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*Quotable Quotes*

*Tending bonsai teaches me patience.*

MJL—Ausbonsai



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# The Yarra Valley Bonsai Society Newsletter

## Highlights from May & June 2022

The May meeting was a Show preparation session, where Steve M described the necessary steps in preparing trees and pots for exhibition. Members brought along their trees for final advice on presentation and tree selection.

Our annual Bonsai Show was held on the weekend of 28th and 29th May, a week later than originally planned to avoid the clash with the Federal election. The Federal Government were inconsiderate enough to book out the entire Chirnside Hub for the week plus prior to use as a prepolling station!

A report on the Show is included later in this newsletter.

The June meeting featured the long-awaited demonstration on Grafting Techniques by our own Nick R, assisted by his work colleague Michael. Nick had presented on this topic during Covid lockdown but this was via a Zoom meeting, which was not quite the same or as effective.

Nick explained that grafting involves the attachment of one piece of plant material to another, for the purpose of:

- Plant reproduction, when other methods are not suitable or successful.
- Adding branches to an existing tree in a desired location.
- Adding roots where needed.
- Changing the foliage characteristics of a tree.

There are many different grafting techniques, but the most common and useful are:

- Veneer or side grafting
- Cleft grafting
- Chip budding
- Approach graft
- Thread graft

The tools and material requirements for grafting include:

- A very sharp grafting knife, with only one side bevelled.
- Secateurs or scissors
- The understock or root material
- The scion material (i.e. The shoot to be grafted on to the understock).
- Grafting/budding tape.



Above - Nick explains the principles of grafting

**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 .



**37 F3**

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

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### Calendar Dates:

- 12th July (Tuesday) YVBS Monthly Meeting. 7:30pm. Chirnside Hub.
- 30th July (Saturday) "Last Saturday of the Month" Workshop. 1:00pm. Chirnside Hub.
- 9th August (Tuesday) YVBS Monthly Meeting. 7:30pm. Chirnside Hub.
- 27th August (Saturday) "Last Saturday of the Month" Workshop. 1:00pm. Chirnside Hub.

See also the Events Calendar on our website: [www.yarravalleybonsai.org.au](http://www.yarravalleybonsai.org.au)

## Highlights from May & June - Cont. From Page 1

- A greenhouse or a plastic bag to maintain moisture levels in the scion.
- Methylated spirits or isopropyl alcohol for sterilisation of tools.

It is important that the understock material is healthy with a strong root system. One to two year old seedlings are generally used. Greater success is achieved if the same species is used for scion and rootstock.

The scion is selected for its desired variety and characteristics. It should be from the current year's growth, be strong and healthy, have no damage or infections, be clean and fresh.

A successful graft requires the cambium layers to be effectively connected, and so the scion should be very carefully aligned with the cut on the understock. The steps are:

- Clean up space on the understock to take the graft
- Collect the scion material, trim to size and clean the base
- Make a cut into the understock
- Cut the scion
- Fit together so the cambium layers on at least one side are aligned
- Apply tape over the join to ensure a continuing tight contact.

Grafting can be done in late winter to early spring or in mid to late summer. Summer grafting is used primarily for chip budding or T budding, and sometimes for veneer grafts. Winter budding is used for veneer grafts, cleft grafts, whip and tongues, and thread grafts. Ideally, the root stock should be active and the scion dormant.

While not for everybody, grafting can often be a useful addition to your bonsai toolbox.



Above - Members gather round for a closer view of grafting..

## Bonsai Training Courses

The Introduction to Bonsai novice training course was held in March and April this year, however for new members and those who missed out, another course is planned for August this year. This will be held in conjunction with Japara House in Kilsyth who have requested us to run a bonsai course based on enquiries they have received. The course will comprise 4 x 2hr sessions on successive Wednesday evenings, from 17th August through 7th September, at 7:30pm. The location will be Japara House, 54-58 Durham Rd, Kilsyth, and the cost will be \$80 in total. As usual, participants will receive a comprehensive 30+ page booklet of course notes, and a tree to work on during the course. Any member who wishes to enroll should either contact Japara House directly ([www.japarahouse.com.au](http://www.japarahouse.com.au), [programs@japarahouse.com.au](mailto:programs@japarahouse.com.au), 9728 3587) or Lindsay H ([linhad14@gmail.com](mailto:linhad14@gmail.com), 0403 800 671). Course availability subject to both minimum and maximum numbers.

## End-Of-Month Saturday Workshop

For the first time ever, I think, our normal end of the month workshop in May had to be cancelled due to its clash with our Show dates. However, we were back to normal on the Last Saturday of the Month in June. These workshops not only provide a convivial atmosphere for working on your trees and receiving assistance, they are also a valuable means of introduction to the Club for new and potential members. We are confident that all members will be open and welcoming to any visitors or newcomers, and discuss what they may be working on if approached.

### 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.



## 2022 Show Report

Our 2022 Show was staged on the weekend of 28th and 29th May at the Chirnside Park Community Hub, and once again proved to be a great success.

The new layout developed by our Vice-President Steve M provided a superior display arrangement over last year's effort, and led visitors around the exhibits in a consistent manner with a backdrop featured behind each tree. Steve has a few more ideas for further improvements for next year's Show!

A total of 85 trees were on display, submitted by 23 members, ranging in size from small shohin and mame to larger trees, and from novice level to superior aged trees, and everything in between. It was good to see a record number of members contributing, but we hope to do even better next year—all members are encouraged to submit a tree for display, as the Show is intended to showcase to the local community our total Club efforts and progress in developing the art of Bonsai.

We estimate that a total of around 400 people visited the Show over the weekend—we really must develop a better way of counting guests next year! Much interest in the hobby was shown, and we hope to achieve a number of new members joining us over the coming months. We have 5 new memberships already!

Total takings over the weekend, comprising sales area, trade table, donation box and raffle, amounted to over \$8,000, resulting in a net profit to the Club of around \$1,000. This will be put towards costs associated with running the Club, and providing services to members.

Thanks to all members who assisted with the setup, running and take-down of the Show. It is true that many hands make light work!

If any members have suggestions for improving our Show for next year, please put them to any committee member for further consideration. We are always striving for improvement.

Our member Davor T took a number of photos of various aspects of the Show, and these have been loaded to the following on-line storage location. Click on the link to view, or enter it into your favourite device or viewer.

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/a4hx59ejC68kUawn8>

A selection of photos have been included in this article and elsewhere in this newsletter.



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## *NBPCA Article .... A contribution from Leigh Taafe at the National Collection in Canberra*

In April the National Bonsai & Penjing Collection of Australia (NBPCA) welcomed its second Artist in Residence, Scott Martin from Victoria. Scott, who owns Bonsai Matsu located in Melbourne, worked collaboratively with NBPCA staff over three days during April to deliver demonstrations, workshops and presentations showcasing his talent and knowledge. While he was here, Sam Thompson, NBPCA's Assistant Curator, created a short video for our Facebook page. If you missed it, you can view it online here: [National Bonsai & Penjing Collection of Australia | Facebook](#)

This month I would like to showcase a couple of fabulous penjing from the late Hong Lin from Melbourne. Mr Lin emigrated from China to Australia in the 1980's, starting his penjing collection again from scratch. He was very active in the propagation of new material for his collection, particularly growing Chinese elm from cutting.

To the uninitiated, the composition at right might represent a cascade bonsai style. Depicting a tree growing in harsh conditions from the face of a cliff, where possibly snow, wind or other things have caused it to grow in a sideways or downward fashion rather than upright.

With penjing, however, particularly from the Lingnan schools in the Southern areas of China, the inspiration for the artist is not necessarily to create the illusion of a big, old tree in miniature, but rather to create a wholistic composition that might tell a story, depict a mythical creature, represent a relationship, or among other things, evoke an emotion in the viewer.

What the artist, in fact, was intending with this composition was to depict a mythical dragon, where the twisting, turning trunk is the dragon's body and its craggy branches are the feet and claws.

For many, the penjing landscape is easily identifiable, with accompanying rocks, different species of plants, and possibly figurines used to create a scenery on a tray. Where a landscape is not the intention, and the artist uses a single tree, or a couple of trees of the same species without rocks or figurines, identifying a penjing is a little more difficult.

The second composition represents the relationship between a mother and a daughter. A common composition, also sometimes representing the relationship between a father and son. The way the trees are styled and interact with one another help us to understand that relationship. In this composition, the small tree on the right (Daughter) has its branches growing around the trunk of the larger (Mother) tree, representing a small child with its arms cuddling their parent's legs. The two trees are planted very close together, representing a very close relationship. The first right branch of the Mother tree grows out, down and over the Daughter tree as a protecting arm of coverage. There are elements of strength in the shaping of the primary branches and exposed root at the front of the Mother tree, but also a sense of elegance in the fine ramification of the twiggy tertiary branches.

There is one element to this composition that is unusual and could be described as Mr Lin choosing artistic license to add another small tree at the back of this work. This little tree to the left is actually the Father. A fun play on a story that actually depicts his family. His wife and daughter, and himself to complete a family portrait.



## *Kudos, Accolades and Thanks*

- To our members Tracey F and Val G for donating pots as raffle prizes for the Show.
- To the AABC and Bonsai Northwest for the loan of photo backdrop materials so we could photograph our trees at the Show for consideration for use at the World Bonsai Convention virtual exhibition.
- To Davor T for his expert photography at our Show.

## **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](http://BONSAISENSATION.COM.AU) for more information



## *Tree Profile: Trident Maple - Acer buergerianum*

**General information:** The trident maple is native to eastern China and Japan. It is in the family of *Aceraceae* and is a very popular species for bonsai, due to its small, three-toothed leaves, a thickening trunk, generally hardiness, and hefty, gnarled rootage conducive to root-over-rock style.

**Lighting and Temperature:** Full sun or partial shade throughout the year but will need protection from hot winds.

**Watering:** Daily throughout the growing season, easing off in winter. Keep the soil moist but well drained. Watch that the soil doesn't stay continually wet over particularly rainy winters.

**Feeding:** Recommended from spring to early autumn once a week to every three weeks once buds appear, and then tapering off the feeding schedule in summer. Do not spray the leaves! Note that fertilizing and excess watering after summer may adversely affect autumn colours.

**Pruning and wiring:** Shorten new shoots on established branches once they have grown out to 3 or 4 pairs of leaves in late spring to two sets of leaves, and continue doing this throughout the growing season. Remove large leaves throughout the growing season to enable light to reach the inner branches. Leaf pruning should not be more than one third at a time, a total leaf prune is not recommended in consecutive years. For strong trees, total defoliation may be performed in late spring—some growers defoliate up to 3 times over the growing season! Wiring can be done any time during growth, but take care as old woody branches are brittle.

**Propagation:** From seed, air-layered, or grown from both hardwood and softwood cuttings. Softwood cuttings in summer, use heal cuttings for better results. Air layering may be done in spring and early summer. Can take a long time to root!

**Repotting:** In spring, before buds open. Roots grow very quickly, so annual repotting may be necessary for young trees; older trees tend to need repotting every 2-3 years. Position the roots during repotting!

**Pests and diseases:** Generally pest and disease free, but are vulnerable to caterpillar attack. If you have poor air circulation or dry roots, powdery mildew might develop.

**Styles:** Informal Upright, Slanting, Cascade, Semi-cascade, Literati, Curved-trunk, Broom, Clump, Group planting and Saikei.

### **Some species suitable for bonsai:**

Many varieties are available and several interesting and rare cultivars have been developed as well, including 'Goshiki Kaede' (striking pink and green variegation), 'Kifu Nishiki' (roundish, almost un-lobed leaves), 'Mino Yatsubusa' (dwarf with long, narrow leaves) 'Mitsubato Kaede' (distinctive cork-like trunk) and 'Naruto' (strongly incurved leaf surface).



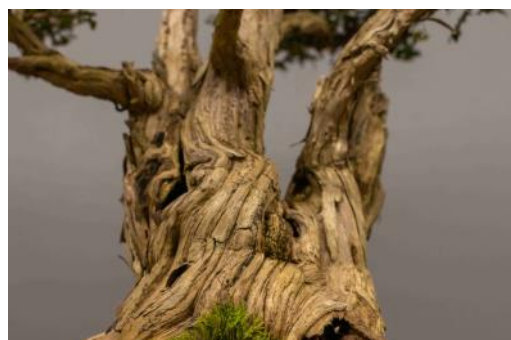
*Photo courtesy of BonsaiShop.com.au*



## On The Display Table



A selection of trees on the Display Table at the June meeting, and below, some additional Show images.



## *Bonsai Calendar: July - August*

Most species that are used for bonsai are hardy (able to withstand freezing) however, when grown in containers they do not have the ability to bury their roots deep into the ground, which insulates them from the cold. The Melbourne climate rarely reaches zero (freezing) or sub zero temperatures but protecting your trees from the winter elements may still be necessary. Be wary of extremely wet weather as having your trees saturated for extended amounts of time may lead to problems through rotting of the roots, which is invariably fatal!

Having the ability to inspect the detailed branch structure of your deciduous trees in winter provides an excellent opportunity to consider restyling your trees. Here are a few tips to get you through the winter.

- Monitor the weather and protect your bonsais from excess rain, wind and cold. Find the most protected area in your yard. Place them undercover if necessary.
- Remove any dead leaves from around your trees and display benches, as these can become a breeding ground for insect pests.
- Prune and thin out your conifers where necessary to set up their growth for the coming growing season.
- Keep your trees as well drained as possible. Place bricks or blocks of wood under your bonsais to ensure water is escaping the pot and air is circulating around and under your trees.
- Carefully inspect each tree and make any changes that will improve your bonsai. Remember the busy potting season is not far away so having your wiring and pruning complete before this time will take the pressure off.
- Avoid the temptation to repot too early. Wait until the buds start to swell before attempting this procedure.
- Prepare your potting medium and place in a dry area. Organize any other items needed for potting (root picks, mesh, scoops etc.)
- Consider what pot you will use for each of your trees. Place them next to the bonsais that they will be paired with.
- It is not necessary to fertilise your trees when they are in dormancy, however evergreens are still growing slowly and natives may not even slow down too much, depending on species and weather conditions. An occasion application of liquid fertilizer can benefit these trees.

It is difficult to predict the changing of the seasons. Trying to schedule with the use of a calendar may lead to problems. Watch your trees carefully and let them guide you.



## Bonsai Sensation Nursery

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# ヤラ谷間盆栽会

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2022

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[www.yarravalleybonsai.org.au](http://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  
July & August 2022*



The Club meeting on Tuesday 12th July will feature the ever-popular Team Challenge. Join a team under the direction of a senior member, and race to create the best bonsai possible! A great learning opportunity! Display Table—"Deadwood and Shari", or Member's Choice.



The Last Saturday of the Month Workshop will be on Saturday 30th July from 1:00pm to 4:00pm.



The Club meeting on Tuesday 9th August will be a demonstration on "Root Over Rock Bonsai" by special guest presenter Peter Fewster. Great to welcome Peter back again. Display Table—"Root Over Rock", or Member's Choice.



The Last Saturday of the Month Workshop will be on Saturday 27th August from 1:00pm to 4:00pm.



## Other Events



**NOTHING SCHEDULED AT THIS TIME!**



**Don't Forget—World Bonsai Convention,  
Online Event, 8th—16th October 2022.**

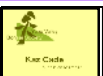
Go to <https://www.worldbonsaiconvention2022.com> for details.

**Early Bird Registrations (\$90) close on 30th June. Full price  
registration is then \$140.**



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](mailto: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](mailto:info@yarravalleybonsai.org.au)