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

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



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

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The Yarra Valley Bonsai Society Newsletter



Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!



Highlights from November & December 2013

The November club meeting featured a brief presentation from Michael Simonetto, followed by a workshop coordinated by Michael.

Michael spoke on the necessity of full or partial defoliation on deciduous trees to develop the fine branch structure that we all desire. He demonstrated on a trident maple group, and said that tridents should be defoliated at least twice every season - the first time after two months from coming into leaf, and the second time after a further two months. Japanese maples should be defoliated if vigorous, otherwise just pinch back as normal. He also indicated that spruces, shimpaku and needle junipers must have up to two thirds of new growth pinched back.

Many members brought in trees to work on, and Michael's clear advice and assistance was greatly appreciated by all.



The December meeting was the Christmas breakup, but we were also treated to special presentation/demonstration by Quentin on styling natives. Quentin stated that there were no special rules for styling natives - look for the left-right-back arrangement of branches, movement in the trunk which should be open at the front, and a rounded crown. Tips of branches should be angled upwards, as they grow in nature. Don't be afraid to wire natives, but ensure that the tips are angled upwards.



Field digging or yamadori of natives is often unsuccessful due to their common practice of developing a widely spreading

Cont. Page 2

Top right - Michael Simonetto talks on defoliation of deciduous species.

Left - Ross gets ready to assist Mike with some heavy bending on his cedar.

Calendar Dates:

- 14 January (Tuesday) YVBS Monthly Meeting. 7:00pm Morrisons.
- 18 January (Saturday) Special Workshop with Barry Wood - Azaleas. 1:30pm Morrisons.
- 1 February (Saturday) Special Workshop with Quentin Valentine. 1:30pm Morrisons.
- 8 February (Saturday) Nursery Crawl 'Deep South'.
- 11 February (Tuesday) YVBS Monthly Meeting. 7:00pm Morrisons.
- 22 February (Saturday) "Last Saturday of the Month" Workshop. 2:00pm Morrisons.

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

Highlights from November and December - Cont. from Page 1

root system with few fibrous roots. If attempting to harvest from the field, it is probably better to do it in winter after prolonged rains. However, better and surer results are generally obtained from working with advanced nursery stock.

Defoliation of natives, in particular eucalypts and banksias, can be beneficial in promoting ramification and reducing leaf size. Repotting of natives may be done from mid-October through to March, ideally at the end of October. Pick a cool spell to repot rather than during the hottest days. After repotting, keep the tree in the shade for a week or two, then place out into its normal position. Once a native tree is accustomed to pot culture, then extensive root work can generally be done without ill effect.

Quentin demonstrated repotting of a huon pine group and



Above - Quentin with the huon pine to be worked on to his left, and other examples of his native bonsai.

Left - Steve and Marcella doing the heavy work on the demonstration examples.



styling of an old huon pine single tree, ably assisted by guest Marcella and our member Steve M. With the single tree, Quentin retained the multi-trunk arrangement to fill in the foliage to add depth, and arranged the foliage first in an upward direction and then drooping, producing a nice final design.

Quentin brought along a selection of his advanced native bonsai to illustrate that great bonsai creations can be achieved with our Australian native species.

Nursery Trips in 2014

Although we traditionally have arranged four nursery crawls throughout each year, it has been decided in 2014 to reduce this to two. The main reason for this decision is the busy syllabus throughout the year, including our Show in May and other special events and international visitors.

We will not be visiting Plantmark wholesale nursery during the year, however there is a new Plantmark nursery opened up in Wantirna at 771 Boronia Road (near EastLink) which is more local for us, and members can call in to this or any other Plantmark nursery at any time, indicate that they are from Yarra Valley Bonsai Society by showing their membership card, and buy at wholesale prices.

Following member suggestions, we are also attempting to arrange a yamadori session sometime during the year - stay tuned for further notifications next year! If anybody has any suggestions for a dig location and can arrange relevant permissions, please contact a committee member or email yarravalleybonsai@gmail.com with details.



library Check-out!

YVBS has subscribed to the new bonsai magazine produced by the Association of Australian Bonsai Clubs. Copies of all issues are 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. Lorraine Simpson and other pots 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.



Member Profile

Christiaan O'D lives in Upwey and is married with three children. He works at the Victorian Government Department of Justice.

His horticultural background is largely half hearted attempts at vegie gardens and enthusiastically killing off a number of trainers in the pursuit of understanding bonsai and pot culture. He admired bonsai many years ago as a child, but about three years ago stumbled across AusBonsai forum on the web, and fell in love with what our natives looked like as Bonsai.

He learnt his initial bonsai techniques from the internet.... then joined YVBS and continued the journey, learning from all at the club, from the magazines in the library and a beginners course with Craig.

He has about 100 pre bonsai training stock at the moment. Nothing is yet a bonsai, but he is happy learning how to keep trees alive in pot culture, and keen to explore yamadori to obtain more advanced stock. He really enjoys natives, but has a couple of nice pre bonsai black pines that he hopes will become reasonable trees in time. In the future, he would like to have a better understanding of how our natives respond to the bonsai culture, and contribute towards that knowledge.

In addition to bonsai, Christiaan enjoys playing guitar, reading, spending time chasing his kids around, and a good book.



Special Workshops

We have two Special Saturday Workshops coming up early in the new year, featuring two prominent guest presenter / demonstrators - Barry Wood and Quentin Valentine.

Barry is better known to us for his previous entertaining and informative demonstrations on group plantings, but he is also a satsuki azalea expert with great experience, which he will be sharing with us in a Special Workshop on Azaleas on Saturday 18th January from 1:30 to 4:30pm. Price for participants is \$10, observers free.

Quentin, President of the recently-formed Victorian Native Bonsai Club, will be running a Special Workshop on Natives on Saturday 1st February from 1:30 to 4:30pm. Price for participants is \$20, observers free.

Participant places will be filled on a first come, first served basis - register with Rudi at yarravalleybonsai@gmail.com or by ringing 0418 369 852 at your earliest convenience to avoid disappointment. Observer places are unlimited - just turn up on the day. Venue for both workshops is Morrisons.

Right - Barry indicating his thoughts on Rudi's satsuki during a recent meeting at the Satsuki Special Interest Group.



Ask Mr. Miyagi.....



Q. I'm going away over Christmas, will my bonsai be ok?

A. Keeping your bonsai watered while you are away from home has always been a problem for enthusiasts. Pruning, feeding and general maintenance work can be left for a week or two without any detriment to your trees but watering *has* to be attended to on a daily basis. I have known a few enthusiasts who have refused to go on holiday during the growing season for fear of losing trees through lack of water! Fears of tree's drying out in their owners' absence seem well founded as one always hears stories of well-meaning friends, relatives and neighbours who forget to water an expensive, prized tree.....

Asking a friend or neighbour can work but only if they are reliable enough to remember to water properly on a regular basis. Many trees have been lost after neighbours have forgotten to water a tree on just a single occasion while the owner is away on holiday. The amount of water a tree requires daily can be reduced by watering well and then being moved to a cool position away from light to reduce transpiration and moisture loss. This will increase the amount of time the tree can be left without additional watering, hopefully for the duration of your vacation. Your neighbours may be helpful and have the best intentions but are unlikely to have the experience to know how much and how often your trees require water and more importantly, how quickly the soil can dry over the course of a day, particularly when it is hot or windy.

Writing Credit: bonsai4me.com

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

Craig's Corner

The regular column by Craig Wilson of Gentiana Nursery.

NOTHOFAGUS

This extraordinary tree species is one of the most ancient genus in the world, they are restricted to the southern hemisphere and span from Australia across the Pacific and into the western part of South America. They were a predominant tree during the age of Gondwanaland and fossils have been found in Antarctica.

On the Australian mainland the principal species is *Nothofagus cunninghamii* and its range is restricted to the cooler parts of the great divide. The deciduous Tasmanian species *Nothofagus gunnii* would at first glance seem to be a bonsai growers dream but unfortunately these trees will not grow on the mainland.

During the early part of the 20th century the New Zealand species *Nothofagus fusca* was commonly planted in gardens and there are some fine old examples both in the Dandenong and Macedon ranges.

For the bonsai grower *Nothofagus cunninghamii* is the species most commonly encountered. The suitability of this species for bonsai is a subject much discussed. There are many pitfalls when growing these trees, they have a tendency to shed branches, they are very prone to heat stress and achieving good ramification is not easy. The positives are the ease with which they root prune and the beautiful mottled bark which seems to have its own species of lichen. I have a very old group which I bought in the early 80s and was collected from Kinglake in the early 70s because of the age of the bonsai and my fascination with the species I have persisted with the group and now as the trees approach the 45 year mark they are becoming beautiful and the bark on the main tree is beginning to crack. For someone starting out in bonsai that is a formidable wait and old specimens are thin on the ground. I know that Jeff at Chojo feature trees has some lovely old plants which were imported from Tasmania some years ago and they are beginning to show off the old bark which is so desirable in this species.

So if you do want to grow *Nothofagus* bonsai do not expect to develop an orthodox tree, grow them in a semi shaded and cool position and enjoy having such an ancient tree species in your collection



Left - *Nothofagus gunnii*

Right - *Nothofagus cunninghamii*

Photos courtesy
www.potn.com.au



Robert Kempinski Visit

We have the privilege of a visit from the high calibre American Bonsai Artist Robert Kempinski in March 2014. He's an internationally acclaimed Bonsai Artist, the Immediate Past President of Bonsai Clubs International and his international teaching level is classified "Expert".

Schedule of events:

Saturday 8th March, morning and afternoon Workshops 9:30AM - 12:30PM and 1:30PM - 4:30PM

Sunday 9th March, morning Workshop - 9:30AM - 12:30PM

Sunday 9th March, afternoon Advanced Critique - 2.00 PM - 4.30 PM

The venue will be Morrisons for all sessions. This is the biggest event run by our club to date outside of our Shows, and provides an opportunity for members to advance their bonsai learning through participation in a workshop or critique, or by observing at one or more of the sessions.

Price to members are very reasonable for such a high-profile instructor - \$50 per workshop, \$30 for the critique, \$10 for observers per session. Booking forms are available on our Forum, or by contacting Rudi on yarvalleybonsai@gmail.com or on 0418 369 852.

Bio: Rob Kempinski's bonsai capitalize on the expressive, scientific and tactile nature of the art. His collection, a mix of tropical and temperate trees that can take the heat of the Florida summers and very mild winters has been influenced by his extensive global travel. He has won several bonsai awards and has participated in many national bonsai shows. He has written and has a book titled "Introduction to Bonsai, Growing and Appreciating Bonsai Across the Globe," along with many articles for bonsai journals and magazines. Check out the following web site for further information.

<http://artofbonsai.org/galleries/kempinski.php>

A sample of Rob's trees - left, a swamp cypress and right, a buttonwood christened 'Dante's Inferno'.



Kudos, Accolades and Thanks

- To Michael and Alison Simonetto for leading the workshop at the November meeting.
- To Quentin Valentine for his very informative presentation and demonstration on natives as bonsai at the December meeting.
- To Marcela Ferreira for assisting Quentin - and for making her first visit to our club.

Tree Profile: Chinese Elm - *Ulmus Parvifolia*

General information: The Chinese Elm is native to China, Japan, North Korea and Vietnam. In large part due to its small leaves, it is one of the most common trees crafted for bonsai purposes. Although classed as a deciduous tree, often the leaves remain year round. It is very hardy relative to other deciduous trees and because of its high tolerance of pruning, making it ideal for the beginner.

Lighting and Temperature: Full sun or partial shade throughout the year but will need protection in winter from frost, in summer from hot winds. Due to its versatility it has the ability to tolerate a wide range of temperatures, light, and humidity conditions

Watering: Daily throughout the growing season, easing off in winter. Keep the soil moist but well drained.

Feeding: Recommended during its growth season from spring - summer, three to four times a year is enough to maintain a healthy growth. If you want to retain the small leaves don't use high nitrogen fertilizer.

Pruning and wiring: Shorten new shoots on established branches to two sets of leaves. Remove large leaves throughout the growing season. Pruning large branches is best done in late autumn. Wiring can be done any time during growth, but take care as old woody branches are brittle and the bark is thin and damages easily.



Propagation: Only from air-layering or grown from both hardwood and softwood cuttings. Softwood cuttings in summer, use heel cuttings for better results. Air layering may be done in spring and early summer.

Repotting: Spring is the best time, annual repotting for young trees; older trees only every 2-3 years. Position the roots during repotting!

Pests and diseases: Generally pest and disease free, but are vulnerable to borers and chewing insects. Watch for aphids, leafhoppers and gall mites

Styles: Suitable for all forms and sizes - especially good for the broom style which is the natural shape of *Ulmus*.



Other Elm species suitable for bonsai:

There are over 40 varieties of elms available and several interesting and rare cultivars have been developed as well.

'Seiju' and 'Catlin' are dwarf varieties with very small leaves.

'Nire-keyaki' dense branching and tiniest fringed leaves.

'Corky Bark' very attractive as the name indicates.

'Stone's Dwarf' distinguished by its rough, but not corky bark.



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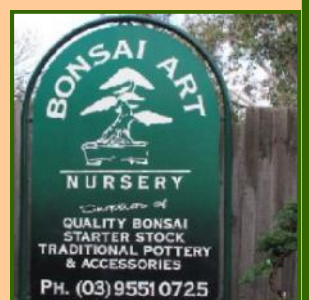
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Bonsai Calendar: January - February

Watering and Position should be the main focus during the summer months. It's a good time of year to be on the safe side when it comes to caring for your trees.

Watering

- Water evenly and thoroughly. This will encourage roots to grow at the bottom of the pot improving the health of the tree
- Water in the mornings. If this is not possible, water in the evenings but avoid wetting the foliage on species that are susceptible to mildew (Maples, Oaks, Crepe Myrtles)
- Bonsais that will require more water: Maples, Camellias, Azaleas, Liquid Ambers, Elms, Wisterias, Alders, Taxodiums, Beech, Hornbeams, Pyracanthas, Banksias, Melaleucas, other natives
- Bonsais that will require less water: Pines, Cedars, Corokias,
- Separate your trees into categories based on their watering needs

Position

- Morning sun is best. Avoid the afternoon sun in the summer.
- Consider the species and pot size when arranging your display. Take extra care when using small or shallow pots as they will dry out quickly.
- Species such as Beech, Hornbeam, Maples, Spruce will scorch if not protected by both the sun and the wind
- When looking for shade, avoid placing bonsais directly under trees. Pest and diseases can be passed to your bonsais.

Summer is a great time to work on your benches, watering systems, shade cloth and weed around your display. If you are going away for the holidays, put some serious thought into how your trees will be looked after. Many bonsai are lost over this time of year.

2014 YVBS Bonsai Show

Our Bonsai show, held every 18 months to alternate between spring and autumn seasons, is scheduled for Saturday 17th May at the Montrose Town Centre as usual. All members are urged to submit at least one tree for inclusion in the Show - remember that we are not (just) showing bonsai masterpieces, but trees in development are just as important to indicate to our visiting public that the art of bonsai is a journey rather than a destination. Look through your trees now and decide which one(s) you will show - and then work towards getting them into show condition by the due date. This might mean giving them extra attention over the next few months - repotting, wiring now which could be removed prior to the Show, and extra attention to pinching over the growing season.

End-Of-Month Saturday Workshop

Workshops are held on the last Saturday in each month at Morrisons, except for December and January which fall right in the middle of holiday periods. The workshops are a social gathering which provide an opportunity to get to know your fellow members, work on your trees, and of course, receive advice from more experienced members if required. We are open from 2:00 to 4:30pm, and members and guests are welcome to drop in, with or without trees!



Left - heaps of activity at the November Saturday workshop.

ヤラ谷間盆栽会

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www.yarrawalleybonsai.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
Jan & Feb 2014*



Our first monthly meeting on 14th January will be a Workshop Night with Craig Wilson. NO Overview/Review Session!



A Special Workshop on "Azalea" with Barry Woods will be held on Saturday 18th January, 1:30 PM - 4:30 PM at Morrisons. Max 8 Participants, costs \$10.00, unlimited Observers for FREE, bookings are on "first-come-first-served" basis!



NO monthly Workshop in January - AUSTRALIA DAY weekend!



Saturday 1st February, Special Workshop on "Natives" with Quentin Valentine, 1:30PM - 4:30 PM at Morrisons. Max 6 Participants, costs \$20.00, unlimited Observers for FREE, bookings are on "first-come-first-served" basis!



Our first Nursery Trip for the year "DEEP SOUTH" will take place on Saturday 8th February, covering this time two Nurseries (also interesting for "non-bonsai" partners) and one Pottery place: Faceys Nursery (Native Wholesale), Pearcedale Garden Centre (10% discount, generally an excellent range of good material), Lorraine Simpson Pottery (great designs, wholesale prices!),



Our monthly meeting on 11th February will start with a Overview/Review Session "The Cheater's Guide to Bonsai: Short Cuts for the Lazy and Impatient" by Bill McKernan followed by a presentation by Craig Wilson on "Ficus" - a night not to be missed!



Saturday 22nd February monthly Workshop, 2:00 PM - 4:30 PM at Morrisons.

Events from Other Clubs



There is no information available at this point in time!



CLUB CALENDARS

The number of pre-orders for 2014 club calendars was not sufficient to justify printing them this year, and so we have reluctantly cancelled the project on this occasion. We will try again for 2015. A small quantity of demonstration 2014 calendars have been produced to indicate the style and design in mind, and these will be on display at club meetings next year. Take a look and indicate your thoughts and suggestions to any committee member.

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.yarrawalleybonsai.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@yarrawalleybonsai.org.au