



Web: www.sydneycitybonsai.org.au

Email: info@sydneycitybonsai.org.au

Club Meetings: 2nd Wed (Feb-Dec) 7pm

Sydney Boys High School, (enter via Gate 2)

Main Hall, Cleveland St, Moore Park

Phone: 0407 573 419

Address: PO Box 329, Darlinghurst NSW 1300

Committee Meetings: 1st Wed (Feb-Dec) 7pm

14/102 Doncaster Avenue, Kensington NSW 2033

PRESIDENT'S PATCH

Coming up:

"Bonsai in the City" 9 October 2005

This Sunday, Sydney City Bonsai Club will be doing a display and some demonstrations at "Gardens R Us". Be sure to come along and watch the action and get some tips from the experts! Plus you can enjoy a snack and coffee at the Gardens R Us café.

WHERE: Gardens R Us, 75 Gardeners Rd, Kingsford

WHEN: 10am - 4pm, Sunday 9 October 2005

MORE INFO: Call Marika on 0407 573 419

Coming up:

"Carnivale 2005" November 2005

The annual "Carnivale" festival, hosted by the Bowen Library in Randwick is having a Chinese theme this year and Sydney City Bonsai Club has kindly been invited to exhibit.

The excitement will include things like Chinese Calligraphy, Bonsai, Chinese Health Care Talks, Chinese Knots, Bi-lingual story-time party and a big Gala Night on 25th November 2005 launching new Chinese books & DVDs with Chinese music and dancing.

WHERE: Bowen Library, 669 Anzac Parade, Maroubra

WHEN: Various times in November

MORE INFO: Call Bowen Library (02) 9314 4888 for event details or bookings.

Next Club Meetings...

7pm Wednesday 12 October 2005

Wiring & Styling Workshop

7pm Wednesday 9 November 2005

Repotting & Root Pruning Figs & Olives Workshop.

In review:

Sydney in Bloom 21-25 September 2005

Thanks to the lovely ladies, Libby and Tim (yes, Tim is a lady) from the Australian Institute of Horticulture (AIH) we received an invitation to exhibit at "Sydney in Bloom" to promote the art of bonsai and advantages of joining a local bonsai club. The Sydney City Bonsai Club committee and Western Suburbs Club committee (Peter, Les & Barry) worked tirelessly to ensure everything ran smoothly over the 5 days. Special thanks to Thor and Diane from Bonsai Exotique, who were exhibiting next to us. These wonderful people minded our stand when we weren't available, watered our plants and helped us decorate our stand with some very beautiful bonsai. Thanks to everyone for their amazing efforts to make this event such a success.

BELOW: William from Sydney City Bonsai Club at Sydney in Bloom promoting the art of Bonsai. Thanks to Geraldine for kind donation of the club banner (in the background).



The "All Star" Sydney City Bonsai Club Committee

Patron: Dorothy Koreshoff

President: Marika Kahle

Vice president: Sue Brennan

Secretary: William Hay

Treasurer: Neville Althaus

Public Officer: Max Blanco

Librarian: Philip Bell

Committee: Michael Zanetti,

Lee Wright, Gary Graham

Newsletter Editor: Anick Daneault

CONTRIBUTING IS SEXY

So get cracking and send your newsletter contributions to:

PO Box 329 Darlinghurst NSW 1300 or
newsletter@sydneycitybonsai.org.au

A FRESH PERSPECTIVE

DON DELUCA

Don Deluca, a long time bonsai enthusiast and commercial bonsai stock plant grower from Hay, recently went to England and spent some time working with Kevin Willson, one of England's bonsai masters.

I was not sure exactly what I learned specifically from Kev during my short stay. I knew things weren't exactly the same as when I'd left but I couldn't put my finger on the changes. During the return trip I had a lot of time to reflect on all that I had seen. There is nothing quite like a fear of heights to keep you focused on your thoughts rather than staring out the window of a plane at 35,000 feet.

Nothing really stood out as new. I had been lucky enough because of my friendship with Kevin to get into private collections. As beautiful as these trees were, their creation was nothing more than imagination, good raw material and the application of techniques that we use almost every day as bonsai enthusiasts. I was not phased by the fact that nothing really stood out. In fact, it's kind of reassuring to discover that our English counterparts have gained the level of excellence I saw with the techniques we use here. If all I had achieved by going on this trip was to spend the time having fun with friends I couldn't see a problem with that. I think that once you have been involved in a hobby that you are keen on for a few years, you are less likely to discover new techniques at the rate you did at the beginning.

I began working on my private trees a week ago and the strangest thing happened. I'm doing pretty good work. I spent most of my time at Kev's wiring Scots pines. Day after day that's what I did. It is only now that I realise how much I've been influenced by the close study of the raw material that I was fortunate enough to work with.

The countryside has had an effect as well. I can understand some styles better now because I've seen the effect snow has on branches. Windblown trees dot the landscape; there are rocky outcrops with trees growing out of tiny cracks, twisted by all the elements. I had never actually seen this kind of environment first hand. Books are a great way to study a subject but there's nothing like seeing the real thing.

I went to Bendigo about a month ago to help out during a workshop that Grant Bowie ran for the club. I know most of the Bendigo crew well enough to say that wiring is not really their thing. Grant, however, is a great believer in the benefits of wire so I knew that he would be making most of the participants wire everything in sight. As it turned out, he picked a bloody big pine to do his compression wiring demo. The tree came up pretty good on the day, I thought; but now I know I can get more out of that tree. Since I've been playing with my own trees I've started to notice little differences in how I go about things and the short of it is, I understand more now.

At the time of the workshop I was back as far as the body was concerned but the mind has only just landed in the last few weeks. I don't know how to explain it but what seems to happen whenever I work with Kev is that somehow he joins the dots for me. I got a lot out of his visit 3 years ago and this trip has had a similar effect. We all know the tricks of doing bonsai. It's been well and truly written about in many books and yet so few people actually understand. I know I don't. What seems to happen is that I study bonsai and nature and I take it in but when it's left up to me to regurgitate it, what I think I've learned by studying it sometimes comes out in the wrong order.

All the answers are in there just as they are in all of us, it's just that we don't always know what order to let them out. You don't have to get things completely wrong to stuff up. All it takes is one thing out of place and the tree's beauty is hidden from us. It then takes an accident or a visit from a better stylist to uncover the mistake. **The real mastery of bonsai is in the fine points. It's the little things that make the profound statements.**

I've been to a lot of workshops in the past few years and the only time I saw trees become bonsai in one sitting was at Willson's place. Now I am aware that bonsai are not created in one sitting. The surprising thing is the level of finish that is possible if the tree is prepped correctly. Because of the constraints of time on the demonstrator during workshops, little more than hard pruning of the participant's material can be done before sending them home to regrow basically what was removed. This is in part due to the fact that most material arrives on the day with nothing done by way of preparation. **Good material deserves lots of time. The mule work should be done prior to arriving at a workshop;** this way the demonstrator can come in and help the owner with the design of the tree. The participant can continue the tree's development at home, knowing the design arrived at during the session with the demonstrator is intact. The level of finish Kev gets in one sitting with a tree makes what we do look sad. The real crime is that we are in a better position than they are even if we don't have the yamadori. We just can't make the adjustment from slash and burn to wiring. There's too much Japanese thinking in our bonsai.

Our climate, if properly exploited, could see us very easily produce some of the best pre-bonsai material in the world. Using the approach to bonsai the Europeans have combined with our endless summers, we should be right up there with the best. I, for one, will be doing things differently from now on.

We don't have to be as good as Willson to get better results than we currently achieve. When we sit in front of raw material we have an idea as to the tree's final style. The next thing we do is cut the hell out of what's there in order to get rid of the unnecessary foliage and branching and hopefully produce enough regrowth to take the tree further along in its development. This is an approach that I can fully understand. I've done it many times myself. The stupidity is that when the tree complies we only use a tiny amount of what is produced. We cut hard and wait for the tree's reply and on it goes. Meanwhile, ten years go by and the bonsai is no closer to being selected for the gallery section of Bonsai Today.

There are, in spite of all that I've said, some truly beautiful trees in Australia. The sad thing is that the majority of them have slowly evolved over many years and it's the passage of time that has instilled the true beauty in the material rather than the hand of man.

The oldest tree on Kev's benches is a Scots pine that was 6 years in training. The lower trunk was perhaps 300 years old. It had a diameter of 10-13 cm. The bark was old and beautifully developed. The design was what stood out first of all. I'm not saying the bark didn't play an integral part in the overall look. One thing should compliment the other. What stood out most of all was

the level of development the tree displayed. With a growing season of 6-8 weeks (in Essex) annually this tree had reached the level I saw it at in six years. I was shown photographs of the development stages and what I saw confirmed what they were saying. We may not have 300 year old pines to collect from the wild but we can easily grow seedlings to this size in a few short seasons. It's the approach to the layout of the branches and foliage arrangement that we get so wrong. Use basically everything. Produce a silhouette of the final tree during the workshop then as time goes by remove the 'wrong' bits as more appropriate growth is produced. Over the years the tree ages and the structure improves but the beauty of the original design is maintained. The tree has not been put through the usual stresses produced by the hack and wait method we practice so development takes place much quicker. It's that simple.

I've seen a lot of stuff that Kev's students are producing in one to two years in a climate that's a joke by comparison to ours and it rocks. These same students are no more artistic than we are. Horticulturally speaking we know much more about plants than the people I met. In spite of this they had beautiful trees. The difference is their approach. If their methods are adopted here we can expect to see some pretty spectacular trees appear in the next few years.

Events calendar

There are many great bonsai events for 2005 organised for by various bonsai clubs and societies happening in NSW and ACT. The Events Calendar on our website is regularly updated through the month with any events that are brought to our attention. Visit the website www.sydneycitybonsai.org.au or tell us about your Bonsai event, so we can include it.

Date	Event	Details
8-9 Oct	Canberra Bonsai Society Show	Canberra, ACT
9 Oct	"Bonsai in the City" - Sydney City Bonsai Club Show	Gardens R Us, 75 Gardeners Road, Kingsford. Call Marika 0407 573 419 for more info.
15-16 Oct	School of Bonsai Show	Ray Nesci's Nursery, 26 Sagar Rd, Kenhurst. Visit the www.schoolofbonsai.com or call 0418 571 105 for more info.
16 Oct	Nepean Bonsai Society	Glenbrook Community Hall, Ross St. Call Mark 0402 060 471 for more info.
22-23 Oct	Campbelltown Bonsai Group Show	Tim's Garden Centre, Mt Annan (next to the Botanical Gardens at Mt Annan). Visit http://users.bigpond.net.au/evilnem/bonsai for more info.
24 Oct - 14 Dec	Freeform Bonsai Pots (4 week course)	Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre call (02) 9824 1121 for more info.
21 Nov - 12 Dec	Bonsai for Beginners (4 week course)	Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre call (02) 9824 1121 for more info.
4-6 Nov	Newcastle Bonsai Society Show	Club Macquarie, Argenton visit www.newcastlebonsai.org.au or call (02) 4932 0440 / 0414 853 952 for more info.
12-13 Nov	Urimbirra Bonsai Society Show	Figtree Community Hall, Figtree
19-20 Nov	Central Coast Bonsai & Suiseki Show	East Gosford Arts Centre, Gosford
18-20 Nov	All Australian Native Bonsai Show	National Botanic Gardens, Canberra