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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



1-4:00pm on the **Last Satur-
day of the month, at the same
venue as monthlies!**

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The Yarra Valley Bonsai Society Newsletter

Highlights from July & August 2024

The July meeting feature special guest pre-senter and AABC Visiting Tutor David Nassar who gave a very entertaining and informative presentation and demonstration on cultivating and styling shimpaku junipers.

David explained that he started his bonsai journey many years ago, and like most of us added almost every species into his collection. He eventually elected to reduce his varieties and specialize in shimpaku junipers, maples and pines.

David likes shimpaku junipers because they are not prone to branch die back like other junipers, they do not suffer from a lot of pests, and if they do get an infestation it is generally easy to treat, they have dense, compact foliage, and they are not prickly. He gets most of his shimpaku bonsai starters from air layering off growing stock trees, after first bending and twisting the selected branches before applying the layer. He air layers using sphagnum moss media only, and favours wrapping in clear plastic followed by black plastic. Unwrapping the black plastic allows inspection through the clear plastic to check for root growth. Cuttings can also be used and strike very easily, but the trees take a little longer to develop.

Young trees should be wired with many twists and turns. David favours tight wiring at a shallow angle, around 30 degrees, and says that no raffia is needed utilizing this method. All bending and twisting work should be carried out from the end of summer through to the start of spring, when the trees are semi-dormant, otherwise there is a greater risk of snapping the trunk or branches.

Shimpaku like lots of sun, water, fertilizer, and good air circulation. They should not be pinched, but cut the shoots once per year, with winter being the best time to do it. Let the shoots grow over spring and summer. David uses Powerfeed pellets as a fertilizer, and applies it over winter as junipers and pines are still growing then.

David recommends repotting deciduous trees in July, junipers in August, and pines in August/September. With junipers, he does the top work first and then repots a year or two later.



Above - David Nassar with a small shimpaku at the July Meeting

Calendar Dates:

- 10th September (Tuesday) YVBS Monthly Meeting. 7:30pm. Chirnside Hub.
- 14th Sep (Saturday) YVBS Nursery Crawl. 9:30am at Conifer Gardens Ferny Creek
- 21st Sep & 22nd Sep (Saturday 10am-4pm & Sunday 10am-1pm) Northern Suburbs Bonsai Show. Greensborough.
- 28th September (Saturday) "Last Saturday of the Month" Workshop. 1:00pm. Chirnside Hub.
- 5th & 6th Oct (Saturday & Sunday) BSV Bonsai Exhibition. Box Hill Town Hall.
- 6th October (Sunday) Tutored Workshops with Tony Bebb. Japara House.
- 8th September (Tuesday) YVBS Monthly Meeting. 7:30pm. Chirnside Hub.
- 12th October (Saturday) YVBS Display at Bunnings Lilydale. 10am-2pm.
- 26th October (Saturday) "Last Saturday of the Month" Workshop. 1:00pm. Chirnside Hub.

Continued Page 2

See also the Events Calendar on our

Highlights from July & August - Cont. From Page 1

After his demonstration, David critiqued various members' junipers which had been brought in, and provided much valuable advice for their future development.

The August meeting featured a presentation by Victor B on Accent plants and features used in Bonsai display settings. He used his trips to the Kokufu and Taiken-ten bonsai exhibitions in Japan with Tony Bebb as the basis for illustrating his discussion, using a slide presentation with many pictures. He introduced the concept of tokonama 3 point displays for bonsai, and explained that the accents used in conjunction with the bonsai can be plants, statues/figures, or stones/suiseki.

It is most important that the size of the accent is in proportion to the size of the main tree. E.g. small tree, small ac-

Right— Accent Plants, Left— Shohin multipoint display, Below—Kusumono.



cent piece.

Victor also introduced the concept of kusumono, which is a combination planting of grasses, weeds, and even succulents in a separate pots. This art form developed alongside bonsai, and can also be used as an accent.

Victor suggested that Craig Wilson's Gentiana Nursery in Olinda can be a useful source of small specialized plants to be used as accents.

Bonsai Training Courses

The course covers a wide range including origins, styles, species, growing and development, refinement, wiring, repotting and maintenance. A new course manual which better reflects the current content will be provided to all students for reference during the course and for future review, along with a tree on which to work.

The next scheduled course will be in 2025, however if there is sufficient demand this may be brought forward to later in the 2024 year. Any interested members should put their names down on the list present at each meeting, or contact Lindsay H linhad14@gmail.com.



Above - Students at the 2024 course.

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. 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

Our annual Nursery Crawl will be held on Saturday 14th September, with all members and guests welcome to attend for all or part of the day. We will start at Conifer Gardens nursery in Ferny Creek, meeting at 9:30am, and then proceeding to Bonsai Sensation in Narre Warren North, followed by Bonsai Art in Heatherton. Keen shoppers can then proceed to Collectors Corner / Garden World to finish up the day.

Please register your intention to attend with Marlene J, mjerlitschka@iprimus.com.au, 0418 147 871.

Special deals may be on offer at some points of call—see separate email advice for details (if available).

Right - Members at Bonsai Sensation during the 2023 Nursery Crawl.



Annual General Meeting

Our Annual General Meeting will be held in conjunction with the September meeting, where annual reports will be presented and the Committee will stand down and a new election held. Nomination forms for election to the Committee will be sent to all members via email along with the notice of meeting and officer's reports, and completed nomination forms should be returned to Lindsay H prior to the meeting.

If you can spare a little time and have lots of enthusiasm, we encourage you to consider standing for the Committee. Fresh ideas and approaches are welcomed and will keep our club refreshed and relevant to all members. Serving in this way can be very rewarding and fulfilling, as well as adding to your bonsai knowledge and personal development.

Following the AGM, we will have a workshop night so bring along your trees to work on or seek advice and assistance.

Tony Bebb October Visit

We had Tony Bebb down for a demonstration and tutored workshops last year, and his visit was so rewarding to participating members that we are repeating it this year in October. Tony is a well-known and highly respected Australian bonsai professional and AABC Visiting Tutor, based in Brisbane. He will be conducting a special wiring tutorial and workshop at the meeting on Tuesday 8th October. Bring along your own trees that need wiring, or utilize one of the club-provided trees on which to practice your wiring techniques. You will have the opportunity to purchase the tree at the end of the night (a black pine), or can simply leave it with the club.

Tony will also be conducting Tutored Workshops on Sunday 6th October, morning session from 9am to 12 noon, and afternoon session from 1pm to 4pm, to be held at Japara House in Kilsyth due to a competing booking at the Chirnside Park Hub. The cost is \$50 per session, very reasonable to gain the attention and assistance of such a talented and experienced bonsai professional.

Bookings are essential as slots are limited to 8 persons at both sessions. Only 5 vacancies remain at this time. Contact Lindsay H (linhad14@gmail.com or 0403 800 671) if you would like to book a slot.

Tony will also be available for personal one-on-one sessions at your own premises. Half-day sessions are available on Monday 7th October and Tuesday 8th October—4 slots only, and one has already been booked. Again, contact Lindsay H for bookings. During Tony's visit to your premises, you can request his advice or assistance with any or all trees in your collection—you call the shots and nominate what you want. Cost will be \$200 per session.



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2024 YVBS Bonsai Show

Our Bonsai Show will this year be held in November—a spring show at which we will hopefully be able to exhibit some trees in flower as an added attraction.

The Show will be held on Saturday 23rd November and Sunday 24th November at the Chirnside Park Community Hub.

Each member is encouraged to submit at least one tree for display, however multiple trees can be offered if preferred. A Tree Submission Form will be distributed to all members in September and again in October, and we request that this form be filled in with your tree/s information and returned as soon as possible. This is required to enable Steve M to make a final tree selection and to design the display layout.

Select your trees now and start to prepare them for display at the Show. Remember the following guidelines:

- Foliage should be neatly trimmed, free of pests, and with all dead or discoloured leaves/needles removed.
- Soil surface should be neat and weed-free. Top dressing or moss should be applied if preferred.
- Pots should be thoroughly cleaned and the bottoms should be free of dirt and debris.
- Wire on the tree is permissible if required, but should be minimal and neat if present.
- Trees should be watered the day before delivery to the Show, but should not be dropping when delivered.
- Pots and stands should be labelled with the owner's name on the underneath surface. Pen on masking tape is a good means of labelling.

Lets make this our best Show ever!

Spring Launch at Bunnings

The Club has been invited to participate in the Spring Launch event at Bunnings Lilydale on Saturday 12th October from 10am to 2pm, which we have accepted. We hope to have a couple of tables where we will display 6—8 trees, and maybe have a running demonstration. Of course, we will have club information and membership forms available as well!

We will put out a call for volunteers to man the exhibit at the September meeting, but we also hope that Club members will drop in on the day to check us out, as well as the other community groups, local nurseries, and animal groups who have also been invited to participate.

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 July Saturday Workshop

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Tree Profile: Swamp Cypress—*Taxodium distichum*

General information: The Swamp Cypress or Bald Cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) is native to the south eastern United States. It is a deciduous conifer which is hardy and tough, adapting to a wide range of soil types, whether wet, salty, dry, or swampy. It is noted for the russet-re autumn colour of its lacy leaves/needles. The heartwood and roots are rot-resistant.

Position: Full sun.

Watering: It is vital for the health of the tree that its roots stay moist constantly. Use a soil mix that retains water.

Feeding: Use your normal bonsai feeding regime during the growing period.

Repotting: During dormancy in winter. A soil mix of at least 80% organic matter and 20% inorganic material is recommended, although they will happily exist in any mix provided that it does not dry out. Slightly acidic soil is preferred – pH range of 5.5 to 6.8.

Pruning & Wiring: Bud pinching – pinching new growth reduces leaf size and promotes back budding. Elongating shoots can also have a few cm trimmed off if they are getting too long or thick. The pinched leaves will fill in the space where the tip was removed, but they will not continue to elongate.

Pruning – Prune only when vascular tissue has been established, otherwise the shoot will die back over winter. It is safe to prune after a new shoot has changed colour from green through pale pink to reddish rust colour. Once this colour is reached, it is safe to prune. On most trees, prune back once per growing season, around the start of December. The only other time to prune is during dormancy in winter.

Wire during winter.

Styles: Formal Upright, Informal Upright, Slanting, Group/Forest

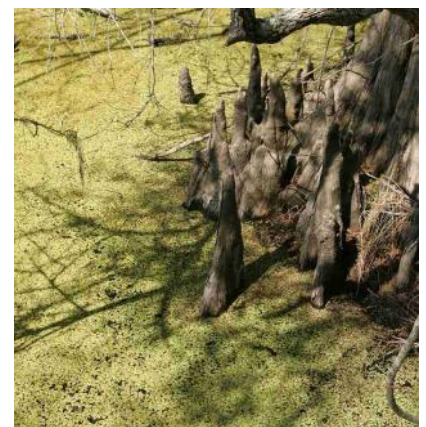
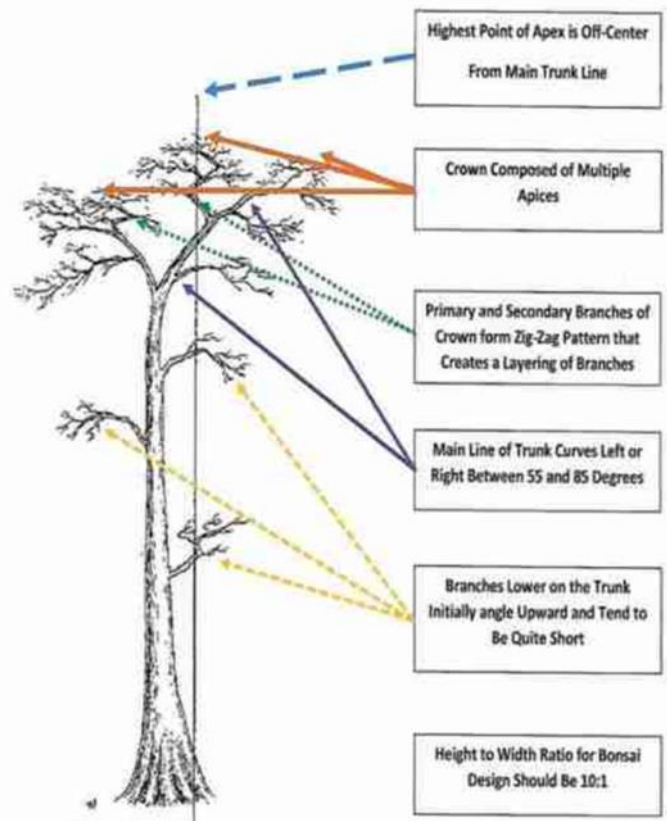
Propagation: From seed, but cuttings also strike well.

Pests and diseases: Not prone to any particular pest or disease, but be vigilant and treat any infestations noted. Possums like the new foliage!

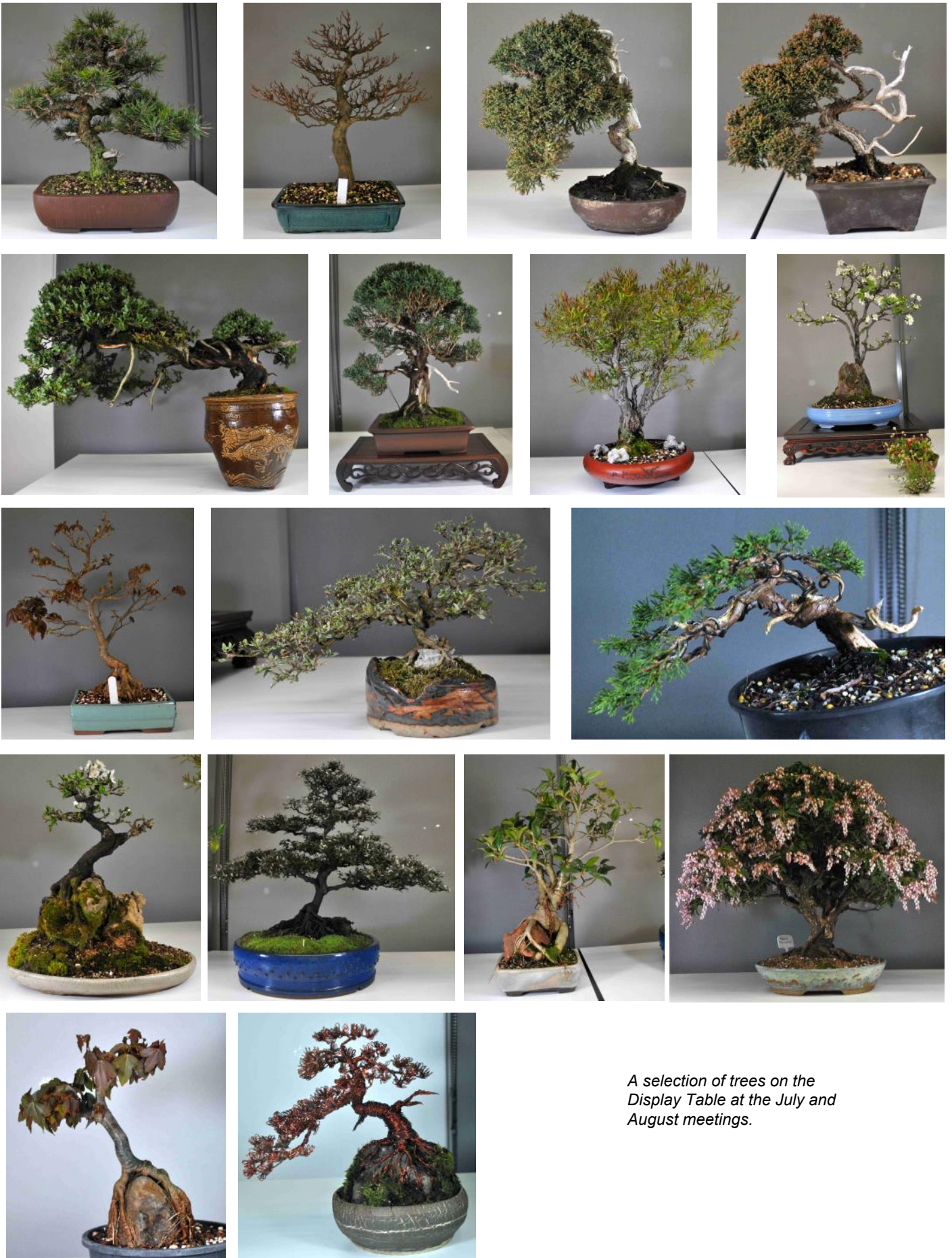
Knees: Swamp Cypress are known for having knees, which are woody projections from the root system that project above the ground or swamp water. The purpose is to provide oxygen to the roots. To develop knees on bonsai swamp cypress, the tree must be over 12 years old and the water table must be at the right depth in relation to the roots. To grow knees, place the pot in a water reservoir filled with water up to, but not above, the rim of the pot. The water level is maintained daily during the wet season (summer). Once the dry season arrives, remove the pot from the water reservoir. Knees can take 2-3 years to develop, though they can develop in one year. Note that this procedure must be followed every year after knees have developed, or the knees may be lost.

Photos: 1—Growth habits. 2—foliage, 3—forest planting at the NBPCA, 4—knees in the wild.

Credits: Steve Wise from Canberra Bonsai Society, Randy Bennett on Bald Cypress Facebook page, Wikipedia for knee photo.



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.

YVBS Tree Profiles

Each issue of the newsletter since the Club was formed has contained a Tree Profile containing information on growing and styling various tree species with particular attention to conditions found in the local area based on actual members' experience.

For ease of access going forward, all of the Tree Profiles have been extracted from the newsletters and loaded to the Club web-site, where they can be individually downloaded in PDF format for display or printing.

To access the Profiles, go to the website www.yarrawalleybonsai.org.au and hit "Tree Profiles" on the top menu bar (under the ... tab). A new page will load containing a complete listing of available tree profiles in alphabetical order based on botanical names. Where appropriate, the common name is included after the botanical name.

Of course, the Tree Profiles can still be found in the old newsletters, but following the redesign of the web site, not all of the past newsletters are available for download. Only the past 2 years of newsletters have been included on the new website.





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ヤラ谷間盆栽会

Volume 5 No 79
July & August
2024

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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 2024*



The September monthly meeting will be on Tuesday 10th September at 7:30pm, and will feature our Annual General Meeting followed by a general workshop. Bring along your trees and tools, assistance is available from experienced members if required. The Display Table theme is "Japanese Maples", or Member's Choice.



Our annual Nursery Crawl will take place on Saturday 14th September meeting at 9:30am at Conifer Gardens Nursery in Ferny Creek, followed by Bonsai Sensation Nursery, Bonsai Art Nursery, and then possibly Collectors Corner at Garden World.



The Last Saturday of the Month Workshop will be on Saturday 28th September from 1:00pm to 4:00pm at the Chirnside Park Hub.



Tutored Workshops with Tony Bebb will be held on Sunday 6th October at Japara House Kilsyth. Morning session at 9am, afternoon session at 1:00pm. Prebookings are essential.



The October monthly meeting will be on Tuesday 8th October at 7:30pm, and will feature a demonstration and workshop on wiring techniques under the direction of special guest bonsai professional Tony Bebb. Bring along your own tree to wire, or utilize one of the Club pine trees. Display Table theme is "Forest or Groups", or Member's Choice.



The Club will have a display table at Bunnings Lilydale as part of their Spring Launch event on Saturday 12th October between 10am and 2pm. Come along and check it out!



The Last Saturday of the Month workshop will be held on Saturday 26th October from 1:00pm to 4:00pm at the Chirnside Park Hub.



Other Events



The Northern Suburbs Bonsai Club 2024 Annual Bonsai Show will be held on Saturday 21st September from 10am to 4pm and Sunday 22nd September from 10am to 1pm at Greensborough Masonic Hall, 23 Ester St, Greensborough. Entry \$5.



The Bonsai Society of Victoria will hold their annual Bonsai Exhibition on Saturday 5th October and Sunday 6th October from 9am to 4pm. Box Hill Town Hall.



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