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# The Yarra Valley Bonsai Society Newsletter

## Highlights from January & February 2024

**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!

### Inside this issue:

Bonsai Training Course	2
Sale Day 2024	2
Trade & Lib Update	2
National Convention	3
Bonsai Reshaped Canberra	3
Kudos, Accolades, Thanks	3
Wall Calendars	3
Bonsai Artwork	4
Saturday Workshops	4
Tree Profile - Sannantha	5
On The Display Table	6
Bonsai Calendar	7
Confused Growing Season	7
Looking Ahead	8
Other Events	8
YVBS Forum	8

The January meeting was scheduled to be a Workshop, however the Club received an unexpected but very welcome donation of a large number of bonsai trees from a local member of the public in January, and the Committee elected to provide members with the opportunity to purchase the trees via an auction process.

There were some quality trees on offer which just needed some tender loving care to bring them along to show-worthy condition.

Under the direction of auctioneer Patrick, the



bidding at times was fast and furious as members recognized the great opportunity to obtain some excellent material at very attractive pricing. All but one of the 30-odd trees was snapped up on the night, and the remaining tree will be put up for sale at our planned May Sale Day.

We look forward to seeing some of the trees on display at our Annual Show in November.

*Above - Members inspect the trees prior to the auction.*

*Left - Auctioneer Patrick in full flight!*

The February meeting featured a presentation and demonstration by our own Steve M assisted by Dean S on "Wiring and Heavy Bending". They worked initially on a Cedar owned by Patrick, and followed up with some work on a Shimpaku Juniper.

Steve and Dean demonstrated the wrapping of the tree with wet raffia followed by rubber, to support the cambium layer in the tree while bending. Heavy wire was placed on the tree, and additional guy wires were used to maintain the substantial bends applied.

Steve also explained other techniques which could be used when doing heavy bends:

- Wedge cutting—extracting a wedge of material from the tree and then closing the wedge with the bend.
- Trunk splitting—using a splitting tool to part the inner heart wood to make bending easier.

### Calendar Dates:

- 12th March (Tuesday) YVBS Monthly Meeting. 7:30pm. Chirnside Hub.
- 15th March & 16th March (Friday & Saturday) Vic Native Bonsai Exhibition. Preston.
- 30th March (Saturday) "Last Saturday of the Month" Workshop. 1:00pm. Chirnside Hub.
- 9th April (Tuesday) YVBS Monthly Meeting. 7:30pm. Chirnside Hub.
- 11th April to 14th April (Thursday through Sunday) Bonsai Reshaped at NBPCA, Canberra.
- 20th April (Saturday) Satsuki Interest Group Meeting. 1:30pm. Bonsai Art, Heatherton.
- 20th April & 21st April (Saturday & Sunday) Bonsai Northwest Exhibition. Footscray.
- 27th April (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)

Continued Page 2

## Highlights from January & February - Cont. From Page 1

- Trunk drilling—drilling a number of holes into the heart wood to remove material and ease bending.

Thanks Steve and Dean for your demonstration!



*Right - Applying the raffia to the cedar trunk.*

*Left—Steve applying force to bend the trunk while Dean tightens the guy wire.*



## Bonsai Training Courses

A total of 10 members have signed up for the Introduction to Bonsai Training course, which this year will be run in two sessions, on Saturday 6th April and Saturday 27th April from 9:00am to 1:00pm on both days. Venue is the Chirnside Park Community Hub as usual.

Participants will be given a set of course notes and a tree on which to work during the course. Bring along your own tools and wire if you have them, otherwise a selection of tools and wire will be available to borrow.

We have reached capacity for the course, however if any other members wish to participate, we may be able to squeeze one or two more in! Contact Lindsay H for details—yarravalleybonsai@gmail.com or 0403 800 671.

Current registered participants are: Jess B, Wayne M, Simon B, James S, Wendy S, Clare S, Christine S, Andrew S, Marilyn W, Kelly W.

## Advance Notice—Annual Sale Day 2024

As previously advised, the YVBS Annual Show will be in November this year—a Spring Show. Consequently, it has been decided to move our Annual Sale Day which is normally held in November to May 2024. As normal, it will be held on the morning of our Last Saturday of the Month Workshop—25th May. Sale from 10:00am to 1:00pm and Workshop from 1:00pm to 4:00pm.

We anticipate that our usual sellers will be involved, making for a great opportunity to pick up some quality trees, pots and materials. Put it in your diary now!

For any members or associates wishing to book a table for the day, contact Marlene mjerlitschka@iprimus.com.au or 0418 147 871. The fee for a table is \$25, and the vendor is responsible for their own sales. Credit card and EFTPOS facilities are available through the Club and can be used by all vendors, with proceeds being sent out approximately one week after the Sale Day.

Reminders and further details will be advised in the next newsletter, on our website, and at our intervening meetings.

### 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.



### 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.



## *AABC National Convention 2024*

The National Bonsai Convention this year will be in Brisbane and hosted by the Bonsai Society of Queensland. It will run from 17th to 20th May. Full registration fee is \$310. More information for AABC 36 - Bonsai By Design - can be found by visiting the website:  
<https://bonsaisocietyqld.asn.au/events/#!event-list>

The Convention venue is:

Royal on the Park Hotel

152 Alice Street, Brisbane City 4000

<https://www.royalonthepark.com.au/contact>

International Demonstrators are:

Koji Hiramatsu, from Japan,

Martin Walters, from Auckland, New Zealand.

with supporting Australian Demonstrators:

Lindsay & Glen Bebb, and

Andrew Sellman, (one of the AABC VTs from Queensland).

Highly recommended for anybody planning or desiring to be in Brisbane at this time of the year.



## *Bonsai Reshaped 2024 in Canberra*

Bonsai Reshaped is the annual celebration of the art of bonsai at the National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia (NBPCA) at the National Arboretum in Canberra.

This year we welcome internationally recognised artists Marija Hajdic from Croatia and Morten Albek from Denmark, to share their expertise, influences, experiences and enthusiasm through workshops and live demonstrations.

Both professional artists carry the legacy of the bonsai masters into the future whilst developing and exploring the boundaries of the artform.

For more information and for tickets, visit [nationalarboretum.act.gov.au](http://nationalarboretum.act.gov.au).

The various events associated with the event will take place between 11th and 14th April.

A number of YVBS members have participated in previous years and all can highly recommend it—and of course check out the National Bonsai Collection as well!



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## *Kudos, Accolades and Thanks*

- To our anonymous bonsai tree donor—many thanks and rest assured that your trees have all gone to good homes.

## *2024 YVBS Wall Calendars*

A reminder that a few of the 2024 Club Wall Calendars are still available at \$10 each. They feature photographs of our members' trees taken at the 2023 Show and make an attractive and useful addition to your home, as well as being a valuable keepsake to provide future inspiration.

See Marlene J at any Club meeting, or reserve a copy by contacting her at [mjlerlitschka@iprimus.com.au](mailto:mjlerlitschka@iprimus.com.au).





**BONSAI MATSU**

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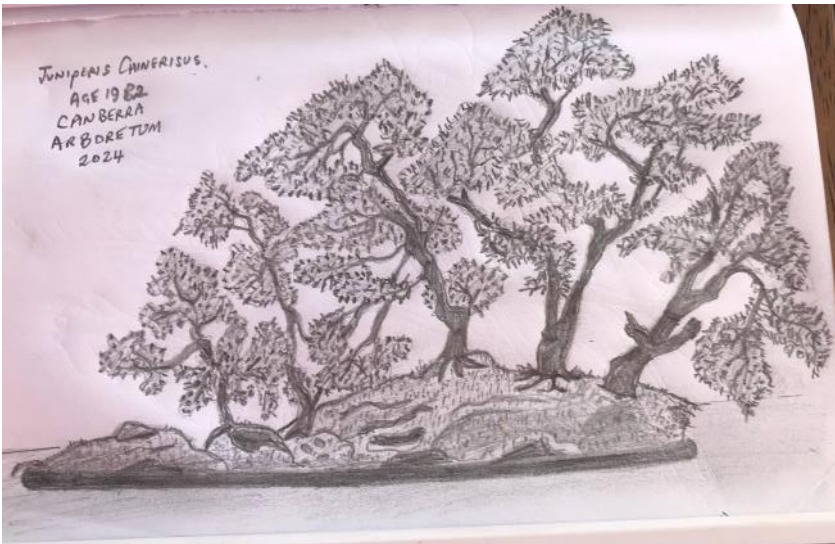
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## Bonsai Artwork

As well as Bonsai, David R has an additional hobby in sketching and drawing. As he puts it, where other people like to sit down and read to relax, he likes to sit down and draw. Here are some examples of his work.

Very nice David—you are multi-talented!



## End-Of-Month Saturday Workshop

The regular Last Saturday of the Month workshops are a relaxed place to work on our trees, discuss our bonsai activities with like-minded people, or seek advice or assistance with our trees. There is usually something interesting going on, and plenty of trees to look at, in various stages of development.

If you are looking for advice or assistance, remember to seek opinions from various members, and take the advice which best fits your feelings. Remember that there are no "right" answers when it comes to styling—it is your tree and your choice.

The workshops 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, or just come along for an introduction to the art of bonsai. There is no obligation or cost.



Above - Members at work at the January Saturday Workshop

Open from 1:00pm to 4:00pm on the last Saturday of each month except December, at the Chirnside Park Community Hub.

## BONSAI SENSATION NURSERY

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

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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.

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## Tree Profile: *Twiggy Heath Myrtle* - *Sannantha bidwillii* (*ex Babingtonia* or *Baeckea*)

**General:** According to *Wikipedia* - *Sannantha bidwillii* is a species in the myrtle family, Myrtaceae. It is endemic to Australia in QLD, but also found in NT, VIC and NSW. The species also known as *Baeckea* was first formally described in 1997 and given the name *Babingtonia bidwillii*. In 2007 it was placed in the newly created genus *Sannantha*. For many years the name *Baeckea virgata* was misapplied to this species. *Baeckea virgata*, currently *Sannantha virgata*, is endemic to New Caledonia!

It has been cultivated for a number of years under various names and still is available as such!

*Sannantha* or *Baeckea* is a very popular species for Native Bonsai with masses of small white flowers in late spring and summer. Its bark is very attractive textured, giving it a great mature look. The leaves/foilage is soft and dark green.

One of the very best species for beginners to bonsai—it has naturally small leaves, tolerates hard pruning, and is extremely hardy.

**Lighting & Temperature:** Place in full sun, but semi shade or morning sun is o.k. too, it's also frost hardy.

Protect from hot drying winds!

**Watering:** Daily in the morning, it's very thirsty - keep the soil moist, but don't overwater it doesn't like wet soil.

Don't let it dry out!

**Feeding:** Best to use a slow or controlled release type fertilizer like Native Osmocote from spring to autumn at the drip line. You can use liquid fertilizer like Charlie Carp throughout the seasons.

Don't fertilize in the middle of the hot summer and 6 weeks after repotting!

**Repotting:** Can be done twice a year, late spring and autumn, using a well drained soil.

**Propagation:** Easy from seeds in spring, semi ripe cuttings in autumn, air-layering in early summer and collecting (Yamadori).

Check with the landowners or Council first!

**Pruning and wiring:** Best time is early summer after flowering during its growth time or autumn to get budding before winter. Will grow a very fine ramification when regularly pruned. It responds well to repeat pinching of new shoots.



Will shoot back on old wood, but not necessarily where you want it! Best practice is to only prune back to green leaves, but can be cut back very hard.

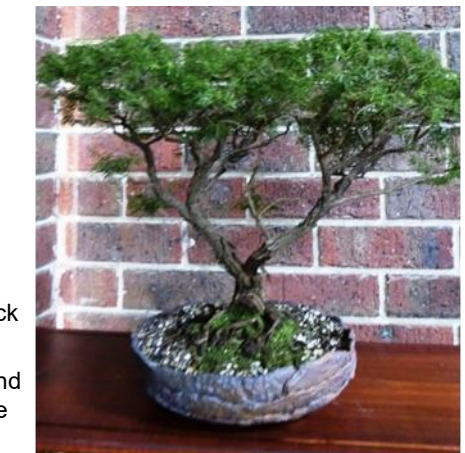
We hardly ever do some wiring and prefer the clip and grow technique, because its branches are very brittle and of its delicate bark!

**Pests and diseases:** Webbing worm and Looper caterpillars, best to remove manually and use a systemic pesticide like Confidor.

Keep checking regularly!

For some fungal diseases use the relevant fungicide.

**Styles:** Informal upright, single or multiple trunks, group plantings, semi cascades. In all sizes including Shohin!



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<https://www.murrumbungstudioceramics.com.au/>

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## *On The Display Table*



*A selection of trees on the Display Table at the January and February meetings.*



## *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.

## *Confused Growing Season*

The seasons in Melbourne have been a bit irregular this year, with our forecast long hot summer not really happening.

Our trees are also a bit confused, with many growing well and others in a quandary as to which season it is at the moment.

The little crab apple featured here has fruit which is almost mature combined with a full flush of blossom—in February! It also has a sprinkling of sun-burnt leaves.

It will be interesting to see what happens to the tree going forward in 2024. Will it drop its leaves in Autumn? Will it flower again in spring? Only time will tell.

Meanwhile, other exotic species are going gang-busters, appearing to appreciate the relief from our usual excessive summer heat.

Watering is a challenge this year, knowing if our trees need daily watering or if we may be in danger of watering too much on cooler days with overcast conditions.

Constant vigilance is required, with decisions made based on our daily observations.





 **Dean Shaw (Deano)**

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# ヤラ谷間盆裁会

Volume 5 No 76  
January &  
February 2024

Page 8

[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  
March & April 2024*



The monthly meeting on Tuesday 12th March at 7:30pm will kick off with a report from David R on his recent visit to Japan to attend the Kokufu-ten Bonsai Exhibition, followed by a Tree Lab and group discussion. Bring along a tree if you want to share progress or seek group advice. Display Table—"Various Shohin or Mame Size Bonsai", or Member's Choice.



The Last Saturday of the Month Workshop will be on Saturday 30th March from 1:00pm to 4:00pm. Note that this is the Easter weekend, but the Workshop is still on!



The monthly meeting on Tuesday 9th April at 7:30pm will be a presentation on "Styling Dynamics" by Patrick I. Display Table—"Pines—Any Style", or Member's Choice.



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



## *Other Events*



The Victorian Native Bonsai Club will hold their 2024 Exhibition on Friday night 15th March from 5:30pm to 8:30pm and Saturday 16th March from 9:00am to 4:00pm. The venue is Preston City Hall, 284 Gower Street, Preston. Entry is \$7, children under 15 free.



The NBPCA will stage "Bonsai Reshaped 2024" at the National Arboretum in Canberra from 11th to 14th April Thursday through Sunday. The main event is Bonsai After Dark on Friday evening 12th April. Bookings through [nationalarboretum.act.gov.au](http://nationalarboretum.act.gov.au).



The Satsuki Azalea Interest Group will hold a meeting on Saturday 20th April at 1:30pm at Bonsai Art Nursery, 236 Old Dandenong Road, Heatherton.



Bonsai Northwest Club will be holding their Bonsai Exhibition on Saturday and Sunday 20th and 21st April at the Footscray Community Arts Centre, 45 Moreland Street, Footscray. 10am to 4pm. Entry Adults \$5.



### YVBS ONLINE:

Our Website can be found at [www.yarravalleybonsai.org.au](http://www.yarravalleybonsai.org.au)—check it out for the latest information on Club activities. Also, the Club is on Facebook and Instagram, and all members are invited to join up and participate in the information exchange.

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For a prospectus or further information contact us via the society's external email: [yarravalleybonsai@gmail.com](mailto:yarravalleybonsai@gmail.com)