



## NEXT CLUB MEETINGS

### Green Square Community Hall

3 Joynton Avenue  
Zetland

### 7pm Tuesday 9 February 2016

Bring In the Pines that you cut in November. Sue to talk on pine stripping. Lee o talk on natives/water trays.

### 7pm Tuesday 8 March 2016

Workshop on junipers -trimming, tricks of pruning

## CONTACT DETAILS



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## COMMITTEE

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## 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 February Newsletter

### February Meeting

- Sue will talk on pine stripping. Bring in the Pines that you cut in November.
- Lee to talk on natives/water trays.
- Feature Tree of the month – pines & natives

### In this issue:

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This beautiful driftwood bonsai (sharimiki) picture is sourced from Petri Borg who runs a comprehensive website on the care of bonsai: <http://bonsai.atwebpages.com/>

Carving trees can be so much fun: Take your carving talents to the limit. Check out this youtube video as a great alternative to trunk removal: <http://www.youtube.com/embed/2a1QISYNGHs?rel=0>

## MAKING DRIFTWOOD BONSAI (SHARIMIKI AND TANUKI)

Making driftwood bonsai [sharimiki: true driftwood bonsai and tanuki (phoenix grafts): man-made]

When people first see a driftwood bonsai (sharimiki in Japanese), they often ask "How did they do that?" Sometimes the answer is nature created the deadwood, other times it is man-made.

Driftwood bonsai (sharimiki) is usually collected and developed from harsh mountain and/or coastal landscapes where the amount of dead trunk (and possibly dead branches situated on the dead trunk area) is extensive giving a large portion of the tree a silvery weathered look of driftwood. "Veins" of living bark connect the roots to live branches contrast with this severely weather-beaten tree remnant. This unusual combination of large dead areas, free of bark contrasting with small signs of life results in a tree with a dramatic ancient look which is much revered.

True sharimiki are rare as it is increasingly difficult to find specimens in nature. A man-made driftwood bonsai style can be achieved by joining a living tree to an interesting piece of deadwood to create a "tanuki" (alternatively called "phoenix graft").

The deadwood usually has the form of a weathered tree trunk, or at least its lower portion. To add living material to the deadwood, a groove or channel is first carved into it or with small tanuki the bark on one side of the plant is stripped before fixing the tree to the deadwood. The living tree (usually a young juniper, because of the species' vigor, flexibility, and ability to endure harsh shaping) is fixed within the channel using non-reactive nails or screws, wire wrappings, or clamps. Over time, the young tree grows into the deadwood channel, which disguises the fact that it is a separate entity. Once firmly in place, the nails, screws, or other affixing devices are removed, and the living tree is cultivated and shaped with typical bonsai techniques.

In Japan the term "tanuki" implies shape-changing trickster and as such tanuki would not be displayed at formal Japanese bonsai shows. However, many bonsai growers outside of Japan consider tanuki an acceptable bonsai technique and have created outstanding bonsai artistry using this technique.

This photostory shows two examples of creating tanuki.

Sources: Cheshire & Norman, "Japanese gardening and growing bonsai", Anness Publ., 2011 and Randy Clark Charlotte, NC, full story see <http://www.bonsailearningcenter.com/IMAGES/PDF%20files/tanuki.pdf>

### 1. Cedrus deodara tanuki.



Cedrus deodara nursery plant and a suitable piece of driftwood. Make sure that the trunk diameter in the lower section of the deodara chosen is of sufficient size to accept a long thin screw without splitting the trunk.



Remove the shoots and branches completely on one side of the plant. Using a sharp knife, cut away approximately half of the trunk of the side from which the branches have been removed. Be careful to leave the live vein on the otherside of the trunk undamaged.



Rake out the root-ball in order to remove excess soil, and trim the roots into a compact system. Spray the roots regularly to prevent them drying out because this style takes a long time to produce. It may be useful to predrill the driftwood in the position of the intended screws as driftwood can be extremely hard. Using a power drill or screw driver, attach the lower trunk to the lower part of the driftwood. Stainless screws are preferable but brass would be a good second choice.

## MAKING DRIFTWOOD BONSAI (SHARIMIKI AND TANUKI) continued



Continue to attach the trunk with screws, making sure that the cut side of the trunk sits adjacent to the driftwood. The trunk can be curved around to the other side of the driftwood so that it follows the curving features of the driftwood, and then secured with raffia. When the trunk becomes too narrow to accept a screw, continue to attach it by tying it tightly with raffia.



While you are attaching the plant to the driftwood, keep spraying the roots regularly and cover them with a plastic bag to retain moisture. This will assist the tree during the lengthy attachment process.

Styling on the upper part of the tree shows the position of the trunk and branches in relation to the trunk and driftwood.



Tree is now potted, trimmed and shaped ready for its journey as a tanuki.

### 2. Shimpaku Juniper on large deadwood



Collected deadwood and one metre tall Shimpaku Juniper with 2 cm diameter trunk.



Training pot with four drill holes and stones to be placed in bottom of training pot to reduce the amount of moisture in contact with the bottom of the deadwood.



Determine the angle the dead wood will be positioned in the pot and saw the bottom of the dead wood to achieve this. Screw in 4 eyelets so that the deadwood can be secured by wire through the 4 drill holes made in the pot.



Determine which way the trunk should be positioned onto the snag. This may take some time and planning on your part. Don't rush! Once you have decided, remove all foliage which will be located between the trunk of the deadwood and the trunk of the live juniper. Use a marking pencil to draw a line on the deadwood indicating where the groove you wish to cut will go.

Next, remove the juniper from its container, wrap it in a plastic bag and tie very tightly with string. This step is very important. The roots must remain unharmed and not dry out during the lengthy process which follows.

# CLERODENDRUM (CLERODENDRON) RESTYLE BY LEE

## Clerodendrum (Clerodendron) restyle

By LEE

In 2006 I acquired a slip of a clerodendron and set out to develop it into a bonsai. A year later it had thickened and was starting to show promise. Clerodendrons are great trees to bonsai but you must be prepared to wire constantly [and often even more frequently than that]. In their growing season they are maniacal and never seem to stop putting centimetres on in a week.



November 2007

The starter I worked with quickly started putting on substance and in a year you could see the future direction.



January 2008

The upper structure is coming on well and the trunk continues to thicken.

Cleros guzzle up water and need to be overpotted in order to satisfactorily cater to their heavy requirement. They are pretty rugged and can bounce back after a strong wilt but it is better to keep them hydrated. I don't use water trays but just pot big and water often.



June 2009 - The tree's form is there, the leaves are small and it is becoming a decent bonsai. I sold the tree but continued looking after it a couple of times a year and on went its growth.

One of the striking points of a clerodendron is the deeply fissured bark. In the wild the branches grow straight due to their rapid development and the long slender leaves are about 5 cm long. Under bonsai cultivation the internodes shorten and the leaf size miniaturizes wonderfully well.

They flower, small white flowers without scent but these tend to develop on long shoots and when you are shaping for bonsai a flowering tree can be a very much overgrown tree. The flowers are dainty and delicate and quite pretty.

As fast as the branches grow so does the trunk thicken and you can get a good stout tree in just a few years looking far older than it is. Life with a clerodendron has its upside and its downside – a lot of work for pretty fast results.



April 2015

The tree came to me for 3 months boarding and I had to look at it day after day and wasn't happy with what I was seeing. The upper structure had thickened well out of proportion and the tree was uncomfortable and looked 'bloated'. When the owner came to pick it up I asked if I could keep it for some months and drastically restyle it. When the immediate response was yes I removed the entire apex.



April 2015 -Radical restyle

In hindsight I would not recommend doing this just before winter but cleros are very hardy and it soldiered on through the cold weather and into early spring. Late September growth started and my heavy cut was vindicated when the upper structure started growing.



In full growth mode it is necessary to remove all the wire every 4 weeks and rewire and trim but the difference in the harmony of the tree now and before the cut is so apparent. Drastic? Yes! Necessary? Yes! Worthwhile? YES!!! You can't get away with this sort of drastic work on some species but cleros, privets, pyracanthas, elms, olives will all reward you the same way with strong positive growth and development.

## NEW STYLE JINNING TOOL & DRIFTWOOD BONSAI continued

### New style jinning tool

Overseas demonstrators are using a new style of jinning tool that works much faster than the jinning pliers available here.



Jinning pliers are good with junipers. Squeezing the bark separates it from the branch and it can then be stripped off. The pliers are also good to grab part of the end of a jin and twist the wood downwards to remove the cut off end and give the jin a more natural look.



The new style jinning tool has a wooden handle and a curved blade attached to each side of the wood. The blade can be smooth or serrated. It is pulled over the bark and removes the bark working much like the standard potato peeler. It is faster than the pliers, especially when working with thicker branches. It does tend to leave a rough surface, more so than with the pliers. It is an effective tool and will probably be available in Australia and if not, then on the net.

### Shimpaku Juniper on large deadwood continued from page 3



Using a die grinder or dremel tool fitted with a round nose router bit cut a groove into the deadwood. Note: It is considered "good bonsai" to ensure that a portion of live trunk (also called "life line") is visible as it emerges from the soil in the front of the tree. The groove needs to be at least half again the depth (or more) of the shimpaku's trunk diameter and at least half again as wide.

Remember you are working for a showable tree in 3 to 5 years. If you make the groove too shallow, the tree will eventually push itself out of the groove.

Starting at the base, begin to fit the juniper into the groove in the deadwood. Use a small drill bit to bore a hole through the live shimpaku and slightly into the deadwood. Then use a long sheet rock or deck screw fitted with a small washer and secure the juniper snugly into its groove in the deadwood. The washer prevents the bevelled head of the screw from sinking into the trunk of the juniper too far. Move up a 4-5 cm and place the next screw. Use as few screws as possible working up from the bottom. You might need to dremel



further to fit the trunk; or make a vent to allow a branch to go through from the channel. Note: Because you will be placing the deadwood on stones, the live roots will have to be left, right or in front of the snag.



heavily for the next two years. Don't replot the tree for at least two years.

Tie the tanuki in place by threading two strands through each eyelet and twisting to secure. Use a screwdriver to twist tighten the wire. The deadwood and shimpaku **MUST** be immobilized. Place bonsai soil into the container and chopstick to eliminate air pockets in the customary fashion. Afterwards soak the planting in water and protect from sun and drying winds for about two weeks. Then return the planting to full sun. Begin feeding after 3 to 4 weeks. Feed



The tanuki is now ready to begin developing as a bonsai. There is a lot more to be done, but not for a while. What the tree needs now is time to develop. Once you know the tree is thriving and healthy, you may begin wiring and shaping branches and carving and treating the areas of deadwood. After about a year the tree will have hardened into the shape it was bent and the sheet rock screws may be removed without fear that the tree will spring back. As the tree develops more roots and increases its grip on the deadwood you will discover the need for the massive amounts of tie-down wires described in step nine will become less necessary. (Note: Right picture: simulation).

# CALLISTEMON CARE AND EVENTS CALENDAR

Callistemon (Bottle Brush) pruning, repotting and taking cuttings.

So when is the best time to prune bottlebrush (callistemon)? How much should you prune and why doesn't mine flower? Experienced growers of native bonsai explain that you should prune them hard after flowering, and they will power away again.



Callistemon in flower

On his post in Ausbonsai, Pup, (<http://www.ausbonsai.com.au/forum/viewtopic.php?t=264>) explains that the important thing to ensure flowering is to remember new wood. If you keep pruning for shape constantly you will lose buds that will flower. So cut back hard in November (i.e. after flowering time) even if it has not flowered.



Left: Callistemon ready for pruning; Right: After pruning

Let it grow then in late March early April, cut to shape then don't prune again until after flowering. Also because Callistemon are apical dominant, you have to be careful to make sure the apex continues to taper. You can pinch tips for ramification but that's it. Then when the blooms are past their peak then prune again.

Repotting is carried out in early November. In most cases about every 3 years unless it pushes itself out of the pot.



Callistemon cutting, honey and pot ready for planting

You can take cuttings of Callistemon. Pup explains that he uses the cuttings from his pruning as the starters for new plants. He uses honey to aid the rooting. The honey also acts as an anti-fungal agent and he has had a 90% success rate.



Keep cuttings moist and in light shade to give roots time to develop.

## BONSAI EVENTS CALENDAR

Date	Event	Details
10 April 2016	Nepean Bonsai Society Annual Show: A contemporary bonsai display	The Glenbrook Community Hall, Cnr. Ross St. & Great Western Highway, Glenbrook. NSW
31 April-1 May 2016	Illawarra Bonsai Society Annual (Autumn) Show 2016	Sutherland District Trade Union Club (Tradies), Kingsway, Gymea
20-23 May 2016	29 <sup>th</sup> Australian Bonsai Convention	Wrest Point Convention Centre, Hobart, Tasmania