



# YARRA VALLEY BONSAI SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

1st Quarter 2026

The YVBS meets on the second Tuesday of each month at Chirnside Park Community Hub, 33 Kimberley Drive, Chirnside Park  
Meetings begin at 7:30 pm .  
Saturday Workshops are 1-4 pm on the Last Saturday of the month, at the same venue as monthlies!  
PO Box 345 Mount Evelyn, VIC 3796 Australia  
ABN 92 966 395 686

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The YVBS newsletter will be issued quarterly from this first issue in 2026, and the format is changed in an attempt to simplify the newsletter production process. Please bear with us as we may experiment with different production tools - any assistance on offer from knowledgeable members will be greatly appreciated!

## Upcoming YVBS Events

Tuesday Meeting 14th April – “Shohin Size Bonsai” with Nick J. Display table theme – Shohin and Mame trees, or Member’s Choice.

Saturday Workshop 25th April.

Introduction to Bonsai Beginners Course, Part 1 (For those enrolled) – Saturday 2nd May 9am to 1pm

Tuesday Meeting 12th May – “Developing Interest in Young Trees” with Tien from Bonsai Sensation. Display table theme – “Autumn Colours”, or Member’s Choice.

Introduction to Bonsai Beginners Course, Part 2 (For those enrolled) – Saturday 23rd May 9am to 1pm

Sale Day Saturday 30th May 10am to 1pm (prior to Saturday Workshop).

Saturday Workshop 30th May.

Tuesday Meeting 9th June – General Workshop. Display table theme – “Penjing-Style Bonsai”, or Member’s Choice.

Saturday Workshop 27th June.

## Upcoming Other Events

Bendigo Bonsai Club Easter Exhibition – Saturday 4th, Sunday 5th and Monday 6th April. 10am to 5pm, except for Monday 10am to 3pm. Uniting Church Hall, 25 Forest St, Bendigo. Admission \$3.

Bonsai Northwest Bonsai Exhibition – Saturday 16th and Sunday 17th May. 10am to 4pm. Footscray Community Arts Centre, 45 Moreland St, Footscray. Admission \$5.

## Meeting Report- January

The January Club meeting was our normal workshop to start off the year. We had a great attendance with all members busily working on their trees.



## Meeting Report- February

The February Club meeting was a Team Challenge, where teams of up to 6 members were formed under the guidance of a senior colleague and presented with a tree and the challenge to produce the best bonsai that they could within the time constraints of the meeting. The tree this year was an Australian Native Syzygium, or Lily Pilly. Members discussed options and then madly clipped and wired to produce their "finished" tree. Each team then had the option of one of their members purchasing the tree at the end of the night, and it was pleasing to see that all trees sold, and indicator of the quality of the end results.



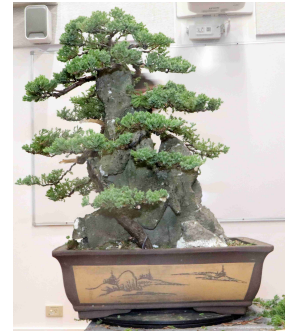
## Meeting Report- March

The March Club meeting featured our special guest Tony Bebb from the Brisbane International Bonsai School, current President of the AABC and one of their Visiting Tutors. Tony is a very experienced bonsai professional and teacher, whose visits to our club are always greatly anticipated and valued.

For this month's demonstration, Tony walked us through the creative process of designing a bonsai from scratch. He chose one of President Steve's overgrown trees — a needle juniper planted on an artificial rock — as his subject.

As Tony worked, he talked us through each decision, explaining his thought process and sharing a steady stream of practical insights. Steve joined in to assist with some of the wiring, making it a lively and collaborative session.

The transformation was remarkable. What began as an unruly mass of foliage gradually revealed structure, movement, and character. The accompanying images show the dramatic before and after results, along with Tony and Steve in action during the styling.



The transformation was truly impressive. The images show the dramatic before and after results, along with Tony and Steve in action during the styling.

## Tutored Workshops with Tony

We made full use of Tony's availability by arranging a half day Tutored Workshop limited to 8 participants so each could get suitable access to Tony's advice and assistance.

It was unfortunate that we were restricted by Tony's availability to a working day which made it difficult for a lot of members to sign up, otherwise multiple sessions would have been considered. However, all places on the single available Tutored Workshop were filled.

Tony's remaining time available to use was filled with private sessions at member's homes - Steve M and Ken G snapped up the available sessions!

This is the third time that we have hosted Tony at YVBS, but it will not be the last!



## Some of Tony's "Gems"

- Bonsai is the art of trickery - see something bigger than what it actually is.
- Bonsai is also the art of space. Emulate native trees in the wild, and leave room for the birds to fly and kids to climb.
- Create an old tree in nature, 200 - 300 years old, not a park tree which, at 50 - 60 years old at the most is still an adolescent.
- Remember the basic principles when designing a tree - asymmetry, direction, balance and depth.
- Recognise what you don't like, which leads you to what you do like.
- When repotting, balance the supply (roots) and demand (foliage) equation.
- Tony's preferred repotting time is late winter to early spring. Except for mature trees going from one bonsai pot to another, when he prefers autumn.
- Tony prefers an organic potting mix for better water retention. General mix is a 1:1:1 ratio of decomposed pine bark or peat moss, scoria and zeolite. A fully inorganic mix requires more frequent watering, which is not practical for most working people. For a "wet" mix, eg for native trees, double the proportion of pine bark.

## End-of-Month Saturday Workshops

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 at our meetings and workshops! Bring along any trees that you may have to our workshops 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.

Pics below are from the January and February End-of-Month workshops,



## Introduction to Bonsai Training Course

The next "Introduction to Bonsai" Training Course is scheduled to be held on Saturday 2nd May and Saturday 23rd May, from 9am to 1pm both days. All participants will receive a tree to work on and a comprehensive training booklet comprising all course notes. Course fee is \$100.

This course will cover all of the basic bonsai knowledge required to confidently start your bonsai journey, and the notes provide a ready reference to consult as you move forward.

Most current members have participated in the course at some point during their time with the club.

Contact Lindsay H ([linhad14@gmail.com](mailto:linhad14@gmail.com), 0403 800 671) to book your place, or put your name down on the registration form at any Club meeting or workshop. Note—minimum numbers will apply, and payment must be made at least two weeks prior to commencement. Insufficient confirmations may result in course cancellation.

## Hirotoishi Saitoh Events

We had previously provided advance notice of a visit and series of events featuring Japanese bonsai master Hirotoishi Saitoh in July this year, in collaboration with the Bonsai Society of Victoria (BSV). The events were to include tutored workshops and a special evening demonstration.

Unfortunately, BSV have cancelled Hiro's visit for 2026. Hopefully, a visit can be arranged next year, when we would be keen to be involved again.



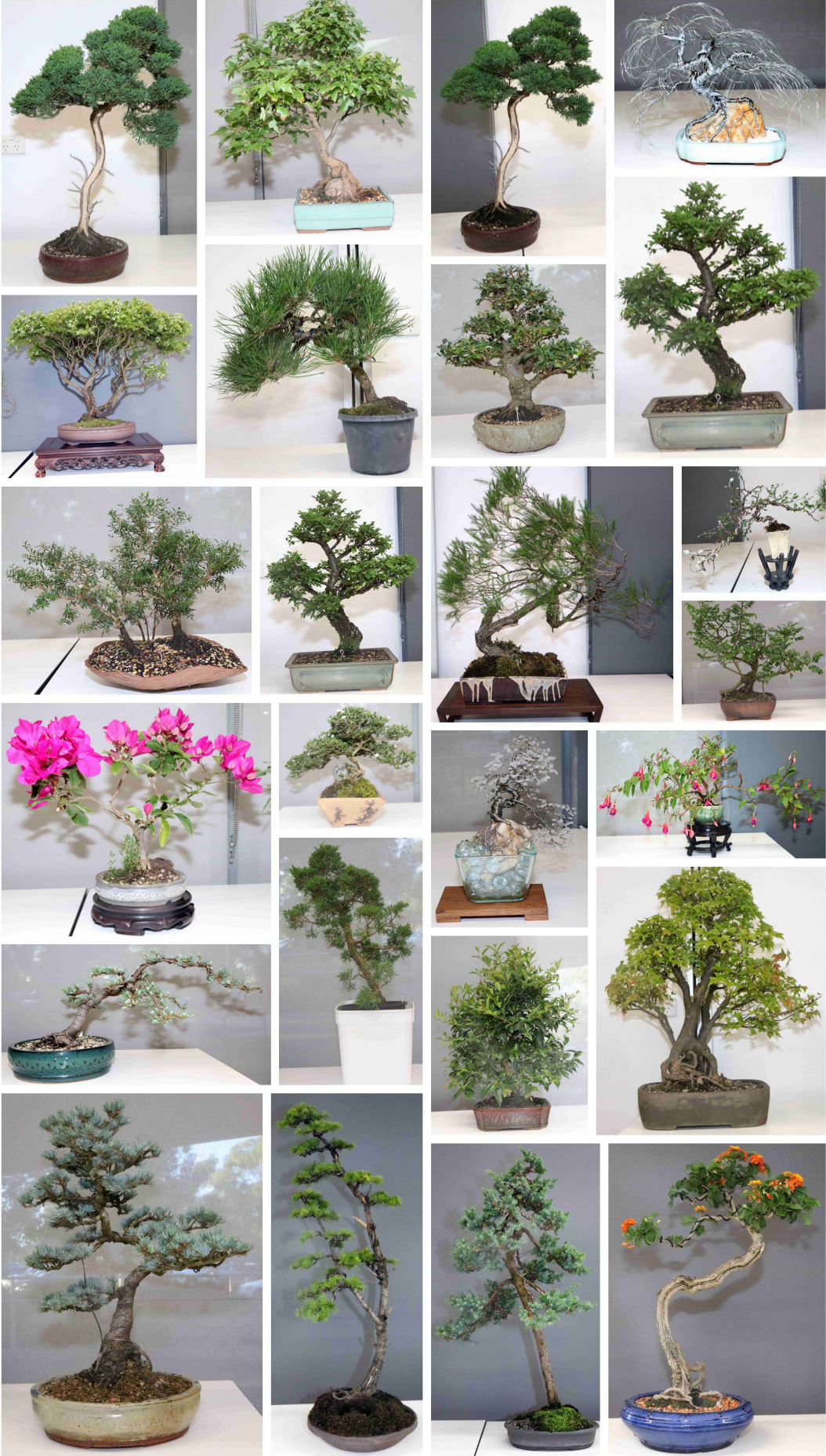
## Bonsai Calendar March-April-May

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.
- 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.
- Autumn provides a small window of opportunity to carefully repot some bonsai. Eg 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 winter.
- While enjoying your autumn display, put some thought into winter survival.
- Once all the green leaves have changed or fallen you can begin cutting back on deciduous trees to shape without fear of the tree bleeding.
- After all leaves have fallen, clean up debris around your bonsai area (including the top of pots), to reduce potential homes and hoding places for pests.
- Any trees that have been protected from the summer sun can be pushed back into the open. The winter sun will promote bud development and tighten spring growth.
- Adjust your watering routines as your trees will be using less water, and rain may become more common. Avoid overwatering at this time of year as trees are extremely sensitive to root rot.
- If possible, make a habit of watering at the warmest part of the day. This will give the excess water a chance to drain before the cold nights.
- Keep an eye on moss growth which may interrupt water intake and increase the chance of root rot.

## Display Table

A selection of trees from the January, February and March Display Tables. Note that in contrast to past newsletters, not all trees may be included due to space restrictions. Please see the following page.



## NBPCA Artist in Residence Program

The NBPCA are seeking expressions of interest from interested artists within the bonsai community to apply for the 2026 intake of artists in residence. This 3-5 day program offers the opportunity for Australian resident bonsai artists to be inspired by a new environment and to exchange techniques and ideas with the NBPCA curators and volunteers. A daily fee plus allowances will be paid.

If any experienced club members are interested in learning more, contact Lindsay H for further information and an application form.

## 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. Note that all Tree Profiles included in previous newsletters are now located on the club website for perusal and downloading.

## Club Sponsors

The following organisations are valued sponsors of our Club - please support them when you can.

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## BONSAI SENSATION NURSERY

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