



NEXT CLUB MEETINGS

Green Square Community Hall

3 Joynton Avenue Zetland

7pm Tuesday 10 October 2017

Special Demonstration-Brenda Parker,
President of Illawarra Bonsai Society

7pm Tuesday 14 November 2017

Peter will demonstrate how to
develop a root over rock bonsai

CONTACT DETAILS



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MEMBERSHIP

| | |
|-----------------|------|
| Full Membership | \$40 |
| Concession | \$25 |
| Family | \$55 |
| Pensioner | \$25 |

SCBC wishes to thank Sydney City Council for their continued support for our club by providing the hall at a reduced rate.

October Meeting

- Special demonstration by Brenda Parker, President of Illawarra Bonsai Society – accent plants and questions on azaleas



Pine restyled by Andrew Edge and Hugh Grant at Bonsai Society Central Coast 20th Anniversary - "A Touch of Japan"

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Guest Demonstrator Brenda Parker at SCBC this month!



SCBC members be up for a treat this month as our guest Brenda Parker, President of Illawarra Bonsai Society will be giving a special demonstration. It will feature a talk on accent plants and then at our special request, follow up with answering questions on one of her specialities – azaleas. So bring your azaleas and/or your questions about keeping azaleas alive and in top form. Brenda's talks are always top notch so come and enjoy!

JAPANESE BLACK PINE STYLING

Joe Morgan-Palor Styles Japanese Black Pine

JOE MORGAN-PAYLOR Joe's bonsai passion began as a teenager. His thirst for knowledge eventually took him to Japan to study under Mr Urushibata of Taisho-en. With more than 20 years of knowledge and experience Joe is undoubtedly one of Australia's predominant bonsai artists.

Last month, the Bonsai Society Central Coast celebrated their 20th anniversary and held a special two day event "A Touch of Japan." Here are some key points from Joe Morgan-Palor demonstration on a Japanese Black Pine.



Japanese Black Pine

This tree has a good kink in the trunk and a good nebari. Although it has lots of fine branching and some heavier branches, many of the branches protrude from the same height on the trunk.

Joe set about pruning out the strong areas and removing needles, essentially to begin balancing the density, while he contemplated the future structure of this tree. He explained that you should keep 5-7 pairs of needles around each candle and along leggy branches leave additional needles to encourage more growth.

The first big decision was to choose which of the 4 larger branches all at the knob area on the trunk had to go. The more natural flow of the trunk was to the left, so Joe cut out the two middle branches and made a couple of short jins and shari.

Joe prefers to hand carve, rather than use a dremmel as he believes you get a more natural look when done by hand. This left two close back branches which would be wired lower. At this junction Joe had not yet decided whether or not to keep both back branches.



Pine now pruned; major unwanted branches removed and viewing angle chosen.

Now for the lower branch wiring. The first couple of wires sets up the whole tree. The first wrap of the wire should be flush with the trunk as this gives a better holding capacity and then you should aim to link two branches. Try to avoid wire in the front of the trunk because pine branches take long periods to set (up to 3 years) and so you don't want ugly wiring on your benches. First wrap near the trunk to both branches keeping the wire flush with the trunk so there will be no slack when you actually start the full wiring and subsequent bending. When changing the gauge of the wire make sure you have one and a half turns along the larger gauge before you start the rest of the branch. You can loop the second wire to the heavier wire at the start to get a better hold.

With the secondary branch wiring start at between the junctions and keep the wire flush with the main branch line similar to how you initially connected the two junctions at the trunk. With all of the secondary wiring you are trying to create a "fan" so that weaker buds have access to sunlight. At the end, tip all of the buds up which can easily be done with a small backward hook with the wire. Make sure that when you are bending you support the branch and also you may need to twist the branch to orient the buds upward.



Joe, assessing the flow of the tree. He contemplates whether or not to keep one of the large back lower branches

PINE STYLING, MAINTENANCE & REPOT

After bending the back branches, Joe took look at the tree from a distance to get the sense of flow and decided that he will cut off the second low branch because when he brings down the upper branches it will get too congested.



Yes the branch had to go so that the tree could exhibit a flow and not look congested

When looking at the top of the tree, Joe explained that there were no really good branches. "You have to work with what you've got." At this point in time, you cannot over-stress the tree. It is better to leave on some extra branches so the tree can increase its photosynthetic activity and when the density increases, you can remove the unwanted branches later. The apex is the most difficult to plan. Air wire the apex branches so they can grow freely with the wiring only positioning the small branches so light can be on every bud.



This tree now has the makings of a very interesting aged pine and when the foliage thickens it will be a great bonsai.

Japanese Black Pine maintenance cycle

The principle of the two flush growth in Japanese Black Pines is the feed heavily in Spring to generate growth of a strong single extended candle. Then depending on your local environment, cut back this candle in summer

(early Jan in Sydney) to trigger a ring of new candles at the base. You then prune back to two buds in Autumn.

In order to maintain growth balance, you pluck the old needles in late early spring back to 5 pairs of needles. The next phase in spring is to heavily feed both the liquid and pelleted fertiliser. About 3 weeks prior to candle cutting, Joe lets the fertiliser run down and then scrapes off the solid fertiliser.

When decandling, he leaves 2-3mm of the candle up from the base so you don't wreck the new buds. The buds of fresh pine growth easily fall out so wait until these new buds have hardened off before pruning back to two shoots (Autumn). From Autumn, you should feed enough to get the plant through winter.

Chris repots Japanese Black Pine



Late August/early September is a good time to repot Japanese Black Pines in Sydney. Chris uses the Koreshoff mix (7 washed gravel screenings:3 choir peat:1 Standard Dynamic Lifter



Last pot was 4-5 years ago and so the roots have curled and curled around the bottom of the pot.

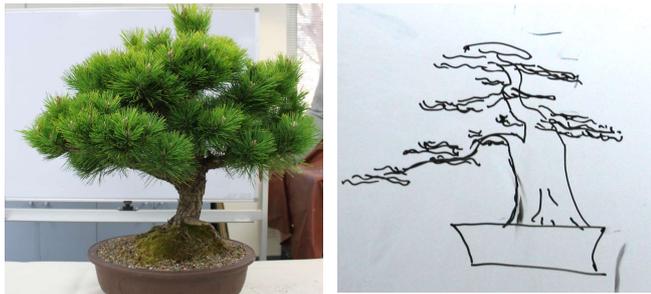


Plant has now been wired into the pot and the potting mix is being worked in amongst the remaining roots with a dibble stick. This tree will then be deeply watered and kept in a shade not windy spot for about a month to recover.

BRANCH SPLIT TECHNIQUE

Andrew Edge and Hugh Grant – Branch Split Technique

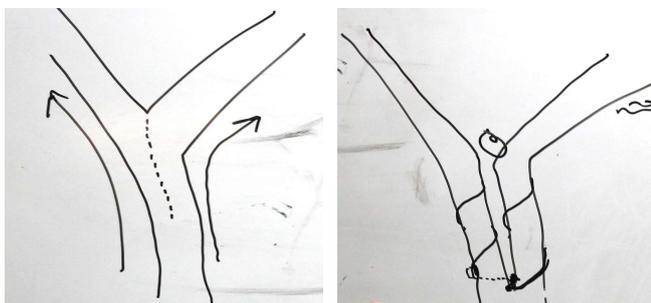
At Bonsai Society Central Coast- “A Touch of Japan”, Andrew Edge and Hugh Grant demonstrated the technique of splitting a branch to form two branches on a very healthy pine. It was so bushy that you could not see the branching within. Andrew and Hugh drew up a diagram of how they envisaged the out come of their restyling.



Pine at the outset and styling plan

After pruning and removing some branches, they encountered a problem with the top of the tree where there was a branch that was much too thick. So in order to create finer branching at the apex they decided to split this thick branch.

Hugh explained why the technique of branch splitting is possible using the diagrams below. Because you are cutting/splitting directly in the centre of the branch, you are only cutting dead wood; the live wood (xylem, phloem and cambium) is located on the outer part of the branch. Once split, then you very carefully wire them in a way that the wire will properly support the split branch and the subsequent bend.



Technique of branch splitting

When watching this technique it very quickly became clear that you needed two people – one to cut with an appropriate sized splitter and the other to make sure

that the consecutive cuts were exactly in line and centred.



In order to get a straight and centred split two sets of eyes are needed



When first placing the wire down the split, they had to adjust the split a little further down to get the wire fully in place. Extreme care was taken so that they did not damage the branch beyond the split. The wire was then carefully wrapped around each split branch. It is extremely important to note the direction of the turns on each of the split branches so that you protect the end of the split.



Wire is inserted into the split then worked along both halves of the split branch.

With the wire in place Hugh was able to place each of the branches to improve the apex of this tree. (See front page for picture of final styling.

REVITALISING FIGS WITH LEE

Revitalising a Fig

BY LEE

A number of years ago I got a small fat, well developed Port Jackson fig and worked to develop the upper structure. It came along nicely but I have been dissatisfied with it for the last year. It became boring, static and branches getting too large for the proportions of the tree.

This photo is a year old and in the intervening year the branches had thickened and the lower right branch was excessively thick for the size of the fig - 17 cm high.

Closer inspection of other branches showed that there was a lot of growth far too heavy in the upper structure of the tree. It is important to keep an eye on the top of the tree and remove branching that is getting too heavy for the area.

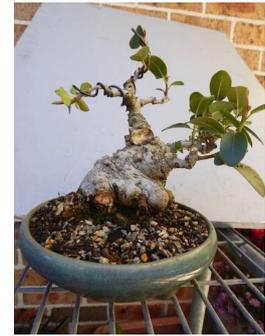


Fig before revitalising

Mid September is too early for working on figs but I needed to refresh the soil and disturbing the roots minimally I repotted it and then made some sweeping changes. Overly large branches were removed and while the tree now had more going for it it still wasn't much more than ordinary. Well, I spun it around slowly on the turntable and saw a different vision from the back.

Less conventional but far more interesting. The drawback is the backward slant on the top trunk but once branching and foliage have developed it will not be an issue. In the meantime, the chunky irregular trunk with its many knobs is far more appealing than the staid front.

It is all in your eye... some might find the change not to the tree's advantage but I don't see it that way. With some judicious pruning I have revitalised a boring tree and in the space of one working bee have a new tree on my bench- without adding to my numbers.



*Left: Original viewing angle - a bit ordinary
Right: New viewing angle - far more interesting.*

Repotting should not be just changing the soil and pruning roots, it is also the time to look at your bonsai with fresh eyes and see if there is a better option than it's current position. Often not, other times, like this, you can find a new tree in old stock.

From tragedy to possibility

Picked up another tree from Leong. One of his aged customers dropped several hardly done by figs at his place. He was in the process of hydrating the leafless trunks and I asked how much he wanted for one. Had to ask him several times before he said \$10 and I have a new fig.

I think it is a Tiger fig... Ficus Retusa... but for \$10 a great buy. Despite its ill treatment there is life in it and I soaked it overnight in EcoSol and have potted it into good bonsai soil. The stuff hanging off its roots was dreadful and would have gone a long way to smothering it. But life has changed. I know it won't do anything until late November/early December but when it goes it is ideally placed to go well. Might take the back trunk off in due course but not now.



Left: Just out of the plastic bag; Right: Now a possibility

Front smaller roots are uncomfortable and aerial roots unnecessary. After an overnight soak I trimmed back some thick underground roots and removed the unwanted above ground roots.

JUST A BIT OF FUN & EVENTS CALENDAR

Just a Bit of Fun – Knock-Kneed Elm

BY LEE

I got this little elm at one of the SCBC meetings several years ago and developed it into a nice mini- odd but nice. I named it Gimli after the dwarf in Lord of the Rings because it has a dwarfish look about it.

After a couple of years the root structure development started to overpower the tree and the roots no longer were in tune with the design. So I split the tree.



The main root became a semi cascade and is coming along nicely in the early stages of its new persona.

The other root was planted and started sending out shoots in late winter. Once the main shoot was strong enough to wire the tree was removed from the pot, the correct angle ascertained, repotted and wired.

The roots are wonderfully knock-kneed and the branching has to mimic that movement.



Knock-kneed Chinese Elm

A bit of fine tuning to the original wire shaping and the little tree is on its way. Strange, odd, but with its own distinctive charm. The apical branch will be wired when it is strong enough and it too must mimic the outrageous curves of the exposed roots.

I think I've got it - the left branch at least. It is going to be careful shaping not to overdo the apical branch when I wire that but the development of this little bonsai is going to be interesting. At the moment I'm letting the horizontal branch grow to thicken and meld with the root structure and when that occurs the branch will be shortened to a better length.

Informal uprights are fine but you must have some fun in your collection and elm root cuttings are a great way to get some quirky movement and unusual trees. Go for it.



*Chris at Bunnings East Gardens
(Thanks to all SCBC members to supported our stand)*

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 |