forefinger moves the blade as you cut. NEVER use two hands to operate this tool! You lose skill and expertise by so doing.

If your tools are quite dull the sanding head on the Dremel can be used to refine the cutting edges. When you have sanded away the dullness there must be NO light showing between the blades.

It is not untoward to end up with blades that are uneven but they won't cut well and you either sharpen them properly or buy new ones. If the cutters are dull sharpen the outsides and use the Hone and Stone to remove any burrs left by the Dremelling. Only use the Hone and Stone lightly on the inside to remove any burrs after sharpening the outside edges.

To keep your tools from getting rusty use a penetrating oil to protect the metal. WD40 or aerosol cans are not complete protection and rust can occur. Use '3 In 1' or Camellia Oil.

Secateurs are bypass cutters and you mainly sharpen the large blade. The bottom blade is to hold the branch being cut and does not need sharpening.

Take care when you are sharpening any blades not to hit the other blade as you work.

Silky Saws – This is a Japanese branded saw that cuts on the pull and is excellent for working with bonsai.

To tighten bonsai tools that have a rivet, put the tool, rivet head up, on steel [you can use a hammer head] and hit the rivet with another hammer. Hit gently and test, hit harder and test. If you overdo this and make it too tight you have ruined the tool as you cannot undo excessive tightness.

Scissors – only touch the top of the blade with Hone & Stone. Then run the Hone & Stone along the blade to remove any burrs. When scissors close properly there is a slight tension as the blades pass each other. You should be able to feel the blades passing each other and this indicates the scissors are in good condition.

Sharpening with a Dremel is only used on rubbish tools. Good quality tools in good condition only need a touch up with a Hone & Stone. You use a Dremel when you have to remove a lot of metal.

When using side cutters, always cut near the middle. The points are not strong enough to be used for major cutting. Side cutters come in a variety of sizes and only large side cutters should be used on large branches. If the branch is larger than half the length of a blade it is too large for the tool and you risk damaging your side cutters.

Buy good tools and look after them after each session, cleaning the blades between plants so no infection is passed and cleaning and oiling them at the end of each session.

Date	Event	Details
4/5/6 July	Ideas Summit	Dural Country Club - Peter Adams [English Master] will be demonstrating plus Monday workshop at Ray Nesci's
15-16 August	Bonsai Society of Sydney Annual Show	Chequers Resort, Terrey Hills
28-30 August	Gardening Expo at Sydney Showground	Sydney Olympic Park 10 am – 4:30 pm
29-30 August	Illawarra Bonsai Society's Annual Show	Boys Club, Box Road, Sylvania
11-13 September	Bonsai Society of Australia Show and Marketplace 9 am – 4 pm at Baulkham Hills Council Chambers, Showground Rd at Carrington Street.	This is one of the best bonsai shows of the year with many advanced bonsai on display. It is an ideal opportunity to see some of the legendary Koreshoff trees. The BSA Show is also noted for a fine Marketplace where members sell trees, both stock plants and bonsai, and the nursery trade is represented with plants and pots. This is a show not to be missed
18/19/20 September	The Tops Weekend Banksia Complex, The Tops Conference Centre, Stanwell Tops.	Live in weekend of bonsai with guest tutors Carole Walker from Gold Coast and Georgina Kretschmar. Pre bookings essential for this very economical and fun weekend. Contact Brenda 9547 2157 or Jamie 0415 440 807
18/19/20 September	Bonsai Society of Australia's Annual Show and Marketplace.	Baulkham Hills Council Chambers, Carrington Rd at Showgrounds Rd, Castle Hill
24/25 October	School of Bonsai Show	Ray Nesci Bonsai Nursery 26 Sagar Rd, Kenthurst [plus sausage sizzle]