sydney city bonsai club inc.

NEXT CLUB MEETINGS

Green Square Community Hall
3 Joynton Avenue Zetland

7pm Tuesday 8 November 2016
Brief talk on pesticides by Sue. Close up demo on cutting pines for those who need help. Bring trees or photos for Easter Show stand.

7pm Tuesday 13 December 2016
Christmas meeting – details next month

CONTACT DETAILS

0432 461 025

info@sydneycitybonsai.org.au

http://sydneycitybonsai.org.au

PO Box 486
Summerhill NSW 2130

COMMITTEE

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

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.

November Meeting

- Brief talk on use of pesticides by Sue
- Bring in your trees or photos proposed for Easter Show stand
- Close up demo on cutting pines for those who need help.
- Members styling hotspot and work on your trees.

At the September Meeting:
James' Banksia before and after trimming (top)
SCBC members watching Sue work on a Japanese Black Pine (lower)

In this Issue:

Reminders

Car Access to Green Square Community Hall: You need to enter the car parking area via Portman Street.

FUSING TRUNKS IN BONSAI

Fusing Trunks in Bonsai

In nature figs fuse branches to branches, aerial roots to trunks, aerial roots to branches and perhaps many other combinations of plant parts can fuse. This is nature's way of self-grafting.

Indian banyan (F. benghalensis) produces aerial roots from branches

Essentially any parts of a fig can fuse if the parts are forced to grow into each other and are not allowed to grow and push themselves apart. Similarly, other trees, such as Trident maples and Lilly Pilly can be seen to have merged trunks where they have been growing adjacent to each other and have no where else to grow.

In bonsai trunk fusions are a grafting technique that use multiple approach grafts of seedlings or rooted cuttings to create a large base trunk with a dramatic even taper in a relatively short time frame. Although not formally a way to get a trunk to become thick, it is a way to create a tree with a thick trunk in the shortest time possible. Either we start with a number of saplings which are carefully placed and then tied together with tape so that they are fixed in place or you can tie and/or pin multiple saplings around a supporting cone-shaped object so that they eventually merge with each other as they thicken. Eventually they become visually one plant.

Trident Maple with fused trunk

Merging may take place within months after tying them together. In order to avoid die-back of a complete section of the new tree, the saplings are ideally interwoven a little. That way veins will grow across multiple saplings and can help support a sapling when individual root-systems fail. Alternatively a few saplings are retained so that any which die can be replaced.

Figs and Trident Maples are particularly amenable to trunk fusion. The whole process is a lot of fun, but you must be patient as it takes some time before nature takes is course. Here are a few pointers:

- Obtain or grow multiple small trees, preferably cuttings from one tree or clone. In that way the parts will be alike in all respects; bark colour, leaf size and shape will be the same.
- Do not use random seed grown from various stock sources as their bark colour and other characteristics will vary and the final creation may look "unusual".
- The trees are removed from their pots and kept intact. It is good to place them in water to keep the roots moist as the process can take some time.
- Branches and roots that interfere with the positioning of the trees next to each other are removed. Trees are secured to each other in the position you want with plastic wrapping twine that does not stretch or anything else that is not elastic. If you are using a polystyrene or wooden cone as a trunk base you can pin/staple the individual saplings into position
- Try to get the trunks as close to each other as possible by shifting the various trunks around. Perform this activity out of the sun and wind and make sure to keep the roots moist during this process as it can take quite a while to get the trees positioned and secured. Often a second set of hands proves useful in manipulating 5-10 trees and the securing twine.
- Pot the trees without doing any shaping or trimming, other than the minimal amount required to bring the trees as close to each other as possible. Do not plant them into a small bonsai container but a moderately large

FUSING TRUNKS IN BONSAI *CONTINUED*

container that will allow them to grow as quickly as possible. Allow the trees to grow vigorously and do not trim any growth off the trees for a year or longer.

Jerry Meislik on his website – www.fukubonsai.com provides a clear and detailed explanation of the steps required to fuse a trunk. These photos are from his site.

- Over 12-18 months the trees will grow and fuse into each other. Some of the smaller trees may eventually die in the centre of the grouping but that is fine as the dead trunks will be overgrown by the living trunks. If you have just joined the saplings together without a cone base, do not remove any of the dead trunks as these will become overgrown by the living trunks and will be part of the final composition. If you have used a cone base then you can replace any dead saplings with the ones you have set aside.
- Do not fertilise for two weeks after potting and keep the tree out of direct sun and wind. After that, the trees can be moved to as bright a light as possible, fertilised and cared for to allow maximum growth.
- After 12-24 months of uncontrolled growth, you can inspect the tree by undoing the tape. The binding tape must be re-applied if the trees appear loose or the composition needs more fusion. Once the trees fuse completely the tape can be removed and branches shaped with wire. The trunk itself cannot be bent as the movement will break apart the fused trunks.

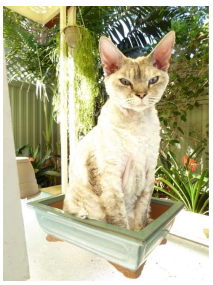
Close ups of trunk fusion (photos from Ficus Forums)

Fusion is an easy technique to improve your trees. Give it a try on your figs and/or trident maples. The key is to secure the parts to fuse together with a non-stretching material that is broad enough not to scar the bark. Allow the trees unrestrained growth and provide the best care you can and the rest will be done by the tree. Don't expect immediate results; this is a long-term project.

Information sources: Jerry Meislik – http://www.fukubonsai.com/1a9a13.html; Bonsai Empire – http://www.bonsaiempire.com/blog/trunk-fusion; Ficus Forums - http://www.bonsaihunk.us/ficusforum/FicusTechniques/FigTechnique2.html

Choose the right pot by Lee

1.Ensure the pot you choose is large enough for plant.



3. Be sure your plant is facing the front of the pot

←2.Do not plant a semi-cascade in a standard pot.

ALBEK SELECTS HIS FAVOURITE SHOHIN

Morten Albek, Bonsai Specialist, Selects his Favourite Shohin[1] Subjects

Morten Albek, from Denmark, is a worldwide recognised prize-winning bonsai artists. In 2008 he published his book '*Majesty in Miniature, Shohin Bonsai, unlocking the secrets of small trees*'. In 2014 Morten was appointed as Ambassador of Shanghai Botanical Garden for promotion of Bonsai Art. He started on his bonsai journey in 1993, and has since worked on building up knowledge and skills, and is today teaching bonsai, especially Shohin-bonsai internationally.

His blog, *https://shohinblog.com/* which specialises in shohin bonsai, is one of the most popular bonsai blogs in Europe. Recently he began posting his top 5 hit list of bonsai subjects. I have reproduced parts of the blog on his first two subjects – "Maple" and "Cotoneaster". I encourage all to follow up directly as his information is clear, concise and extremely well presented.

Japanese & Trident Maple

Morten explains that the classic Japanese maple is so obvious a tree for Shohin bonsai. *Acer palmatum* and *A. buergerianum* have lovely leaves and good trunks if grown properly.

Japanese Maple (above left)

Trident Maple in autumn colours (above)

Trident Maple, mame-bonsai (left)

Tolerant for pruning, and also showing beauty during the dormant period, makes it very suitable for especially Shohin-bonsai displays, showing the change of the seasons. Especially the *A. buergerianum*, Trident maple (named by the form of the leaves), shows a great winter image, where the dormant buds waiting for spring looks refreshing and neat.

The trick is to keep the foliage healthy, especially during the heat of the summer where leaf burns at the fragile A. palmatum can be a small problem. Although it is rarely a real problem, because most exhibitions are from autumn until late spring, and in the meantime it is more of a personal approach if you care much about these small failures happening during the season.

Leaf pruning is a way of controlling the balance of energy in the tree, as well as defoliating full or partially, is a technique usable to keep a dense branch construction and smaller leaves. The Japanese maples and tridents are very responsive and tolerant to these techniques.

Partial shade is necessary during the warm summer months, and it is important to control the tree for aphids. Albek has rarely had any problems with pests, but it can happen on weak and stressed trees. The shifting seasons are clearly reflected in the Japanese maple, with fresh red-green new foliage in spring, darker green variations in summer, and beautiful yellow or red in autumn/fall.

Cotoneaster

In choosing, Cotoneaster Albeck explains that *"Among its many advantages is the small leaves, flowers and autumn berries. Most are deciduous but specimens that keeps foliage through the winter are also available..... It it's found all over Europe down to western China. For some reason I have not found many as bonsai in Japan, although I find it one of the best varieties for bonsai. Especially for Shohin."*

Cotoneaster in fruit (left) and semi-cascade (right)

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REVIEW OF TAIPEI BONSAI BOOK

Sue Reviews Taipei Bonsai Book

At the October meeting, Jack Lin presented SCBC with the 2015 publication of the Taipei Bonsai & Suiskei Associations Book. Whilst the book is in Chinese it is full of beautifully presented pictures bonsai and suiskei.

Sue reviewed the book and reported back to the meeting that this book is great for members to critique individual trees for their style and design.

Many of the trees follow classic Japanese principles and are styled with exquisite detail. Others whilst meticulously shaped, have block-like overall shapes, sometimes unbalanced or appear over-styled do not appeal to the Western eye.

Sue explained that this book is an excellent resource for members to study when designing their own trees. You can pick up design ideas and also get an understanding of how important it is to build the overall basic trunk and main branch structure for the long-term before you do the foliage refinement.

This book has been added to the SCBC library and can be borrowed. Below are a few examples of the photos in the book.

Zelkova serrata (100cm)

Zelkova serrata (58 cm)

Juniperus chinensis (98 cm)

Camellia Japonica

Ficus microcarpa (62cm)

Albek Selects Favourite Shohin continued

The cotoneaster show great tolerance towards hard pruning, and reacts by a flush of new growth after hard pruning if the specimen is healthy. Also new growth emerges from the roots and even at the old base of the trunk. One negative with cotoneaster, is that it is a little difficult to find specimens with a decent trunk size.

Early stages of a Cotoneaster. The long branches is let to grow freely for some time to thicken the branches. Afterwards these sacrifice branches are cut back

Another negative for this species is the missing ability to make callus and healing wounds after cutting bigger branches. The cut will be visible forever, as on junipers, after pruning large branches, and therefore you have to pay attention to where the cut is made in order to hide it on the backside or hidden by branches. Another way is to hollow out bigger scars, so it looks natural.

[1] What are Shohin Bonsai?: *Bonsai can be classified into different groups by size. The size of bonsai is generally measured as the distance between the top of the soil and the apex of the bonsai tree. Shohin are considered small bonsai– up to 25 cm tall and a width limitation of 35 cm. Mame or mini bonsai are up to 15 cm in height.*

RUST IN FIGS & EVENTS CALENDAR

Rust in Port Jackson Figs

Ficus rubiginosa, commonly known as the rusty- or Port Jackson fig is native the Australian east coast from Queensland to Bega in sourthern NSW. At the SCBC October meeting, Sue ran a short discussion on a fungal infection "rust" which has attacked a significant number of members fig bonsai.

Rust on Fig Leaves

Identifying Fig Rust on Leaves

Humid air or excessive rain will encourage this fig disease. Rust is a fungal growth that is rarely found in dry climates. The first sign of rust are tiny yellow spots on the underside of leaves. The rust on the fig leaf's underside then spreads to the upper proportion and the spots become reddish brown (0.5 to 1 cm across). As the rust progresses, the fig leaves will yellow and fall to the ground.

How to Prevent Fig Rust

The simplest way to prevent fig rust is to water only the ground under you figs. Rust fungus seeks free moisture on the leaves. Water in the morning so the sun has a chance to dry the foliage. Careful pruning can also help by improving the air circulation through the branches, allowing the evaporation of excess water from the leaves. Rust spores remain over winter if you do not clean up any debris of fallen leaves.

Treating Fig Rust

Separate any infected trees from your other bonsai especially other uninfected figs. Rust seems to respond best to fungicides containing copper sulphate and lime. You will need to repeat treatments every two to three weeks. Often fungicide treatment is unsuccessful for the current season. However it is important to keep removing any infected leaves and put them in the garbage (never compost) bin to reduce the spread of the infection.

30th AABC National Convention, Brisbane, 2017

Program Features:
Leading bonsai artist, Marc Noelanders from Belgium; Tony Bebb and Steve Cullum

19-22 May 2017
www.bonsaisocietyqld.asn.au

Bonsai Events Calendar

Date	Event	Details
11-13 Nov 2016	Newcastle Bonsai Society Exhibition	Charlestown Bowling Club, 5 Lincoln St, Charlestown
20-26 March 2017	National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia, Canberra for 'Bonsai Week'	Canberra, venue tba.
6 – 7 May 2017	Illawarra Bonsai Society Annual Show (Autumn)	Sutherland District Trade Union Club (Tradies) Kingsway Gymea 25
19th - 22nd May 2017.	Association of Australian Bonsai Clubs 30th National Bonsai Convention	Royal on the Park, Brisbane. Qld. More info: www.bonsaisocietyqld.asn.au