



NEXT CLUB MEETINGS

Green Square Community Hall

3 Joynton Avenue Zetland

7pm Tuesday 11 June 2019

Wiring Basics – Bryan. Members work on their trees.

7pm Tuesday 9 July 2019

Annual General Meeting. Display Focus - deciduous trees.

CONTACT DETAILS



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COMMITTEE

Patron	TBA
President	Bryan
Vice President	Neville
Secretary	David
Treasurer	Chris
Newsletter Editor	Roz
Librarian	Les
Committee	Frank, John & Ed

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.

June Meeting

- Basic Wiring Techniques - Bryan
- Member styling hotspot
- Bring your own trees to work on



This Melaleuca bracteata (River or Black tea tree) group was put together in the late 1970's. The trees were rearranged in 2009 and put into a larger pot. 2019 AABC Australian Native as Bonsai Exhibition, Melbourne.

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Earth & Fire Bonsai Pot Exhibition & Sale

Make a note in your diaries for 3rd and 4th August for the first ever Earth & Fire Bonsai Pot Exhibition and Sale. 18 bonsai potters from NSW, VIC and ACT will showcase their best work and conduct bonsai pot sales. It will be held in Building 16A Balcombe Heights Estate, Balkham Hills. Bonsai pot making demonstrations can be made on request. Enquiries: Boris (mobile 0404475002 / e-mail: lomov@hotmail.com).

Mystery bag left at last month's meeting

Chris is trying to locate the owner of an "Aldi" shopping bag containing two sets of glasses each in a case and other items including a reusable coffee mug left after last month's meeting. See Chris if it is yours.

AABC 2019 – AUSTRALIAN NATIVES

AABC 2019 – “Australian Natives Breaking Through the Bonsai Ceiling”

The 2019 AABC Conference held in Melbourne exclusively focused on Australian Natives as bonsai. Having been to the last 6 AABC events, I must say that this was the best ever. It not only showcased magnificent Australian Native bonsai, the presentations and demonstrations offered a plethora of new ideas on styling our natives along with a wealth of horticultural experience for adapting styling techniques specifically for Australian Natives.

Ryan Neil was outstanding as a presenter. He explored and pushed the boundaries of using Australian species as bonsai. He kept on challenging us to think how we could take Australian Natives as Bonsai to the next level where the trees reflect the uniqueness of the Australian landscape and where they are presented as more mature and very old trees. The supporting cast of Australian presenters also challenged our thinking and shared the result of years of experimentation and experience with the delegates.

All 205 delegates went home thoroughly satisfied with the experience. The organisers, the Victorian Native Bonsai Club deserve hearty congratulations for their professionalism and inspiration.



NBPCA Award for the best Australian style bonsai at the AABC Convention, to Marcela Ferreira for her *Melaleuca styphelioides*, or Prickly Paperbark

Special congratulations to Marcela, for being awarded the National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia Perpetual Award for the best Australian style bonsai at the AABC Convention, for her outstanding *Melaleuca styphelioides*, or Prickly Paperbark. Marcela acquired in 2013 in poor health and had lost a lot of branches. She nursed in back to health and initially developed a full crown. More recently she created a lighter canopy with a more natural and aged look. The pot is one she made and perfectly matches the tree.

Below are just a few trees to give you a feel for the high quality of the native bonsai presented at the exhibition. A particular feature of the exhibition was how carefully each tree was matched with an appropriate pot.



Above: *Leptospermum lavigatum* (Coastal Tea Tree)

Right: *Allocasurina littoralis*



Left: *Leptospermum lavigatum* (Coastal Tea Tree)
Centre: *Leptospermum poligalifolium* (Mountain Tea Tree)
Right: *Leptospermum flavescens* (Tea Tree “Cardwell Pink”)

You can see the exhibition on the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TMeQD2x-c8&fbclid=IwAR1jjZQYwgCbdG5rruP808VrWdYMMrUAqSedmMQekNVuzxZM1HeUGqKUobg>

RYAN NEIL STYLES KUNZEA AT AABC

Ryan Neil Styles Kunzea at AABC

At the 2019 AABC, Ryan worked on 3 different collected kunzea. He explored the various opportunities and specific styling issues that this species presents for development into bonsai.

When considering bonsai as an art form you cannot ignore the impact of nature, the impact of culture and the impact of the environment. We cannot import true Japanese culture into our bonsai. What we say, write and create reflects what we experience.

Australia has a rich ecosystem, an immensity of unique species with multiple influences including extreme drought, fires and flooding rains. Not only do the plants have to be rugged and adaptable to the harshness of the environment, Australians in this slightly chaotic natural environment have developed a uniqueness of character often described as "larrikin."

A feature of Australian natives is their multiple apical branches. When styling natives you need to maintain continuity in the base structure. You need to work within that structure and set lines to improve it. This is the beginning stages of the bonsai.

You need to think about proportions and scale and find positions in the composition space for the foliage to photosynthesise. You need to expand the foliage and get finer ramification. But how do you achieve and maintain the airiness so typical of Australian native foliage?



Old Kunzea selected for first demonstration

An old Kunzea collected by Hugh Grant was selected for the first demonstration. Ryan explained that we need to

take our cues for styling from the environment it came from and extend it. Extreme drought creates ruggedness with an inference of harsh, sharp and dangerous. The thin dry fibrous wood which bends creating a slender female form with long slender needles has to be characterised into the design. You can't have a "leaf pad" form for this type of tree. The styling must reflect the tree's habitat.

If the natural form is bent and somewhat contorted, how far can you go to bend the dry fibrous wood without breaking it? Observing that many Australian natives burst into growth immediately after rain storms, Ryan experimented with wrapping very wet paper towel around the area of the tree he wanted to bend. He secured it with raffia and left it for at least 30 minutes while he cleaned out the rest of the tree.



The branch is "brought back to life" by hydrating it and makes it more malleable. With deadwood, you need 2-3 weeks of constant hydration to ensure the water soaks in and then you can bend it. This approach is specifically for trees with dry fibrous wood. For other trees like maples, the tree should be relatively dry when bending branches. There is no right way nor wrong way. What is important is that you experiment and use your knowledge of physiology of plants to find the right process for the species you are working with.

For brittle trees, Ryan explained that it is important to spread the load of the bend along the branch by using your whole body (not just your hands) and also slightly rotate the branch as you bend it. The structural wire should be placed at a longer angle (never at 45 degrees) to spread the load and guy wires are a must to further hold the bend. You should manipulate the bend slowly and always be ready to back off. When bending always be aware of the shifting of tissue. It is better to give the tissues a rest rather than attempt to bend to the final position in one go.

RYAN NEIL STYLES KUNZEA CONTINUED

When wiring brittle branches you should use larger gauge wire and you should elongate the angle of the turns to 60°. This creates less bends and spreads the force over the branch. Ryan uses copper wire, particularly for structural wiring, as it has a greater ability to hold the branch in place. It also gives you more control over branch placement.



First styling iteration of this very old Kunzea

The leaf mass of many Australian trees have long fine linear strings in response to regular dry conditions. The primary purpose of transpiration is to cool the plant. Australian plants have features designed to reduce transpiration, so if you work to create a huge mass of foliage you increase the potential for the plant to lose water and stress the tree.

However the expansion of the roots, branches and trunk is driven by the sugars produced by the leaf mass. You will need to develop the secondary structure by going through a phase of high leaf mass supported by lots of watering and then go back to the tree and re-create the airiness by thinning it out.

When we come back to thinning we further build (wire) and refine the secondary structure. You need to work with the growth cycles of the tree. Don't cut it heavily when the tree is in rapid growth. Let the growth harden off first before pruning to shorten the shoot. Then when the side shoots form, you pinch prune them and lean on the older growth to keep the plant in a positive energy state.

Although this technique will ultimately make the tree too dense you will then need to thin out the branches to recreate the character of the tree.

Through these iterations of leaf mass growth and thinning and refining the secondary and tertiary structures over time the tree will develop into the next more mature bonsai stage. Ryan emphasised that just cutting back will not get your tree to the next level of bonsai.

Another Kunzea styled by Ryan.

Using similar principles to those articulated above, here are the before and after pictures of another much younger kunzea styled by Ryan.



Australian natives present as very complex material for styling into bonsai.



Ryan has methodically worked through bonsai styling principles to find the best viewing angle, completed the structural wiring and wired the linear leaf mass into delicate trailing shapes.

THE LEPTO THAT WON'T DIE

The Lepto that Won't Die and the Lepto that Did

BY LEE

5 or 6 experimental leptospermum and the death rate has been savage. They really don't like their roots handled. Well, not quite all. With the sad reaction to careful root pruning decimating my hopes for a flock of flowering natives I was left with two. One was the best... great trunk in thickness and movement. It just needed to develop branches and branchlets – and that was happening.

I put off and put off root pruning it until I really felt I had to do it. I was careful, leaving more root than I normally would, planted it higher to give it more soil for the first year, tried not to disturb the roots too much. For a week it held its ground and then the reality hit as the leaves lost the green and became more and more brown. There are still a few branchlets that are holding colour and I am keeping my fingers crossed but I have to admit...the prognosis doesn't look promising.

On the other hand, one of the leptospermum had a lovely little trunk [emphasis on little], blue foliage and a weeping habit. Promising until I discovered that it didn't shoot back on old wood and the mini cascade I had planned obviously wasn't going to happen.

So I took it out of the pot it was in, crammed it into a smaller plastic pot so I wouldn't waste good soil and put it on the bench until I could sell it. It thrived. I forgot to water it and it thrived.... and still refused to shoot back on old wood.

It was on the sale list but I kept looking at it thinking... there is a bonsai there. Maybe not this year or the next but there is a bonsai lurking in there despite the bare branches. So not really giving a damn, I took it out of the too small pot, roughly raked the compacted roots loose, pulled off a few long ones, trimmed the bottom, put it in a cascade pot that was sitting idle, pruned some branches... and it is happy in its new situation. The tree that refuses to die while the really promising one is on the terminal list.

It's a funny tree and the trunk is too small for the foliage at this stage but you know... I like it. I like the fact that it is happy in a pot I got for another leptospermum that started to go ahead and then slowly died branch by branch.



I like it for the fact that it withstood what can only be called 'robust' root treatment. I am giving it time to settle in and then I will naturalise the deadwood. There is just something about it that pleases me and I'm prepare to give it time to grow into its branches and foliage. And in the meantime, I have that beautiful colour on my bench.

Natives On the SCBC Bench



Amanda's stunning Allocasurina



Neville's Callistemon in a very interesting pot

CORKY BARK ELM & EVENTS CALENDER

Corky bark Elm Makeover

BY LEE

I saw this corky bark elm at a bonsai nursery and I liked the trunk movement, thickness and bark texture but to my eye the rest of the tree was pretty much a write off. The main upper structure had been allowed to develop robustly without styling but the lower branch had possibilities as a new apical trunk.



The first step was to remove what I didn't want - which was the majority of the tree. During the removal I amended my styling vision to leave a jin to give the tree a counterbalance and to imply massive storm damage.

On to the roots and I was stunned at the massive roots stuffed into the pot. The tree had never been root pruned from the day the young plant had been put in the pot and one of the roots was half the thickness of the trunk. Small wonder the foliage wasn't lush and there was a lot of branch die back. After a sustained battle I trimmed the under structure down to a flat base leaving a few overly long roots to keep their feeders.



This plant needed hard root pruning

These will be pruned off next repotting in a year's time when the tree has developed feeder roots around the base.



There is a lot of development to come but from an ugly and clumsy plant the new elm has grace and a hint of style. More work is needed to get the now near vertical branch more upright and the jin has to be refined and branching developed.

The elm now has the opportunity to grow into a pleasing shohin.

Bonsai Events Calendar

Date	Event	Details
8-9 Jun 2019	Bonsai By the Harbour featuring Masayuki Fujikawa	Church of England Grammar Rowing Facility, 86 Wharf Road Gladesville. Bonsai Federation of Australia Northern Inc
3-4 Aug 2019	Earth & Fire Bonsai Pot Exhibition & Sale	Building 16A Balcombe Heights Estate, Balkham Hills. Enquiries: Boris (mobile 0404475002 / e-mail: lomov@hotmail.com).
23-25 Aug 2019	The Tops Weekend Illawarra	Stanwell Tops Conference Centre.
30 Aug-2 Sept	Bonsai Masters-Ryan Neil & Kunio Kobayashi	National Arboretum, Canberra
7-8 Sep 2019	Central Coast Bonsai Club Annual Show and Bonsai Open Competition	Mingara Recreational Club Mingara Drive Tumbi Umbi
8-10 Nov 2019	Newcastle Bonsai Society Exhibition	Charlestown Bowling Club, Charlestown