sydney city bonsai club inc.

NEXT CLUB MEETING

Tote Centre Community Hall
100 Joynton Ave., Zetland
Tuesday 14 December @ 7.00pm

CONTACT DETAILS

0432 461 025

info@sydneycitybonsai.org.au

http://sydneycitybonsai.org.au

PO Box 486
Summerhill NSW 2130

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Patron	TBA
President	Chris
Vice President	Vacant
Secretary	David
Treasurer	Bryan
Newsletter Editor	Bryan/John/Chris
Librarian	Vacant
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 meeting hall at a concessional rate.

AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

This month's meeting (December) will be face to face again!!!! However we are subject to ever-changing Covid restraints. See December meeting for this month's theme and information.

NEWSLETTER CONTENTS

- Monthly meeting feedback Page 2
- December meeting Page 5
- Swap Table Page 6
- Facebook Page Page 6
- Repotting a mature Azalea Page 6
- Why I like Figs Page 8
- Things to do this month Page 8
- Events Calendar Page 9

EDITORIAL MATTERS

We always welcome any contributions from members, so if you have a project underway, have a query, want to sell/swap/buy something, or otherwise have a tale to share, please get in contact via info@sydneycitybonsai.org.au or one of the Committee members.

Merry Xmas from SCBC

MONTHLY MEETING FEEDBACK
November

No need for John to organise a Zoom on-line get together as we were able to have a real face-to-face meeting.

We experienced more success with our e-mail and website systems so advice of the meeting went out as "normal". It resulted in a pleasing turnout of more than a dozen enthusiasts including a number of welcome faces whom we have not seen for some time.

There was no specific topic but members were encouraged to bring a tree and have a short talk about it – and virtually everybody brought at least one tree and there was much enlightening discussion.

Overall views of the display trees

John with his Baeckea in flower and one of his Maples

Anita's Black Pine.

Another flowering Baeckea – it's that time of year

David's Premna (?) and Umbrella Fig

Tim's Juniper getting some vertical adjustment

Cheng brought along an Apple and a Banyan – I was not quick enough to capture both trees

Neville with his Kunzea complimented by his constructed rock – very hard to pick that the rock was not real - until you picked it up!

Lee with her Kunzea and Satome Azalea on a Mallee root – showing us how it's done.

Close-up of Lee's Satome on Mallee root

Brian's Tallow tree

Simon and his thumbs–up Juniper.

Juvenile Radiata Pine brought in by Simon

Chris' out-of-control Stone Pine

Ed's elm with its spring growth

Another of John's trees he brought in to share – a Banksia

As well as being privy to observing a selection of very impressive trees, it was great to catch up with members, especially those we have not seen for a while. The allocated time disappeared pretty quickly. Between Bryan and myself, I think we recorded most trees – if for some reason your tree "slipped through the cracks", or I have the wrong species, or the wrong owner's name, I apologise.

Hopefully we can say good-by to Zoom and continue with our regular face-to-face meetings henceforth. Please put a big tick in your calendars against the 2nd Tuesday of the month, usual place, usual time. Looking forward to seeing you there. Having said that there will be no meeting In January!

DECEMBER MEETING
AGM and Xmas – BRING A TREE

The Exec has decided there will not be a specific topic for the December meeting as it is a Xmas celebration but before that we will have to attend to a long outstanding necessity – our AGM. No groaning and threats of boycotts, we do have to go through with this process – it is already VERY overdue. All Executive positions will be declared vacant and after nominations, positions will be filled by voting. As stated previously, we need members to take on positions to keep the Club operating. You do not need to be a

bonsai "expert" but should be prepared to come to the monthly Exec meeting and participate in management decision making. **Have a go!**

Immediately following the AGM we will have a quiet celebration for Xmas and surviving the year past. The Club will provide soft drinks and some light refreshments. Members can bring something to share but in accordance with Covid expectations, only sealed (commercially packaged) consumables can be accepted. It will be sad not to have the many home-prepared specialties from previous years but that's the way it is.

Covid requirements current at the time of the meeting will be observed.

Bring a tree (or two) along for display and maybe give a bit of thought to enhancing it (them) with Xmas decorations! Get into the spirit.

SWAP TABLE

There will be a Swap Table at the next meeting which will be stocked with whatever is brought along. Members are encouraged to contribute to the table. Bring some loose change and maybe grab a bargain.

FACEBOOK PAGE

The private Facebook page run by John Brown is still going strong and anyone interested in participating should contact John for an invitation. I am getting feedback that there is some good quality chat on the Facebook page and members are encouraged to join.

REPOTTING A MATURE AZALEA
by Lee

My Azalea redwings has been growing and developing in a big ceramic pot for several years. It was lifted and root pruned two years ago and then simply watered, fertilised and pruned as needed. It flowers profusely with deep pink flowers that carpet the entire crown and I wanted it in a bonsai pot. I moved the trunk back and forwards, left and right in the pot to loosen it and then lifted the entire mass. Roots infiltrated every part of the dirt… no wonder it has been so robust.

Azaleas have fine feeder roots and are one of the species that can take a very serious root pruning as long as they get good after care.

A second-hand bread knife is a great way to cut through the root ball. This knife blade is just about flat and I have another waiting to replace it but it does work splendidly and a replacement can often be found in an opportunity shop for a couple of dollars.

I sawed through the root ball and discarded the bottom portion but there was still a lot of cutting back that had to be done. You can see the mass of tiny roots everywhere.

Again, the bread knife proved invaluable. Before starting this stage of the root ball reduction, I had studied and removed several long roots from the nebari as they were extending too far from the base of the tree. When you clean up the subsurface roots don't overlook tidying up the nebari for ugly, crossing or overlong roots.

Trimmed into a compact square and ready to be potted. Azaleas like a deeper pot and moist soil. I would have preferred a slightly larger pot to the one I have used but I need to be able to lift it and this is more than big enough for me with the weight of the pot, soil and tree.

The final step was to shape the foliage pad and lift the understory to show more of the trunk. This will change as the tree extends and grows but I keep onto it all the time to maintain the shape so it is ready for the budding and flowering.

Two weeks after this serious root prune the azalea is putting out new growth and doing well. I have returned it to the top of the concrete pot as it has grown magnificently in this position with several hours of morning sun and indirect light the rest of the day.

Each species has its own level of toleration for root pruning. Elms, Privets, Pyracantha, Azaleas, Olives, Clerendendron can easily handle such an intensive root removal. Other species can't. You have to know your trees to know how much to take off when you are root pruning so you don't set the tree back. I waited until the Azalea had finished flowering, removed all the dead flower heads so it would not waste energy developing seeds and would put that energy into growth. Now it is just care and nipping back to keep it heading for another year of an amazing floral display in August/September.

WHY I LIKE FIG BONSAI by Chris

Let's be blunt – I like Figs because they don't die (unless specifically encouraged to do so, and even then, nothing is certain).

Over the years I have had trials with many species of trees. Some have been successful and some not. But when you look at the ledger the Figs are always on the positive side.

I have just had a Camelia expire inexplicably. It was from old stock taken out of my garden and transferred to a bonsai pot with lots of roots intact and put into my standard mix. It flourished for several months putting out good strong branches and foliage – a deserved win, I thought. Then, for no apparent reason, it terminated its hold on life, all within a few days. No growing conditions had changed, no sprays, insect/disease attack, … nothing. It would not happen with a Fig.

I have observed Sudden Bonsai Death Syndrome (SBDS), as I call it, with Azaleas, Banksias, Elms, Pines, Quinces, Eucalypts and various other species, but not with Figs. Partial Sudden Bonsai Death Syndrome (PSBDS) i.e. branches and other bits (usually with significant aesthetic value) deciding to go to the great compost heap in the sky is also common with many species, but not Figs.

I will go further to say that it would seem Figs can even be resurrected, a second coming so to speak. A past member of the club (who was a horticulture lecturer at TAFE) gave me a (Desert?) Fig he had given up on. He was introduced to members a few Newsletters ago – his name is Chucky. Chucky was quite old but refused to thrive, or die. Seeing the opportunity to go one up on an academic, I took on the challenge. After several years of trying, I had the same pathetic response. In the meantime, a bird's nest fern decided to co-habit Chucky's pot. Let's call him Fred. Embarrassed by Chucky's miserable performance, I decided to let him, and the vigorously growing Fred, fight it out – natural selection and all that. After several years Fred was a clear winner in a knockout decision – or so I thought. Fred was huge and what was left of Chucky's stump was barely visible. Until one day I noticed different shaped green leaves sprouting from Fred's base. Chucky was making a comeback. In appreciation of his tenacity I decided to extricate Chucky from Fred's clutches. It was a brutal process and I inadvertently knocked off all Fred's hard won growth. Never-the-less I took what was left of Chucky and placed him in a training pot with some left-over potting mix. Several week passed and there was no sign of life so I thought that was that. But in the last few days I have noticed that there is new growth emerging. Chucky is back. It's obviously early days and Chucky is unlikely to ever amount to much. But Chucky has provided more scientific justification for Figs being a most excellent choice for Bonsai.

I like Figs because they survive all but the most determined attempts to kill them.

Chucky is back! … again

THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH
December by John

Tasks that can be undertaken throughout the summer months include:

1. Watch for very hot days. Remember, excessive heat does not kill Bonsai, a lack of water does. Water often enough to ensure the soil never dries out. This may mean watering 2 or 3 times a day. Mulching of the top of the soil can help reduce evaporation through the day. Moss on top of the soil can be a good indicator of soil dampness.
2. Continue a fertilizing regime through the summer months
3. Monitor trees through the warmer months as the warmer, humid weather can encourage pest and disease.
4. Most natives can be repotted throughout the summer months. Watch for bud movement and then repot and root prune. Alternatively cut back hard then wait for the new buds to start to appear, then repot. You can root prune very hard at this time.
5. Summer is the time to perform large chops on Japanese Maples and other deciduous trees. The wounds will heel faster and not bleed as much as they would if cut during winter.
6. Pinching tips and pruning new growth should continue on all trees through the summer.
7. Some species need considerable moisture through summer including Wisteria, Banksia, Swamp Cypress, Callistemon and Melaleuca. They may need to stand in water trays.

Specific tasks for December include:

- ✓ Late in the month you can defoliate Elms and Maples so they will produce new smaller leaves.
- ✓ Defoliate Figs
- ✓ Continue monthly spraying of Azaleas for Lace Bug
- ✓ Repot Banksia, fertilize with Osmocote or similar added to the soil, and Liquid feed every 2 weeks.

Sources:

1. AusBonsai Wiki
2. “Bonsai, Its Art, Science, History and Philosophy” by D R Koreshoff

BONSAI EVENTS CALENDAR

	Nepean Bonsai Newsletter	Visit their website - see what the mountain people get up to.
	Illawarra BS Newsletter	Visit their website – good content.
	Bonsai Society of South Australia website	Worth a visit
	Yarra Valley Newsletter	Visit their website.
	Victorian Native Bonsai Club Newsletter	Visit their website – well worth a look.
	There is s photo competition for use at the World Bonsai Convention Photo Exhibition	Close-off date 15th May see website for details
March 2022	Club outing to Bonsai World	Details TBA

Most clubs are now re-commencing meetings with the easing of restrictions. Check out their web-sites for meeting details.