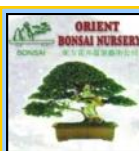



www.atozbonsai.com.au

**Supporting Our
local club....**



Proudly sponsoring the Yarra
Valley Bonsai Society

www.orientbonsai.com.au

www.sasheda.com.au

Official Sponsor of the
YVBS



PO Box 345 Mount Evelyn, VIC
3796 Australia

www.yarravalleybonsai.org.au
info@yarravalleybonsai.org.au

Reg. Assoc A0052264P

Pres: Rudi J 0418 369 852

Sec: Lindsay H 0403 800 671

Treas: Julie H 0419 870 240

Marktg: Mike C 0414 553 746

**The YVBS meets on the
second Tuesday of each
month now at Morrison's
(Morrison House)
Old Hereford Road,
Mount Evelyn**

*Informal 'Review & Overview'
sessions begin at 7:00pm with
a call to order at 7:30.*



118 B8

Saturday Workshops are 2-
5pm on the **LAST** Saturday of
the month, at the same venue
as monthlies!

Inside this issue:

Ask Mr. Miyagi	2
February Special Sale Day	2
Literati and Penjing	3
YVBS Show Report	4
Native Tips	4
Tree Mini-Profile—Fig	5
On the Display Table	6
Trade & Lib Update	6
Bonsai Calendar -Mar/Apr	7
Accolades, Kudos, Thanks	7
Upcoming Events	8
Other Clubs	8

The Yarra Valley Bonsai Society Newsletter

Highlights from January & February 2012

The January club meeting, traditionally a slow time of the year, was scheduled to be a workshop night—however, it was anything but slow, with a large turnout of members filling all available table space. Plenty of advice on hand, and much work was performed on a variety of trees.

The February meeting featured a triple header—a review session on bonsai styles, both classic and non-classic, followed by two very interesting presentations on bonsai imaging. First, club members Marcus and Callum gave a very informative presentation and demonstration on how to sketch bonsai - a good drawing being a valuable tool for planning future developments on our trees.

This was followed by a presentation on how to photograph bonsai by club members Margaret W and Lindsay H, including a demonstration of a simple photographic 'studio' which can be setup easily at home using simple and inexpensive materials and accessories.



Craig W ran a series of small group workshops during the January/February period, which provided an ideal opportunity for members to gain individual coaching on styling and care for their trees.

And finally, the annual club Special Sale Day was a great success! (See separate article later in the newsletter).

Continued Page 2

*Above—A hive of activity at the well-attended January workshop club meeting.
Below—Margaret and Lindsay covering the finer points of bonsai photography.*



Calendar Dates:

- Saturday 3 March and Sunday 4 March YVBS stall at Knox Festival, Wally Tew Reserve, Brennock Park Drive, Ferntree Gully.
- Sunday 11 March Free workshop at Bonsai The Imagination Tree, 1:00pm to 4:00pm.
- 13 March (Tuesday) YVBS Monthly Meeting. 7:00pm Morrisons.
- 31 March (Saturday) "Last Saturday of the Month" Workshop, including Kids Workshop. 2:00pm Morrisons.
- Saturday 7 April to Monday 9 April Bendigo Bonsai Club Easter Exhibition, Forrest St, Bendigo, 10:00am to 5:00pm
- 10 April (Tuesday) YVBS Monthly Meeting. 7:00pm Morrisons.
- 21 April (Saturday) Satsuki Interest Group, Bonsai Art Nursery, 236 Old Dandenong Road, Heathmont, 1:00pm
- Sunday 22 April BSV annual sale day at Kew Masonic Centre, 9:30am to 1:30pm.
- 28 April (Saturday) "Last Saturday of the Month" Workshop. 2:00pm Morrisons.

See also the Events Calendar on our website: www.yarravalleybonsai.org.au

Highlights from Jan/Feb 2012—Continued from Page 1



Left—Marcus and Callum demonstrate sketching. Right—Hard at work at Craig's small-group workshop.



Ask Mr. Miyagi.....



Q. I just purchased a bonsai; can I keep it in my house, like I've seen on TV?

A. The short answer is NO, there is no such thing as an indoor bonsai or an indoor tree. All bonsai are naturally outdoor trees and as such should remain outside. You may however bring your tree indoors for short periods of time. In Japan, bonsai are commonly brought inside for 1 or 2 days at a time and are shown as a part of a tokoname display before being returned outside where they can recover. The only exceptions to this are the tropical species that cannot tolerate lower temperatures during winter and without an artificial source of warmth, the tree would perish.

There are two main reasons that temperate climate bonsai are not kept inside for any length of time. Firstly, all deciduous and coniferous trees need a period of dormancy which is only triggered by cooler temperatures and it is difficult to provide adequate growing conditions for trees indoors. Inside, light levels are lower, humidity levels are very poor and trees suffer from lack of air circulation. For species that are hardy to frosts, it is far better to grow them outside all year round where conditions are conducive to their health and vigour.

Members may submit questions to Mr. Miyagi c/o the YVBS web forum or per the club email: info@yarravalleybonsai.org.au

February Special Sale Day

The YVBS Special Sale Day on Sunday 26th February was another outstanding success for both our sellers and the many buyers who took advantage of the excellent stock and prices on offer. As usual, there was a wide range of trees available, from developed bonsai in pots through to advanced starter and pre-bonsai material. A welcome addition this year was the table of Bruce from Waverley Group with his very professional looking bonsai display stands. Thanks to all sellers, buyers, and YVBS helpers for contributing to the day.

Left—Bonsai display stands on Bruce's table. Right—Eager buyers check out the wares.



Literati and Penjing

The word for the Chinese art of cultivating small trees in shallow pots is Penjing.

'Bonsai' is a Japanese pronunciation of the earlier Chinese term *Penzai*.

It's not just growing plants in small pots, the philosophy behind this living art form is of great significance.

The tradition of ascribing human experiences, sentiments, and traits to plants has very long roots in China. The pine, for instance, served as a metaphor for steadfastness and integrity. The bamboo symbolised the gentlemanly virtues of humility and uprightness. So when we gaze at a painting of a conifer with an elongated, graceful, slender trunk, and a crown consisting of just a few sparse branches, often precariously placed, we may assume that in all likelihood the artist has depicted his own mental or spiritual state. Paintings of such trees served as the inspiration for the style called 'literati' in penjing and bonsai. They reflect the scholars' self-image: towering high above a vulgar, corrupt, commercialised world, struggling to transcend the petty issues of everyday life, which translated into a line-oriented and minimalist design. A literati tree is a prime case of expressionist art.



China's literati were men of culture and erudition (*wen ren*) who, as a group, formed the pillars of traditional society for a millennium. Access to this elite was granted on the basis of ability and learning, demonstrated by the successful passing of examinations based on the Confucian classics, and a general humanistic education. They were a highly educated class of scholars serving as the main structure of imperial administration directly beneath the emperor. They were expected to display moral loftiness and devotion to a high code of ethics, and functioned as the emperor's conscience.

The literati were the original creators of a particular genre of Chinese painting, calligraphy, poetry, garden design, stone appreciation (*Suiseki*), and the entire art of miniature trees and landscapes (*Penjing*), not just the segment named after them – the 'literati' style. This art did not happen in isolation, but within the extremely rich context of literati culture where several art forms enjoyed the benefits of vivid and imaginative interplay and cross-fertilization.

To all their artistic pursuits, the literati applied similar theories and concerns and the same aesthetics. In general literati art was informed by the lofty spirit, noble character, and refined taste that constituted the scholar's ideal of himself. In particular the literati embraced naturalness, plainness and an elegant simplicity.

Just like a good painting, a successful penjing is expected to exhibit much more than skilful mastery of technique. It, too, should convey the essence and spirit of a natural scene. A piece possessing lyrical quality and spiritual significance rates much higher than one whose sole merit is visual fidelity.

Literati goes beyond blind obedience to rules. As in all art, technique is a tool, not an end in itself. In bonsai and penjing we should explore our own unique paths to artistic creation and discover ways to express ourselves as aspects of our own reality.

Thanks to Diana Arnold from Waverley, Mornington, and Satsuki Interest Groups for supplying the original article, of which this is an abridged version.



YVBS FORUM: For new members, it bears repeating that our club has an on-line bulletin board and archive. In addition to the announcements and discussions on topics of bonsai interest, the forum also contains many newsletters from other clubs around Australia. These are to be found (surprise, surprise) in the folder entitled "Newsletters from Other Clubs" and are kept for approximately six months. There are also publications such as "Bonsai Magazine" and the "Satsuki Society Newsletter" which are archived in the library folder available only to members. If you visit the site and register as a user, please email Rudi via the club gmail so that he may add you as a club member user. Just visit our main webpage

<http://www.yarravalleybonsai.org.au> and follow the FORUM link on the left to the forum.

Growing Tips for Australian Natives as Bonsai

By Peter Raymaker

- 1.) The bigger the leaf, the bigger the challenge; consider ones with small close-packed leaves shooting from hardwood – these are easier to work with.
- 2.) While most natives exhibit continual growth, some have dormant periods before growth. Also to sustain growth periods, make sure you use a fertilizer for natives (=low phosphorus).
- 3.) Many natives must be pruned after flowering; for many species a prune BEFORE flowering can lead to excessive dieback.
- 4.) Transplanting works best at the first signs of new growth.
- 5.) Some native don't like to sprout on branches below a horizontal level (=when angle of branch with respect to apex is greater than 90 degrees).
- 6.) Use tie-downs rather than wire for shaping some sensitive-barked varieties;
- 7.) As a rule always seal your major cuts and **try not to disturb** the top/surface feeder roots.
- 8.) Just because they are natives does not mean you can be less vigilant in keep the soil moist
- 9.) Check out [http:// www.AusBonsai.com](http://www.AusBonsai.com). It's a great resource and forum for bonsai enthusiasts with a liking for natives.
- 10.) When choosing a native, have in mind the eventual size and shape.... Some specimens make superb larger bonsai but are virtually impossible to make a sustainable shohin or mid-size.
- 11.) In my view « Bonsai With Australian Native Plants » by Dorothy and Vita Koreshoff's is THE single best book on the subject.

YVBS Show—Progress Report

The Montrose Town Centre venue has been booked for our Show on Saturday 20th October 2012. The Show Committee has been formed and will proceed with the myriad of tasks required to produce a professional result over the following months. A special note to all members—select the trees that you would like to include in the show, and use the next 6 months to refine development so that they will be at their peak on the day. Remember that trees in all stages of development will be shown, and all members will have something which will add value to the overall display.

End-Of-Month Saturday Workshops

Plenty of activity at the January workshop (below left). The February workshop (below right) was a very hot day which kept total numbers down, but still produced a very active and productive day. For any members wanting good quality photographs of their trees, remember that a photo studio will be setup up at each Saturday workshop where photos can be taken for you. No camera required!



Tree Profile: Fig Tree—*Ficus*

General information: *Ficus* a genus of about 850 species of woody trees, shrubs and vines, collectively known as fig trees or figs, is one of the most loved bonsai for many reasons. It is an excellent tree for beginners, as most species of *Ficus* are fast growers, tolerant of most any soil and light conditions, make fine indoor bonsai, and perhaps most importantly, are remarkably forgiving of those just learning bonsai watering techniques. Most *Ficus* grow "banyan" roots naturally; this feature is often showcased by styling *Ficus* in dramatic air-root and root-over-rock styles.

Lighting: Most *Ficus* will grow decently in low light, but thrive in high light conditions.

Temperature: An excellent choice for an indoor bonsai. Indoor *Ficus* appreciate being brought outdoors during summer. Does not like draughts.

Watering: Moderate, increasing in summer and decreasing in winter. Many *Ficus* are very tolerant of being over or under watered, which makes them ideal for beginners. *Ficus* likes a daily misting to maintain humidity.

Feeding: Every two weeks during growth, every 4-6 in winter, using a half-strength plant food or a bonsai fertilizer.

Pruning and wiring: *Ficus* are suitable for most styles of bonsai, but are especially suitable for styles which make use of their property of extensive rooting, such as air-root and root-over-rock styles. *Ficus* can be used for all sizes of bonsai, although, obviously, the small-leaved species make the best miniature bonsai. *Ficus* can be wired, but become quite stiff when lignified, and thus are best wired while the shoots are a bit green. Watch carefully to see that the wire doesn't bite in, as *Ficus* is a very fast grower. Prune back to 2-4 leaves after 6-10 leaves have grown. *Ficus* will bleed a milky latex profusely, which a drop of water will stop.

Propagation: One of the easiest plant to root from cuttings; although the specifics for maximum success vary with species, it's always worth sticking them into soil for the heck of it!

Repotting: Every 2-3 years, although some will grow rapidly enough that yearly repotting may be necessary. *Ficus* is the single most forgiving bonsai in terms of repotting season. The best time is before a new growth spurt, especially in spring, but *Ficus* can literally be repotted any time of year if reasonable after-care is given. Roots can easily be pruned by half.

Pests and diseases: **Pests:** Scale, eelworm, black fly, thrips. **Diseases:** Anthracnose fungus and various forms of rot. Some *Ficus* will lose leaves if overwatered or given too little light.

Some species suitable for bonsai:

Ficus benjamina: weeping fig, Benjamin tree - One of the best trees for beginners

Ficus buxifolia - Small, triangular leaves and very good branch ramification for *Ficus*.

Ficus macrophylla: Moreton Bay fig, Australian banyan - glossy, leathery, dark-green leaves.

Ficus microcarpa: banyan, Green Island fig - thick, round sized leaves, which can be reduced.

Ficus neriifolia: fig, willow-leaf ficus

Ficus retusa: fig, banyan fig, Indian laurel - small, glossy, leathery leaves.

Grows especially spectacular banyan roots.

Ficus rubiginosa: Port Jackson fig, rusty covered undersides of leaves.

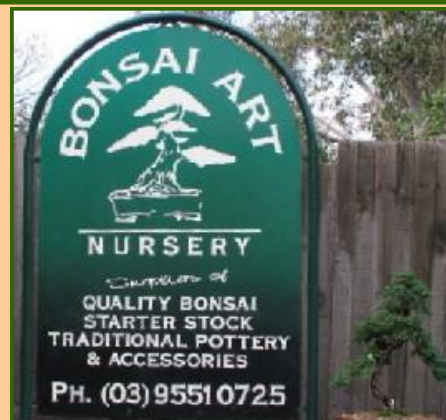


BONSAI ART NURSERY

Come down and see our newly acquired stock of JAPANESE pots!

236 Old Dandenong Road, Heatherton
Closed Wednesdays and Sundays

<http://www.bonsaiart.com.au>

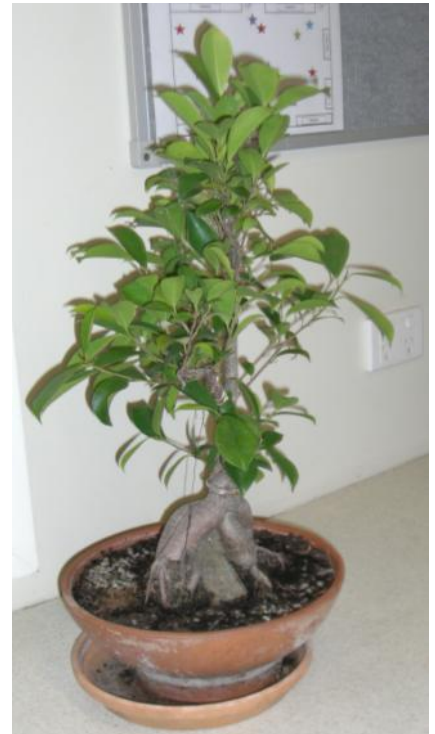


On The Display Table



Above—The display bench at the January club meeting

Right—A fig on the February display bench



Left—Nice little Lilly Pilly

Right—A cedar undergoing extensive early training.



Library Check-out!

YVBS has subscribed to the new bonsai magazine produced by the Association of Australian Bonsai Clubs. A copy of the first two issues is in the library for perusal or borrowing. Remember, the checkout period for books and other library material is one month. If you check out a book and are not able to make the next meeting, you can return the book to Bill at Morrisons during office hours or even post it to the club PO Box.

Trade Table Cheque-out!

The trade table has been restocked with new tools, wire and other accessories. Don't forget the club's tool sharpening kit, available for use at meetings. Anything else you would like to see stocked? Eg special Japanese tools, branch-benders, etc. just advise at the trade table or to any committee member.



Bonsai—The Imagination Tree

Bonsai, starters, potting mix, pots, training courses, bonsai maintenance services. New pots just arrived!

25 % discount applies for any bonsai club members on green stock, soil and tools.

136 York Road, Mt Evelyn

Tel: 03 9737 0400

Melway Ref 120 D1

www.sashieda.com.au

Bonsai Calendar: March– April

By Jeff Barry

The occasional glimpse of brilliant colours is the most rewarding sign that autumn is on its way. For many species, this can be the most exciting time in the growing season. Deciduous trees such as Maples, Hornbeams, and Elms can put on a dazzling display of yellows, oranges and reds as they would in nature. This time of year will always remind me the lakes of southern Ontario in Canada, where I spent much of my childhood. The shades of autumn colours within the Maple forests seemed as endless as views.

Here are a few tips to help make the most of this time of the year.

- When the weather begins to show signs of coolness, progressively give your deciduous trees more sun. This will encourage autumn colour throughout the foliage. Watch out for the occasional hot day!
- Turn your bonsais occasionally if they get uneven light. This will ensure next years buds will develop evenly around the tree.
- Species such as azaleas, camellias and many fruit trees should not be pruned at this time if early spring flowers are desired.
- Late summer growth will strengthen and increase the girth of trunks and branches. Inspect for wire damage.
- Late summer provides a small window of opportunity to carefully repot some bonsai. Be conservative with root pruning at this time. Weather can be unpredictable.
- Use an organic fertilizer (liquid) high in potassium and phosphorus to encourage woody growth in the trunk
- Remove old fruit and flowers.
- Fertilize pines in autumn (not spring) to help reduce needle size.

While enjoying your autumn display, put some thought into spring. As far as this Canadian bonsai enthusiast is concerned, the Australian winter seems to fly by.

Accolades, Kudos, and Thanks

- To sellers, buyers and participating club members for ensuring that the Special Sale Day was such a success.
- To all members who have volunteered for the Show committee to organize our special day in October.



www.atozbonsai.com.au

Supporting Our local club....

We have a new stock of pines just out of the growing area.

2" to 3" trunks from \$60 each.

Also maples and hawthorns, and a range of new pots.

Open every day 10:00am to 4:00pm, except Mondays.

A to Z Bonsai

429 Monbulk Road,

Monbulk



ヤラ谷間盆栽会

Volume 5 No 4
Jan & Feb 2012

Page 8

www.yarravalleybonsai.org.au

A group for all lovers of bonsai in the "far east" of Melbourne



Yarra Valley Bonsai Society
PO Box 345
Mount Evelyn, Victoria 3796
Australia

*Looking Ahead to
March & April 2012*



On Saturday 3rd March and Sunday 4th March the YVBS will have a stall at the **Knox Festival** in the Wally Tew Reserve (former Ferntree Gully Reserve) Brenock Park Drive, Ferntree Gully, Melway 74/B5. Time: 10:00 AM - 5:00PM. Entrance Fees: \$3.00 Adults, \$2.00 Children & Concession, \$7:00 Families.



Our monthly meeting on 13th March will be our third "IRON CHEF" fun night with our grand masters Craig Wilson and Jeff Barry! There will be NO Review/Overview Session. Display Table: Juniper "Cascade / Semi cascade" & Members' Choice.



Our monthly workshop will be on Saturday 31st March, 2:00 PM - 4:30 PM at Morrisons.



The monthly meeting on 10th April will start with the Review/Overview Session on "Front of Tree and Branch Selection", presented by Mike Cotterell, followed by putting it in practice at the main event with Jeff Barry - using a common nursery tree, which will be very interesting. Display Table: "Accent Plants" and Members' Choice.



On Saturday 21st April the "Satsuki Interest Group" will be meeting at "Bonsai Art" Nursery, 236 Old Dandenong Road, Heatherton, at 1:00PM. Don't forget to bring along a Satsuki or other Azalea for discussion or display and a gold coin donation.



Our monthly workshop will be on Saturday 28th April, 2:00 PM - 4:30 PM at Morrisons.

Events from Other Clubs



Bonsai-The Imagination Tree is holding a "Free Workshop" on Sunday 11th March, 1:00PM - 4:00PM in their Nursery at 136 York Rd, Mt. Evelyn.



On Saturday 17th March and Sunday 18th March the Canberra Bonsai Society is hosting the **9th National Exhibition and Symposium of Australian Native Plants as Bonsai**, at the Australian National Botanic Gardens in Canberra. The theme of the symposium will be "Developing and Shaping Native Species as Bonsai". For more details go to www.cbs.org.au and check in their "Latest News" section.



BENDIGO BONSAI CLUB EXHIBITION EASTER 2012, at the Forest Street Uniting Church Hall, Forest Street Bendigo from Saturday 7th to Monday 9th April. Opening hours will be 10:00AM to 5:00 PM on the Saturday and Sunday and 10:00AM to 4:00PM on the Monday.



Bonsai Society Victoria is holding its annual Sale Day on Sunday 22nd April, 9:30 AM-1:30 PM at the Kew Masonic Centre, 31 Strathalbyn St, Kew. Costs: Tables \$25.00, Entry \$2.00.



Member Benefits Refer to the website for a list of discounts to members upon presentation of a current & valid YVBS Membership card. "Freebies" of donated items are also made available from time to time at monthly meetings.

ADVERTISERS & SPONSORS:

Advertising on our website and/or in the newsletter is available for any registered business or sole trader. Society Sponsorship opportunities are capped at three for any year, however supportership opportunities still remain for any business in an area related to the craft of bonsai.

For a prospectus or further information contact Rudi via the society's external email: info@yarravalleybonsai.org.au