

# The Yarra Valley Bonsai Society Newsletter

## Highlights from May/June 2009

**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 are 2pm on the first Saturday of the month. (Same Venue.) **See Page 6.** Check the website for details!

Aesthetically, the highlight of May and June was easily Craig Wilson's presentation on bonsai care and long-term growing strategies. The specimens he brought along were stunning..... We could have just stared at his trees for 45 minutes and still have been inspired, even without his invaluable tips and insights!

Bureaucratically, the highlight (if 'bureaucratic highlight' is not an oxymoron) would be the Annual General Meeting on 9 June. Aside from the hotly contested officer elections and stimulating ratifications to the Politburo and Presidium by the Plenary delegates to the effect that 'member-at-large' will herewith be referred to as 'Committee Member', we did actually engage in some VERY useful brain storming amongst the membership. The Committee of Management will examine the notes from these three groups, integrating them into the plans for 2009-2010, and reporting on them in the form of an Annual Report available to members soon after the start of the next fiscal year.



Workshop efforts following May's Lecture.



Andrew not coveting Peter's camellia.....

Perhaps the biggest slice of news is that we have decided to forge ahead and put together a public show exhibition. The date selected is Saturday 17 October, coinciding with the Montrose Craft Market and the Yarra Valley Spring Orchid Festival. The venue will be the Montrose Town Centre Building, next to the Montrose Library, corner of Leith and Mount Dandenong Tourist Roads. The open hours will be 10:00am—4:00pm. A raffle, trade table, demonstration, and kids' workshop are all planned. Information will follow in August regarding the criteria for exhibition selection. Planning and marketing for this event has already begun and we'll definitely need lots of help from amongst the membership to make this a memorable event. An update will be presented at both the July and August monthly meetings. Contact the Committee members with any ideas you have!

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## Inaugural Novice Course

Beginning on 30 June and continuing over five Tuesday evening sessions, the Society will be offering a Novice Course. We are fortunate to have Craig Wilson (owner of Gentiana Nursery and presenter at the May monthly meeting) as the instructor. Materials will be handed out at each of the five sessions. The cost of the course is \$65 dollars for YVBS members. As of the publication date for the newsletter, the twelve openings have been filled.

We expect to offer another similar class later in calendar year 2009, probably on the weekend in order to accommodate those who weren't able to sign-up for the Tuesday evening sessions.

While the format of the monthly meetings has included a 30-minute "Beginners/ Review" session, it was felt that as useful as these sessions have been or even could be, there was still a preference on the part of many novice members for a more structured set of introductory sessions with a unified set of learning outcomes. The course will no doubt help our members as we gear up for our first public show in October!

### Calendar Dates:

- Sat 27 June and Sunday 28 June: Winter Bonsai Expo organised by the Vietnamese Community in Victoria. 10am-5pm Vietnamese Ancestral Temple, 90 Knight Ave. Sunshine North (Melway 26 J2)
- Wednesday 1 July 10.00am YVBS Demo at Bunnings Croydon/Chirnside Park
- Tuesday 14 July and 11 August 2009 YVBS Monthly Meeting 7.00-9.30pm Japara House, Montrose (Melway 52 D7)
- Saturday 4 July and 1 August 2009 2.00-4.00pm YVBS Saturday Workshop Japara House. Gold coin donation
- Saturday 14 August/Sunday 15 August Waverley Bonsai Group Show SEE PAGE 6 for Details.....
- Sunday 23 August 9.00-4.30 Club Day at "Bonsai the Imagination Tree. See Page 6 for Details.

## Getting to Know You...



**Jarrod: (on left)** I live in Upper Ferntree Gully and have done for my whole 26 years. I worked in retail for many years before landing a job as a web admin for a large retail company. I enjoy Photography and I am also in a national Toyota owners club. I also dabble in faceting though this is a bit too time consuming for my current life style. I'm engaged to get married to my lovely fiancée next March and we plan on honeymooning in Japan. I have been growing bonsai on and off for about 5-6 years. In the past 12 -24 months I've started to treat my trees with the time and respect they deserve. I am currently growing any tree I see that I like, and experimenting with what grows well at my property. I don't really have a favourite species though I would like to learn everything there is to know about Pines.

**Ray: (on right)** [paraphrased] Ray has studied bonsai since 1994, originally as convalescence for a serious illness. He's been a member of five clubs in Victoria, and has been an officer for some of those. Currently he's the BFA (Southern) delegate for the Mornington Group and Alternate AABC delegate for Waverley. Ray was the Victorian figure skating champion for four years running in the mid 1950's. He's also the President of the Pomernian Dog Owners Association. His favorite trees are junipers and Chinese elms. Ray takes pride in his facial locks, but categorically denies the rumours that he either has a minor role in the upcoming film "*Taliban at Large*" or is depicted in the Four Corners feature story "*I Was an Ayatollah for ASIO*." Now, regarding that other rumour about Santa at Myer last December....

In each newsletter, we profile a member or two as a means of getting to know each other better. In that spirit, and as our group continues to grow, members are reminded to bring their nametag/membership cards to meetings

## Ask Mr. Miyagi.....



**Q: Dear Mr. Miyagi:** I think I get the basics for winter watering and feeding of non-natives in the winter here in this part of Victoria: keep the soil moist but not soaking and cease the usual feeding regimen for dormant deciduous trees. However, I feel like I'm cultivating a lot of lichens, moss, and weeds. Any tips?

**A: Dear Reader:** I think you have the basics. As far as "secondary flora" in your pots, you need to distinguish between desirable and undesirable. Certain mosses enhance the presentation and we want to foster this—winter is the best time for this and it certainly is easier than cutting/pasting moss from another source. However, even with the 'good' moss, care must be taken to not have such a thick carpet develop that water and

food will insufficiently penetrate to the soil. Just like with your lawn, too much moss build up can be an indication that your soil is too compact; try to aerate it a bit with just a bit of wire or a nail. As far as lichens and weeds, one tip is to either remove with tweezers (making sure you get all the tendrils of roots) or simply drip on a few drops of brown vinegar. This works especially well with liverwort and starweed. Do NOT even think of using a heavy weedicide such as 'Roundup' in your potted plants. You may need a couple of applications of the vinegar to rid the pot thoroughly. And also this process requires some direct sunlight to work properly. Drops of vinegar applied to a pot in full shade for the whole day will have only a minimal eradication effect. *(I'd like to take credit for this last vinegar tip, but feel I must attribute it to Ray .... [See above.] It's only fair since Ray has credited me with inspiring him with the bearded bonsai artisan look, though he has taken it far above and beyond.....)*

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



To the YVBS Membership: "Bonsai—The Imagination Tree" is looking for volunteers to assist with the backlog of bonsai-related tasks at their social firm. Not only can you pick up some valuable knowledge, but discounts beyond the standard 10% members' rate are possible, depending on the number of hours logged. If you are interested in exploring this, please contact Chris at [nursery@sashieda.com.au](mailto:nursery@sashieda.com.au) or at 9756 7995.



## ***“The Natives are Restless”***

Plant Profile from

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

(Originally Contributed by Lee W. and Reprinted With Permission)

**Common Name:** Lilly Pilly

**Botanical Genus Name** Syzygium



This is a very common garden and park tree and hybrids are coming out faster than you can collect them.

Sun: Sun with a bit of shade. Leaves can burn on a hot day.

Temperature: I have success in Sydney's range of 0 to 40 degrees. Cold days don't worry it but on hot days it needs afternoon shade and plenty of water!

Watering: Very thirsty but it tends to develop thick foliage pads making a lot of leaves to hydrate. In extreme heat even a water tray doesn't provide enough and that is why I find afternoon shade essential over 30 degrees.

Training: Easy peasy. A Lilly Pilly rapidly develops foliage pads and starting from a good stock plant you can develop a benchable bonsai in 12 months. It shoots back vigorously on old wood and keeping the growth under control is more necessary than wishing for it. The branches quickly become brittle so early wiring is essential. It took wiring but quick growth means wires must be checked frequently. The bark is a bit tender so care should be taken when wiring. As long as branches are not cracked all the way through the branch can still survive. I cracked a major branch in two places; applied sealant, bound each spot and wired and not one leaf flagged. It continued growing vigorously and developing the foliage pads.

I find the trunk slow to thicken but the branches are faster.

You can get Lilly Pillies with leaves of all sizes so it is an ideal plant for Mames to large trees.

Fertilizing: Native Osmocote at repotting and half strength Charlie Carp from then on.

Repotting: Spring or fall or most times if the tree needs it or you get a new specimen. I have had no problem bare rooting my Lilly Pillies and putting them in my gravelly open soil mix.

Propagation: I don't propagate but I am sure they are easy.

Pests or diseases: Psyllids, Psyllids, Psyllids! The Lilly Pilly Psyllid (*Trioza eugeniae*) is a tiny native insect related to cicadas. The immature psyllids or nymphs feed inside the leaves. They settle in one spot then embed themselves in the leaf, forming a lump or pimple. This is a disfiguring problem and the last thing you want to see on your bonsai. Confidor protects the plant. Remove affected leaves and spray but spraying every few weeks is essential as the pest is rapacious and very determined. Birds - May land on your trees to eat the sweet fruit and snap precious branches!

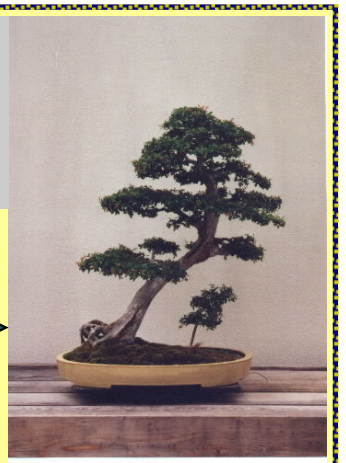
### Comments

Lilly Pillies are easy to grow in most styles and all sizes and they flower and fruit easily making them a delight on the bench over most of the year. There is a variety of flowers in both colour and form and the fruit can vary from cream to pink to purple to red in berries ranging from half a centimetre to 1.5 centimetres across. Consider fruit size when choosing the style but you can't go wrong with a Lilly Pilly. Also consider a summer shallow water tray.

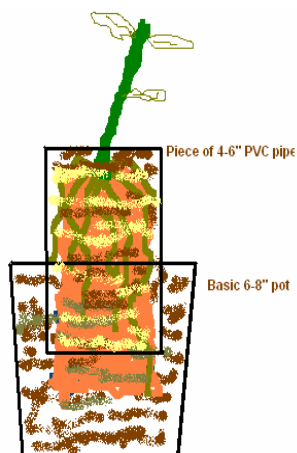
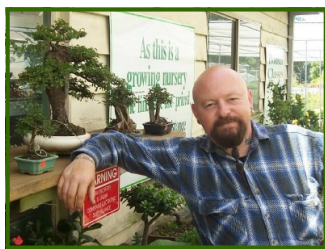


**Quiz Question:**  
Slanting or Informal  
Upright?

*“Answer” on page 5*



## "Tim's Tips" Corner



We've all seen the root-over-rock scenario using plastic wrap. You basically bring the bare roots of your plant along the sides of the rock, wrap the whole thing in plastic wrap and then bury it up to the nebari. Here's another way to do it that's just as good and possibly better, and certainly faster. Get a section of PVC pipe, choosing a size slightly larger than the width of the rock. Place the starter on the rock as desired, making sure to spread the existing roots around the rock and concentrating them in any crevices, as would happened in nature. Keep a spray bottle of diluted plant starter around to keep the roots moist if this process is to last longer than two minutes. Rubber bands are great for securing this.....they allow growth and will rot by the time roots are well on their way....kind of like dissolving stitches. Place this in the pipe section and fill with a sand mix. (Too much grit and you'll get nothing but fibrous roots.) This whole bit then goes in a larger pot with soil topped with some Blood & Bone and Dolomite. Note that you'd be best off only half filling the larger pot with soil to keep the root growth out from the lip of the small pipe/pot, rather than straight down. Initially water and feed into the top of the pipe and taper this off as you begin to water more and more into the planter pot, encouraging the roots even more to grow down quickly over and around the rock. It has been suggested that you can also use an inverted black plastic pot (most commonly a 4-6" tube with the bottom removed) in place of the PVC pipe. The advantage is that the tube is more flexible: you can grip assymetrical rocks more closely. However, roots are strong and stubborn things and they'll easily break through a tube pot...particularly one made brittle by sunlight. On the other hand, you'll need a steady hand with an angle grinder to remove a PVC section, whereas shears or a Stanley knife can take care of the pot when it's time to unwrap your creation. The trees this works best with would be Port Jackson Figs, Trident Maples, Chinese Elms, and (slightly less easily) Zelkovas and Black Pines. Japanese Maples and Junipers aren't as conducive to this style. With trial and error you can do both root-over-rock as well as exposed root designs. Try inserting a piece of wax or Styrofoam between the starter plant and the rock. A year or two later, this is removed leaving a dramatic gap between the tree and the rock. I'm not a big fan of this, as it rarely occurs in nature, but give it a go if it appeals to you.

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



## Kanji/Ideograms of the Month

Apologies: the last issue had a word or two cut off: It should have read:

"As you appreciate the bright fiery oranges and reds of your maples this month, you'll understand the etymology of aki (AUTUMN)"



ANYWAY, one of my favorites has always played out as.....

The kanji for ear:



Combines with the kanji for 'gate':



Resulting in the kanji for 'listen'



I can just picture a nosy old crone with an 'ear at the gate', getting a healthy dose of gossip to share with the neighbors the following day!

The T-Shirt Logo Caucus: After the design selection at the May meeting, the votes were tallied and the results are in. Using an inverse scoring of points to preference, the winner with 66 vote points was the design at right. The next highest scoring design came in with 20% fewer vote points. Full balloting can be viewed by any members who have nothing better to do....



## Tree Mini-Profile: Satsuki Azalea

Satsuki, meaning the 'fifth month' [= May blooming in Japan], is the most popular cultivar of the genus *Rhododendron indicum*.

They tolerate substantial root pruning and will shoot vigorously from hard wood. Repotting recommended from late winter to early spring. Organic feeding conducive to acid-loving plants is recommended fortnightly during spring, and tapering off to once a month in mid to late summer. Azaleas are bottom dominant, which refers to the fact that growth will always be weaker towards an apex, making them especially suited for cascades and semi-cascades. For this reason too, prune judiciously off the top. Also, wire with EXTREME care.

Removing flowers and especially unwanted suckers from the bottom will redirect energy to areas of desired growth. Azaleas require some full sun, preferably late morning, but beware of full sun exposure for prolonged periods; they are not at all forgiving of root dryouts. They also require decent ventilation to minimize the pest risk and they like a good full foliage dousing (over- and underside) every once in a while. Proper winter care and protection is required in Alpine areas.



Website Of the Month:

[http://www.](http://www.bonsaiprimer.com)

**Bonsai primer.com**

Based in the UK, the site is the promotional vehicle for a CD-ROM tutorial. However, there is still a LOT of useful information on the site, particularly for beginners. The links page is also very thorough if not up to date.

## July's Monthly Meeting:

Novice Session: Creating a Forest Planting Demo.

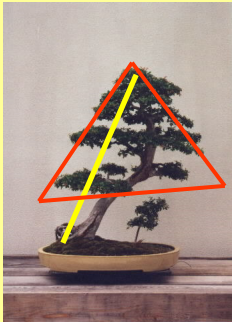
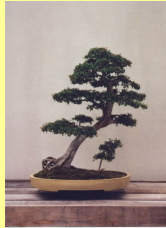
At 7:45pm, **Paul Sweeney**, the original proprietor of "Bonsai—The Imagination Tree" will be the featured demonstrator at the July monthly meeting on Tuesday the 14th. Paul will walk us through the shaping of a large specimen of his choosing. Many thanks to Paul for visiting our club!

In honour of the 220th anniversary of Bastille Day, we may later have an opportunity to work on formal upright trees in the shape of the Eiffel Tower. 🇫🇷 🍷

### From Page 3: Quiz Question-

(Note that "answers" are subjective and not exhaustive)

1. The angle of the overall slant seems to be well within the margins for a classical slanting style, though there is hardly a unanimity of opinion in differentiating between slanting and windswept. Note: slanting style does not prescribe a straight trunk.
2. While the curvature of the trunk seems more indicative overall of an informal upright, note that the apex is not directly above the trunk at soil level. What makes this sublime is that in fact the apex is directly above where the trunk might well be placed in the pot were it a true upright.
3. A feature of slanting style is in the nebari with clearly defined supporting roots compact on the acute angle and extended on the outside.



## Committee of Management:

The Annual General Meeting was held on 9 June. Full proceedings will be available together with the formal financial report to all members after the close of the fiscal year on 30 June. Following the AGM, Committee of Management elections were held and no positions were contested and most incumbents were placed on the ballot with varying degrees of kicking and screaming:

*President: Bill McKernan*

*Vice-President: Neil Howatt*

*Rec & Correspond Secretary: Mark Condon*

*Membership/Mrktng Secretary: Peter Raymakers*

*Treasurer vacant*

Non-Office Committee Members:

Rudi Jerlitschka, Chris Sirre, Marlene Jerlitschka

Note that currently there is no Treasurer. Any member in good standing who would like to assist by serving as Treasurer (or would like more details of the role and time commitment) for the 2009-2010 year should contact the Committee of Management by 3 July at the latest via [yarravalleybonsai@gmail.com](mailto:yarravalleybonsai@gmail.com)

On behalf of the Committee, thanks are due to Marlene Jerlitschka, who served diligently as Treasurer since the Society's inception, tolerating long hours getting records in order and establishing processes in our infancy. Of particular note would be the conscientious way Marlene headed the facilitation of most of the monthly raffles this past year. We are fortunate that we will retain her wisdom and enthusiasm as she is to remain on the committee. Thank you, Marlene!

## July's Saturday Workshop:

### **SPECIAL KIDS' WORKSHOP!**

Saturday 4 July will see the usual YVBS 'First Saturday of the Month' Workshop with a new twist. The workshop will be conducted as usual (bring a plant and share some ideas!), but as it will be the middle of the school holidays between Terms 2 and 3, we'll also host a section specifically for kids aged 7-12. So bring along a child, grandchild, nephew, niece, or build up points with the neighbors and drag one of theirs along.....



For \$6.00, each child will be given a choice of three varieties of starters to pot, trim and style. Together with a care sheet, participants will take home perhaps a first, but hopefully not last, example of this art.

**RSVP** is required for the Kid's section by emailing [yarravalleybonsai@gmail.com](mailto:yarravalleybonsai@gmail.com) by 1 July. The session will be overseen by a member with a Working With Children Police Check, and only age appropriate tools will be utilized. The parent/carer is expected to sign in, sign out, AND remain on site for the duration of the child's attendance.



## Coming Up Before You Know It.....



On Sunday 23 August, "Bonsai—The Imagination Tree" in Monbulk is again offering its **SPECIAL CLUB DAY** from 9.00am to 4.30pm. One day a year, a 20% discount for all club members (of any bonsai club or society) is offered on ALL stock. With a sausage sizzle, tea, coffee, and soft drinks to sustain you as you peruse the field stock, advanced pieces, Japanese & Chinese pots, tools, potting mix and sundries, it's by far the best day of the year to save big at The Imagination Tree. For enquiries, contact Chris Sirre at (03) 9756 7995 or per [nursery@sashieda.com.au](mailto:nursery@sashieda.com.au).



Ref 122 K8

Sunday 23 August

Sunday 23 August

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### Upcoming Waverley Show:



## WAVERLEY BONSAI

Waverley Garden Club Inc, Bonsai Group

The closest group to us geographically is of course the Waverley Garden Club Bonsai Group.

This association has a long and rich history. Advice and assistance from them was very important in getting our group up and running. Several members of our club are also members of the Waverley Group.

Their next show is coming up soon!

**August 14** (10.00am-5.00pm) and **August 15** (10.00am-4.00pm) at the Mount Waverley Community Centre, corner of Stephenson's Road and Miller Cres, Mount Waverley, VIC / **Melway Ref 70 E1**

Trade Tables (cash, credit cards OK, but not EFTPOS) and demonstrations are featured.

Admission: Adults- \$5.00 / Under 16: Free

For more information, consult the Group's Website: [www.home.vicnet.net.au/~bonsai.au](http://www.home.vicnet.net.au/~bonsai.au)

### Library UPDATE

Andrea B. has kindly put up her hand to be the club's first librarian. In addition to acquisition of volumes by purchase or donation, Andrea will work on archiving e-resources as well. Yet perhaps the best idea is her plan to facilitate member-to-member borrowing, at least until our own holdings are sufficient. Much of the cataloguing and records will use the new "Library" folder on the Forum. Andrea's enthusiasm and love of books is best summarized by her remark, "Putting me in charge of the library? It's like putting Dracula in charge of the blood bank."

*The only Zen you find  
on the tops of  
mountains is the Zen  
you bring up there.  
- - Robert M. Pirsig*

### Time to Renew Memberships:



Please note that all memberships are due for renewal as of 1 July. You needn't fill out a new form unless your contact details have changed. Subscriptions will be collected at the next Saturday workshop on 4<sup>th</sup> July OR our next club meeting on the Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> July. (Please bring membership cards for updating)



Fees can be paid by cash or cheque (to *Yarra Valley Bonsai Society*) or by direct deposit

(Please contact Peter Raymakers at 9726 6176, 0431 817 470, or email [rayfam5@lizzy.com.au](mailto:rayfam5@lizzy.com.au) for banking details if required or if you have membership questions.)

**Renewal Membership fees for individuals..... \$25.00** (valid to 30 June 2010)

**Renewal Membership fees for a household membership..... \$35.00** (valid to 30 June 2010)

# ヤラ谷間盆栽会

May-June 2009  
Volume 2 No. 3

*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

Sue, one of our members, has been especially active in bushfire recovery initiatives. Her report on progress follows:

"We have delivered over 600 plants already to Buxton Zoo Nursery, where Colin is distributing them to the 'Triangle' communities (Marysville, Narbethong, Taggerty, Buxton) areas. Another ute and trailer load is almost ready to go, though we think we will actually hold them now until spring. Some of our plants have gone to Bruno's, a large number of swamp gums to PNL 4WD training ground in Narbethong, and the others to many residents. I have also been in contact with Judy Jans, who is now convening the restoration of gardens and landscaping for Marysville. They have just established a website [www.plantaid.com.au](http://www.plantaid.com.au) specifically to link people who want to assist the Marysville community. They are encouraging people to become members of their online community, which you can do on the site. They are very keen to encourage people to get seedlings and cuttings going for them, which will be needed later in the year. So, please keep up the good work. If we can continue to avoid species with potential to become environmental weeds, that would be appreciated. Frost tolerance is another thing to think about. [There is a link on the site to 'desirable plants', as well as 'undesirable ones'.](#)

Judy's garden in Marysville was visited by Waverley Garden Club a few years ago when it was in the Open Garden Scheme. It has been badly hit by the fires also. The main road into Marysville is going to be fabulous in spring with the planting along the roadsides of 12,000 bulbs, which were donated. It will be well worth the visit.

I am happy to continue to co-ordinate our response, and will be appealing for more plants later in the year. This is going to be ongoing for quite some time.

Sue: 0418 372 554



*Too Many Trees and Not Enough Water in sight?*

*Don't want to spend most of Summer 2009-2010 keeping them all alive?*



Consider "Bonsai—The Imagination Tree" as a convenient option to reduce your holdings. Trees sold on a consignment basis and cared for up to the point of sale.

Contact Chris at [nursery@sashieda.com.au](mailto:nursery@sashieda.com.au) or at (03) 9756 7995.



## Accolades, Kudos, and Thanks..

### *Our Thanks to Recent Helpers....*

1. To Craig, for facilitating a great discussion on bonsai care issues at the May monthly meeting and for leading our first novice course starting on 30 June.
2. To Andrea, for agreeing to be Society Librarian.
3. Bonsai-The Imagination Tree for offering discounts on stock to our Novice Course.
4. To Paddy's Plants in Monbulk for discounting plants for our Kids' Workshop in July.
5. To Tim at "A to Z Bonsai" for contributing items to our most recent raffle tables and discounts for the July novice demo....



Please refer to the website for a list of discounts received by members upon presentation of a current and valid YVBS Membership card. "Freebies" of donated items are also made available from time to time at monthly meetings.

### Member Benefits

### 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 via the society's email: [info@yarravalleybonsai.org.au](mailto:info@yarravalleybonsai.org.au)

### Where Have All the Trade Items Gone?

The list of bonsai supplies (for purchase by YVBS members) included in the last couple of newsletters has now been pruned from the newsletter and propagated in the Forum.

Unless items on offer [or prices] change, we will run this in newsletters only a couple of times per year.

Visit the YVBS Forum at:

<http://yarravalleybonsai.org.au/yabb/YaBB.pl>