



sydney city
bonsai club inc.



NEXT CLUB MEETINGS

Green Square Community Hall
3 Joynton Avenue
Zetland

7pm Tuesday 11 October 2011
Figs & other evergreens including
many native species workshop

7pm Tuesday 8 November 2011
Wiring, Pruning & repotting of
broad leaf evergreen trees

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COMMITTEE

Patron Dorothy Koreshoff

President Bryan

Vice President Sue

Secretary Alan

Treasurer Chris

Public Officer Warwick

Newsletter Editor Tony

Librarian Marianna

Catering Philip

Committee Richard

MEMBERSHIP

Full Membership \$40.00

Concession \$25.00

Family \$55.00

Pensioner \$25.00

Welcome to the September Newsletter

October Meeting

Figs & other evergreens can be pruned, wired and repotted this month



A beautiful Chamaecyparis – False Cypress bonsai

[A reminder to those that have not paid; MEMBERSHIP FEES are now over due](#)

In this month's newsletter:

- For picture taken at last month's meeting see page 2
- Sue's styling tips pages 3 - 5
- Events Calendar page 6

Pictures from the September Club Meeting



Sue's Black Pine bonsai



Peter's Privet bonsai



Hector's Serrisa bonsai



Sue's *Zelkova serrata* bonsai

Styling Guidelines & Hints By Sue Brennan

Sue Brennan gave a very interesting demonstration & lecture on styling bonsai at the August meeting.

"There are a number of things that turn a tree in a pot into a true bonsai and they are covered by one word: 'artistry'." Sue Brennan 2006

Some people have a natural flair for balance and style while others can't sense this aspect. Bonsai beginners particularly stress out at the thought of trying to style a young tree.

Beginners take note: there are a series of **guidelines for styling trees** which can help make your hobby a lot more interesting. You will find that your trees take on a more stylistic appearance when you consult the guidelines for help.

*Be aware that most bonsai trees have some sort of styling fault. **Nothing is perfect.***

It is the ability of the bonsai artist to work with faults and make the tree appear balanced and artistic that creates true beauty in bonsai.

A bonsai is never finished. Because a bonsai is continually growing, it is always changing. The longer you have a bonsai the better it will look because your knowledge will also grow.

A bonsai tree must be in balance. If a mechanical engineer would look at a bonsai it must pass the balance test. Just think of the leaning tower of Pisa, if a bonsai is not correctly in balance it looks uncomfortable in the pot.

A badly balanced bonsai sometimes looks as if it is about to fall out of the pot. A good bonsai must appear to be perfectly balanced with the placement of the foliage providing the visual weights and counterbalances to balance the angle and direction of the trunk.

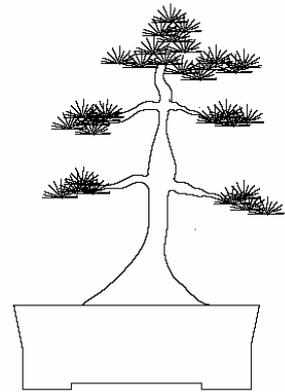


No matter what angle, height or shape of the trunk, it is the job of the foliage to visually balance the tree.

Guidelines for styling trees:

1: Avoid bar branches. Bar branches are branches that grow horizontally from the trunk and form a cross (+).

Bar branches are harsh and too symmetrical for a tree, and if encouraged, can sometimes cause reverse taper to grow in the trunk at branch junctions

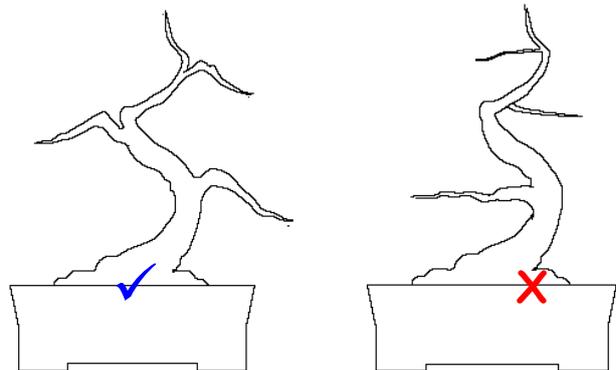


2: Avoid reverse taper. The trunk of a tree should always be wider at the base and taper to thin at the top.

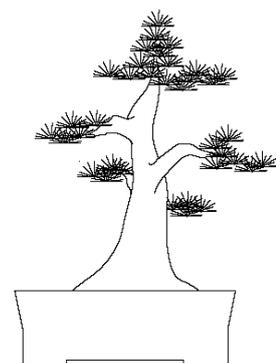
3: The front of a bonsai bows slightly forward and should greet the viewer.

4: No forward growing branches on the bottom half of the tree.

5: Side branches should grow from the outside of the bend or curve, not the inside.



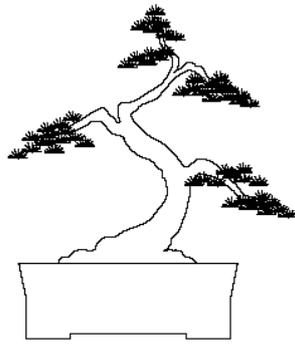
6: The back branch should not be the lowest branch



Styling Guidelines & Hints By Sue Brennan

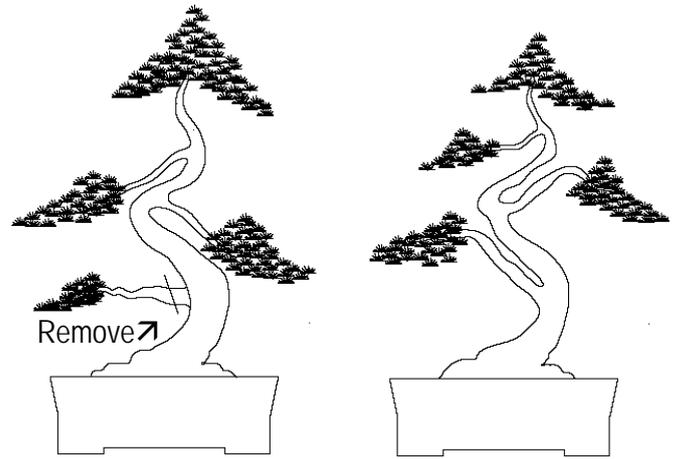
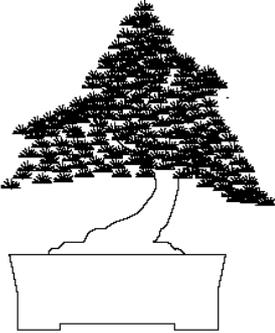
7: Air spaces visible
between the branches are important.

They help to give the bonsai the appearance of age.



Without air spaces showing, a bonsai becomes a blob of foliage on a stick.

Well, sort of!



Remember: it doesn't matter where the branches are; it's where the foliage shows.

Creating the Appearance of Age

The first thing we want to show in bonsai is the appearance of age. The best way to get this dimension is to buy a stock plant with a **thick trunk**.

If it is a variety that holds 'memory cells' all the better, it means that it can be **cut severely to reduce height** and will easily shoot from old wood.

Look for a trunk that has a **nice spread of roots** and maybe a **twist or bend in the trunk**, it will make a more interesting bonsai than a dead straight trunk.

"Don't bother to grow from seed at the beginning, it is very slow and takes several years before you will have anything vaguely resembling what you imagine is a beautiful bonsai."

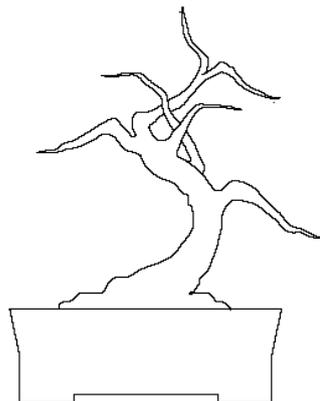
8: Balance. I can't stress enough the importance of a correctly balanced bonsai tree.

If a tree growing in the ground has an accident during a storm and ends up at a different angle it will, over time, encourage branches and foliage to grow in areas to produce a counterbalance so the tree won't fall further.

This takes the tree many years. However, it indicates that the tree is not feeling comfortable with being out of balance.

9: Avoid cross over branches.

They are visually confusing and distract the eye from the direction of the bonsai. If you find you have a tree that has many points outside the guidelines with no alternatives - **don't panic!**



Cross over branches confuse the eye.

There is a saying in bonsai that saves the day:

"It doesn't matter where the branches are, it's where the foliage shows"

Invest a Little for More Fun

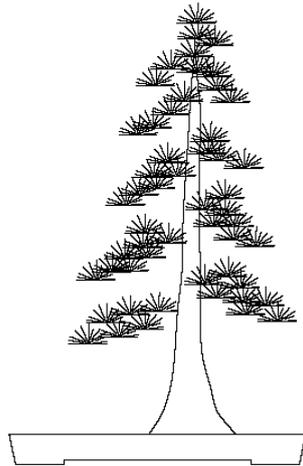
So many budding bonsai enthusiasts, all fired up to do bonsai, go out & buy a seedling & then hover over it waiting for it to grow so they can work on it. Bonsai doesn't start with a seedling. Like any hobby, bonsai requires investment: investment in stock, in tools, in time and in education.

If you are into sport, into travel, into anything, you have to spend money. Yes, a \$3 starter plant ensures you don't lose much if it dies, but spend \$30 on a decent stock plant and your interest in its welfare will help keep it alive. And if it dies what have you lost? – Basically the price of a nice dinner or a budget evening out. In the meantime, you can learn a lot by having something solid to work with. If you have your tree and you don't know what to do with it... bring it to a club workshop & get advice on styling or wiring.

Bonsai come in 5 basic styles:

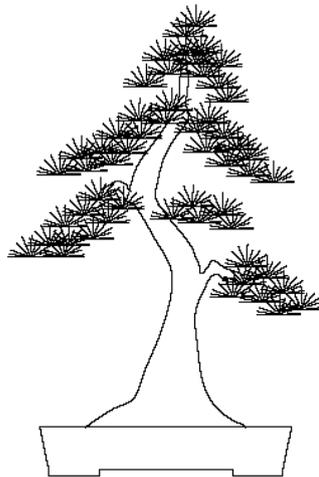
1: Format upright.

This style has a very straight trunk and reminds me of the Norfolk Island pines seen in Sydney.



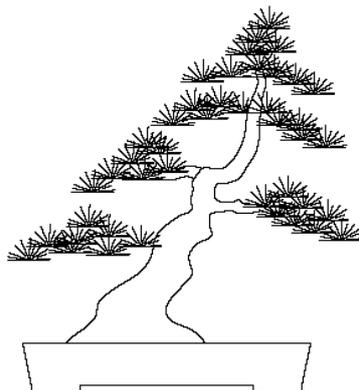
2: Informal upright.

The easiest style for beginners to play with; most trees fit this category.



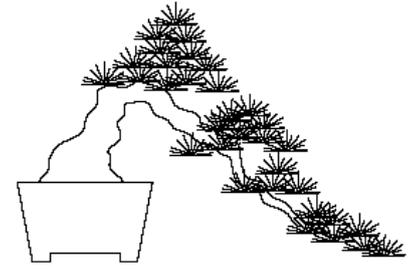
3: Slanting.

The important feature that identifies this style is the trunk slants at 45 degrees.



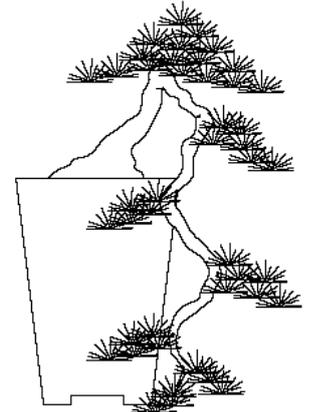
4: Semi cascade

The foliage ends above pot bottom



5: Full cascade

The foliage extends below pot bottom



Before you begin:

Before you cut your stock plant look closely and see which one of the 5 basic styles the tree best suits. Let the tree tell you. The easiest style for beginners is the 'informal upright'.

Within all bonsai styles the same basic styling guidelines are followed.

What's in a name?

Beginners get all in a muddle when bonsai regulars start to quote Latin names for trees, disregarding common garden names.

No, bonsai regulars are not showing off their knowledge, they are merely clearly identifying any one of the around 10,000 varieties of trees growing on planet earth.

Just like buying a motor car, you need to know not only the make (Toyota) but also the model name (Corolla, Camry, Lite Ace, Town Ace, Cressida etc), to get exactly what you want.

*"It doesn't matter where the branches are,
it's where the foliage shows"*

*Keep the styling guidelines handy
when you attack a tree.*

| Date | Event | Details |
|----------------------|--|--|
| 15 – 16 October 2011 | Canberra Bonsai Society Show | Daramalan College, Cowper Street, Dickson, ACT |
| 22-23 October | School of Bonsai Annual Exhibition | Ray Nesci's Nursery, Sagars Road, Dural |
| 29 October | Urimbirra Bonsai Society Annual Show | |
| 4 – 6 November | Newcastle Bonsai Society Bonsai Exhibition | Charlestown Bowling Club |
| 26 – 27 November | Campbelltown Bonsai Society Annual Show | |