



NEXT CLUB MEETINGS

Green Square Community Hall
3 Joynton Avenue
Zetland

7pm Tuesday 14 May 2013

A talk on pots & a demonstration selecting a pot - Pines workshop

7pm Tuesday 11 June 2013

Tips for selecting bonsai stock
Bonsai websites - bring along your favourites. Tool maintenance night bring in your - tools, cloth, linseed oil, sharpening stones, detol & Tea tree oil

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MEMBERSHIP

Full Membership \$40.00

Concession \$25.00

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Welcome to the May Newsletter

May Meeting

POTOLOGY, presented by Lee Wright:

Basically a pot is there to hold water and nutrients for a bonsai and whether it is plastic, concrete or a finely crafted ceramic, as long as it achieves its horticultural purpose it is 'okay'. However, choosing the right bonsai pot to bring out the full beauty of the tree can be as artful as creating the tree and many trees are shown well below their potential because of a poor pot choice.

Lee is a pot enthusiast, loves collecting and using handmade pots and also commercial pots. The important part is marrying a tree and a pot to highlight both.

Come along to the May meeting to get some insights into pot selection, points to look for when choosing a pot and how best to show off your tree... and the pot. Lee will have a good selection of trees and pots on display to highlight her passion.

+ A Pine & Juniper workshop



Black Pine Bonsai

- For Pot Picking Pitfalls see pages 2 & 3
- Firethorn Style Sheet on page 4
- Live Veins article page 5
- Events Calendar page 5

POT PICKING PITFALLS

By Lee Wright

You have a tree, you have a pot, you put the two together and there's no magic. What happened? Why not?

Things you have to note when looking for a pot - other than the actual size.

"Ooohhhh.... I just love this pot. Isn't it beaut".

That may very well be the case but you need to ask yourself some important questions.

- Is the colour so striking that viewers will see the pot first and not the tree?
- Is the colour compatible with the colour of the foliage and the flowers if it is a flowering tree?
- Is the pot shape in harmony with the tree's style? Masculine pots for sturdy trees, feminine pots for more delicate and flowering trees.
- Is the colour good but the glaze is high intensity gathering all attention to itself?
- Is the textural interest on the pot quiet enough to keep the pot in second place and let the tree shine?
- Is the colour/glaze pattern on the pot so prominent it is distracting?
- Does the shape of the pot suit the tree?
- If the pot has a lip, which increases the visual import of the pot, is the tree visually strong enough to carry it?
- How thick is the rim? Thick rims can make a pot look too heavy for the tree? This is especially true with small pots.
- Are the feet fancy or plain and do they suit the tree?
- Has the pot been 'pressed' so there are indentations at the bottom that can hold water? These would make the pot unsuitable for a tree like a pine that likes soil on the dryer side, fine for an azalea, privet, pyracantha that are thirsty.

There is a tendency to overpot a tree and this is fine **IF** the tree is in training or if the tree especially likes moist soil or is thirsty. It is common to overpot azaleas, privets and pyracanthas due to their water needs. Enthusiasts in drier regions can overpot most of their trees to keep the water up to them. However, when you put a tree on a display bench the pot should reflect the size that best suits the tree.

Colours can be hard. The Japanese were subtle, the Chinese colours tend to be very brash. There is a difference between a rich blue pot where the glaze is shaded, speckled or the surface broken by 'reflections'. Some of the high glazed pots on today's market are a solid colour and impact heavily on the tree.

With bonsai your eye should register the tree first and then tree and pot. If your eye sees the pot first the balance is horribly wrong. After all, you did not spend years training the pot. The tree should be the focus with the pot highlighting the tree.

I compare good pot selection to drama. Go to a bonsai show and you will see some trees that jar because the pot and tree do not tell the same story. It is like actors on a stage reading from different scripts. If the pot does not reinforce the story you want the tree to tell it is wrong, purely and simply wrong.



How does a tree tell a story? You create a pine or a maple and style it nicely over the years. The pine should emanate the feeling of a harsh growing site, wind, rain, cold, rugged, struggle.



A maple should make the viewer think of green meadows, rain, gentleness. The pots must match these images to get the most out of your styling. An azalea can come from rugged mountain areas but our conception of an azalea is a delicate flowering garden plant. The pot should be feminine to reflect this image.

POT PICKING PITFALLS

A fig is all curves so putting it in a pot that has very marked angles doesn't suit the majority of figs.

There will always be a tree that doesn't fit into the standard image and takes a special pot. But I am discussing the majority.

Olives are another case in point:



Olives grow in dry, rugged terrain. Their growth habit normally reflects this. Old ground grown olives are weathered, damaged, obviously fighting the elements. To me to put an olive in a high glazed pot is not bringing out the true nature of the tree. And yet I have put an olive in a high glazed red pot... artistic waywardness that worked with the particular tree. I have another olive in a satin glazed highly patterned pot. Again artistic waywardness. In this instance the tree is a full cascade, very light on with two foliage pads that hang below the pot. The tree and the foliage don't conflict with the pot and because both are a bit weird they go together. If the foliage pad was next to the pot they would clash. Artistic waywardness is fun when it works.



A beautiful colour match of pot to foliage

There's another point to bring up.... Quality. A lot of today's pots are poorly made; slapdash, uneven, gross. There IS a big difference between buying a pot that has sagged in the kiln and is odd to one that is simply poorly made. Unusual pots can be gems. Crooked pots can be magic. Poorly made pots are the pits. Horizontal trim that is not straight and true, rims and surfaces that are uneven in a sloppy way - not an artistic way, clunky feet, all these cheapen a pot and by close association can cheapen your tree.

Beginners can look in horror at the prices of some pots and so they should. Don't put a silk purse with a sow's ear. [Or something like that]. But as the novice and the tree improve suddenly the cost of a good, well made pot is worth it because it makes the tree look better.

Attending bonsai shows and club sales is often a great way to pick up second hand pots that are easily affordable and, because they are older they will often be better made with better glazes. A lot of bonsai shows feature one of NSW's bonsai potters and their wares and while these pots are understandably above the cost of mass produced pots they are well worth the money when coupled with the right tree. Occasionally the only way you can get the right pot for a tree is to have it handmade.



At the May meeting I will have quite a number of bonsai in commercial and handmade pots and explain more about the importance of a pot and what it is about each bonsai that made me choose its pot.

There will be a couple of examples of artistic waywardness and one tree where only a handmade pot would suit it.

You will have your own ideas about what might better suit a particular tree but this is what makes bonsai exciting and bonsai displays interesting to visit and pot selection equally fun and frustrating.

APPRENTICE BONSAI *Pyracantha* (Firethorn)



AUGUST 2012

Acquired for thick trunk full of character. A lot of problems up top.



AUGUST 2012

Initial styling. Unwanted branches removed, major root work done. Tree left to rest and grow.



APRIL 2013

Foliage pads and shaping are starting to develop.

2015 — PLANNED SHAPE

25cm tall with broad spreading canopy.



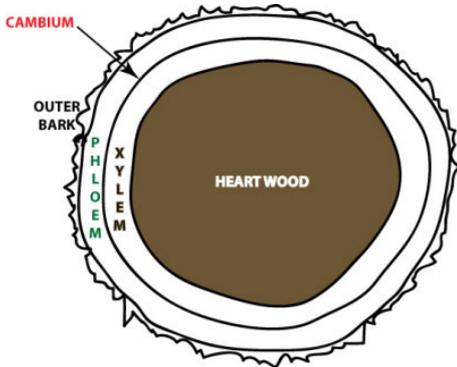
Pyracantha is a Genus of thorny evergreen large shrubs (some reaching 6m x 6m) in the Rose Family (Rosaceae) They are commonly known as Firethorns or Pyracanthas. They are native to an area extending from Southeast Europe east to Southeast Asia, with most of the beautiful species coming from Western China an area with a climate similar to a lot of Australia.

Pyracantha resembles and are related to *Cotoneaster*, but have serrated leaf margins and numerous thorns (*Cotoneaster* is thornless).

LIVE VEINS & EVENTS CALENDAR

A common expression in bonsai is 'Live Veins'.

Live Veins are in fact the Xylem and Phloem 'veins' found in the live part of the trunk just under the bark:



REF:
http://www.treeboss.net/images/bark_cross_section.jpg

A very simplified explanation of these two vein systems is: one transports water and nutrients up (Xylem) and the other distributes manufactured sugars from the leaves to other parts of the plant for use in cell production / growth or for storage for later use (Phloem).

New Xylem & Phloem cells are produced by the Cambium. Both the Xylem & Phloem commonly only flow up or down the trunk with very little sideways movement. So it is easy to work out which part of the Live Veins feeds branches on a tree.

Live Veins and dead veins can be very apparent on trees with a lot of shari (deadwood on the trunk).



The literati Juniper illustrates how bonsai enthusiasts treat live and dead veins. The white wood is heartwood and is dead (the bark and Live Vein areas have been removed) and has been lime sulphured to preserve the wood and to get the weathered look. The brown areas are the living bark and the live veins.

Cutting major branches can cause the vein that fed that branch to die. The branch that was eliminated except for the jin on the lower left side has caused the live vein to die and it has died back all the way to the roots. The branch removal where the two jins are on the back side of the tree caused a second vein to die leaving two live veins separating the two shari.



← *Eucalyptus microcorys* – Tallowwood, showing very strong bark patterning that is following the direction of the 'veins' concealed beneath

Date	Event	Details
Friday 17th to Monday 20th May 2013.	"The Australian Journey" the 26th AABC National Bonsai Convention, Canberra	. email secretariat2013@cbs.org.au for more info