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Quotable Quotes

Trees can be contorted, bent in weird ways, and they are still beautiful.

Alice Walker



BONSAI SENSATION NURSERY

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The Yarra Valley Bonsai Society Newsletter

Highlights from January & February 2023

The YVBS meets on the second Tuesday of each month at Chirnside Park Community Hub
 33 Kimberley Drive
 Chirnside Park
 Meetings begin at 7:30pm .

Saturday Workshops are
 **37 F3**
 1-4:00pm on the **Last Saturday** of the month, at the same venue as monthlies!

The first meeting of the year in January was a workshop, and featured a really good turnout considering we were still in holiday mode. Members brought in a selection of their trees to work on, and were assisted when required by more experienced club members. Much good work was accomplished by all.

The February club meeting featured a presentation and demonstration by our own Lindsay H, on the topic of "Getting Started with Australian Natives". Lindsay showed a progression series starting from seed, proceeding through a series of growing pots from small to large, and culminating with a "finished" bonsai in a bonsai pot. He made the point that members could start from whatever entry point their interests and budget would allow.



Above - A good turnout for the January meeting, a workshop.

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Lindsay pointed out that although we have accumulated thousands of years experience with implementing exotic species as bonsai, we probably only have 60-70 years experience with Australian natives, so there is still much to learn. Experimentation is the key!

Many species of Australian natives have been successfully made into bonsai, including Banksia (integrifolia, serrata, marginata), Melaleuca (linarifolia, styphelioides, erophyllia), Baeckea (virgata), Kunzea (ericoides, baxterii, peduncularis), Leptospermum (laevigatum, scoparium, rotundifolium, morrisonii), Casuarina (littoralis, torulosa, paludosa, cunninghamiana, equisitifolia), and gums (Eucalyptum Angophora, Agonis, Tristaniopsis of various types). Many other species are in existence and may be suitable, and should be tried.

Starting from seed may take longer but there is a lot of satisfaction to be gained in starting from scratch. Seed that persists on trees for long periods is easy to collect, e.g. Leptospermum or tea tree, Melaleuca, Callistemon, Casuarina and Banksia. Other trees disperse their seed as soon as ripe and is more difficult to collect at the right time, e.g. Grevillea, Acacia, Gums. Put seed pods in an enclosed container for some months and then shake to release the often very fine seed, which can then be sprinkled on seed-raising mix. Larger seeds with often hard exterior shells benefit from soaking in hot water for a day before sowing. Carefully transfer the seedlings into tubes or 50mm pots when they are around 25-50mm high.

Calendar Dates:

- 14th March (Tuesday) YVBS Monthly Meeting. 7:30pm. Chirnside Hub.
- 24th March & 25th March (Friday evening & Saturday) Vic Native Club Bonsai Exhibition, Preston City Hall,
- 25th March (Saturday) "Last Saturday of the Month" Workshop. 1:00pm. Chirnside Hub.
- 10th April (Monday) Tutored Workshops with Tony Bebb.
- 11th April (Tuesday) YVBS Monthly Meeting. 7:30pm. Chirnside Hub.
- 29th April (Saturday) "Last Saturday of the Month" Workshop. 1:00pm. Chirnside Hub.
- 29th & 30th April (Saturday & Sunday) Bonsai Northwest Exhibition & Sale. Footscray

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

Highlights from January & February - Cont. From Page 1

Native tubestock is carried by every nursery, although especially good sources are Kuranga Nursery in Mt Evelyn and local community nurseries such as Candlebark Nursery in Mooroolbark. After purchasing tubestock, immediately pot up into larger containers such as 100mm pots to encourage growth. Tease out the roots and remove any tap roots and strong roots when repotting. It is a good idea to wire the trunks with curves at this time before the trunks become too thick to move. It should also be noted that most Australian natives strike from cuttings very easily and this gives another entry point at the tubestock level.

Nursery stock in various pot sizes can be purchased at various nurseries—it is always a good idea to browse your local nurseries periodically, concentrating on the bargain benches or clearance lines for extra bargains! The roots will invariably require a lot of work, so Lindsay prefers to ignore this when selecting nursery stock, and instead concentrates on selecting material with low-down growth, so that extreme trunk chops can be safely made down to low, new leaders.

Of course, there is always yamadori, or plants dug from the ground, as a source of material, either from your own or friend's gardens or from bush blocks (with permission).

Lindsay doesn't make too many firm styling decisions while growing the trunks to a required size, just tries to maintain an even growth pattern around the trunk, applying some wire to lower branches if necessary. Foliage on the inner branches should be promoted, by cutting out the tips of extending shoots periodically. This is especially important on those varieties which do not reliably bud back on bare wood, but is good practice on everything.

Fertilization is important to promote strong healthy growth, and Lindsay uses general purpose slow release and liquid fertilizers under the same fertilization regime as exotics.

The biggest pest threat to natives are probably caterpillars, and vigilance is required to spot them early so that they can be removed before causing major damage. Myrtle rust and other fungal diseases may occur, and if so is best treated with a systemic fungicide such as Mancozeb.

Lindsay finished his presentation with a demonstration on how to initially trim a nursery-sourced banksia and leptospermum.



Above - Lindsay discussing where to make a trunk chop on a nursery-sourced banksia.

AABC National Bonsai Convention 2023

The next AABC National Bonsai Convention will be held in Perth from 19th—22nd May 2023, hosted by the Bonsai Society of Western Australia in partnership with the Association of Australian Bonsai Clubs.

The National Conventions provide an opportunity to see selected International bonsai artists and some of the best Australian bonsai artists as they demonstrate their techniques and vision on great material.

The featured artists at the Convention will be Yuki Fujikawa from Japan, Rafael Torres from Spain, and Scott Martin and Lindsay Bebb from Australia.

For more information, visit the Convention website <https://aabc23.com.au/>.



Library Check-out!

YVBS has a comprehensive range of bonsai books and magazines in our library, all of which are available for borrowing without charge. Remember, the checkout period for books and other library material is one month. If you check out a book and are not able to make the next meeting, you can return the book at a workshop or even post it to the club PO Box. Now under the management of new Librarian Fiona M!



Trade Table Cheque-out!

The trade table has been restocked with new tools, wire and other accessories. A selection of pots are also in stock. Don't forget the club's tool sharpening kit, available for use at meetings. Anything else you would like to see stocked? Just advise at the trade table or to any committee member.



Workshops with Tony Bebb

In April 2023, the Yarra Valley Bonsai Society will be hosting world-renowned Australian Bonsai artist and AABC Visiting Tutor Tony Bebb for a series of tutored workshops at the Chirnside Park Hub. Tony will also be presenting at our April Club meeting on 11th April 2023.

Tony is from Brisbane and is a frequent traveller to overseas bonsai shows and conventions where he is often asked to participate as a demonstrator. He recently was the featured Australian artist at the virtual World Bonsai Convention in Perth where his choice of a melaleuca forest was inspiring and educational—it is shown in the picture on the left.

Morning and afternoon tutored workshops have been scheduled for Monday 10th April—note that this is Easter Monday—followed by individual one-on-one sessions at member's homes on Tuesday Morning and afternoon.

Each tutored workshop session will be limited to 8 people, and Tony will circulate around participants to guide their activities. Participants should bring along one or two trees on which to work under Tony's guidance. Morning workshops will run from 9:00 to 12:00 and afternoon workshops from 1:00 to 4:00. Note that after being offered at the January and February meeting, there are only a few slots left available—any members want to participate and have not yet signed up should contact Lindsay H (0403 800 671, linhad14@gmail.com) as soon as possible.

The individual sessions are intended for those members with significant bonsai collections who would value a visit by Tony to advise and assist with their design and maintenance decisions. Only two slots are available and while they are currently filled, a standby list will be compiled in case anybody drops out at the last minute. Again, contact Lindsay H to register for the standby list as soon as possible.

The cost of the tutored workshops will be \$50 per session—great value for the opportunity to learn from a bonsai professional of the standing of Tony Bebb. Individual half-day visits will be \$200.

Mark down the April Club meeting in your calendars, as it should be a session not to be missed.



2023 YVBS Bonsai Show

Our Bonsai Show for 2023 is now scheduled for Saturday 20th and Sunday 21st May. All members are strongly encouraged to offer at least one tree for display at the Show, so consider your collection now and start planning the work required to prepare the tree/s for display.

The Last Saturday of the Month Workshops in February, March, and April are good opportunities to bring along potential display trees for advice and assistance.

Talk to any Committee Member if you have any concerns about your tree, and its worthiness for inclusion or the work which should be done to improve its appearance.

The 2022 Show was very successful with the new display arrangement. Display organizer Steve M has a few ideas for further improvements, so the Show should be even better this year. Publicise the event to your family and friends and encourage them to come along!



Above - A section of the new display arrangement at the 2022 Show.



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Bonsai Reshaped 2023

Bonsai Reshaped is an annual celebration of the art of bonsai at the National Bonsai & Penjing Collection of Australia in Canberra. This year, it will run from 24th to 26th March.

This year features internationally recognised bonsai artists Jennifer Price from the USA and Nik Rozman from Slovenia as guest artists to share their expertise and enthusiasm through workshops and live demonstrations.

Regular sessions at the event include:

Bonsai After Dark—Live demonstrations, tours, auctions and much more while enjoying drinks and nibbles at the National Arboretum.

Bonsai Workshops—For beginners to experienced.

Bonsai Markets—Pick up everything you need to start or expand your collection.

Bookings for the event can be arranged through nationalarboretum.act.gov.au.



Novice Training Courses

The 2023 Bonsai Introduction Training Course for novices is scheduled in two parts for Saturday 25th March and Saturday 29th April 2022, at the Chirnside Park Hub, from 9:00am to 1:00pm immediately prior to the normal end of month workshop. Numbers are limited to minimum 6, maximum 12. Comprehensive course notes and a tree to work on are included in the course fee of \$100.

Six members have already enrolled in the course, interested others should advise Lindsay H (linhad14@gmail.com or 0403 800 671) as soon as possible. Enrolments will be restricted to members until end February 2023, after which if there are still vacancies, the opportunity to enrol will be offered to the Chirnside Park Hub administration for publicizing to the Hub community.

End-Of-Month Saturday Workshop

The January end-of-month workshop had an excellent turnout considering the prevailing hot weather. Styling advice was available as usual for newer members and guests.

The end-of-month workshops are usually a relaxed place to work on our trees, discuss our bonsai activities with like-minded people, or seek advice or assistance. They also often provide a first point of contact for interested parties who are considering learning more about bonsai or joining the club. Visitors are always welcome! Bring along any trees that you may have for advice if needed—there is no obligation or cost.

Right - Members at work at the Saturday Workshop



Kudos, Accolades and Thanks

- To Tracey F for again donating a number of pots for using as raffle prizes. See Tracey's ad in this newsletter, and note that she is close to setting up production once again after completing her move to a new residence.

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Tree Profile: *Prunus* Species

General information: Prunus is a genus of trees and shrubs, which includes the plums, cherries, peaches, nectarines, apricots and almonds. More than 400 species are spread throughout the northern temperate regions of the globe, with the greatest variety in Japan, China and Korea. Many of them are widely cultivated for fruit and ornament. One of the true joys of spring and autumn for deciduous bonsai are small leaved and flowering and/or fruiting species. Mostly grown in informal styles for their flower and/or fruit display. The blossom colors range from pure white through all the shades of pink and red. Attractive rugged bark and twiggy branches.



Position: Full sun, but semi-shade in summer. Protect from hot northerly winds in summer and from frost in winter.

Watering: Most varieties need frequent watering, more often in summer. Reduce watering in winter. Do not allow the flowers to get wet or they will rot.

Feeding: Every three to four weeks after flowering has finished through to late summer. Use liquid fertilizer or half-strength general purpose food, switching to a formula high in potassium towards the end of summer. No feeding through the high heat of summer, but it can be resumed thereafter till mid-autumn.

Repotting: Every second year in spring, using free draining soil. Prunus serrulata may need annual repotting, which can also be done in late autumn, after leaves drop. Always soak in Seasol after potting your trees.

Pruning and Wiring: Cut back new shots after flowering in late spring and reduce the fruit - if any, to reduce the stress on the tree! Can be carved and pruned back hard, flowers on new wood. Wiring can be done from spring to autumn - on older trees use raffia, the branches are very brittle and to protect the bark - better use guy wire.



Propagation: By layering in summer or grafting in winter and early spring. Difficult to grow from cuttings! Dig stock in autumn!

Pests and diseases: Birds love to eat the flower buds, protection may be necessary in spring. Lots of bugs love to chomp the leaves; some varieties are more resistant to insects and disease than others.

Some species suitable for Bonsai:

Prunus mume: Japanese flowering Apricot, single or double flowers in whites, pink and reds.

Prunus salicina: Japanese Plum, small white flowers, bright red autumn foliage.

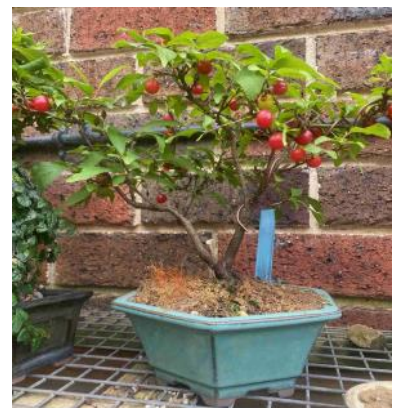
Prunus serrulata: Flowering Cherry, 'Kanzan', used mainly for its remarkable flowers, pink, and so profuse they can completely obscure the branches. 'Hisakura', deep pink single flower. 'Shirotae', fragrant white semi-double flower.

Prunus spinosa: Sloe Plum, spiny shrub, small white flowers, small black fruit. Mainly used for hedging and other utilitarian purposes.

Prunus sinensis: Bush Cherry - This small-leaved cherry bears pink or white pom-pom shaped flowers.

Prunus subhirtella 'Autumnalis': Autumn Cherry, white or pink semi-double flowers. Small leaves with brilliant autumn color. It has the added advantage of more delicate twigging than most cherries.

Prunus tenella: Dwarf Russian Almond with bright pink flowers.



On The Display Table



Trees from the January and February Display Table.

Members please note—Everybody is encouraged to bring in a tree each month for the display table, for general appreciation and to display where you are at with your bonsai skills. There will be NO criticism of trees on the table, but contributing members may seek advice if required. All trees on the display table receive one entry into the display table prize draw, which will be held at the December meeting each year.


Bonsai Calendar: March - April

The occasional glimpse of brilliant colours is the most rewarding sign that autumn is on its way. For many species, this can be the most exciting time in the growing season. Deciduous trees such as Maples, Hornbeams, and Elms can put on a dazzling display of yellows, oranges and reds as they would in nature.


Here are a few tips to help make the most of this time of the year.


- When the weather begins to show signs of coolness, progressively give your deciduous trees more sun. This will encourage autumn colour throughout the foliage. Watch out for the occasional hot days - especially for Japanese maples!
- Some people also believe that reducing the amount of water given to deciduous trees may enhance autumn colours - but don't go too far and stress the plant!
- Don't water the foliage on deciduous trees in the evening to avoid mildew! You can lightly mist azaleas.
- Turn your bonsais fortnightly if they get uneven light. This will ensure next years buds will develop evenly around the tree.
- Species such as azaleas, camellias and many fruit trees should not be pruned at this time if early spring flowers are desired. Azalea can still be pruned if shape/style is the priority - seal the cuts! New shoots should be reduced to two and the remaining shoots shortened to two sets of leaves.
- Late summer and early autumn growth will strengthen and increase the girth of trunks and branches. Inspect for wire damage, remove wire and rewire if needed for shape.
- Late summer provides a small window of opportunity to carefully repot some bonsai. Eg figs, most natives and some pines and junipers. Be very conservative with root pruning conifers at this time. Weather can be unpredictable, keep them in a sheltered position for a few weeks after the work.
- Use an organic fertilizer (liquid) high in potassium and phosphorus to encourage woody growth in the trunk
- Remove old fruit and flowers.
- Fertilize pines in autumn (not spring) to help reduce needle size and to prepare them for the winter.


While enjoying your autumn display, put some thought into winter survival.




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ヤラ谷間盆栽会

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www.yarravalleybonsai.org.au

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



Yarra Valley Bonsai Society
PO Box 345
Mount Evelyn, Victoria 3796
Australia

*Looking Ahead to
March & April 2023*



The monthly meeting on Tuesday 14th March at 7:30pm will feature our own Lindsay M talking on "Shohin Size Bonsai". Lindsay is a very experienced bonsai practitioner, originally from New Zealand, and specializes in these smaller size trees. Display Table—"Various Shohin or Mame sizes", or Member's Choice.



The Last Saturday of the Month Workshop will be on Saturday 25th March from 1:00pm to 4:00pm.



Tutored Workshops with Tony Bebb will be held on Monday 10th April (Easter Monday) for those people who have booked.



The monthly meeting on Tuesday 11th April at 7:30 pm will feature AABC Visiting Tutor Tony Bebb from Brisbane, who will speak and demonstrate on styling techniques. Tony is a world-renowned Bonsai artist, and this is a great opportunity see and meet him. Display Table—"Member's Favourite Tree", or Member's Choice.



Tony Bebb will conduct individual one-on-one consultations with selected members who have booked sessions on Tuesday 11th April.



The Last Saturday of the Month Workshop will be on Saturday 29th April from 1:00pm to 4:00pm.



Other Events



The Victorian Native Bonsai Club will stage their 2023 Bonsai Exhibition on Friday night 24th March from 5:30pm to 8:30pm and Saturday 25th March from 9:00am to 4:00pm, at Preston City Hall, 284 Gower Street, Preston. Entry \$7, children under 15 free.

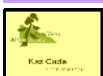


Bonsai Northwest will hold their 2023 Bonsai Exhibition on Saturday 29th and Sunday 30th April from 10am to 4pm at Footscray Community Arts Centre, 45 Moreland Street, Footscray. Entry \$5.



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" or in "Library" and are kept for at least six months. If you visit the site and register as a user, please email Lindsay via the club gmail yarravalleybonsai@gmail.com so that he may add you as a club member user, or if you have any difficulties. Just visit our main webpage

<http://www.yarravalleybonsai.org.au> and follow the FORUM link on the left to the forum.



Member Benefits Refer to the website for a list of discounts to members upon presentation of a current & valid YVBS Membership card. "Freebies" of donated items are also made available from time to time at monthly meetings.

ADVERTISERS & SPONSORS:

Advertising on our website and/or in the newsletter is available for any registered business or sole trader. Society Sponsorship opportunities are capped at three for any year, however supportership opportunities still remain for any business in an area related to the craft of bonsai.

For a prospectus or further information contact us via the society's external email: info@yarravalleybonsai.org.au