



sydney city  
bonsai club inc.

## NEXT CLUB MEETINGS

**Green Square Community Hall**  
3 Joynton Avenue  
Zetland

**7pm Tuesday 10 November 2015**  
Demystifying Judging Bonsai.  
Tree of the month: figs

**7pm Tuesday 8 December 2015**  
Demystifying Judging Bonsai.  
Tree of the month: figs

## CONTACT DETAILS

 0432 461 025

 [info@sydneycitybonsai.org.au](mailto:info@sydneycitybonsai.org.au)

 [sydneycitybonsai.org.au](http://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 November Newsletter

### November Meeting

- Sue demystifies Judging bonsai – What do bonsai Judges look for? Using judging criteria to improve the styling and refining of your trees.
- Feature Tree of the month – Figs. Sue will talk about repotting figs at this time of the year.
- Member styling hotspot – bring in trees for display and/or discussion.

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## We are now on SCC “What’s On” website



Check out the Sydney City Council's "What's On" website:

<https://whatson.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/events/sydney-city-bonsai-club-meeting>

It's a great way for our club to let Sydney siders know where they can learn about bonsai.

## Ever wanted to go to Japan for a bonsai tour?

See our back page for a new and exciting bonsai tour led by Sue to Japan planned for next year!

## JOE MORGAN-PALOR REFINES JAPANESE BLACK PINE AT AABC

### Joe Morgan-Palor refines Japanese Black Pine at AABC Adelaide, May 2015

Joe is a Victorian demonstrator who learned his skills working for some years in a Japanese bonsai nursery. He freely passes on tips and how-to and is becoming a very popular demonstrator.



Japanese Black pine. Old tree, maybe 30-40 years. It has always been grown as a bonsai but it has some issues.

#### DESIGN ISSUES WITH THIS TREE

The size of the trunk compared to the foliage it's carrying makes the trunk look thin. The foliage pads are much too large.

Having a tree so high with such a low first branch doesn't work. The trunk should be far thicker to support such a low branch.

The branches are too thick, they have been allowed to develop too much with too many major secondary branchlets on large branches.

It is necessary to cut out excessive sub branches to minimize the weight and the bulk.

The lowest branch was a back branch and the next back branch is up in the apex.

The styling is going to be a bit shaggy because the tree is just recovering health and it is better to leave more foliage until the tree is robust.



Joe cut off the bottom back branch noting that this cut off branch is far too large and has too many major secondaries

Black pines have a flush of growth in Spring which is cut off in mid to late Summer, this develops buds and those are allowed to grow until late Fall.

#### STYLING AND WIRING

First styling you want to leave space between each candle for the new growth to fill in the spaces. Forming pads is quite easy. The hard part is getting your wiring done properly. Joe likes the line of the branches to peel off from the main branch. When you wire you have to think forward as to how the tree is going to develop.

“The pads that are higher up on the tree should never out compete the main/ first branch and should diminish in size and thickness to keep proportion. All other branches are subservient to the main branch and get shorter, finer and denser as you go up the tree.”

Guy wires are good tools to bring down larger branches. Wire the branch and then establish the guy to bring the branch into a lower position and then work on shaping and positioning the foliage pad branchlets.

## JOE MORGAN PALOR REFINES JAPANESE BLACK PINE *continued*

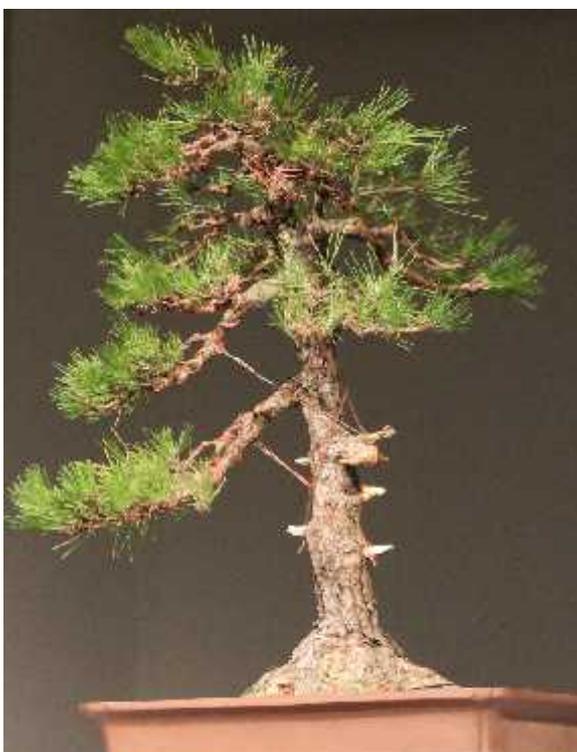
### FURTHER STYLING

Into the apex which had a lot of thick growth. Some was removed in the pre-demonstration work and more has been removed now but it still needs to be lightened some more.

The apex is now to be allowed to develop and grow and more refinement will occur in another session after the tree has become stronger in its growth.



After positioning and wiring all of the branches, Joe takes a step back to view the total structure of the tree and considers removing another lower branch



After the tree has recovered, it will undergo further refinement particularly working towards developing the apex and refining the pads.

### POINTERS ON BRANCH BALANCE AND REFINING

Always careful to tip up the tips of every candle when placing branches. The easiest way to have your pads look refined is to tip up each growing tip to the sun, don't let them be sideways or down. It's not hard to get short needles, what is hard is to get the same strength throughout the tree.

Throughout the year you have a couple of opportunities to correct the balance.

Pulling needles - strong shoots have lots of needles, weak shoots have few. On strong shoots reduce the needles back to 3. On weaker branches leave more needles and if the branch is very weak leave all the needles.

Decandling - This forces a second lot of budding and you get greater ramification. Cutting candles in various ways. If tree is unbalanced cut spring growth off in stages. Cut the lowest part of the tree first which is generally the weakest.

When new buds develop and turn into new shoots you have to remove clumps of buds from up to 5 pairs back to 2 to 3 pairs. On stronger pads leave less, on weaker pads leave more.

In winter fertilize lightly to build up strength for spring. Start in early spring and every couple of weeks fertilise. Fertilise up to the point when the candles are cut. A week or two before candle pruning stop fertilising. The next lot of growth has less vigour and you get shorter needles and internodes. When growth hardens off the fertilising starts again.

Pines have two types of buds: needle buds that develop and adventitious buds that just break out.

If you are doing a large styling leave some extra on to give the tree a better chance to recover and then refine.

Finally, a key point when you are starting with pines is to find someone locally who does pines well. Learn their methods and stick to them.

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***“In 25 years of mucking about with bonsai I have NEVER seen a tree die quickly without help.”***

***Graham Potter, Kaizen Bonsai***

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# FRUITING AND FLOWERING TREES

## Fruiting and Flowering Trees

The physical effort of producing fruits and flowers is very energy intensive for trees. With flowering trees the dead blossoms should be removed, including the stamens, not just the petals. Then the tree should be fertilised and allowed to rest. If a tree produces a heavy crop of flowers the resultant fruit should be thinned as it develops to avoid draining too much energy from the tree.

If you are working on the structure of a flowering or fruiting tree it is better to remove all [or almost all] flower buds before they develop to allow the tree to put its energy into the creation of branches and ramification. Missing a year or two years of flowers will more quickly develop the tree and then it can be allowed to have a big display.



All but 3 flower buds were removed by Lee from this collected azalea when it started budding in late winter 2015.

It is a good idea to give a flowering/fruiting tree a rest every few years by pulling off ALL flower buds as they form and giving the tree a chance to build up again. It is stressful being in a small pot and producing so much. Greater care will ensure a longer lasting bonsai.



In October 2015 the growth of this azalea reflects the energy put into branch development rather than supporting flowers.

Next year Lee will allow the tree to have maybe 5 flowers but again continue improving structure and ramification. The year after it can carpet itself in flowers but by then I will have achieved a lovely bonsai both as a non-flowering and a flowering tree.



The flare of branching that was removed and initially sealed from this azalea left large scars in the front of the tree. Scoring the surface was a start. The wounds were left and now need to be refined with a wire brush and the edges underscored so the developing callous can roll over. In time the tree will grow over the scars but the bonsai has to be attractive during the years that will take.

Allowing a bonsai to produce a mass of flowers or fruit year after year will eventually run the tree's resources down, even with regular fertilising and that can open the way for disease or infestation - or death.

## August Raffle Prize – Olive carving



Remember this - the big olive that was raffled at the August meeting and won by James - who is at least young enough to lift it.

James asked for a carving job and instead had the Dremel put in his hands. No better way to carve your tree than do it yourself.

With pointers along the way he has changed a chunky tree into future bonsai. And is on the lookout for his own Dremel having discovered the fun of carving.

Carving is fun.... excavation, detail and finally refinement.



## LEE RECARVES AN ELM

### Recarving of an elm by Lee

I carved this elm two years ago after it suffered massive dieback when it wasn't watered. The carving worked at that stage but some of the features started to deteriorate and the bulk of the deadwood looked too much for the tree.

My original 'desire' was to remove all the deadwood and make it a hollow trunk but studying the tree negated this. Due to the fact the trunk has 1/3 live wood it would have made the tree unbalanced. If the tree were mine I might have done it but I was carving for someone else and the outcome was important to give the tree balance. Once you remove wood you can't bring it back.

It is important to study your subject, look for different ways to carve, seriously assess the story the tree is to tell and how the carving can be made natural.



The original carving

The first thing was to reduce as much bulk as possible yet leaving sufficient to give the tree weight. I used a Kaizen coarse Termite bit and started scoring the surface, eating away the 'fat' parts. At the back of the tree there were several well calloused branch removal areas and I decided to incorporate those into the design by drilling through them. In the wild, birds or animals would have used the hollows for nests and as the wood deteriorated the areas would have enlarged.

The largest stub area leads to the middle of the tree and it is important that the tree is positioned in the pot so the frontal view gives just a hint of this large opening. Looking directly at it takes away the magic and makes it just a big hole. Seeing just a bit of the light coming through from the back draws the viewer in. There are 4 other holes from back to front but the viewer has to move around the tree to see them. Too many holes can be too much of a good thing so don't ever overdo an effect. Subtlety at all times makes a better carving.

Once I had removed as much deadwood as artistry warranted I left the tree for a day and came back to it with fresh eyes. Working with carving bits roughens up the surface and for the carving to be effective all signs of handwork must be removed.



Main carving complete but refinement needed

Using both cup and flat wire brushes the wood fibres were removed. These brushes can also be used to add more details in the grooves. Because of the condition of the deadwood I opted not to do more detailed work that would hasten further deterioration. There are some areas the wire brushes cannot reach and those rough areas are removed by hand tools as well as possible.

A wood preserver was carefully painted on the deadwood, staying clear of any live areas that had been nicked with the bits. If I were applying lime sulphur I would have waited for several months to ensure any damaged live areas had healed. If the cambium absorbs lime sulphur it can kill the tree. I used a special wood preserver from Kaizen. The tree has to sit under cover for 48 hours to allow drying time. Once it is in the sun the treated area will start to fade and get a more natural look.



The finished tree

You can carve an area of deadwood to enhance a bonsai or you can do naturalizing carving that will eliminate the manmade look of a cut off area. If a scar is easily seen from the front it is necessary to naturalise this so it looks part of the tree's life rather than just a branch that was cut off – in frequent cases with a number of cuts that just looks off.

# CRITIQUIING AND JUDGING BONSAI AND EVENTS CALENDAR

## Critiquing and judging bonsai – why do it?

Notes from: Deborah Koreshoff – Bonsai, Its Art, Science, History and Philosophy, Chapter 10

“When a bonsai is properly displayed we are able to fully appreciate every aspect of its beauty. Many elements are responsible for our reaction when we view a tree and, indeed, if the best bonsai was planted in an old tin and placed on the ground, it would most likely be passed by without a second glance.” The subjective reaction to viewing a bonsai comes from the plant, the pot and the setting and surroundings in which it is placed, be it in your own home with only one viewer or in a public exhibition.

The subject of judging bonsai is a controversial one because along with the objectives of making a small sized tree appear a great age and horticulturally healthy it carries with it a subjective element - bonsai art – which has no “reasonably OBJECTIVE measuring stick”.

“One idea supporting the idea of judging, claims that judging helps raise the overall standard of quality in our work. However the counter opinion, we can say that the guidelines and principles for quality bonsai are relatively available to the bonsai enthusiast and if he is interested enough in raising the quality of his work, he can refer to these and apply the ideas to his trees. It is often true that people often overlook faults in their trees or have not developed the perception to the extent where faults can be pin-pointed. In this sense a judge or a critic may serve the function of improving the quality by critically examining and discussing trees on display.”

Our SCBC monthly Member Styling Hotspot, where each month one or two members present their tree for discussion on styling has been very useful in helping us in pin-pointing both the strengths and weaknesses of a tree and offering ideas on what could be done to improve the tree in question.

At the November meeting, Sue will be talking about how judging criteria can be used to improve the styling and refining of your trees. So if you have a tree you might like to bench at the Royal Easter Show this year or just place it on our information stand at the show, bring it in. Sue will be able to give some tips on getting your tree ready for public display

### Bonsai Tour of Japan – a rare opportunity!

Working with Opulent Journeys, Sue is planning to lead a specialized tour for bonsai enthusiasts to Japan. The 12 day tour, commencing in Tokyo is planned for 10-21 October, 2016. The tour will include visits to famous bonsai nurseries and Japanese gardens. Following Tokyo, the group will explore Kyoto, famous for its Japanese gardens, before going onto Osaka where the tour ends and we fly back to Australia.

More details will be provided at the November SCBC meeting.

## BONSAI EVENTS CALENDAR

Date	Event	Details
6-8 November 2015	Newcastle Bonsai Society annual show	Charlestown Bowling Club, Lincoln St Charlestown.
31 April-1 May 2015	Illawarra Bonsai Society Annual (Autumn) Show	Sutherland District Trade Union Club (Tradies), Kingsway, Gymea
20-23 May 2016	29 <sup>th</sup> Australian Bonsai Convention	Wrest Point Convention Centre, Hobart, Tasmania