sydney city bonsai club inc.

NEXT CLUB MEETINGS

Green Square Community Hall
3 Joynton Avenue
Zetland

7pm Tuesday 11 October 2016
Book review by Sue on Jack Lin's gift from Taipei

7pm Tuesday 8 November 2016
Members workshop Figs. Bring in potential 2017 Easter Show trees for advice & help with getting them at their best for April 2017

CONTACT DETAILS

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COMMITTEE

Patron Dorothy Koreshoff
President Bryan
Vice President Sue
Secretary TBA
Treasurer Chris
Newsletter Editor Roslyn
Librarian Les
Catering TBA
Committee Lee & Frank

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 October Newsletter

October Meeting

- Book review by Sue on Jack Lin's gift from Taipei Bonsai Association
- Members workshop on their trees
- Member styling hotspot

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Some reminders:

Your bonsai are needed for SCBC stand at 2017 Royal Easter Show

In previous years, Sue single-handedly provided all of the trees for the SCBC stand as well as entered bonsai in many of the available categories in the Easter Show Bonsai competition. Not only has this been a herculean effort it really does take a toll on Sue's health and well being over the 10 day display period.

Chris will be co-ordinating the 2017 SCBC bonsai stand. Many SCBC members have really come a long way with their bonsai and they will "wow" the general public with their trees if displayed. It is time for us all to step up and offer one or two trees for the SCBC stand.

See Chris this month so he can begin with a list those who are willing. Then at the November meeting, bring in the display tree you may have in mind, and we can provide advice on what steps you might take to make your tree look its best at the Show next April. Rather than everyone having to separately get their trees to the Show, all of the trees will be given to Chris before the start and he will take them in and keep them safe.

Car Access to Green Square Community Hall: You need to enter the car parking area via Portman Street. See the map attachment on distribution email for details.

ANDREW EDGE STYLES *AGONIS FLEXUOSA* AT TOPS WEEKEND

Andrew Edge Styles Australian Native – *Agonis flexuosa*

At the Tops Weekend in September 2017, Andrew Edge, NSW-based demonstrator from the Central Coast, gave an informative talk and demonstration on styling *Agonis flexuosa*, a Western Australian native: - often called West Australian peppermint from its smell when you crush the leaves; or also called willow myrtle because of its weeping habit. It usually grows to less than 10 metres, it has fibrous bark, long narrow dull-green leaves. In spring and summer the white 5-petalled flowers are massed along the branches.

Overgrown Agonis flexuosa at the start if its styling by Andrew

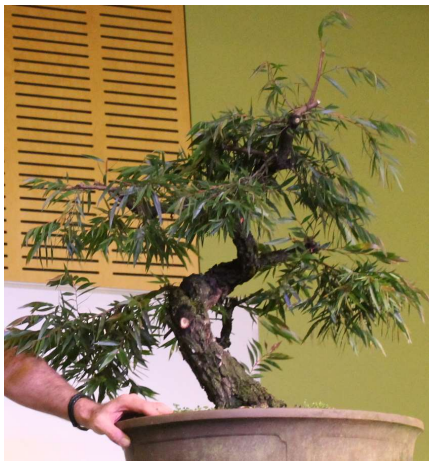
Andrew said that this tree was a nursery "special", bought by a client for $20, ten years ago. It was selected for a stock bonsai because of its misshapen trunk and was almost two metres tall when it was first bought. After purchase it was chopped down and kept at this height for about 10 years. Over the past year it has been left on the bench to grow.

He explained that when styling trees for a client, you need to follow his/her basic instructions. In this case he has been given the green light to do a moderate amount of cutting back in the restyling process.

In general you must always go for balance. When a tree is overgrown like this tree, there are a lot of strong zones and some weaker zones. You need to cut back the strong zones and keep the low strength zones to get vigour. Then in styling you need to get rid of the branches you don't want.

From an artists point of view how we shape a tree depends on our view in our head. The majority of trees have "faults" and you have to design so that you find the balance between making sure the tree does not appear to be construed but its features need to be stylised to capture naturalness and artistry.

With this tree the top branches are far too strong and are growing on top of each other. You also need to get rid of the branches from the inside curves and anything else that is growing straight down.



Initial branch cutting and foliage enables you to see the interesting trunk line

After initial cutting Andrew felt that it is still too thick in some areas and these need to be corrected. To get a healthier tree you need to prune it using the "strong v/s low strength concept" and then let the tree regain strength. He also pointed out the sharp trunk angle half way up the tree means that from the current viewing angle the bottom of the tree is always pointing away from you. Also the lowest branch is pointing down primarily and this is not how natives grow.

The tree actually looks quite contrived at this point in time. Hence Andrew took the lowest branch off and opened up the bottom of the tree. He also got rid of the second lowest branch. This now means that the lowest branch is at the back. Now by changing the angle of the tree Andrew as taking this tree to the next level of styling – that is short and long movement in the tree.

Andrew took the lowest branch off and changed the angle of the tree

Andrew commented that with natives he believed usually people have too many branches lower down. He explained with the new angle, he still has a problem with the back branch, but if he takes it off he will lose a lot of depth of the tree. However, the branch is too thick. By cutting half the branch, he could develop more green foliage at the back rather than a thick branch sitting in a pocket.

ANDREW EDGE DEMONSTRATES AT THE TOPS WEEKEND *continued*

Andrew Edge Styles Agonis Flexuosa *continued*

Put the thicker wire on first and then go thinner. Wire two branches with the same wire so they hang off each other.

Always use two hands when putting on wire -one as a support, the other applying the wire. When bending it helps to twist as well as reduces the risk of branch snapping.

Don't cross wires or you will lose strength in the wire as there is nothing to support the branch and hence if it likely to snap because it is putting pressure on the under wire. It is very important not to make the tree 2-dimensional – so when looking from above you have to be able to see all of the branches.

Mmm…..That lower branch is just too thick and even with foliage it will detract from the overall design of the tree. So it has to go!

He emphasised that when styling, you need to think what the tree will look like in five years, so if in doubt cut it out. In all of the branch cuttings he left a little stub (as you do for Junipers) because you will get die back if you don't.

The tree is now ready for the next phase of its journey.

Andrew will not repot this tree until around Christmas as it needs to recover. Then it will be repotted every two years. When it is time to repot he will treat it like a juniper. He will leave the soil on and cut about one third off.

With natives, Andrew sieves his soils so that no particle size is smaller than 2 mm – that is, he always uses an open soil.

He feeds heavily and regularly using dynamic lifter or fertiliser cake and liquid fertilise every two weeks. He uses Joe Morgan-Palor's recipe for fertiliser cakes – blood & bone; Charlie Carp; dynamic lifter, potash mixture and dries them out on metal plates. Alternatively, he uses cattle feed pellets available from livestock suppliers. They are quite cheap – around $20 a bag. He generally gives natives full morning sun until midday, tree shade in the middle of the day and then dappled sun in the afternoon.

Propagation is easy from seed which does not require any pretreatment prior to sowing. Cuttings must be used to propagate named cultivars but these can be slow to form roots.

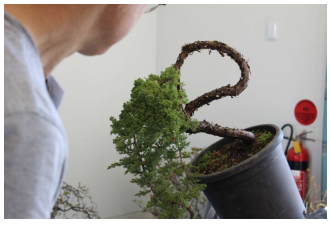
Most trees are grown from seed sown when ripe (usually in the fall) and exposed to natural temperatures and humidity

1. Some trees are grafted or budded, especially fruit trees and hybrids, by taking pieces of the desired tree and inserting them into the stems of "rootstock" trees; this is done in winter or early spring.

2. A few trees can be grown from cuttings taken in late

Photos from Min Hsuan Lo Workshop at Tops

Here is one happy customer who participated in Taiwanese bonsai master Lo's Saturday's workshop at the 2016 Tops Weekend. His Juniper has been completely transformed.



Above: Juniper with good potential being assessed by Lo.

Top right: Major branches removed and plant tilted to accentuate the curves of the trunk

Opposite: Juniper branches have been wired into positions which maximise the artistic potential of this tree.

TAIWANESE BONSAI MASTER JACK LIN'S SURPRISE VISIT TO SCBC

Jack Lin's Surprise Visit to SCBC

Those members who showed up for the September meeting got a special bonus when Jack Lin, a Taiwanese bonsai master, showed up at the club with his wife and daughter. Jack had been advised that bonsai was not done in Australia. He was having withdrawal symptoms and checked out the internet and delightedly fronted up to our meeting.

Jack is very personable with a good command of English and he was more than happy to mix with enthusiasts and talk about bonsai in Taiwan. There are 26 clubs and all very well attended. There are major bonsai shows/conventions monthly and bonsai is very much stronger than it is in Australia. Happily the member's trees on display that night were of good standard.

Jack showed us how he 'hard wired' a tree by putting the wire through the dirt and affixing it out of one of the drain holes to give extra stability and then twisted the juniper into contortions. He has The Knack because the result was a weather ravaged natural twist.

He moved around examining member workshop trees got excited over some Australian natives that he had not encountered previously in Taiwan –e.g. Ruby Fig. He helped members providing advice on styling. It was clear that he has enormous experience in bonsai.

Jack provides advice on styling Jamie's callistemon

He presented our club with a beautiful book showing the 2014 and 2015 bonsai exhibits from the Taipei Bonsai & Suiskei Association where he is Honorary Chairman.

In the course of the week of his visit Jack appeared at the Bonsai Society of Australia's show on Saturday and Sunday and at the Illawarra Bonsai Society's meeting on Monday. He now knows that bonsai is alive and well in Sydney and hopefully for one or all of the clubs, when he moves here, as he plans, we could get an infusion of overseas bonsai artistry at our fingertips.

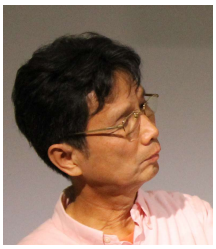
Thanks Jack, for your vibrancy, dash and your expertise.

On the Bench at SCBC in September

Below are three of the trees benched this month at SCBC

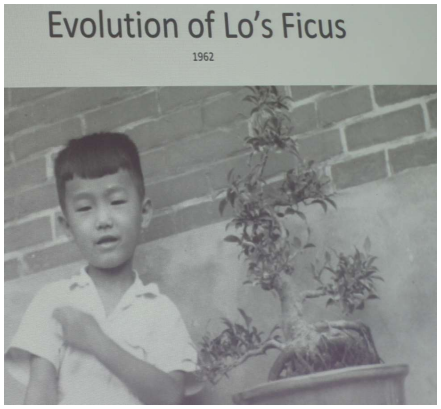
DEVELOPMENTS IN FIG STYLING BY MIN HSUAN LO

Min Hsuan Lo – Photo Story on Developments in Fig Styling



Lo was born in Taiwan in 1956. His background in bonsai comes from learning from his father who owned and managed a bonsai nursery in Taiwan. Lo began teaching bonsai in 1992 in Taiwan and continues to teach bonsai in Taiwan universities. Lo travels extensively internationally doing demonstrations, lectures and bonsai classes. Awards include 1995 Taiwan Ficus Bonsai Association Golden prize; 1999 JAL world bonsai contest; and 2007 BCI Artist, Writer & Photographer's Award.

This pictorial presentation on developments on Fig styling was made at the 2016 Tops Weekend.

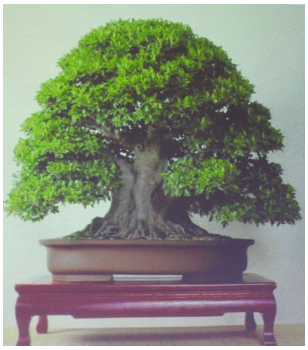


1962 Ficus "funny-looking" style – Lo's first Fig

Before 1994, Ficus in Taiwan were styled according to the Japanese triangle form but by observing the giant Ficus outside his University when he was a student, Lo created the umbrella style for Ficus modelling it more on its natural form.

Photo of giant Ficus which inspired Lo to create the umbrella style for Ficus

By detailed study of the Fig's natural form, by 2004, Lo further developed the styling by changing the proportion of the trunk to the branch length. In nature very old Ficus have longer branches compared to the trunk. Also, in extremely old trees, branches are very heavy, very long and form a wavy pattern.



Lo's first Ficus wins Second Prize in 1994 Taiwan Ficus Bonsai Association.

In young trees the branch will point upwards, then as the tree ages the weight of the branch increases and the branch levels out and finally after a longer time it actually points downwards. However, the tree will respond when the branch goes too far down as it would die in this position. Hence the growth tip starts growing upward. Over time the weight of the tip levels and pushes downwards and the tree responds again. Hence in very old trees we get a wavy pattern particularly in the lower long branches.

This picture has become Lo's signature showing the up, down, left and right styling of old trees mimicking nature

Lo's method of styling is to cut – get new growth – wire and when it thickens cut again on the opposite side and then wire again.

Lo's second Ficus in 2004 follows nature in more detail

In Lo's third Fig in 2006, he has now paid attention to the roots both nebari and aerial roots.

For the nebari he used wire to get the positions he wants and for the aerial roots he has wrapped them so that they fall in the correct positions around the trunk.

A word on defoliating Figs: Only defoliate a healthy tree and do it only in the growing season. One week before, reduce the water. If you defoliate in Summer you need to put the tree in half shade after the defoliation or it will burn back in hot afternoon sun. p.5

MAKING STONES FROM POLYSTYRENE AND EVENTS CALENDAR

Stones from Polystyrene – Or how to make a large mess

These notes are based on Norm Ketterinham's method, who unfortunately took ill just before the Tops Weekend.

Here are our impromptu demonstrators delivering Norm's method of making stones from polystyrene

First decide what type of stone or stones you wish to make. Go for a drive to the mountains; look in books etc.

Obtain your polystyrene. The best is the more dense version of polystyrene such as from an appliance such as a dishwasher or fridge. Making stones from polystyrene is very messy – so choose carefully where you want to make this mess.

Using a good kitchen knife cut your polystyrene to begin cutting the shape. You may need to glue flat layers to build up your shape.

In terms of glue, Norm uses water-based wood glue but the parts can take up to a week or more to dry, depending on the temperature. Other types of glue have been tried. For example Titebond2 is a very good wood glue which dries in about 3 hours. Melt/weld glues like Super Glue (dry in 10 minutes) or P.V.C. glue also works but possibly too well. Don't use these melt/weld glues in confined spaces. No more gaps, works with a drying time of 3-5 hours.

When your creation is dry and solid, attack it with special tools (bull nose pliers, Stanely knife, BEST kitchen knife and/or hacksaw blades, scissors or chopsticks). Mostly pull your pieces off with your bull nose pliers. Fingers also work well in finishing off the shape.

Here's John from our club having a go at shaping the polystyrene

Example of polystyrene that has been glued in layers and then shaped

Once you have created your shape, you need to get some gravel – best to sift it to get small pieces (e.g. re-sieving the gravel which goes on bonsai). Norm has explained that sand does not work as it will not give a "rock" appearance.

Now apply your paint – Brown, Green, Blue, White, Grey etc. Now is the time for speed in applying the gravel. From now on its paint gravel and more of it until you are happy with your result.

Here is a finished piece. The advantages are that it is so light weight; it ages well; and it can be mended if it breaks.

Have fun and experiment, experiment and experiment.

BONSAI EVENTS CALENDAR

Date	Event	Details
15-16 Oct, 2016	The School of Bonsai Annual Show	Ray Nesci Nursery, 26 Sagars Rd, Dural
11-13 Nov 2016	Newcastle Bonsai Society Exhibition	Charlestown Bowling Club, 5 Lincoln St, Charlestown