



NEXT CLUB MEETINGS

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

7pm Tuesday 14 October 2008
Figs & Sue's 'Green Belt Talk' on
pruning & other bonsai
maintenance

7pm Tuesday 11 November 2008
Natives, Junipers & Figs

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COMMITTEE

Patron Dorothy Koreshoff

President Neville

Vice President Sue

Secretary Lee

Treasurer Rebecca

Public Officer Max

Newsletter Editor Tony

Librarian Philip

Committee Philip, Gary, Tani,
Jennie, Damian

MEMBERSHIP

Full Membership \$30.00

Concession \$20.00

Family \$45.00

Pensioner \$15.00

Welcome to the October Newsletter

October Meeting:

Sue's Greenbelt Talk – covers pruning & other bonsai maintenance

Its Figs time, bring in your trees and get a critique from the experts.

Figs can be pruned, wired and repotted this month. Bring along soil and a range of pots if you plan to repot your tree. Azaleas & Junipers can also be worked on this month

The formal opening of the National Bonsai and Penjing Collection was 28 September
[see article on page 4](#)



Olea europea subsp. *africana* - African Olive 1997 in the National Bonsai Collection

Saturday October 18 - another club member's **NURSERY CRAWL** has been organised, if you are in the market for some new plant material then why not join us. Senior club members will be along to help – for more information turn to page 6

- To see Members Trees in Training on show at the September meeting see page 2
- For information on a New Bonsai Website with great information turn to page 3
 - Intrepid Sydney City Bonsai Club members save the day – page 3
 - Carving for Bonsai article on pages 5 & 6
 - Events calendar page 6

TREES IN TRAINING ON SHOW AT THE SEPTEMBER MEETING



Sue's lovely Kurume Azalea bonsai



Paul's *Malus x purpurea* bonsai

Lee made this cute little lizard drinking from a pool of water on a companion stone from an earring. A perfect accompaniment for Australian native bonsai →



Doug's *Pinus thunbergii* bonsai →



Doug's *Pinus thunbergii* bonsai



Sue's *Ulmus parvifolia* bonsai

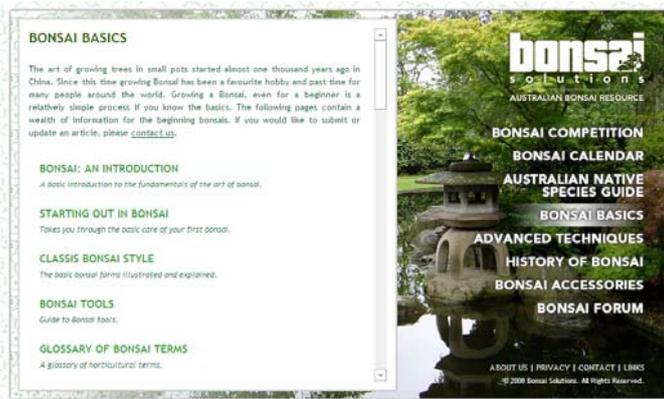
NEW BONSAI WEBSITE & RIGHT PLACE - RIGHT TIME

Bonsai Solutions website www.bonsaisolutions.com.au



This is a new website and specialises in Aussie Natives. Steven H, who runs the site, is looking for contributors to do plant profiles. Just go into the site, click Submit Care Sheet [in the first or second paragraph] or click Aust Native Species Guide and open the Care Sheet from there.

I know you all have nothing better to do with you free time [Free Time??? What's that???] but all the help we can put into filling out this website just means a greater promotion for Aussie natives and enlarging the enthusiasts that are interested in them.



When you submit a profile Steven will email you and if you can send him photos of the plants – all the better.

If you can send this around to any enthusiasts that you know are interested in natives... I am sure every little bit helps. I've submitted profiles on the majority of natives I have worked with so I pass the ball to all of you to add more insights to existing profiles and definitely add new ones.

Cheers Lee



Lee demonstrating carving at the Illawarra Bonsai Society Show in September under the watchful eye of Bryn – see Lee's Carving Article pages 5 & 6

NEAGARI

Most of us have driven down lanes where the steep banks have been washed away to expose the roots of an ancient beech or pine, and this style is based on such cases.

The roots, which must have mature bark and interesting shapes, add a dramatic, rugged appearance, so the design of the tree itself should echo this.

The foliage mass should be kept fairly small so that its weight or wind resistance doesn't cause the exposed roots to bend over.

You might find wild specimens that lend themselves to training in this style, but more often than not, growing from scratch is the easiest method.

Exposed Roots

根上



SYDNEY CITY SAVES THE DAY

Lee - It was my lovely idea to attend a 1 hour council run 'basic bonsai care' course and just see who was telling what to the attendees. I asked Sue if she wanted to come along and got a quick YES. I had a strong feeling about the course popularity when I phoned on Monday and could get two seats the following day but it was being given during the working week.

Sue and I fronted up, determined to remain incognito and silent. We did too... until a bloke came in and apologised profusely but someone had neglected to tell the trainer that he had a course so he was no where to be found. Attempts were made to organise another meeting the next day without luck and I piped up, acknowledged that the two of us were there under false pretences, that Sue was an expert tutor on bonsai basics and did he want Sue to conduct the hour course.

And she did. Sue rescued trees from being kept inside, saved them from being put in the direct sunlight all day immediately, explained as much about the basics of soil, water and trimming as can be done in an hour with no aids. And, naturally, we passed out info on the SCBC and invited them to come along. And no one could use the excuse that it was too scary when they didn't know anyone... they now knew two members.



Sue communing with a Bonsai Group – pre-attack!

All in all it was a fun time and the information will save some trees, spark interest for another attendee in getting a bonsai and hopefully really open the door to this marvellous hobby to three more people. You just have to be at the right place at the right time whether under false pretences or not.

Bonsai Defined

"Think: tree."

--Mr. Miyagi from *The Karate Kid*

NATIONAL BONSAI & PENJING COLLECTION - CANBERRA

By Roger Hnatiuk

Yesterday at 8 am Grant Bowie unlocked the front gate of the brand new National Bonsai and Penjing Garden in Canberra. Within a few minutes the first two people came through the gate. Then a few more. By 9 am it was over 150. By noon it exceeded 1000 and by closing of the gate at 5 pm over 2200 had been recorded.



Artist's impression of new Bonsai Pavilion

Four to five Friends Bonsai Guides were kept very busy answering questions the whole time. There were a small number of minor infringements like walking on the gravel to see behind trees, or touching them, but the visitors really were very well behaved from our management perspective.

The response of the visitors was so up beat. Different people liked different trees, so we have succeeded in catering to a wide range of interests. Formal, Japanese style trees were picked out by many, as was the delight of others in discovering native Australian species as bonsai.

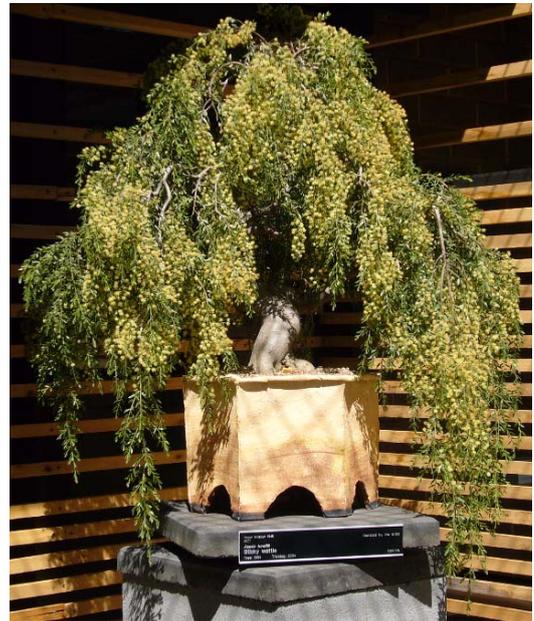


← *Juniperus chinensis*
'Shimpaku'

Chinese Juniper

The pavilion itself also attracted favourable comments. We spent quite a bit of time explaining our labels to some, for example 'what is the date after the artist's name', or what is the difference between the date for the tree and for training. We'll think about how to deal with that. We've thought of an explanatory sign at the entrance, but on a day like yesterday, it wouldn't have been read by most as the streams of people were just too intense for them to stop and read anything at the entrance.

Quite a number of those who enjoy gardening and flowers either don't visit art galleries, or maybe don't read the labels there, or just weren't prepared for something new like this and were brave enough to ask what it all meant. On the other side, I heard many people discussing the information on the labels and they had no problems with it.



Acacia howittii var. *prostrata*, Sticky Wattle 2005

Day one has certainly been the success we have all hoped and worked for. For the next three weeks, we will be very focussed on servicing the crowds from Floriade, ironing out those little wrinkles that real usage of planned events always turns up, and ensuring that we don't burn out our workers.



Melaleuca raphiophylla, Swamp Paperbark 2007

The formal opening of the National Bonsai and Penjing Collection was 28 September and all enthusiasts and friends are cordially invited to visit it whenever you are in Canberra.

Roger is the Chairman of the Bonsai Management Committee of the new National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia since 2006, which is sponsored by the Government of the Australian Capital Territory, Canberra

CARVING FOR BONSAI GUIDELINES

By Lee Wright

An ability to carve realistically can serve a bonsai artist well. It can also become an interesting facet to working with bonsai by utilising carving skills on different media to enhance an appearance of age or minimise an unsightly part of the tree.

MAJOR REASONS TO CARVE: beyond the sheer fun of it, would be to:

- Minimise or beautify damaged areas on the tree
- Minimise or beautify branch stubs
- Increase the character of a tree
- Eliminate a fault, such as reverse taper
- Moderate the direction of jin so it flows with the tree

CARVING TOOLS can be:

- Hand held carvers and a small mallet [for the traditionalists!!]-
- Dremel with Flexishaft and appropriate bits [good for small to medium jobs or fine tuning larger carvings
- Ozito with flexishaft and bits. [Cheaper than the Dremel but doesn't have the guts and you get what you pay for!!]
- Angle Grinder and carving heads and bits [this is big time stuff and requires strength as well as the necessary accessories but if you are working on large material a Dremel would drive you mad.]

Bits: The Dremel pack comes with a number of bits, very few of which are appropriate for tree carving and you need to buy additional bits. There is a list at the end of the article of bit numbers that I have found effective.

SAFETY: can never be overlooked. :

Safety Goggles: First and foremost are safety goggles to protect your most precious carving asset.. your eyes. You will find that during refinement stages using the wire brush, bits of the wire will break off and hit your face. They don't puncture the skin but it is not the wisest move to get one in your eye.

Earplugs: Not necessary all the time but some woods can be noisy to carve and protection is better than damaged hearing.

Facemask: This is essential as some woods, such as olive, are poisonous and inhaling the dust can be detrimental.

WHAT TO CARVE

Hardwoods such as olives and elms are ideal for carving as the wood does not deteriorate quickly. Conifers have a natural resin that offers them some protection. The harder the timber the more risk you run in breaking equipment [or burning out the Dremel] but the more fine detail you can do to flaunt your skill.

WHAT TO CARVE CAREFULLY

Softwood trees not ideal subjects for carving but you can work on them with consideration to their natural habitats and the fact that the wood must be regularly treated to minimise deterioration. It is true that softwood such as maples would not carry jins for long enough in their natural environment to offer them as a feature so basically, NO jins on deciduous trees. But branches do get damaged; shari and cavities do develop naturally so you can replicate them.

THREE RULES for carving:

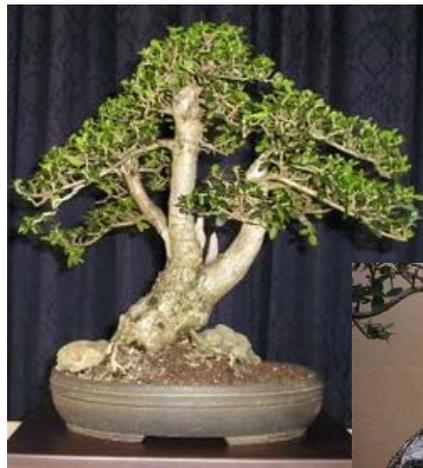
RULE ONE – the work **MUST** be natural. It must never look manmade.

RULE TWO – It must tell a story. You don't carve to carve but to enhance some aspect of the tree and that aspect must be in line with the individual tree as well as the natural environment it would live in and possible damages it would incur.

RULE THREE - You must remove **ALL** traces of your work so the carved areas look weathered by wind, rain and other elements. Any trace of man's hand and it is wrong. This includes round holes, straight lines, symmetry and other aspects that simply would not happen in nature.

WHERE TO START

Study the tree. What are you trying to say? Was the tree damaged when a branch broke off in a windstorm; did lightning strike it and create a shari? Did insect damage lead to rot and a hole for an animal or insect?? Taking the most common aspect... a major branch has been removed leaving either a large cut or a branch stub. How can you work that into a story? You do not just carve lines in the round cut area... you have to extend it to mimic a falling branch that has taken part of the trunk bark / wood with it. Some branches would die back to the tree, some would actually cause a bit of dieback on the trunk.... You can start tailoring the stub until you get a believable look. A thick branch was removed because it was growing in the wrong direction so the stub is not right. Curve one side and shape the other so it gives the impression of the direction you want. At all times whatever you do must look realistic and probable.



← April 2006, first study your tree



September 2007 →

When you are working on sharis, try to avoid taking the deadwood to the soil. Deadwood in constant contact with damp soil will rot faster. However, it is much easier to say than do as often the naturally dead areas run down to the soil when they involve dead roots. You often cannot avoid it so just be aware of the problems that can come.

Back to RULE THREE: – Refinement. The hardest, longest, most tedious part is removing traces of your handiwork. Once the tree is close to how you envisage it you need the metal brushes to start erasing the unnatural lines and soften the carving into a weathered image. By doing that you also reduce some of the contrasts so you need to go back and deepen areas. Then refine. This goes for quite a number of bit and collet changes.

SHADOWS & DEPTH: The most effective carving has interest because of the shadows that have been created. Flat carving is boring and looks unfinished. Carving with depth and shadows has interest and character - keeping in mind that you don't go too deep on softwood.

FINISHING: Once you are satisfied with the carving let the tree stand for several months to allow any nicks on and around the cambium to heal. Lime Sulphur will be applied to strengthen the wood and it can kill the roots if it gets into the soil.

When applying Lime Sulphur, first spray your tree a number of times over half an hour or an hour period until the wood is wet but not dripping. If you apply Lime Sulphur to dry wood it runs like crazy, it will dry yellow and it takes some months before that ages to the greys you want. If you apply Lime Sulphur to wet timber it does not run as fast [it is like water] and it dries white. In a short time the white will start to age to a range of greys from silver to slate, increasing the depth and naturalism of the work.

Some advise adding real India Ink or Sumo ink [tattoo parlors] to the Lime Sulphur to colour it but I have tried the sumo ink and found I had a flat, ugly shade of dirty grey. I much prefer the Lime Sulphur and the natural way it ages.

CARVING FOR BONSAI GUIDELINES

One bonsai artist advocates acrylic paint as it has wood preservatives in it but I don't see that this treatment gives a natural look. No deadwood is one flat colour; it has a soft range of colourations developed over time. You simply cannot get that with paint. And on this subject... look around.... jins and sharis are NOT white. The oldest deadwood can be weathered to a soft, silvery grey but not white. White deadwood is not a natural state of affairs.

And the last bit of advice from one who learned the hard way. You cannot carve character in a trunk if it has no character to begin with. You can use your tool to make a negative into a positive but you cannot use carving to make a plain, uninteresting trunk attractive.

Recommended Dremel Bits:

www.dremel.com Click country, click Tools & Accessories, click Bits & Accessories, click Rotary Tool Bits, click Carving and scroll across the pages to see the heads. Bits have to be sourced by keeping a list and stopping in every nearby hardware as few stores carry much of a range.

Bold/Underlined are my preferences but I use them all
107, **110, 115, 116**, 117, 117, 121, 124, 190, **193, 194, 196**, 7144, 9906 and **Tungsten 9934**.

OCTOBER 18 NURSERY CRAWL and MORE

18 October - 9:00 am start

Meet at Morton Park on Gould Avenue, LEWISHAM

Cost: \$10 per head at start of journey

Note: two of the nurseries are cash only

1) Wholesale nursery, advanced plants, wholesale prices – **Cash Only**

2) Ray Nesci Bonsai Nursery, Kenthurst
Nursery Crawl plus School of Bonsai Show [**Cash and Credit Cards**]
Sausage sizzle \$3 each

3) Padre Pio Bonsai Nursery **CASH ONLY**
Specialising in root over rock and trunks with movement

This will be a full on day with a lot to see and do. We will meet at Morton Park, Lewisham and car pool for both fun and petrol economy [hence the \$10 charge to cover the driver's running costs, tolls and petrol].

We are getting special entry to a wholesale nursery where all plant sales must be paid in cash but there will be big savings so it's worth it.

And please, don't front up with a pocket of \$50 bills... please try to have some smaller bills so you can pay the \$10 and your purchases with exact money.

From the wholesale nursery we will stop at Ray Nesci's to browse the bonsai pots and stock plants and see their annual bonsai show. There will be a sausage sizzle with profits going to Westmead Children's Hospital.

If everyone is game after this we will stop at Padre Pio, a relatively new bonsai nursery in Annangrove.

Experienced members will be on hand for selection and styling advice.

Saturday's start will be 9 am sharp so be sure to be there on time. Plenty of on street parking.

REMEMBER BRING A TREE TO EVERY MEETING

October 2007 →



← May 2008

July 2008 →



Many enthusiasts use knob cutters, side cutters, knives and other implements to naturalise branch stubs and cuts but picking up a Dremel and teaching yourself to carve opens a new side of bonsai that can be great fun and offer a great artistic offshoot. Give it a go.

Date	Event	Details
11-12 Oct	Canberra Bonsai Society Annual Show	Open 9am to 5pm Ainslie Arts Centre Elouera Street, Braddon, ACT
18-19 Oct	School of Bonsai Annual Show	Ray Nesci Nursery, Kenthurst
22-23 Nov	Central Coast Bonsai Society - Annual Show	
22-23 Nov	6th National Exhibition of Australian Plants as Bonsai	Australian National Botanic Gardens - Canberra