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The Yarra Valley Bonsai Society Newsletter

Highlights from May & June 2024

The May club meeting featured special guest presenter and Club sponsor Tien Hsu Liao from Bonsai Sensation Nursery who spoke on “Deciduous Pruning and Styling”. A favourite guest who is always entertaining and informative, Tien gave his take on deciduous tree development based on his extensive experience at his nursery. He used various members’ trees that were brought in, as examples.

Tien introduced his “Principles of Pruning” to guide pruning activities, specifically for deciduous trees but also generally applicable to other species.

TIEN'S PRINCIPLES OF PRUNING

CUT	KEEP	WHY
Thick	Thin	Increase taper
Vertical	Horizontal or Angled	Aged appearance
Inside of Curve	Outside of Curve	More natural
Strong/Top	Weak/Bottom or Lower	Increase taper
Straight	Curve	Natural wave in branches
Further	Nearer	Shorter internodes closer to trunk
Middle/Centre	Side/Lateral	More natural
Multiples	Doubles or Singles	Avoid swelling or thickening



Above - Tien explains his approach to pruning of Lindsay H's trident maple.

Tien emphasized that it takes time to build a bonsai. He normally prunes deciduous trees around May or June, soon after leaf drop. It is also preferable to prune more often, rather than once per year.

Tien demonstrated his approach on members’ trees—a young trident maple, an older crab apple, a Chinese elm, and a trident root over rock.

The June meeting featured a presentation by our own President Patrick I, who spoke on “Styling Dynamics”. He prefaced his discussion by saying that he was not presenting his original thoughts, but what he was learning from various sources along

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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Calendar Dates:

- 4th July (Thursday) First Hirotooshi Saito Demonstration. 6pm. Huntingdale Golf Club.
- 9th July (Tuesday) YVBS Monthly Meeting. 7:30pm. Chirnside Park Hub.
- 11th July (Thursday) Second Hirotooshi Saito Demonstration. 6pm. Huntingdale Golf Club.
- 27th July (Saturday) “Last Saturday of the Month” Workshop. 1:00pm. Chirnside Park Hub.
- 27th and 28th July (Saturday & Sunday) Goldfields Bonsai Show. Daylesford Town Hall
- 13th August (Tuesday) YVBS Monthly Meeting. 7:30pm. Chirnside Park Hub.
- 31st August (Saturday) Last Saturday of the Month” Workshop. 1:00pm. Chirnside Park Hub.
- 31st August & 1st September and (Saturday & Sunday) Australian Native Plants as Bonsai Symposium. Treacy Centre, Parkville

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

Highlights from May & June - Cont. From Page 1

his bonsai journey. He did not want to change any of the basic approaches to design, but rather to bring some extra aspects to the fore—what *feeling* is the design.

The purpose of designing our trees is generally:

- Beautiful
- Recreation of nature in miniature
- Depict great age
- Generate something interesting
- To elicit an emotion from the viewer.

Nature forms patterns—trees are symmetrical in youth, mostly pyramidal, but as life goes on random processes create change—*asymmetry* results. Asymmetry in our design allows us to tell the particular story of a tree.

The crux of everything is the relationship of the three styling feelings—*harmonious, tension, dynamic*—to the perpendicular centre line of the tree.

Harmonious—the trunk line, main defining branch and apex all move in agreement away from the perpendicular centre line.

Tension—trunk line is in contradiction with the main defining branch and apex.

Dynamic—trunk line and defining branch move in contradiction to the apex.

Harmonious design is simple and elegant, and accepts what we are given by the tree. We use it in a tree that has enough—we just bring out what is already there. It has enough interest, age, features and qualities.

Tension as a design feel can often be used with less expensive material, that which has less initial character evident or less potential. In *Tension*, we bring interest to the tree. We use the defining branch and apex moving against the movement of the trunk to make conflict of these elements, to be the component that gives the tree its interest. *Tension* can also be used when a base can't support a *harmonious* design either visually or physically.

In *Dynamic* design, there are two aspects—*artistic* and *technical*.

With the *artistic* aspect, we have material with a high degree of rotation and twisting, live wood and dead wood, something that falls outside of the norm of most bonsai material. We can artistically raise its level even higher than it presents.

With the *technical* aspect, we may have a form like *semi-cascade* or *cascade* which may not have the features in the trunk to carry the weight of all the elements that are moving away from the base, which might be narrow. If this is the case, we can pull the apex away from the direction of the defining branch to bring the visual mass back to the trunkline and bring visual balance to the line.

Patrick made extensive use of photos of actual trees projected onto the whiteboard, and then drew lines on the board over the photos to illustrate his points about styling elements. He also illustrated his points by innovative body positions!



Above - Patrick illustrates movement in a tree by drawing over the image on the whiteboard.



Above - Some tai chi moves to illustrate tree movement!

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.



Annual Sale Day 2024

Our annual Sale Day was held on the morning of Saturday 25th May and featured a full room of sellers, so that our trade table was relegated to the foyer area.

Customer/visitor numbers appeared to be greater than in previous years, and sales in general were higher, leaving most sellers satisfied with their takings—and the reduction in their tree stocks!

Great to see a number of quality trees, starters and pots going to new homes.

Many thanks to all members who assisted in running the day, and in promoting the Sale Day in general.

Right - The sales area appeared quite crowded at times.



AABC Bonsai Convention

The 2024 AABC National Bonsai Convention was held in Brisbane in May under the auspices of the Bonsai Society of Queensland and attracted a total of 182 visitors from various Australian states and New Zealand. It provided attending delegates with a great learning opportunity, and showcased a high quality exhibition of bonsai and suiseki.

The 2025 National Convention was announced to be held in Canberra from 16th to 19th May 2025, hosted by the Canberra Bonsai Society. Featured international artists will be from USA - Jennifer Price from Chicago and Michael Hagedorn from Portland. In addition, three Australian artists will be on the program as demonstrators—Jarryd Bailey from Tasmania, Sam Thompson from the NBPCA in Canberra, and Marcela Ferreira from Melbourne. The venue will be the Canberra Rex Hotel and the National Arboretum.

Members are encouraged to consider attending the Convention to improve their bonsai knowledge, and as a side benefit to view the National Bonsai and Penjing Collection at the Arboretum.

Further information is available at https://www.canberrabonsai.club/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=139:2025-aabc-bonsai-convention-3&catid=85&Itemid=2374



Hirotoishi Saito Demonstration

Acclaimed bonsai master Hirotoishi Saito from Japan will be in Australia to conduct workshops and demonstrations from 3rd July to 14th July 2024, sponsored by the Bonsai Society of Victoria. BSV has kindly invited members from other clubs to participate in the various sessions.

Hiro was once an almost annual visitor to Australia, but his last visit was in 2014. His return is welcomed by many local bonsai practitioners who fondly remember previous visits. He is an excellent, softly-spoken bonsai teacher with great English language skills.

His tutored workshop sessions are fully booked out, both for participants and observers, but a number of YVBS members have managed to secured spots.

Hiro has two public demonstrations with attendance slots still available, on 4th July and 11th July, from 6pm to 9pm. Venue is the Huntingdale Golf Club in Oakleigh South. Bookings must be made through the BSV web site—<https://www.bonsaisocietyvictoria.com.au/events/2024/7/1/japanese-bonsai-sensei-visit>. The cost per ticket is \$35. YVBS members are invited to attend if it is possible for you to do so.



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Deano's Canberra Visit—Report by Club Member Dean S

I just wanted to share my recent visit to our Canberra Bonsai Arboretum and events at the Bonsai Reshaped 2024, held in April. I had been planning this trip originally booking back in 2020, but the trip was cancelled due to Covid. The Canberra Arboretum in itself is just architecturally stunning and nestled in a hill situated on a fantastic rolling panorama landscape, which is just breathtaking & inspiring. If you haven't been, like me, it's well worth the trip.

The Bonsai Reshaped event started off with the After Dark evening including demos with our amazing International Bonsai Professionals - Morten Albek (Kitsetu-en Shohin & Bonsai – Denmark) & Marija Hajdic (Meleda Bonsai Studio – Croatia).

We were in the same room split into 2 groups of 6... in this beautiful setting on top of a rolling hill in the architectural designed Margaret Whitlam Pavilion. Lucky me spending both Saturday & Sunday afternoons in the presence of Bonsai Greatness, both Morten & Marija were just amazing. Bonsai Artists all around the world only dream to get up close and personal with 2 of the Europe's greatest artists of big & small bonsai.

Both artists were the ultimate professionals in every way, talented, knowledgeable & funny at times both having beautiful humble souls with a caring nature, which made the experience even more enjoyable. A true out of body experience. I did pinch myself.

We were also very lucky to have Sam Thompson come around in between to help & we had a few great chats over the 2 days. Sam is a truly humbling man with ridiculous talent. He has been contributing to maintaining and improving our national bonsai collection for just on 6 years.

A magnificent 3 days. Thanks to all involved Leigh, Sam and all the staff & volunteers in making this event possible & truly memorable.

I will remember these few days very fondly for the rest of my life.



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.

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.

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



Above - Members at work at the Saturday Workshop

BONSAI SENSATION NURSERY

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

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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: Hawthorn - *Crataegus*

General information: *Crataegus* also commonly called **Hawthorn** or **Whitethorn**, is comprised of about 200 species. A native to temperate regions of the Northern Hemisphere in Europe, Asia and North America. Some species producing good autumn colour turning yellow, red or orange. Hawthorn is very suitable for Bonsai due to its quick and fine branch ramification. The other attractions are the clusters of white or double pink flowers in mid-spring and small red berries in autumn. They take about 15 to 20 years to flower! The branches on most species contain strong spines.

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

Watering: Most hawthorns like a lot of water, especially in summer! Keep moist all the time - don't let them dry out!

Feeding: Once a month from spring to autumn. High phosphorus and potassium fertiliser to promote flowering. In late summer use low nitrogen to harden the growth. Don't fertilize in midsummer!

Repotting: Young plants every year, older ones every second or third year in spring before leaf buds open or autumn when plant is dormant. Use standard bonsai mix - not too free draining to keep the moisture up!

Pruning and Wiring: Cut back new shots to two leaves with constant clipping to keep the shape under control. Structural and heavy pruning before leaves appear. Large wounds can take a long time to heal over! Wiring can be done during spring and summer, but best in autumn. Keep checking regularly for scarring!

Styles: Formal upright, Informal Upright, Slanting, Cascade, Semi-cascade, Root-over-rock, Twin-trunk, Clump, Group planting and Saikei. **Any size!**

Propagation: Softwood cuttings in summer, air-layering in spring, root development can take a long time. From seed when fruit is ripe!

Pests and diseases: Aphids, Caterpillars, Powdery Mildew and Rust.

Species most common for Bonsai:

Common Hawthorn/ *Crataegus monogyna* varieties, also known as Quick or Quickthorn. It is a rounded, deciduous tree with fragrant white flowers.

Hawthorn/ *Crataegus oxycantha* (syn. *Crataegus laevigata*), also known as May or Midland Hawthorn, the *Crataegus oxycantha* variety 'Pauls Scarlet' with its profuse, double, dark-pink flowers.

Bodhidharma's Crataegus laevigata 'Rosea flore Pleno'



 **Dean Shaw (Deano)**

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 **To Order OR Enquiries:**

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On The Display Table



A selection of trees on the Display Table at the May and June meetings.



Handcrafted Bonsai Ceramics created in Victoria from Australian high fired stoneware clays.

Murrumbung Studio Ceramics 0459 555 346
<https://www.murrumbungstudioceramics.com.au/>
<https://www.facebook.com/murrumbungstudio>
Instagram: @murrumbungstudioceramics



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 occasional 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.



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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
July & August 2024*



The July Monthly Meeting will be on Tuesday 9th July at 7:30pm, and will feature a special guest presenter, David Nassar, President of Bonsai Northwest Club and visiting AABC Tutor, who will speak and demonstrate on "Shimpaku Juniper Development and Styling". David is quite experienced on this species, and has produced a number of videos on the subject via his YouTube channel. David has also agreed to offer advice on any of our members' junipers, so bring along your tree if you would like his comments. Display Table—"Deadwood and Shari", or Member's Choice.



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



The August Monthly Meeting will be on Tuesday 13th August at 7:30pm, and will feature our own member Victor B to talk about "Accent Plants" for bonsai display. Should be a very informative session! Display Table—"Root Over Rock", or Member's Choice.



The Last Saturday of the Month Workshop will be held on Saturday 31st August from 1:00pm to 4:00pm.



Other Events



First Hirotoishi Saito Demonstration, sponsored by BSV, will be on Thursday 4th July from 6pm to 9pm at Huntingdale Golf Club. Prior bookings are essential—see article within this newsletter.



Second Hirotoishi Saito Demonstration, sponsored by BSV, will be on Thursday 11th July from 6pm to 9pm at Huntingdale Golf Club. Prior bookings are essential—see article within this newsletter.



The Goldfields Bonsai Society will stage their "Winter Silhouette Bonsai Show" on Saturday 27th and Sunday 28th July, from 10am to 4pm each day. Daylesford Town Hall, 76 Vincent St, Daylesford. Entry \$3



The Victorian Native Bonsai Club will host the 10th Symposium on Australian Native Plants as Bonsai on Saturday 31st August and Sunday 1st September at the Treacy Centre in Parkville. Prior Bookings are essential. Visit <https://www.vicnativebonsai.com.au/coming-up-10th-symposium-on-australian-natives-as-bonsai/> for further information.



Special Note—A new book on Australian Plants Bonsai will soon be published by noted Australian bonsai professional Stephen Cullum. Information and ordering—go to australiannativebonsai@gmail.com

YVBS ONLINE:

Our Website can be found at 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.



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