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The Yarra Valley Bonsai Society Newsletter

Highlights from July & August 2022

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!

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The July Club meeting featured the ever-popular "Team Challenge", where attending members formed into teams of 3 or 4 and created their best bonsai vision from a supplied tree within the very tight time constraints of the meeting. This year, the trees were young cedars. The end results were very creditable and all teams should be congratulated on their efforts. The finished trees were purchased by lucky team members and taken home to add to their collections.



Above - Contemplating the design at the Team Challenge

The August Club meeting featured a presentation and demonstration by the very talented bonsai practitioner Peter Fewster, on the subject of creating a root-over-rock bonsai. Peter shared with us his experience and knowledge gained from many years of experimentation in this area.

Peter prefers to use trident maples for root over rock compositions as they are tough and the roots grip the rock well and spread with age. The best rocks incorporate nooks, crannies and fissures for maximum interest — they can be found anywhere but Peter has had much success around Westernport, Corinella and Stony Point. Interesting rocks can also be purchased from aquarium supply shops.

Young seedlings should be placed on the rock so that the tree growth follows the rock characteristics. Roots are divided into at least three bundles to go over both sides of the rock. Peter's methodology is to tie the roots to the rock with aluminium wire and then let the roots grow over and absorb the wire. It is important to get the roots in as close a contact with the rock as possible. Place the rock and tree combination into a pot and cover with soil — Peter doesn't use aluminium foil to cover the roots on the rock.

Fertilise the tree extensively — we are after rapid bulk growth. Placing the pot directly on the ground will further promote growth as the roots extend from the holes in the pot and into the ground.

Check the tree the following dormant season by removing it from the pot. Re-wire and pack the roots if necessary to ensure tight contact with the rock. Thread-graft new roots if there are any unsightly gaps in the root structure. Re-bury the rock with a higher position in the pot to start exposing the roots. Repeat until the desired result is achieved.

Calendar Dates:

- 10th September (Saturday) YVBS Nursery Crawl. 10am at Bonsai Sensation
- 13th September (Tuesday) YVBS Monthly Meeting. 7:30pm. Chirnside Hub.
- 17th September (Saturday) Satsuki Interest Group Meeting. 1:30pm. Bonsai Art, Heatherton.
- 17th Sep & 18th Sep (Saturday & Sunday) Northern Suburbs Bonsai Show. Greensborough Masonic Centre.
- 24th September (Saturday) "Last Saturday of the Month" Workshop. 1:00pm. Chirnside Hub.
- 1st & 2nd October (Saturday & Sunday) Bonsai Society of Vic 2022 Show. Box-Hill Town Hall
- 11th October (Tuesday) YVBS Monthly Meeting. 7:30pm. Chirnside Hub.
- 29th October (Tuesday) YVBS Monthly Meeting. 7:30pm. Chirnside Hub.

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

Highlights from July & August - Cont. From Page 1

Peter's demo tree did not require root grafts, but needed branches in some bare areas on the trunk, so he demonstrated thread grafting techniques for the benefit of attending members.

Peter said that rocks can get very hot in summer, and that the Japanese growers often drape moistened cloth over the roots and rock in the height of summer to protect the tree.

Peter also shared his experience in developing thick trunked tridents quickly. Grow in the ground and let the tree grow unchecked — each 1m of height produces roughly 1cm of trunk girth. Do a severe trunk chop, then continue to grow in the ground. Repeat every year or two, and feed well to maximise growth.

During the refinement and maintenance phase of tree development, fertilizing is reduced with an aim to achieve more compact growth patterns.

Peter also shared a method he has seen described of fusing seedlings together to form a shaped thicker trunked tree. Used wire is gathered together, twisted, and then shaped into a pleasing curved form. A bunch of seedlings are spread out around the base of the wire structure and then tied to the wire bundle. The seedlings will fuse together over time and assume the formed shape of the wire.

Peter uses tea bags to hold solid fertiliser pellets such as Dynamic Lifter. The filled bags are placed on the soil — water passing through the bags leaches goodness from the pellets but all of the fine remnant particles are retained in the bag. Each bag will last for about 1 month before depletion of most of the active ingredients. A useful tip is to drop the used tea bags into a bucket of water for a few days. This has the effect of leaching out the last bit of goodness from the fertilizer. The resultant water can be used as a liquid fertilizer.



Above - Peter fixes the tree to the rock.

2022 Annual General Meeting

The 2022 Annual General Meeting of the Yarra Valley Bonsai Society will be held in conjunction with the September meeting. The agenda will cover acceptance of the minutes of the previous meeting, presentation of Officer's Reports, general business, and election of new officers and committee of management.

While some nomination forms have already been received, members are requested to consider stepping forward to assist with the running of the club if they can spare a few hours of time per month. It is important to seek new committee members and ideas to keep the club progressing and meeting the needs of all members. In particular, we are in need of somebody with IT skills to assist with web site management and social media, and somebody with writing or publishing skills to assist with newsletter production. (Your Secretary has been doing both for more than 10 years, and is getting tired!)

Please be aware that it is not necessary to have advanced bonsai knowledge to serve on the committee. It is a management role and what is needed is enthusiasm and commitment.

Contact Lindsay H for nomination forms, or talk with any committee member for further information.

Following the AGM, we will have a presentation on "Taking Your Trees to the Next Level", and a Show and Tell of members' trees. Bring along one of your trees and talk about its history and your plans for future development. Advice can also be sought from the audience if required.

Note—at previous AGM's we have had a tree giveaway to all attendees, however we have elected not to do that this year. We will have the free tree day at the December breakup meeting instead.

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.



Nursery Crawl

The Club has traditionally organized one or two Nursery Crawls per year, where members tour a group of bonsai, general and/or wholesale nurseries on a given Saturday for the opportunity to pick up plants, bonsai, and materials, with selection advice available from experienced members where required. This had to be put on hold during the Covid lockdown years, but we can now proceed again.

A Nursery Crawl is organized for Saturday 10th September, starting at Bonsai Sensation and then visiting Bonsai Art and Garden World Collectors Corner. We meet at Bonsai Sensation at 10:00am, stop for lunch near Bonsai Art, and will finish up around 3 or 4pm.

Club discounts on certain items will be available on the day—Bonsai Sensation will offer 10% off plants, tools etc. and 20% off pots. Bonsai Art will offer 10% off all stock excluding bargain bench and pots.

These are all bonsai nurseries with individual specialties and all are worth a visit. Bonsai Sensation has a huge range of starter stock as well as developed bonsai. Bonsai Art specializes in Satsuki azaleas, and has other general bonsai and starters. Collectors Corner has an interesting range of display trees and various bonsai starters. Pots, materials and tools are available at all of the nurseries.

Members should register their intention to attend with Marlene J (mjerlitschka@iprimus.com.au) who will send out a confirming email with full details of addresses and times. Members may elect to do the full tour or to join at specific nurseries.



Members enjoying a previous visit to Bonsai Sensation Nursery

9th (Virtual) World Bonsai Convention

Although the Earlybird registration for the Convention has passed, a full registration at \$140 is still good value to obtain access to a world-class list of presenters and demonstrations. The AABC has advised the following benefits in registering:

- watch 9 world renowned bonsai artists demonstrate their skills
- no need to travel or pay for accommodation – watch the entire Convention program in the comfort of your own home
- replay every session at a time suitable to you - and do this as often as you want, even after the Convention closes (until the end of October 2022)
- see many additional activities, including large photo exhibitions of bonsai and suiseki, and presentations on Ikebana, carving and suiseki daiza making
- take a virtual tour around the National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia
- access an online marketplace with many vendors of bonsai related products for sale
- online auction of bonsai and suiseki related items

The ONLY way to get access to these activities is by registering to virtually attend. Registration also supports the Australian bonsai scene, as a major percentage of the profit from the event goes to the Australian Association of Bonsai Clubs, and from there, back to us through their tutoring programs and other activities.



Program includes

- Demonstrations.
- Critiques.
- Exhibitions of Bonsai & Suiseki in Australian & NZ Collections.
- Additional activities.
- A virtual tour of the National Bonsai & Penjing Collection of Australia.
- Online Auction.
- Marketplace.



- Training Courses - Beginner to Advanced
- Styling & Shaping
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- Online Shop for Tools, Wire and Bonsai Accessories



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From the NBPCA—by Leigh Taafe

In preparation for our move from temporary residence in Commonwealth Park, up to our existing facility within the National Arboretum in Canberra, we increased our holding of bonsai and penjing from around 30 trees up to a number over 100. In order to do this, we relied heavily on the bonsai community to increase their loans and donations so that we had a selection of trees to choose from to create a worthy display for our grand opening in February 2013.

The bonsai community were invaluable in helping us create a brilliant display, with trees coming to us from many parts of Australia. Today I wanted to share with you one of those trees, a *Banksia serrata* kindly donated by Lynne Farrell from Tasmania. Grown from seed planted in 1980 by the late Neale Farrell, then taken over by Lynne after Neale's death in 1991, this tree has grown from strength to strength over the last 10 years here at the Collection, so much so, that we have had to increase the pot size for the tree twice in that period, and not just a little bit.

One of the interesting points of this tree's journey over the last 10 years here at the Collection is the girth that the tree has put on around the trunk. It is common for *Banksia* species to "fatten-up", so to speak, when grown in pots. This makes *Banksia* a brilliant native species for bonsai when what we are aiming to achieve is the illusion of an aged tree, just in miniature. Therefore, making great bonsai in a short space of time. Many people are astounded that this tree only dates back to 1980, as it looks so much older. The diameter of the trunk has increased almost 100% since it arrived at the Collection in late 2012, going from approximately 19.6cm up to an extraordinary 38cm. This increase in girth was at such a rapid rate that the outer bark of the trunk actually split down the side, see pic right. This split happened a few years before the picture, you can see that the next layer of bark is now getting that aged bumpy look as it grows to fill in the space.

The Farrell's are considered two of the early pioneers of bonsai in Australia, Lynne was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to study bonsai in Japan under the Master Sasumu Nakamura. Upon her return, she shared her enthusiasm by teaching bonsai throughout Tasmania. Of interest, Tasmania's first practicing female veterinary surgeon, Lynne was a pioneer of Angora goat genetics and is noted for performing embryo transfer in goats during the 1970's & 80's. In 2006, Lynne was inducted to Tasmania's Honour Roll of Women for her service to Science



End-Of-Month Saturday Workshop

Regular Club workshops are held on the last Saturday of every month except for December at our normal venue, the Chirside Park Hub, from 1:00pm to 4:00pm. This year only, we also sacrificed our May workshop due to our Bonsai Show being pushed back by one week due to the Federal election.

The workshops are a relaxed place to work on our trees, discuss our bonsai activities with like-minded people, or seek advice or assistance. The trade table is also open for those wishing to purchase tools and supplies. Note — we are expecting a new supply of pots soon due to a donation to the Club!

The workshops also provide a first point of contact for interested parties who are considering learning more about bonsai or joining the Club.

Visitors are always welcome! Feel free to drop in for a tea or coffee and a look around and a chat. We are now able to open kitchen facilities again, and masks are no longer compulsory indoors, although they may be worn by personal choice.



Above - Members at work at the July Saturday Workshop

BONSAI SENSATION NURSERY

MONDAY TO FRIDAY 9:00am – 5:00pm / **WEEKENDS** 10:00am – 3:00pm

PHONE 8794 9668 / **MOBILE** 0425 722 827

253 Centre Road, Narre Warren South, VIC 3805

We have more than 30,000 plants for sale, including an extensive range of pots, tools, wire, and soil. Lessons, plant boarding, and restyling are also available.

Visit our Facebook page and website BONSAISENSATION.COM.AU for more information



Tree Profile: *Juniperus*—*Juniper*

General: According to Wikipedia - *Juniperus* are genuses in the cypress family Cupressaceae with about 60 species of juniper widely distributed throughout the world. They are evergreen with needle-like and/or scale-like leaves. They can be either monoecious or dioecious. The most popular variety for Bonsai is the 'Needle' Juniper - either Japanese or Chinese. The scale-like leaved one 'Shimpaku' is quite underrated in Australia, but favored in Japan and by myself too (not prickly)!

Many Bonsai Masterpieces are Shimpaku and Masahiko Kimura is known for having many outstanding Shimpaku.

It is one of the best beginner trees in the Bonsai world due to its forgiving nature and the ease of styling them.

Lighting & Temperature: Full sun, but in summer partial shade. Frost tolerant to about -8.0°C! Junipers prefer a humid condition and a humidity tray can help in providing the right level - but don't sit them in to the water to avoid root rot!

Watering: Don't allow to dry out and remain dry! Young plants benefit from soaking during dry spells. Good drainage is critical to prevent root rot, don't over water! They benefit from frequent misting to keep the pores dust free - during the growing season spray daily!

Feeding: Fortnightly with high nitrogen fertilizer in early spring, don't fertilize in hot summer. Slow release works well with a low level on nitrogen fertilizer in autumn and NO feeding in winter. Rather under than over fertilize ... it could kill them!

Pruning and Wiring: Pinching continuously from spring to autumn, but DON'T remove ALL growing tips - it will weaken your tree! If you cut the needles they'll turn brown. Junipers can handle hard pruning as well!

Wiring can be done anytime with care, best in autumn or early winter. Due to the flexibility of the trunk and branches whilst young heavy bends can be made easily. Older trees need to be protected with raffia or tape - watch out for the at times brittle deadwood! Depending on the age of the tree the wire can remain on from 3 months to a year, watch the wire over the summer month. "Clip and grow" achieves excellent results as well.

Repotting: Early spring is best when new buds appear. Avoid too much root disturbance, but remove any rotting or sick roots. For a better recovery don't remove more than about 25%. Add some washed coarse river sand to your bonsai mix for good drainage. Young trees every two years, older ones only every three to five years.

Propagation: Hardwood cuttings and air layer in spring, softwood or from seeds in autumn.

Pests and diseases: Scales, spider mites, webworms, aphids and needle miners - use specific pesticides. Rust fungus and root rot if poor drainage.

Styles: Every style and form of bonsai is possible! Great with Driftwood, Jin, Shari, Phoenix graft and for Landscapes too!

Just to name a few species suitable for Bonsai:

***Juniperus chinensis* - Chinese Juniper**, showing juvenile needle-like leaves, adult scale-leaves.

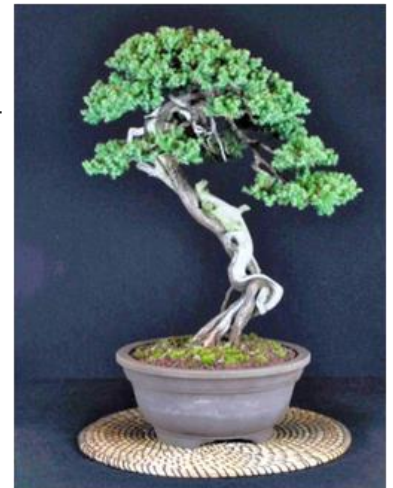
***Juniperus procumbens* – Ibuki Juniper**, very common as Bonsai with needle-like green leaves.

***Juniperus squamata* - Flaky Juniper**, valued for its needle-like bluish foliage and compact habit.

***Juniperus chinensis* 'Shimpaku' - Shimpaku Juniper**, its attractive scale-like leaved and beautiful bark make this one of the top candidates for bonsai.

***Juniperus communis* - Common Juniper**, it has needle-like leaves in whorls of three; the leaves are green, with a single white stomatal band on the inner surface.

***Juniperus rigida* - Temple or Needle Juniper**, open habit with graceful drooping branches with green needle-like and scale-like leaves. It is much loved as Bonsai with many fine and old examples.



Above - Photo courtesy of Wikipedia



On The Display Table



A selection of trees on the Display Table at the July and August meetings.



Bonsai Calendar: September - October

Following are the main tasks to focus on during this time of year.

Repotting/Root pruning

- When repotting, look for ways to improve the overall appearance of your bonsai. For example, changing the position of the tree by turning, lifting or leaning the tree. Also consider alternative pot choices.
- Watch for the buds to swell on deciduous trees. Repot before buds break into leaf.
- Begin your repotting with deciduous varieties such as, maples, oaks, elms (September) and then continue with varieties such as, cryptomerias, azaleas, pyracanthas and pines (October).
- After repotting, keep your trees in a protected area away from extreme weather (hot or cold)

Wiring

- Wire all trees before repotting, rather than after repotting. This will minimize any movement to the tree after being repotted.
- Deciduous trees should be wired before breaking into leaf. Be careful not to damage the delicate buds while wiring branches.
- Watch carefully for wire damage at this time of year as most trees are growing at a rapid rate.

Pinching/Pruning

- Begin to pinch back new shoots as soon as they appear.
- Frequent pruning/pinching will improve ramification and help reduce leaf size throughout the growing season.
- Remove dying flowers from the tree as it weakens the plant and encourages pests.

Fertilizing/Watering

- With new growth, the need of water and fertilizer increases. Try to observe your trees individually to establish the amount and frequency of watering necessary.
- Avoid overwatering. Remember it is a process of wetting and drying.
- Use a slow release fertilizer (Osmocote/Dynamic Lifter) in combination with a liquid fertilizer (Powerfeed, Charlie Carp).
- It is better to fertilize regularly and frequently in small weak doses than give a strong dose now and then.
- With flowering species, fertilizing should commence after flowering.
- Water your trees (with plain water) before using liquid fertilizer.

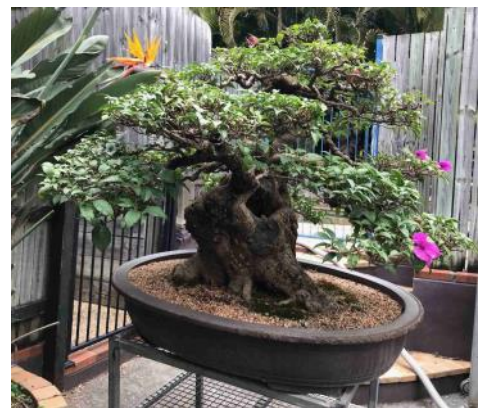
David's Second Bonsai Collection

David R is intending to spend part of each year in Brisbane, alternating with his home in Melbourne's east—so, of course, he needed another bonsai collection to occupy his time while in Queensland! During a recent visit, he called in to a local bonsai nursery, The Bonsai Man and was "dumb struck" with the trees on offer. He couldn't resist picking up a few beauties, including a couple of bougainvillea that he has always wanted to include in his collection.

David was impressed with the quality of the trees on offer and the prices were reasonable.

If any members are travelling through Brisbane, it might be worth a visit.

Check out The Bonsai Man website



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
September & October 2022*



The monthly meeting on Tuesday 13th September includes the Annual General Meeting of the Club as well as a presentation on "Taking Your Trees to the Next Level", and also a Show and Tell on Members' Trees. Display Table —"Japanese Maples Any Style" or Member's Choice.



The only Club Nursery Crawl for 2022 will be on Saturday 10th September, visiting Bonsai Sensation, Bonsai Art and Gardenworld. Meet at Bonsai Sensation at 10:00am, or join at any time. See separate email invitation.



The Last Saturday of the Month workshop will be on Saturday 24th September from 1:00pm to 4:00pm.



The monthly meeting on Tuesday 11th October will comprise a presentation on "Bonsai Pots—A Potter's View" by our own Tracey F, as well as a Bonsai Basics overview on Pot Selection, appropriately enough. Display Table —"Forest or Groups", or Member's Choice.



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



Other Events



The Satsuki Interest Group Meeting will be held on Saturday 17th September at 1:30pm at Bonsai Art Nursery, 236 Old Dandenong Road, Heatherton.



The Northern Suburbs Bonsai Show will be held on Saturday 17th September from 10:00am to 4:00pm and Sunday 18th September from 10:00am to 2:00pm, at the Greensborough Masonic Centre, 25 Ester St, Greensborough. Entry Fee \$5, children free.



The Bonsai Society of Victoria will be holding their 2022 Bonsai Show on Saturday 1st October and Sunday 2nd October at the Box Hill Town Hall.

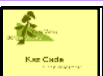


Kudos, Accolades and Thanks

- Thanks to Beryl Spink who has kindly donated quite a number of bonsai pots to the Club, via Stefan D.

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