



Proud to sponsor the Yarra Valley Bonsai Society

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### Quotable Quotes

*Don't worry if you kill a tree - at least you will have gained a pot.*

*Hugh Grant*



Proud sponsor of the Yarra Valley Bonsai Society

[www.bonsaisensation.com.au](http://www.bonsaisensation.com.au)



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The YVBS meets on the **second Tuesday** of each month now at Chirnside Park Community Hub  
33 Kimberley Drive  
Chirnside Park

Meetings begin at 7:30pm.

**Metway 37 F3**

**Saturday Workshops** are 1-4:00pm on the **Last Saturday** of the month, at the same venue as monthlies!

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# The Yarra Valley Bonsai Society Newsletter

## Highlights from May & June 2019

The May meeting featured guest demonstrator Tien from Club sponsor Bonsai Sensation, who took as his subject the styling of one of the left over cedars from the earlier Team Challenge night. He felt inspired to adopt a different styling option than the upright form, and elected to go for an "aerial raft" form after seeking audience input - effectively a cross between a slanting and semi-cascade style.

Tien confided that it is often difficult to get the initial inspiration for styling the tree, but to try to look for the tree within the tree.

In the aerial raft form, Tien laid the tree and pot over on its side, and proceeded to remove most of the bottom branches, and then wired the upright branches into a random but consistent upwards growth. He made sure that he introduced differences in the height and thicknesses of the upright "trunks" to ensure that the result looked natural.

Tien advised the eventual owner of the tree to do a rough re-pot now to establish the growth angle, and then a more complete repot during the coming or the following spring once the tree is more established.

Tien explained that cedars are maintained by pinching out the terminal tips of growing shoots, initially on the primary growth, then the secondary and tertiary shoots as ramification develops.

Lindsay H purchased the tree at the end of the night, and committed to keeping both Tien and the members informed as the tree develops. He reports that so far, the tree has survived the initial repot!

Tien also said that he considered that there are three stages in developing bonsai skills:

- 1) Consider as a tree (horticultural skills)
- 2) Consider as a bonsai (technical skills)



Above - Tien established the new planting angle for the cedar.

Below left - David R working in parallel on refining Tien's other trees.



### Calendar Dates:

- 9th July (Tuesday) YVBS Monthly Meeting. 7:30pm. Chirnside Hub.
- 27th July & 28th July (Saturday & Sunday) Bonsai Northwest Exhibition. Footscray.
- 27th July (Saturday) "Last Saturday of the Month" Workshop. 1:00pm. Chirnside Hub.
- 3rd August & 4th August (Saturday & Sunday) Goldfields Bonsai Winter Exhibition. Daylesford.
- 13th August (Tuesday) YVBS Monthly Meeting. 7:30pm. Chirnside Hub.
- 30th August to 2nd September Friday to Monday) 2019 World Bonsai Masters. National Arboretum, Canberra.
- 31st August (Saturday) "Last Saturday of the Month" Workshop. 1:00pm. Chirnside Hub.

See also the Events Calendar on our website: [www.yarravalleybonsai.org.au](http://www.yarravalleybonsai.org.au)

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## Highlights from May & June - Cont. From Page 1

### 3) Consider as an art form (creativity)

In parallel with Tien's demonstration, David R worked on another couple of Tien's trees to wire and refine their design.

The June meeting featured another guest presenter, Scott Martin of Bonsai Matsu, who demonstrated the initial styling of a nice Japanese Black Pine. Scott explained that he had been to Japan on 5 or 6 occasions specifically to learn about Black Pines.

Black Pines benefit from a systematic approach to care and maintenance:

- Around the start of December you should commence de-candling - de-candling will cause a second flush of growth to occur.
- Around June the trees should be in their dormant period so there is more flexibility for shaping, and the buds will have hardened off.
- Thin out buds in this dormant period to only two in each location - if you don't clean out or thin the tree, in Spring everything grows but at least 50% may need to be removed. When pruning, look for buds further back from your cut site. If you remove growth where there is no bud behind, the branch will die. There is limited chance of back budding.

With Black Pines you need to balance the resources available to the tree by pruning and plucking – forcing the sap, nutrients and growth into the areas you want it to go.

Generally, where there is more green on the tree, this is where the growth will be directed. Black pines are apically dominant and will always want to grow taller even at the expense of the lower branches. The care of Black Pines can be summed up as Control and Balance.

Before you begin, look at the genetics of the tree. When you are looking at pines get one with a strong nebari and straight, sharp needles. Decide on your possible front. Scott tends to look for trees where the apex is not directly above the trunk. He prefers to have a tree lean towards you rather than lean back from the viewer. This creates a sense of imbalance.

Having been able to view the tree for some months prior to the demonstration, Scott had chosen 5 possible fronts, which he marked onto the pot, and then spent some time explaining his reasoning behind each choice.

Scott's advice was to always work towards good structure – resist the temptation to 'spaghetti' a branch from the back right around to the front. Always be prepared to take two steps back in order to achieve one step forward if that is best for the eventual structure and presentation of the tree. Be brave and make hard decisions early on areas that are not quite right. Don't be tempted to hang onto branch/es that you know do not work as it is much harder to bring yourself to remove them once you have had the tree for years. Guesstimate the final height of the tree as this will determine which branches are going to work in the overall structure and which can be readily removed. Once you remove a branch – don't dwell on it. Bin it and move on.

Black Pines bend really easily at this time of year (June) when sap isn't flowing through the tree. Scott used the analogy of a hose. A hose full of water is harder to bend than an empty hose. This is the same as a branch with flowing sap being harder to bend than a dormant branch. Pine branches bend directly from the trunk towards the ground at an acute angle. They should not be allowed to curve up then be curled down as maybe a deciduous branch would. When a branch is bent, the new fibres of

*Continued Page 3*



Above - Scott Martin at work during the June meeting.



### Library Check-out!

YVBS has a comprehensive range of bonsai books and magazines in our library, all of which are available for borrowing without charge. 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 at a workshop 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. A limited range of pots are also in stock. Don't forget the club's tool sharpening kit, available for use at meetings. Anything else you would like to see stocked? Just advise at the trade table or to any committee member.





the branch need to grow over the old to set the branch into its new position.

Wire is at its strongest when it is straight so the fewer bends, the stronger the wiring. The angle of the wire has to go in parallel with what you are trying to achieve. Wires should always be kept on the outside of a bend. Regardless of the angle of the wiring you need to know what you want the branch to do that is important. Do you want the branch to move down, forward or back? Always tension the wire against the branch. The wire must contact the branch to hold it in tension to keep position. The wire should stay on the branch until the branch begins to swell around the wire, but not so long that it cuts into the branch and leaves an ugly scar. When wiring, 3 turns of a wire around a branch will anchor it, so you can move to the other end of the wire and start wiring a second branch knowing the wire will not move.

Guy wires should only ever be used to keep a branch in position and not be used to force a branch down. Scott used very fine wire and attached his guy wires to screws drilled into the trunk or in the nebari just below the soil. The reasoning being that when the tree is repotted the guy wire will not be affected as it would if it had been attached to the side of the pot. Also attaching the wire to the pot may put undue pressure on the trunk which may cause the trunk to move rather than the branch. To bend thicker branches Scott protected areas of the branch with split pieces of garden hose, and wired steel bars to the underside of the branch. He then levered the branch down gradually to its new position. When the branch reached a certain point, Scott says you will almost feel it 'give up' resistance as the fibres tear.

Scott only uses copper wire. It is soft when bent but 'sets like concrete' when it is twisted under tension around a branch. Scott suggests using copper wire on pines for its strength. Aluminium wire allows the branch to gradually move back towards its original position.

Pines must be fed in both spring and autumn otherwise, while they will survive, they will never be great trees.

For those members who requested Scott's contact details, they are as follows: [www.bonsaimatsu.com](http://www.bonsaimatsu.com) and [scott@bonsaimatsu.com](mailto:scott@bonsaimatsu.com).



Above - The original and finished tree, (after Scott had completed the wiring at home).

## Kudos, Accolades and Thanks

- To Tien from Bonsai Sensation for presenting a most enlightening demonstration on alternative styling of a cedar at the May meeting.
- To Scott from Bonsai Matsu for his very detailed demonstration and discussion on Japanese Black Pines at the June meeting.

## Member Profile

Gunter T was born in Germany and now lives in Lilydale. He is married with one son and three grandchildren.

Now retired, he has no formal horticultural training but loves gardening. He became interested in bonsai late last year when he joined the club, and has learnt most of his bonsai techniques from members of the club.

He has a collection of about 6 bonsai at this time, and has a long term goal of learning more and enjoying the hobby.

His other interests include gardening and restoring antique tractors.



**NEW PRODUCT LINE**....for those starting out or with a handful of bonsai, I have introduced a **50/50** mix of **ORCHIATA PINE BARK** and **DIATOMITE 2-7mm** in a **20L bucket @ \$25.00**. Also available are **DIATOMITE 35L bags @ \$25.00** and **ORCHIATA PINE BARK 40L bags (3-6 or 6-9mm) @ \$30.00**. **ORCHID POTS** are available in a range of sizes. To order call Julie **0419 870 240** or email [julie@bonsairoots.com.au](mailto:julie@bonsairoots.com.au)



## 2019 AABC Convention

A number of members attended the 2019 National Convention of the Association of Australian Bonsai Clubs, which was held in Melbourne again this year at the Mantra Bell City in Preston. Sponsored by the Victorian Native Bonsai Club, the convention and associated bonsai exhibition featured solely Australian native trees.

Featured artist was Ryan Neil from the United States who seemed excited to be working with what to him were new species. He was ably assisted on stage by Hugh Grant, with other contributors being Marcela Ferreira, Roger Hnatiuk and Quentin Valentine.

Collected Kunzia trees featured in the on-stage demonstrations on both the Saturday and Sunday, which were a challenge for both Ryan and Hugh which they overcame admirably - the trees fetched some outstanding values at the subsequent auction.

Ryan's trial of bending a very large, stiff and brittle kunzea branch by first hydrating the branch through the use of wet paper towels wrapped around the branch flew in the face of conventional bonsai lore, but proved successful on this occasion.

The bonsai exhibition was outstanding, as we have come to expect from shows staged by the Victorian Native Bonsai Club. Ryan admitted to being blown away by the quality of some of the trees on display.

The Convention next year moves to Sydney, and will be staged from 15th to 18th May 2020, entitled "A Golden Celebration". Featured international artists are Juan Andrade from Costa Rica and Mitsuo Mitsuda from Japan.



Above - Featured artist Ryan Neil at the Convention.



Although a little more difficult for us to get to, it is highly recommended for all members who can manage it.

Left - some of the trees in the exhibition - from left, Coastal Tea Tree, Casuarina littoralis, Melaleuca.

## Novice Training Course

The Novice Training Course for 2019 has now been completed, and 12 attendees are now fully-fledged graduates from the course!

Craig Wilson did his usual excellent job in drawing on his wealth of knowledge and experience to introduce the basics of the bonsai art and craft to the participants.

The next Novice course will be scheduled in 2020 for any interested members who missed out this year, and Intermediate Structured Workshops with Craig are planned for August this year - more details later.



Above - Craig presents the first lesson at our new Chirnside Park venue.

## BONSAI SENSATION NURSERY

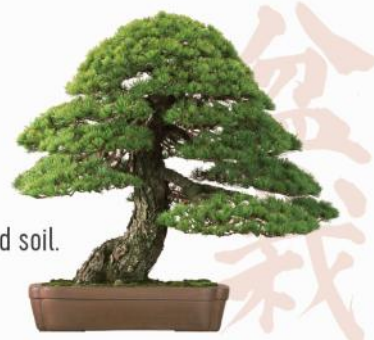
MONDAY TO FRIDAY 9:00am – 5:00pm / WEEKENDS 10:00am – 3:00pm

PHONE 8794 9668 / MOBILE 0425 722 827

253 Centre Road, Narre Warren South, VIC 3805

We have more than 30,000 plants for sale, including an extensive range of pots, tools, wire, and soil. Lessons, plant boarding, and restyling are also available.

Visit our Facebook page and website [BONSAISENSATION.COM.AU](http://BONSAISENSATION.COM.AU) for more information





## Tree Profile: *Callistemon - Bottlebrush*

**General Information:** The Australian native *Callistemon* are mainly found up and down the east coast of Australia, and are commonly known as Bottlebrush because of their cylindrical brush-like flowers. They are much admired for their brilliant flowers which generally form in spring, but can spot-flower at other times. They are grown extensively in gardens and public areas. The plants are all woody shrubs which range in size from 0.5m to 4m tall. They often grow in damp or wet conditions such as along creek beds or in areas which are prone to floods. They grow in a wide range of soils provided that they are not too alkaline, but good drainage is essential for pot culture. The bark varies between species, and can be fibrous, rough, hard, though finely textured, or it can be papery with soft changes of colour. Many *Callistemon*s have beautifully coloured new leaves. These vary from pale pink through to dark rusty greens. Though not as spectacular as the flowers, these colours add greatly to the visual enjoyment of seeing these plants grow through the seasons.

**Position:** Full sun, all year around for optimum growth and flower production.

**Watering:** Although drought tolerant in the wild, they must be well-watered in pot culture. Check daily and water if the pot is drying out.

**Feeding:** Like all members of the myrtle family (Myrtaceae or Eucalypt family), *Callistemon*s will thrive on nitrogen-rich fertiliser. Care needs to be taken not to overdo the nitrogen, as this encourages the production of lush leaves at the expense of good flowering! Two applications of blood and bone or similar, one in autumn and another in late winter is recommended for flower production, although frequent applications of liquid fertilizer such as Powerfeed or Charlie Carp will maximize healthy foliar growth. Do not fertilise when flowering, as this reduces the flowering duration.

**Repotting:** As *callistemon*s are quite vigorous growers, roots will quickly fill a pot. Check drainage in the pot, and if water is slow to be absorbed, repotting should be scheduled! Once per year or every second or third year will probably be required. Wait until the weather starts warming up and new growth is starting before repotting, generally from mid-Spring onwards.

**Pruning and Wiring:** For general shaping, prune them hard just after flowering finishes. Prune behind the flower brushes. If you leave a few green leaves below your cut, new growth will come from the axils of those leaves. Do not prune after March/April, or you will lose flower buds which appear on new growth. Pinching tips for ramification is permissible. Wire at any time when needed, but best after flowering and heavy pruning when the structure can be more easily seen.

**Propagation:** Can be grown easily from seed, however *callistemon*s hybridise easily so the characteristics of the resultant seedlings may vary from the parent tree. Collect the seed pods when mature and store in a container or bag in a warm, dry place. When left on the tree, the seedpods can take up to trees years to release the seed, so best to collect the oldest, unopened seed pods. Seeds will be released into the container from the pods in anything from a few weeks to a year, so be patient! Sow seed in spring. Alternatively, take semi-hardwood cuttings in summer – these will grow true to the parent plant.

**Pests:** Scale, and the attendant black fungus, can sometimes be a problem. Remove them with fingernails if isolated, or control with white oil if extensive. *Callistemon* are also prone to attack from a variety of caterpillars, the worst type comprise multiple large black caterpillars from the same egg laying which because of their numbers will rapidly defoliate a bonsai tree. Keep a close eye on your trees! Pick them off with tweezers if found. Other smaller caterpillars may also be found, but usually in smaller numbers and so do less damage. Keep an eye out for eaten leaves, and then search for the caterpillar culprit!

**Styles:** Mainly grown in the upright styles. Naturally growing specimens vary from multistemmed shrubs to erect small trees with weeping branches, so best to try to reflect what is seen on nature.

**Varieties:** There are about 50 species of *callistemon*, many of which would not have been tried as bonsai but which would probably succeed. Some of the more readily available types are:

*Callistemon sieberi* – native to our local Yarra Valley area, pale yellow flowers in summer.

*Callistemon viminalis* – The Weeping Bottlebrush, with bright red flower spikes.

*Callistemon citrinus* – The Crimson Bottlebrush, bright red flower spikes in summer and autumn.

*Callistemon salignus* – the Willow Bottlebrush – attractive narrow foliage and white papery bark, flowers are generally white or greenish, but pink, red and mauve forms can be found.

*Callistemon* cultivars – generally from *viminalis* or *citrinus* as one parent, including-

Captain Cook – one of the smaller cultivars with bright red flower spikes and small narrow leaves.

Little John – a dwarf cultivar with masses of flowers and blue-green foliage

Kings Park Special – very hardy, will generally bud back from old wood more readily than other cultivars. Bright red flower spikes and attractive furrowed bark.

Dawson River Weeper – large cultivar with a more pronounced weeping habit. Bright red flower spikes.



*Pictures courtesy of AusBonsai, multiple contributors.*

## On The Display Table



A selection of trees on the Display Table at the May and June meetings.



## Bonsai in the Community

We were asked by the Croydon Garden Club to present an Introduction to Bonsai at their June meeting - which unfortunately coincided with our Club meeting date and time - but Lindsay H went along and delivered the presentation using slides and a selection of bonsai trees for illustration. The talk was well-received and generated a lot of questions and interest. We may get some of their people along to our Saturday workshops, so please extend a warm welcome to them if you see them.

Another presentation was requested from a similar Garden Club group by one of the members who belongs to both groups - to be scheduled later in the year or perhaps next year.



## BONSAI ART NURSERY

New Trading Hours

Mon, Tues, Thur, Fri - 9:00am to 5:00pm

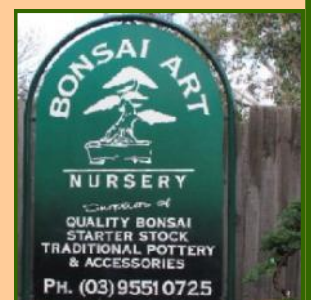
Sat, Sun - 10:00am to 4:00pm

Closed Wednesday

Great selection of bonsai, starters, and pots including a range of quality Japanese pots.

[www.bonsaiart.com.au](http://www.bonsaiart.com.au)

236 Old Dandenong Road, Heatherton





## *Bonsai Calendar: July - August*

Most species that are used for bonsai are hardy (able to withstand freezing) however, when grown in containers they do not have the ability to bury their roots deep into the ground, which insulates them from the cold. The Melbourne climate rarely reaches zero (freezing) or sub zero temperatures but protecting your trees from the winter elements may still be necessary. Be wary of extremely wet weather as having your trees saturated for extended amounts of time may lead to problems through rotting of the roots, which is invariably fatal!

Having the ability to inspect the detailed branch structure of your deciduous trees in winter provides an excellent opportunity to consider restyling your trees. Here are a few tips to get you through the winter.

- Monitor the weather and protect your bonsai from excess rain, wind and cold. Find the most protected area in your yard. Place them undercover if necessary.
- Keep your trees as well drained as possible. Place bricks or blocks of wood under your bonsai to ensure water is escaping the pot and air is circulating around and under your trees.
- Carefully inspect each tree and make any changes that will improve your bonsai. Remember the busy potting season is not far away so having your wiring and pruning complete before this time will take the pressure off.
- Avoid the temptation to repot too early. Wait until the buds start to swell before attempting this procedure.
- Prepare your potting medium and place in a dry area. Organize any other items needed for potting (root picks, mesh, scoops etc.)
- Consider what pot you will use for each of your trees. Place them next to the bonsai that they will be paired with.

It is difficult to predict the changing of the seasons. Trying to schedule with the use of a calendar may lead to problems. Watch your trees carefully and let them guide you.

## *Saturday Workshops*

Attendance at the Last Saturday of the Month workshops have been down a little lately, perhaps due to the inclement weather, but remember that we have plenty of room in our new facility to spread out, so we encourage all members to come along, with or without their trees, to do some work, watch other members and learn from their activities, or just have a chat. There is always plenty of helpful advice on hand for those who need it, and always something new to observe and perhaps a snippet of new information to be gained.



**[www.bonsaisensation.com.au](http://www.bonsaisensation.com.au)**

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# ヤラ谷間盆栽会

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May & June  
2019

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[www.yarravalleybonsai.org.au](http://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  
July & August 2019*



Our monthly meeting on Tuesday 9th July will be a demonstration and presentation by Michael Simonetto on Flowering Quince, covering growing, training and propagation. This is a tree with spectacular flowers in late winter/early spring, whose cultivation is generally not well understood, so should be a night not to be missed! There will be no Bonsai Basics Review. Display Table - Suiseki and Rocks, Flowering Quince, and Members Choice.



Our monthly workshop will be on Saturday 27th July at Chirnside Park Community Hub, 1:00pm to 4:00pm.



Our Monthly meeting on Tuesday 13th August will feature a Bonsai Basics Review on Tree Progression by Howard W, followed by a general workshop night under the direction of our own experienced members. There will also be an opportunity for a Swap and Sale area. Display Table - Nebari and Members Choice.



Our monthly workshop will be on Saturday 31st August at Chirnside Park Community Hub, 1:00pm to 4:00pm.



## Other Events



Bonsai Northwest Exhibition & Sale, Saturday 27th and Sunday 28th July, 10:00am to 4:00pm at Footscray Community Arts Centre, 45 Moreland Street, Footscray. Admission \$5 Adults.



Goldfields Bonsai Society will be holding their Winter Exhibition Daylesford Town Hall on Saturday 3rd August and Sunday 4th August. No further details are to hand at this time - check on our Forum closer to the date. Admission \$3 adults.



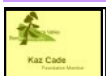
The National Bonsai & Penjing Collection of Australia will be staging the 2019 World Bonsai Masters event in Canberra at the National Arboretum from Friday 30th August to Monday 2nd September. The event will comprise a series of workshops on the Friday, Sunday and Monday, and a Critique and demonstration on the Saturday. More information at [www.nationalarboretum.act.gov.au](http://www.nationalarboretum.act.gov.au).



Members are reminded that YVBS Membership Renewal Fees for the 2019/2020 year are due on 1st July 2019. See the Renewal Letter sent to all members for payment details.

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.



**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](mailto:info@yarravalleybonsai.org.au)