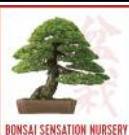




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The Yarra Valley Bonsai Society Newsletter

Highlights from September & October 2025

The September meeting was our Annual General Meeting, where Officers' reports were presented and ratified by the attending members. The Committee then stood down, and elections were held for the 2025/26 Committee. Although many existing members stood for re-election, some significant exceptions were President Patrick I and Treasurer Wendy S who elected to retire for health and family reasons. Fortunately, former Vice-President Steve M put his hand up for President, and former general Committee members volunteered for the other open executive positions—Ken G for Treasurer and Grant L for Vice-President. Late nominations on the night from Elaine B and Dean S as general members rounded out the Committee. As nominations matched the vacant positions, Returning Officer Victor B declared that all were considered elected.

Following the AGM, a special event took place, the auctioning of Bonsai books donated by the estate of former member Richard J. Around 50 high-quality books were on offer, most of them currently out of print, and carrying very low reserve prices. Half of the books were sold on the night, with the remaining ones to be split between future raffle prizes and offered on the sales tables at our upcoming Bonsai Exhibition. Bidding on the books was at times fast and furious, and resulted in a return to the club of \$490 which will aid us in funding future club activities.

The October meeting was a presentation by President Steve M on "Air Layering". Steve began by saying that air layering, a general method for propagating trees, was used in bonsai to create new bonsai material from mature specimens, refine the root base by eliminating poor roots and forming new roots further up the trunk, and/or reducing the height on leggy trees while saving the best trunk portion.

Special Report from Elaine B:-

"Air layers were started on 2 of my trees by Steve M at our October Tuesday meeting. He delivered a fabulous demonstration of this propagating technique. Steve showed us, in an engaging and practical way, that Air Layering is straightforward & usually successful. We can create new trees at minimal cost! Steve ran through the standardised techniques he has used successfully on a huge variety of species. There is no risk with Japanese Maples, they will produce roots in around 6 weeks, if started when the donor tree has fully leafed out in spring. The Scot's Pine of mine is an experiment, we shall all see how it goes. Propagation by air layering is a fun, inexpensive & generally safe* way to boost your collection, or deal with otherwise hopelessly unattractive plant material. Note: *If you're trying this technique with actual garden trees, have somebody steady the ladder. Safety first! The best idea I gained from Steve's presentation, is to pack a small black plastic pot with damp sphagnum BEFORE cutting the pot with scissors to slip



Above - Steve M demonstrating Air Layering at the October meeting.

Calendar Dates:

- 8th & 9th Nov (Saturday & Sunday) Geelong Bonsai Show. Belmont, Geelong.
- 11th November (Tuesday) YVBS Monthly Meeting. 7:30pm. Chirnside Hub.
- 22nd & 23rd November (Saturday & Sunday) YVBS Bonsai Exhibition. Chirnside Hub
- 29th November (Saturday) "Last Saturday of the Month" Workshop. 1:00pm. Chirnside Hub.
- 9th December (Tuesday) YVBS Monthly Meeting. 7:30pm. Chirnside Hub.

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

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



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

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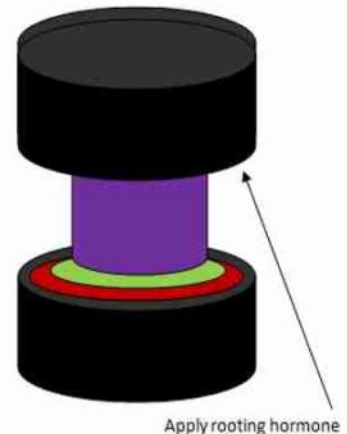
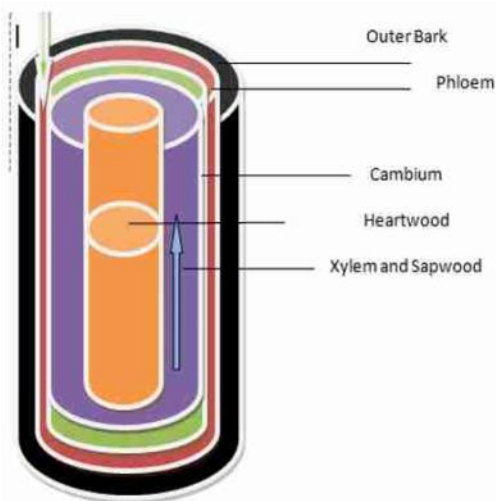
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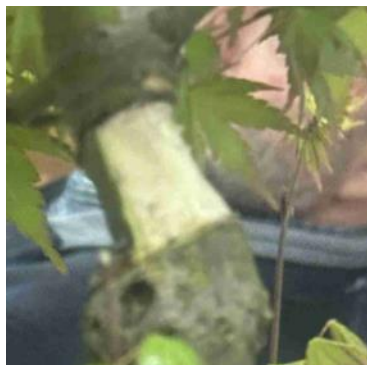
around the prepared (peeled) section of branch or trunk, then secure pot with wire. So simple, so obvious & so easy to do, now that I've seen it!"

Steve used the picture at right to illustrate the principles of Air Layering. The arrows indicate the downward flow of sugars in the Phloem layer and the upward flow of water through the Xylem and Sapwood. Removing a ring from the tree removes the outer bark, phloem and cambium layers thereby interrupting the downward sugar flow, yet retaining the xylem, sapwood and heartwood to maintain the upward flow of water to the foliage. The interruption to the downward sugar flow encourages the tree to form new roots at the top section of the removed ring.



Steve explained the methodology as follows:

1. Select a suitable branch or part of the trunk, should be greater than a pencil thickness with healthy growth. Consider movement and taper.
2. Girdle—make 2 cuts roughly 1 and a 1/2 times the thickness of the branch/trunk apart and remove all material down to the xylem. The cambium layer, generally of a green appearance, must be completely removed or the tree will try to heal itself and bridge the ringed gap.
3. Apply rooting hormone to the upper section of the ringed section.
4. Tightly wrap the entire ringed area that has been removed in moist sphagnum moss
5. Cover the moss in either cling wrap and aluminium foil, or black plastic as roots grow better in the dark. Steve likes to use a suitable nursery pot with the side slit top to bottom and a hole cut in the bottom to match the size of the branch/trunk. This method must be monitored as sphagnum moss will dry out and water will need to be added. The pot is held together with wire or cable tie.



Above - Ringed section in progress.



Above - A completed air layer using the plastic pot technique.

Steve demonstrated his techniques on some of his trees and members' trees, and Patrick also applied an air layer to one of his trees.

We are sure that many members will give air layering a try after seeing how simple Steve's method is!

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.



2026 YVBS Bonsai Exhibition

Our 2025 Bonsai Exhibition will be staged on 22nd and 23rd November from 10am to 4pm at the Chirnside Park Community Hub, 33 Kimberley Drive, Chirnside Park. All members are encouraged to submit at least one tree for display, so make a selection and start preparations. Speak with Steve M for any advice needed on preparing your tree/s. Tree submission forms have already been sent out, and will also be sent out again with the Month Ahead email for November. Forms should be returned to Marlene J (mjerlitschka@iprimus.com.au) or by hard copy as soon as possible, but at the latest by 1st November.

In addition to the Best Tree chosen by public voting, this year we intend to trial an award system as well. An independent judge, acclaimed bonsai artist Quentin Valentine, will choose the best tree in large, medium and small sizes, and this will be displayed next to the tree at the Exhibition. There will also be a Certificate of Merit awarded, which will be for that tree chosen in each of the size categories as having the most potential.

As usual, volunteers will be needed for the show setup, during the Exhibition hours, and for take-down at the end. Roster sheets were circulated at the October meeting, and we thank those members who volunteered. Additional volunteers are still required, especially for Saturday 2:00—4:00, and all shifts on Sunday. Contact Grant L (grant.daniel.lewis@gmail.com, 0411 153 313) if you can help.

We also need to borrow additional Bunnings-style plastic tables as there are insufficient tables at the Hub for our needs. If you have one or more at home, work or friends and can assist, please contact Lindsay H (linhad14@gmail.com, 0403 800 671).

We hope that all members, whether they can assist or not, will come along to the Show to support the Club and to be inspired by the quality and variety of trees on display.



Best in Show

Congratulations to John G, one of our senior members who is also a member at Bonsai Society of Victoria, for winning the Peoples' Choice Award at the recent BSV Bonsai Exhibition.

John is a very talented bonsai artist who consistently creates innovative compositions for the various bonsai exhibitions in which he participates. While the tree itself was very worthy, we suspect that the stand, an adapted large tree stump, also caught the public eye!

Will John display this tree and stand combination at the YVBS Show, or will he have something else in store for us? Come along and find out!



Bunnings Spring Fair

YVBS was again asked to be part of the Spring Fair at Bunnings Lilydale store in September this year, by putting on a Bonsai display and demonstration.

Marlene J, Steve M and Lindsay H each brought along a couple of their trees for the display, and Steve did a brief demonstration on initial styling of a nursery stock Lepidospermum.

Being given a prominent position near the rear entrance to the store, there was a lot of passing traffic and plenty of interest shown in the display. Many Club promo and Exhibition flyers were picked up, which will hopefully increase our show attendance and eventual membership.



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Bonsai Reshaped 2025

The National Arboretum in Canberra, in conjunction with the National Bonsai and Penjing Collection Australia, is holding their annual Bonsai Reshaped event in Canberra from 5th to 9th November, a celebration of the art of Bonsai.

Featured international bonsai artists are Caroline Scott from UK, Heike Gunst from Germany and Sandra Grlica from Germany, in conjunction with local artist Marcela Ferrera. They will perform a demonstration at the Art of Bonsai evening on Friday 7th November from 6pm to 10pm, and will also facilitate tutored workshops at the beginners and intermediate level on the other days of the event.

Several YVBS members attended workshops with Heike and Sandra when they last visited Australia in 2019, and can vouch for their knowledge, professionalism and easy-going nature. See Lindsay H for personal recollections—they particularly appreciated the chance to work on Australian native material!

Vacancies seem to be still available for the evening demonstrations and some of the workshops. Visit [Bonsai Reshaped - National Arboretum](#) for details and booking.



Above - Heike Gunst and Sandra Grlica in Canberra 2019 .

Tony Bebb Satsuki Azalea Tour to Japan

Tony Bebb is organizing a tour to Japan in 2026 to take in two Satsuki Festivals, at the Ueno Green Club in Tokyo and the Kanuma Kaboku Centre in Kanuma. There should be a great display of stunning azaleas in full flower. Additional features of the tour will be a private workshop with a Japanese Bonsai master, as well as a number of sightseeing activities. The tour runs from the 15th to the 26th May 2026.

A number of YVBS members have participated in previous bonsai tours to Japan run by Tony and Keiko Bebb and all report having a great time and vouch for his organizational skills and attention to detail during the trips. Talk to David R or Ken G for information on their experiences.

For further information or to book a place, refer to Tony Bebb at TB Bonsai—tonybebbbonsai@gmail.com.

End-Of-Month Saturday Workshop

The regular Last Saturday of the Month workshops are a relaxed and friendly 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.

Members are encouraged to make any visitors feel welcome.



Right - It was a family affair at the September workshop!

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AABC Update

Next year the 38th AABC National Bonsai Convention in Hobart, 1st to 4th May 2026, will be a “do not miss” occasion. Remember **Early Bird Registration closes on 31st October** so do not miss the savings on the registration fee. Tasmania is a great place to spend some extra time visiting too. It is suggested that delegates keep an eye out for airline ‘happy hour’ (Virgin) flights or sales by other airlines to get the best fares. Register for *Southern Bonsai* at <https://aabconvention2026.square.site>.



Now that we are back into a regular convention cycle following the COVID pandemic we are pleased to announce recent news that the Illawarra Bonsai Society have taken on the task of hosting the 39th AABC National Bonsai Convention in Sydney in May 2027

A new initiative the AABC Executive has developed – to be called the “New Stylist Award” will be launched as a feature of the Hobart Convention. The **AABC NEW STYLIST AWARD** is a competition to recognise up and coming Bonsai Artists with the possibility of them joining the AABC demonstrator list for the Visiting Tutor Program (VTP). The award will be presented to the winner of the contest as judged by delegates of the AABC National Convention at which the competition is held.

Eligibility requirements

Any person who is a financial member of an AABC member club is eligible to participate.

They should have enough Bonsai experience to be involved in club activities to share their knowledge and techniques and may have demonstrated at their local club meeting, exhibition or activity before.

APPLICANT MUST NOT be on the AABC VTP Demonstrator list, have previously demonstrated at an AABC National Convention, or have been a previous winner of the AABC New Stylist Award.

Online application forms will be available via the AABC website and National Convention website.

The Competition

Each contestant nominating for the competition will:

1. Be attending and pay their own travel, registration and expenses to the AABC National Convention. This may be sponsored by their member club in part or full at their club's discretion.
2. At the discretion of the organisers, be given up to 3 hours to complete the styling of the material supplied by the host club into a 'finished' design. All Bonsai styles are acceptable. The tree will not be potted into a Bonsai pot and should not be removed from its original container. The Bonsai design produced must be horticulturally sound with an excellent chance of survival. The competitor will ensure that the tree would be welcome in their own garden and not remove an excessive amount of branching and foliage.
3. Supply, or organise the provision of their own tools needed including a turntable if desired. For interstate participants, liaison with the host club is possible for the supply of a turntable.
4. Upon completion, the competitors will be asked to give a brief description of their styling choices and their thoughts for the future of the tree, including their thoughts for the future container.

YVBS Library

Members are reminded that items from our library of bonsai books, magazines and videos are available for borrowing at any meeting or workshop. Items may be borrowed for one month, or longer by special arrangement. See Ken G to borrow any item, or other Committee members if Ken is unavailable.

Note that the library includes some excellent DVD's including a number of instructional videos by Bonsai Boon on Japanese Black Pines and Scale Junipers. Because many people no longer have DVD players, these videos will be progressively transferred to USB memory sticks as well.

Tree Profiles

All tree profiles which have been included in previous issues of the YVBS newsletter are available on our website for viewing, or downloading as PDF files.

Simply visit our website, click on the three horizontal dots on the top menu bar, and then click on Tree Profiles on the drop down list. Select the tree species and click to view/download.

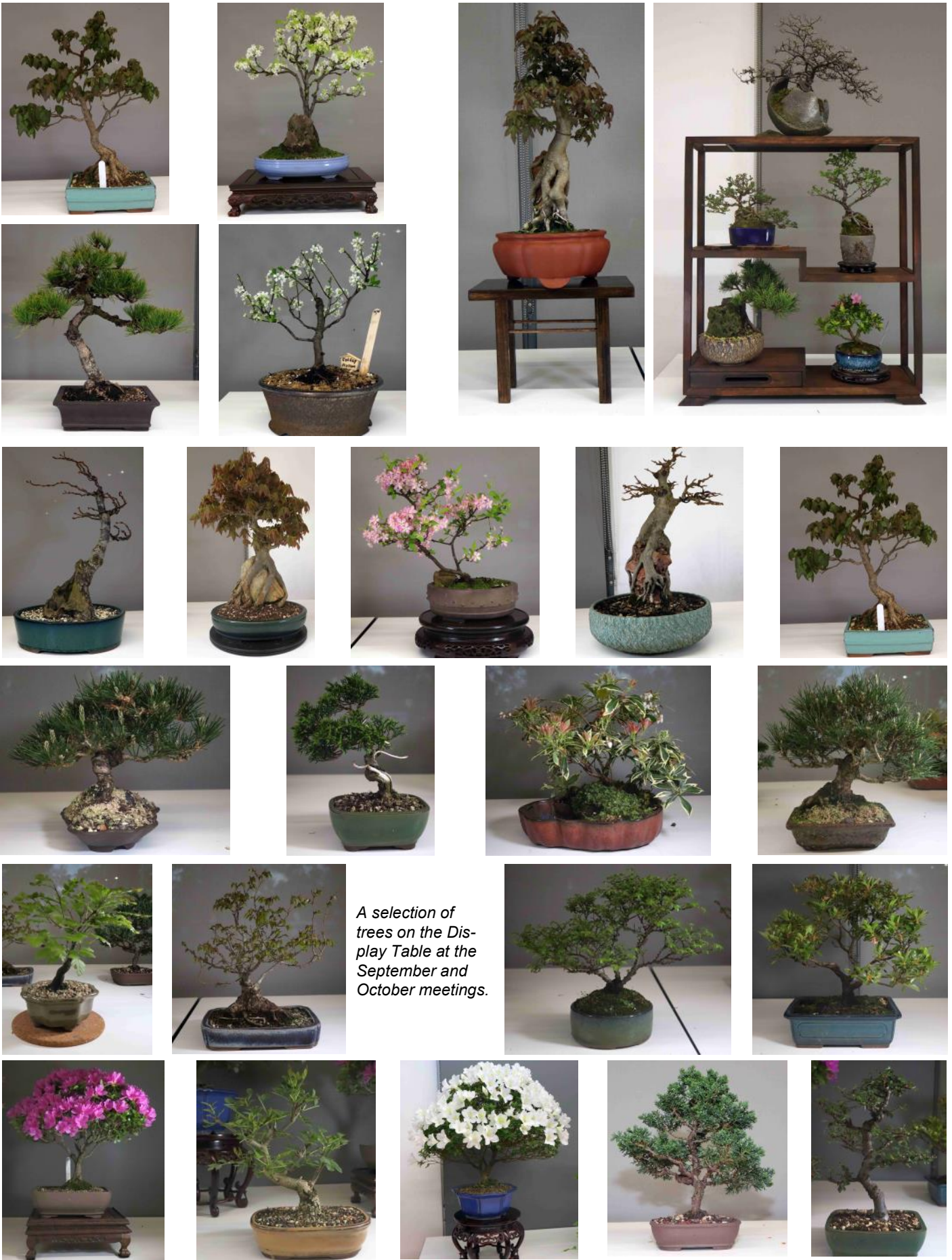


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Tree Profiles

The Club has compiled local (Melbourne East, Australia) growing information on a number of trees commonly used for bonsai, and has published them in newsletters over the past 12+ years. The individual Tree Profile sheets may be downloaded here in PDF format for the convenience of members. Note that trees are listed by botanical name, but common names may also be included.

On The Display Table



Bonsai Calendar: July - August

This time of year is always an exciting time for any bonsai enthusiast. Small buds have turned to vigorous growth in just a few weeks. Vibrant greens and blues of fresh growth are spreading across most conifers. With this growth comes the need for increased water and food.

Always keep an eye on the weather this time of year. Winds, heavy rains and extended dry periods make for unpredictable growing conditions. Pay extra attention to the bonsai that have just been repotted. If you are relying on an irrigation system, perform regular inspections to ensure all trees are being watered properly. Prune your trees in order to keep the new growth nice and compact.

Here are a few tips to get you through the season.

Position

The sun and wind are good for your trees, however some varieties will benefit from protection (Beeches, Hornbeams, Maples, Azaleas), as the leaves will easily scorch if the tree is in the wrong position. When putting trees in strong sun, trees must have a consistent water cycle. Avoid using shade directly beneath overhanging trees as animal droppings and leaf debris can create problems.

Watering

Water thoroughly. Shallow watering encourages roots to grow at the surface of the potting mix (trees will dry out faster). If trees are root bound take extra care with saturating the root ball. Organise bonsai in "like-watering" sections to assist in your watering cycle. Potting mix should not be left to completely dry out.

Pinching and Pruning

Pinching and pruning should be attended to as soon as leaves develop and shoots elongate. Buds that develop where branches are not needed should be rubbed off immediately. If a branch is needed, allow bud to grow keeping the terminal bud to help increase the girth of the branch.

Conifers may require finger tip pruning- removing buds at the tip of the growth will push growth back onto the branch and create smaller foliage.

Potting

Most repotting should be complete. Varieties such as Chinese Elms, Azaleas, and Junipers can still be re-potted with care. Varieties such as Figs, Pomegranates, Pyracanthas and Natives can be re-potted even later. Pines should not be re-potted after spring finishes.




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Volume 5 No 86
September &
October 2025

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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
November & December 2025*



The November monthly meeting will be on Tuesday 11th November at 7:30pm, and will feature a discussion on "Pot Selection" led by Steve M and Grant L, followed by a tree and/or pot swap/sale. Bring along any tree that you have fallen out of love with, perhaps you can swap it or sell it to another member! The Display Table theme is "Azaleas—Any Style", or Member's Choice.



Our 2025 Bonsai Exhibition will be held on Saturday 22nd and Sunday 23rd November, from 10am to 4pm both days, at the Chirnside Park Community Hub.



The Last Saturday of the Month Workshop will be on Saturday 29th November from 1:00pm to 4:00pm at the Chirnside Park Hub.



The December monthly meeting will be on Tuesday 9th December at 7:30pm, and will feature be our Christmas break up including a discussion on members' trees. Bring along a favourite tree, or a problem tree, and spend a few minutes talking about it. The Display Table theme is "Your Favourite Tree", or Member's Choice.



Note—NO Saturday Workshop in December!



Other Events



The Geelong Bonsai Club will hold their 2025 Bonsai Show on Saturday 8th and Sunday 8th November, from 9am to 5pm both days, Geelong Masonic Centre, 27 Regent Street, Belmont. Entry \$5, concession \$3, accompanied children free.



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