

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 sched-
uled. Check the website
for details!

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So much for last newslet-
ter's pledge of a shorter
publication!

The Yarra Valley Bonsai Society Newsletter

Highlights from November and December

The last few months have been quite busy for our growing group. The end of October saw us with a stall at the Mount Evelyn Street Bash, where a couple members sold a few items but mainly tried to drum up interest. (In other words, trying to de-mystify the art and alleviate the "Oh-no-I-couldn't-possibly-do-a-bonsai,-I'd-kill-it-for-sure" fears.) November not only saw our first Saturday Workshop, but outreach led us to have a display and recruiting table at the Lilydale Show. Next year, as a practice run towards eventually our own show like the "big boys", we aim to develop our club's presence at the Lilydale Show into a more formal display. (Note that next November's YVBS theme is getting trees ready for formal display. See p. 5) This November's monthly meeting hosted visits from Ian Glew of AABC Ltd. and Vic Byrde of the National Bonsai & Penjing Collection in Canberra. The



highlight of that meeting, however, was Tim Vivoda's wiring demonstration. Tim's generosity continued into December, as he hosted a Break-Up Party BBQ at his nursery, donating many many items (trees, tools, pots) towards making our raffle the most successful yet!

**NOTE!!!!!!

As Japara House is closed for the month of January, we'll be meeting at the Mount Evelyn Scout Hall. (Melway Ref 120 A1). We'll be back at our regular meeting place for the 7 Feb Workshop and 10 February meeting!

Time ticking down for Foundation Membership.

As the current membership knows, the \$10 joining fee was waived until 1 January 2009. All prospective members are encouraged to join prior to 1 January to save on the joining fee and to bask in the eternal glory of being a "Foundation Member". For bookkeeping purposes, any membership POSTED or fee banked by 31 December will come in under the wire. [Note: All memberships are renewed at the start of the fiscal year [1 July] regardless of joining date.]



Calendar Dates:

- Tuesday 13 January 2009
YVBS Monthly Meeting 7.00-9.30pm Mount Evelyn Scout Hall, Station Street / Mt. Ev (Melway 120 A1)
Featured Theme: Working with Natives
- Saturday 10 January and 7 February 2009
2.00-4.30pm
YVBS Saturday Workshop
January: Mt. Evelyn Scout Hall (See above)
February: Japara House. Gold coin donation
- Tuesday 10 February 2009 7.00-9.30pm
YVBS Monthly Meeting
Japara Neighborhood House / Montrose, VIC
Featured Theme: TBA
- Saturday 4 April 1.00pm YVBS Public Talk/Demo
Lilydale Library, Anderson Street, Lilydale. Free
- BENDIGO BONSAI CLUB AUTUMN EXHIBITION** St Paul's Parish Hall, Myers St, Bendigo, 11th to 13th April
Saturday, 10 am to 5 pm, Sunday 11 am to 5 pm, Monday, 10 am to 4 pm. Admission \$3, children free.

Getting to Know You...



Tom Calvert: "In addition to bonsai, I am into gold prospecting and have written a book on the subject. I was in the services for nine years; when I came out, I was a bit lost and in search of something. Joined an outlaw bike club, but found that what I was looking for was inside me all the time: being happy with what you have, and with what and who you are. Basically knowing yourself. My favorite styles are formal uprights and windswepts. I also like Chinese landscapes. My favorite tree is the wild olive.... the tree of peace."

Ruth South: I've been happily married for 31 years, had 4 boys and 3 grandchildren, dog, chooks, fish, etc. I've lived in Cockatoo since the 1970's and always had a fascination for bonsai over the years. A few did not fare well under my care....until I realised you needed to water them! :-). It wasn't until we lost our son Matt last year that my interest in bonsai was renewed: at the funeral, a friend of his gave me a dear little conifer and it's one of my most treasured possessions. Needing to keep this thoughtful gift thriving and begin a collection, I've taken a class at Imagination Tree, and have had heaps of help from Tom at "A to Z" and from folks in our Society. Getting confident! My interests include photography (am about to turn pro!), music and my family....and anything on the Lifestyle Channel. My outlook on life is driven by my son's: "There's always someone worse off than yourself; so why not bloody smile and enjoy life."

In each newsletter, we profile a member or two as a means of getting to know each other better.

Saturday Workshops.....

Per interest as expressed by the membership, and under the initiative of Rudi & Marlene Jerlitschka, we have begun monthly informal workshops. Although we had a small single digit turnout for the first workshop in November, attendance reached twenty for our second workshop on 6 December. The premise for these sessions is to offer a simple and informal opportunity to work on one's own trees, sharing ideas and techniques with other members. "Which branch needs to go?" "Ray, how can I thicken up the pads on this juniper?" "Where's the FRONT on this tree?" "Best way to anchor this wire?" "Would a thread graft work here?" No 'business sections'. No raffle. No demonstrations.



Michael contemplates the design crossroads with his pine.

Just a chance to learn and make more progress on one's collection than perhaps possible during the general monthly plenary gatherings. Novices are especially encouraged to drop by: our club is fortunate in lacking "bonsai fascists" - having many experienced members who LOVE sharing what they know about this craft. Due to the holiday period, the next workshop will be held on Saturday 10 Jan. 2pm at the Mt. Evelyn Scout Hall, and from February on the sessions will convene on the 1st Saturday of each month from 2pm at Japara House in Montrose.



Rudi and Margaret search for the "inner tree" amidst the foliage.



Peter primps & prunes problematic protruding parts per perfect proportion.... poetically.

Ask Mr. Miyagi.....



Q: Dear Mr. Miyagi: I chose figs for bonsai because they are fairly hardy. However, every once in a while I see some of the leaves go yellow. Sometimes they have brown or black spots on them as well. (see photos) What am I doing wrong?

A: Dear Daniel-san, I've told you many times: "wax on, wax off". Seriously though, there is nothing to worry about. While I respect

you for being proactive and wanting to care for your trees, this often blinds us to the cycles of change. Do we worry when the leaves of our maples change colour & fall off in autumn? No. What you describe seems to be just part of the basic cycle of older leaves departing and making room for the younger shoots and trunk development. (I'll leave the 'Circle of Life' metaphor to Walt Disney.) However, if this becomes too widespread, with many leaves doing this at the same time, it could indicate a mineral deficiency or pest problem. Now get back outside and finish painting my fence...



Members may submit questions to Mr. Miyagi c/o the suggestions box at the monthly meetings or per the club email: info@yarravalleybonsai.org.au

“The Natives are Restless”

ACACIA, Commonly known as Wattle, the Great Aussie Gold Rush »

By Andrew Christie & Jan Briggs

Wattles are a great native to bonsai. There

are a number of suitable species and new hybrids are soon to be released. First and foremost, the most important factor about wattles is WATER. If you let them dry out you will have BIG problems. If you let them stay too wet you better prepare yourself to throw them out. The water factor has to be carefully balanced to ensure healthy trees.

When you start with a wattle you are only going to get small plants but they do grow fairly quickly and within two to three years of growing in an oversize pot, you will get a trunk the size of your finger. In 4-5 years you will get a thicker trunk. You don't get a lot of taper in wattles. The informal upright or weeping styles are the best for this plant. You can get a great weeping style tree with a wattle and you can expect flowers within two years.

Although wattles grow in more arid areas in their natural habitats, in a pot situation they like moisture.

The Cootamundra wattle in its prostrate form will put out a lovely show of flowers. After flowering cut back to an upward growing bud to develop the weeping habit. When pruning other trees for bonsai it is

common practice to cut back to a lower growing bud but not if you are working on a weeping style. The bud needs to grow upwards so it can arch down. There is no weeping style in the Asian bonsai but a weeping style is being developed with this native tree.

Wattles are relatively easy to grow as long as you properly tend to their water needs. They are subject to borer attack, which is probably what kills a lot in their natural habitats. In a pot and subject to bonsai-care, they will last a lot longer. But also watch for Golden Lace Bug and scale infestation, particularly in a wattle that is not 100% healthy. If they get air, light and breeze with the right amount of water you should experience few problems. Fertilise with Native Osmocote or Charlie Carp.

Root pruning - don't be savage although your initial root prune can remove 50-70% of their fibrous roots - but no more. Maintenance root pruning would see about 30-40% removed. With

wattles you get a better result by over potting. The roots grow fairly quickly and as roots fill the pot, water becomes more critical. You will also notice they respond well to rainy conditions, new growth will start showing.

Wattles set well with shaping and with a bit of age and thickening the shape will hold.

Wattles are a species worth trying. Within 3 - years you can get a good result from a small tree.

[Re-published with permission of the Editor, Sydney City Bonsai Society newsletter, March 2004, and author JB.]

This article is a reprint from ASGAP



Quiz Question: November

“What thickness of wire should I use relative to the thickness of the branch or trunk to be wired?”

Most sources will indicate that the wire used should be roughly one-third to one half the thickness of the branch being wired. Obviously this is not set in stone, as factors such as the type of bark, quality of wire, degree of the bends undertaken, and elasticity of the branch will come into play. Is the wire used as a splint or a brace or merely a growth guide? Note that doubling the thickness of wire (say from 1.5mm to 3.0mm will increase the holding factor three-fold. Smaller wire is more likely to cut into bark, especially if the wiring is left on for too long. You may wish to consider a double run of smaller wire over a single run of thicker wire. So, once again, no hard and fast rules except not to wind the wire too tightly and to maintain a 45-degree angle to the run of the branch or trunk.

Wet T-Shirt Contest:

In 2009 we'll be doing a print run of YVBS T-shirts. As a lead-up we'll be having a contest for best design. Winning design gets a free shirt. Sketch your idea, and drop it in the suggestion box at the next monthly meeting.

Quiz Question: December

“At what point is a tree classed as ‘slanting’ rather than informal upright?”



Informal upright style

The first difference is seen in the overall angle of the tree. Some sources reckon the angle via ground level to be between 30-75 degrees, whereas other sources are found specifying 60-80. More importantly perhaps, formal uprights still have the apex (tip) directly above the base [more or less], whereas in slanting style this is impossible. Equally important, the trunk line tends to be straighter in a slanting than in an informal upright. Also in slanting, the lowest branch grows on the side opposite from direction of slant. Some also believe true slantings are not to be positioned in the center of the pot.



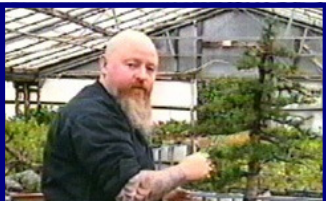
Slanting style

Images: bonsaitreeforums.com

Website Of the Month:

<http://www.bonsaitreeforums.com>

Some good articles and blogs from bonsai fans. As with most blog forums, you have to wade through a bit of babble to find the pearls. Join for free.



Here are some of the tips from my demo at the November meeting:

1.) By request here's the recipe I mentioned for homegrown wound sealant:

Equal parts PVA glue and egg white, mixed with soy protein (you can use soft tofu). You can also add any water-based paint for blending it with the surrounding bark. Provided you keep this in a sealed container, it should last a while and does the same job as that expensive

'\$25 per tube' stuff.

2.) On wire, if you heat your wire in the oven at 280C for 20-40 minutes, your wire will become far more pliable. This is important with cheaper wire that may have uneven strength throughout. Someone suggested you could also just chuck the wire on the BBQ, but that tends to ruin the anodisation.

3.) As wire is expensive, you can smooth out any longer lengths of salvaged wire by simply running it over your knee, like towel drying after a shower.

4.) Use bits of garden hose around the wire when wiring branches that are either large or brittle (like azaleas) to minimize bark damage and potential cracking.

5.) For many deciduous trees, you can actually leave the wire on the trunk and the tree will grow around it, with scar remnants contributing to the aged appearance. Not recommended for pines/conifers.

Tim Vivoda is the owner of "A to Z Bonsai" in Monbulk. His section appears in each newsletter.

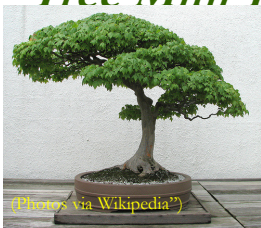


Insurance through AABC Ltd.

Now that our Society is formally affiliated with both the two All-Australian bonsai-related organizations, the Southern Chapter of the Bonsai Federation of Australia (BFA) and the Association of Australian Bonsai Clubs (AABC Ltd), we can announce to the club membership the offering of an insurance policy for trees. From the text of the AABC Offering:

"The AABC policy covers all member's bonsai trees and Club equipment at exhibitions, including physical loss or damage of items during travel to and from and whilst at exhibitions in Australia. Specified Items Bonsai's & Club Equipment \$10,000 per claim with a \$1,000 limit per any one item. Limitations of Cover Excess \$250 per claim. Restricted Cover: No – unrestricted cover (Clarification: The Optional Limitations of Cover (Restricted Cover), is applied when the cover is to be restricted by the insurer, this has not been applied under this policy). Fire Excluded: No - this policy includes fire insurance. Definition: Club Members are defined as Financial Member Clubs of the Association of Australian Bonsai Clubs Ltd and their individual Financial Members. The following endorsements apply to the Business Special Risk Section: Cover applies to bonsais on exhibition and at shows only. No cover whilst in nurseries. The policy covers all shows or displays conducted by Clubs that participate in the policy providing that they are official Club activities. The policy does not cover activities undertaken by individual Club members, such as the selling of trees at shopping centres or markets. Association of Australian Bonsai Clubs Ltd Insurance Policy. The cost for the insurance cover is \$2.00 per member per Club. If you are interested, Contact Peter Raymakers.

Tree Mini-Profile: Trident Maple

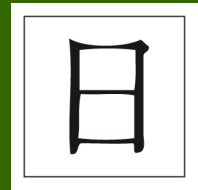


(Photos via Wikipedia)

Acer buergerianum The trident maple is a very popular species for bonsai, due to its small, three-toothed [thus TRI-denta/] leaves, a thickening trunk, and hefty, gnarled rootage conducive to root-over-rock style. While the trident is considered to be more heat/sun tolerant than the Japanese maple, many suggest great care in fertilizing via leaf spraying. Feeding recommended from once a week to every three weeks once buds appear, and then tapering off the feeding schedule in summer. Leaf pruning should be no more than one-third; a total leaf prune is not recommended in consecutive years. Roots can grow quickly when in good health. Repotting recommended for spring, prior to budding. Responds well as cuttings (hardwood and softwood) and air layering.



"Ideograms of the Month"



"Sun"



"Moon"



When combined, sun and moon form a single ideogram used in either the concrete meaning of 'illuminate' 'change' or a more abstract 'enlightenment'.

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The Imagination Tree
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By Mary Holderness

Draft Syllabus for 2009

Below is a draft syllabus for themes, activities, topics for calendar year 2009. Note the operative word is DRAFT! We're always open to change (especially when we have no control over it! J) Topics and forums can change , given availability of people, funds, etc. Feel free to contact the Committee of Management or place suggestions in the box at meetings with ideas. Beginners and novices especially are encouraged to provide ideas as to what they feel they need to build their skills and confidence in this craft. We'll try to keep the syllabus as up-to-date as possible on our website.



		Review Session (7-7.30pm)	Main Theme/Topic	Other:
January	13	Classical Styles Part II: Semiformal Uprights	Natives as Bonsai	Display Table: Natives
February	10	Classical Styles Part III: Slanting	Tools and Sharpening	Display Table: Members' Choice or Slanting
March	10	Classical Styles Part IV: Semi-Cascades	Watering and Water Saving Strategies	Display Table: Members' Choice or Semi-Cascades
April	14	Classical Styles Part V: Cascades	Working with Pines & Conifers	Display: Autumn Colour Check-in for "Our" junipers
May	12	Jins and Sharis	Internal Show/Presentation	Display: Figs and Penjing
June	9	Moss and Muck	Guest Demonstrator TBA	Annual General Meeting: Officer Elections
July	14	Group and Landscape Plantings	Grafting, Threading, and Air Layering Rafting Demo	Yamadori Trip? Display Table: Bare Deciduous
August	11	To Hard Prune or Not to Hard Prune.....	Root over Rock Styles & Creation	Display Table: Pines
September	8	Pests and Threats.....	Leaf and Root Pruning	Buying Trip to Nurseries?
October	13	Pots and Potting	Azaleas & Dwarf Camelias	Display Table: Azaleas
November	10	Wiring Basics	Getting Plants into Showcase Stage	Lilydale Show
December	8	Surviving the Summer	Major Demonstration	Christmas/Holiday Party

ヤラ谷間盆栽会

November-
December 2008
Volume 1 No. 2

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



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E-mail: info@yarravalleybonsai.org.au

Here's Wishing You All a Safe and Joyous Holiday Season & auspicious beginnings as the "Year of the Rat" makes way for the "Year of the Ox"



The Natives might be dormant in the summer, but not us!

Summer Break? What Summer Break!?! Just a reminder that in fact we WILL meet in January. Our initial programming had January as a month off, but per membership preference we will have a meeting on the 13th, the second Tuesday of the month as usual. As summer is a time of dormancy for most natives, it's an opportune time to look at some natives as bonsai. In the review session from 7.00-7.30, Neil will continue with Part II of his overview on the five main classical bonsai styles. Peter Raymakers will give an overview of caring for natives, some of the challenges in using natives for bonsai, and some of the best species to work with. He'll bring several trees from his wide and varied collection, including his "Best in Show" winning Sheoke. Correspondingly, the Members' Display Table will have NATIVES as its theme for January. **HOWEVER: Please note that as Japara House is closed during the month of January, we will be meeting at the Mount Evelyn Scout Hall (Station St. / Behind the Mt Ev. IGA — Melway Ref 120 A1) at the same time as usual (7pm).**

Accolades, Kudos, and Thanks..

Also, a thanks to the member who donated several volumes of *Bonsai Today*....
A fine foundation for our future library.

Our Thanks to Recent Sponsors & Contributors:

1. To IGA Mount Evelyn for a donation of vouchers for tea and condiments.
2. To Councilor Len Cox of the Shire of Yarra Ranges for facilitating a grant to our organisation for startup needs.
3. To the organisers of the 2008 Lilydale Show for apportioning us display space in their horticulture tent.
4. To MultiCrop for recent donations to our raffle tables.
5. To Ian Glew of AABC for contributing the first book to our library and AABC badges.
6. To "Bonsai—The Imagination Tree" and "A to Z Bonsai Starters" in Monbulk for their continued generosity with time and materials.



**Additional
Member
Benefits**

Supplementing the membership benefits listed in the last newsletter and on the website, we are grateful to acknowledge and pass on the following benefit to membership upon presentation of their YVBS membership card:

Colchester Nursery - 315 to 317 Colchester Rd, Kilsyth (Melway Ref 65 D1)

10% off all stock.

Advertisers & 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