



September—October 2008 Volume 1 No. 1

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The YVBS meets on the second Tuesday of each month at Japara House in Montrose (Melway 52 D7)

Informal/Review sessions begin at 7:00pm with a call to order at 7:30. Saturday Workshops also scheduled. Check the website for details!

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The Yarra Valley Bonsai Society Newsletter

Inaugural Meetings Kick Off!

After less than three months between initial flyers for "all those interested in forming a new bonsai club" and a second monthly meeting, the Yarra Valley Bonsai Society is off and running! With extensive advice and encouragement of other bonsai groups in the Greater Melbourne area as well as the Bonsai Federation of Australia (Southern), we seem to have come a long way in a short time. Lots of enthusiasm among the members, great resources in the outer Eastern suburbs, two respected (and VERY helpful) bonsai nurseries at our doorstep....it's all coming together. We are now an incorporated association. A website is going, thanks to Mark Condrón, and affiliations with BFA (Southern), AABC, and RHSV are in the works. Our September meeting saw the election of a Committee of Management and some work on large junipers donated by "Bonsai—The Imagination Tree". October had Chris Sirre offering a talk on pots and repotting. Next month Tim Vivoda of "A to Z

Bonsai" will speak on wiring basics. With a paid membership approaching 30, is it possible we may soon outgrow the home provided us by Japara Community House in Montrose?



Our Syllabus

In two separate surveys, we've asked members and prospective members which issues and topics they would most like to see themed in our monthly meetings. Thanks for the great feedback and feel free to drop notes in the "Suggestions Box" at monthly get-togethers. From this input, the Committee of Management is attempting to construct an annual syllabus that is matched to the seasons, within the budget of our young Society, and best utilizes the expertise and resources of current members and local experts. Review sessions and Saturday Workshops will, we trust, keep our activities relevant to all levels of enthusiasts. We hope to have a draft of this syllabus up on the website by the end of the year and all members are encouraged to comment and suggest additions as our little club grows from a seedling to a starter.....

Calendar Dates:

- 1-2 November 2008
Ballarat Bonsai Show—Robert Clark Centre, Botanical Gardens / Ballarat, VIC
- 1-2 November 2008
Goldfields Bonsai Society Show
Trades Hall / Castlemaine, VIC
- Sat/Sun 8-9 November Geelong Bonsai Show
Geelong Masonic Centre/Regent St. Belmont, VIC
- Saturday 8-November 2008 2.00-4.30pm
YVBS Saturday Workshop
Japara House. Gold coin donation
- Tuesday 11 November 2008
YVBS Monthly Meeting 7.00-9.30pm
Featured session: Tim Vivoda on wiring and maintenance.
- Tuesday 9 December 2008 7.00-9.30pm
YVBS Monthly Meeting

YVBS Committee of Management

Mark Condon (SECRETARY) I have an IT background, just recently moved to the Yarra Valley area, did some web work for a few local growers which led to working with online plant sales; looked at adding a few bonsai lines which revived an old interest. I always found cacti and succulents easier cause I can't kill them. I'm an absolute beginner at bonsai but grateful the society has started up — it offers a way to develop my beginner's interest into something more substantial.



"The road towards bonsai mastery is cobbled with the remnants of a thousand dead trees."



Marlene Jerlitschka (TREASURER) Our interest in Bonsais started over 30 years ago in Germany. Very restricted by space and weather, our collection was very limited. Since we could not bring plants to Australia, we had to start all over again and have now quite a number of trees, our favorites being maples & flowering trees. As with every bonsai enthusiast, we had success as well as losses over the years. Now that we both retired, we will have a lot more time to look after them.



Rudi Jerlitschka (MEMBER-AT-LARGE)



Neil Howatt (VICE-PRESIDENT) As a chef for the Coldstream Brewery, I'm perhaps not left with as much free time as I'd like. I really enjoy gardening and have cultivated bonsai for about 4 years. I like to try new things with my specimens and to push the boundaries of the conventional. As VP, I'll be doing a lot of work with the YVBS syllabus over the next year, so I'm looking forward to your ideas!

We'd like to profile a member or two in each future newsletter as a means of getting to know each other better.



Bill McKernan (PRESIDENT) I lived in Japan for two years and had a landlord who was quite an accomplished bonsai artisan. As I shifted around quite a bit (particularly in places with very harsh winters) I was never able to indulge this interest beyond appreciation. However, after moving to Australia in 2001, I was soon able to take a more active turn with this pursuit. I'd still consider myself a novice but am clearly hooked for life!



Peter Raymakers (MARKETING AND MEMBERSHIP SEC'Y)

I am a music teacher and compose and have always lived in the outer eastern suburbs. My interest in gardening has been influenced by my dad who has always loved and worked in his little plot. I discovered the art of bonsai through my dad as well who always loved it and dabbled in it.... but I wanted to learn it better and have more. I have a special interest in native subjects particularly the ones no one wants to touch. I'm not necessarily great at it but have a desire to work with natives. I also enjoy azaleas and camellias as subject plants. I currently own about 100 plants....maybe a little more. BUT!!< IF stage 4 water restrictions come. What am I going to do!?!?



Chris Sirre (MEMBER-AT-LARGE) I came in contact with bonsai in 1985 when I started to work for Edo Plant, www.edoplant.com (also known as Edo Bonsai). I have grown bonsai ever since. My interest in growing trees and shrubs made me decide to get my diploma in Horticulture. Unfortunately I had to leave all my bonsai behind when I moved to Australia in 2001, but the passion for them came with me. In February 2007, I started working at "Bonsai—The Imagination Tree" in Monbulk.



As part of its kickoff, our Society acknowledges the Wurundjeri people as the traditional custodians of the lands on which the Society has established itself and expresses its appreciation and respect to past, present and future Wurundjeri elders and community members.

The "Committee of Management" meets roughly once or twice a month as deemed necessary. It is to be elected once a year at the Society's Annual General Meeting in June. Matters of concern can be brought to our attention at the monthly meetings or per email at info@yarravalleybonsai.org.au

“The Natives are Restless”

The Banksia as Bonsai: *Banksia Integrifolia*

By Grant Bowie

There are currently 76 known and identified species of *Banksia*, most of which are located in Western Australia. Eighteen Banksias are found in the eastern half of Australia or in tropical Australia. Banksias are related to the *Protea* family of Africa, with which they share many similarities. Banksias are an evergreen tree or shrub, although prostrate plants also exist. They have usually either a single trunk with an irregular outline or a multi-trunk shrubby appearance.

Banksias can have a variety of leaf shapes and sizes, but are usually tough and leathery. The leaves may grow alternately or in whorls.

Flowers are also variable but are usually numerous on a spike that becomes woody. Flowers set at the end of new growth and take some time to mature. Not all flowers become seed as there are just too many on each. Some 36 species are fire-tolerant: having thick bark and/or a woody base or lignotuber. These Banksias take heavy pruning or defoliation quite well.

The fire-sensitive Banksias are thin-barked and suitable only with lighter pruning.

Banksias have evolved to thrive in poor soils but can survive in better soils if the drainage is good.

They can survive in poor soils through the development of special roots called pro-toid roots. These are described later in the article.

HINTS FOR GROWING NURSERY STOCK

First try whatever Banksias already grow in or near your area, and remember the large-leaved, tree-type. Banksias will probably be best as bonsai. The large-leaved (up to 6"/150 mm) varieties will be vigorous but with the correct techniques the leaf size will reduce dramatically.

I have grown *Banksia ericifolia* (Heath Banksia), *B. paludosa* (Swamp Banksia), *B. marginata* (Silver Banksia), *B. serrata* (Old Man Banksia) and *B. integrifolia* (Coast Banksia). All Western Australian Banksias, even those grafted, have died in my location. Banksias can be grown easily from seed but must be potted up and on quickly; always pot up to the next size pot. Do not over pot! The soil should not be too fine or too coarse and should drain freely. They will fill the pot quickly with very fine roots and

need extra watering once well established.

Fertilise generously with Native Osmocote in the potting mix and liquid feed every

week or two (except winter) with a mild liquid fertiliser like Maxicrop, Nitrosol, Charlie Carp etc.

Use fertilisers at full recommended strength unless plants are sick or new to your collection. You may need to build up to a heavy fertilising regime.

Banksias are very hungry and thirsty as potted nursery stock, so please look after their needs.

Do not pot-on a Banksia at any stage if it is wobbly in the pot. If it looks skinny, weak and wobbly, then just lightly trim it and put it back.

If the tree is fat, but unstable or wobbly, then check rootage and soil ball for root eating Curl Grubs. Remove grubs and root-prune hard, lightly trim foliage, pot back into same or larger pot and put in the shade for 3-4 weeks.

Article reprinted courtesy of “Australian Plants As Bonsai Study Group”

<http://asgap.org.au/bonsai>



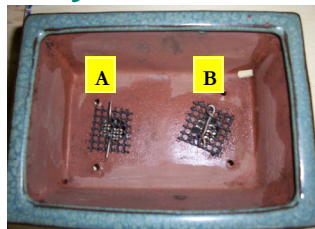
Quiz Question: Sept.
“What’s Wrong With this Pot?”

....aside from it having little to brag about aesthetically (and somebody still possibly paid \$9 for it)?

The first of two main liabilities is found in the lip of the pot, which might serve as a comfortable home for pests.... It may also make repotting quite a chore, particularly if the plant becomes pot-bound. Secondly, and perhaps more important, lower quality pots often have the drain hole sitting higher than a concave section at each of the four inner corners. Water will pool in this area and perhaps lead to root rot, particularly for the species more susceptible to this malady. If you have a pot like this, some suggest filling this area with a waterproof sealer or gap filler to assist in drainage.

Don't worry— we won't be getting you newsletters quite this long beyond our Kick-Off publication!

Quiz Question: Oct.
“Which Meshing wire Configuration is Correct?”



Both can be found in well-regarded publications. Some prefer “A” as it lends itself to easier mesh removal through the drain hole. Others would tend to “B” as a more secure way of placing mesh. And still others use both, depending on the mesh used. If that weren't ambiguous enough, some might even rely on adhesive rather than wire. All seemed to agree that aluminum wire is far better than pure copper for this task due to corrosion/reactive potential. At the end of the day, considering artisans initially used pieces of broken pot as mesh, the correct answer is probably “whatever does the job.”

Recommended Website Of the Month:
<http://basics.bonsaisite.com>
A good reference point for both beginners and novices.....



Here are a few tips for keeping pests away from your plants:

For a homemade fungicide or weedicide:

Gather 100 grams of sheoke or native casuarina (casuarina glauca) needles. Add to 10 litres of water and boil down to 1 litre. Add 8 litres of fresh water. Place in spray pack or in a clean empty spray bottle and spray directly onto foliage.

"Tim's Tips" Corner

To keep birds from pecking at your moss & surface soil:

Place naphthalene balls or flakes (standard mothballs) in bits of old stocking or thin socks. Place these behind pots, and NOT on soil or in a position where precipitation might wash onto a section of soil in a lower pot, as with shelved bonsai displays. This works well and will not harm plants, provided the 'sachets' are EXTERNAL to the pots.

Tim Vivoda is the owner of "A to Z Bonsai" in Monbulk. His section will appear in each newsletter. Learn more from Tim at our November meeting: He'll be the keynote demonstrator!



To prevent insects from getting a foothold among your trees:

Simply wipe a cloth soaked in solution of Baygon (Insect & Ant) on the base and sides of pots. This works for either glazed or unglazed pots. Repeat after six months.

Ideograms of the Months



"Tree"



"Forest"

About our newsletters.....

At the moment our newsletter will be produced and dispatched every two months (=six times per year) with "volume" indicative of year of publication and numbered one through six.

In keeping with point 6 of our society's mission statement (see page five of this newsletter) we will dispatch electronic copies only in .pdf format to membership and to other bonsai societies. Newsletters will also be archived on our website (<http://www.yarravalleybonsai.org.au>). The topic of a **library** was raised at our last meeting and we are examining ways to maximize holdings of electronic content in addition to books and periodicals.

Should a society member have neither an email address nor access to the internet, a hard copy of the most recent issues of the newsletter may be available for perusal at the monthly meetings.

As we hope this to be a source of news AND useful information, suggestions from the membership are always welcome. Just email us or drop a note in the Suggestion Box at the monthly meeting. Also, any members willing to contribute items [with needed copyright or permission in order] or to work on paste-up and publication are invited to contact any member of the Committee of Management.

Tree Profile: Chinese Elm

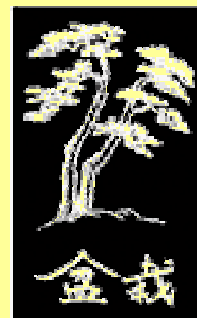


(Photos courtesy of A to Z Bonsai?)

In large part due to its small leaves, the Chinese Elm (*Ulmus parvifolia*) 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, making it ideal for the beginner. With sufficient feeding, the Chinese elm can grow quite vigorously. However, the soil needs to remain moist, even in winter and the roots (especially of young starters) can be susceptible to frost. New shoots should be leave-pruned to one or two.



Proud sponsor of the Yarra Valley Bonsai Society:



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BY SASHI-EDA
EST 1993

Bonsai- The Imagination Tree

413 Monbulk-Silvan Road

Monbulk, VIC 3782

www.sashieda.com.au

ヤラ谷間盆栽会

September—
October 2008
Volume 1 No. 1

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

FROM THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION:

Yarra Valley Bonsai Society's Objectives:

1. To further interest and craftsmanship in bonsai and related arts for its members, and to inspire participation by both beginners and advanced growers of bonsai;
2. To further the appreciation of the underlying aesthetic tenets of the bonsai craft and its variations;
3. To advance appreciation of bonsai by the wider community, especially in the Outer Eastern suburbs, through participation in exhibitions and shows and other forms of outreach selected by the society.

www.yarravalleybonsai.org.au

E-mail: info@yarravalleybonsai.org.au

4. To share knowledge and skills with related clubs and/or societies locally and nationally;
5. To acknowledge, beyond the craft of bonsai, the social capital value of community and grass roots organisations;
6. To exist as an exemplary community organization with a minimal carbon footprint as expedited through scant paper usage, recycling, and by means of low imprint activities and marketing;
7. To operate as a wholly non-profit making organisation. The Yarra Valley Bonsai Society shall not operate in any manner which would result in pecuniary gain or profit to any member (aside from the Members' Trade Table) and none of the earnings of the Group shall inure to the benefit of any member.

A draft of the constitution will be available for comment by paid members at a future point before being ratified by the membership at large.

Membership Information and Benefits



Membership entitles you to discounts at the vendors listed to the right. We hope to add to this list and have it updated regularly on the website. We thank the vendors listed for agreeing to offer discounts to our membership! If you have paid a membership and have not yet received a card (and would prefer to have it before the next monthly meeting), please email Bill at

yarravalleybonsai@gmail.com

Current Benefits to Members (Upon presentation of valid YVBS Membership Card):

1. **"A to Z Bonsai"**: All stock discounted down to wholesale price plus 10% on cash purchases; Monbulk-Silvan Rd, Monbulk, VIC
www.atozbonsai.com.au
2. **"Bonsai- The Imagination Tree"** 10% off on all stock; 413 Monbulk-Silvan Road, Monbulk, VIC
www.sashieda.com.au
3. **"Mount Evelyn Garden Center"** 10% discount on all cash purchases for all stock, excepting items already listed as 'special' or clearance'. 126 York Road, Mount Evelyn, VIC www.mtevelylngardencenter.com.au
4. **"Collector's Corner"** 10% discount on all bonsai stock. 810-834 Springvale Rd. / Braeside, VIC
www.collectorscorner.com.au/bonsai
5. **"Orient Bonsai Nursery"** 10% off on all stock. 11 Mahoney's Road / Reservoir, VIC
www.orientbonsai.com.au

Advertisers and

Sponsors:

Advertising on our website and/or newsletter is available for any registered business or sole trader.

Society Sponsorship opportunities exist for any business operating in an area related to the craft of bonsai.

For details contact Peter Raymakers via the society's email: info@yarravalleybonsai.org.au