



Yarra Valley
BONSAI SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Q2 – April to June 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 held 1pm to 4pm on the **last Saturday** of the month, same venue as the monthlies!

President: Steve M
0402 004 012

VicePresident: Vacant

Secretary: Lindsay H
0403 800 671

Treasurer: Ken G
0419 337 116

Marking: David R
0402 032 001

Members: Marlene
0418 147 871

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.

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

ABN 92 966 395 686
Reg. Assoc A0052264P
PO Box 345 Mount Evelyn,
VIC 3796 Australia

Bunnings Mother's Day Event

On 9 May, YVBS was invited to host a table at Bunnings Lilydale as part of their community event.

It was a great opportunity to get out into the local area, showcase bonsai, and connect with people who were curious to learn more.

We had a steady flow of visitors stopping by for a chat—some completely new to bonsai, and others keen to share their own experiences.

Having trees on display helped spark plenty of conversations, and it was great to see so much interest from the community.

Events like this are a simple but effective way to raise awareness of the club and welcome potential new members.

Thanks to those who gave their time to help on the day and represent YVBS—it's always appreciated.

Hopefully we'll have more opportunities like this in the future.



Introduction to Bonsai training course

– building skills from the ground up



Yarra Valley Bonsai Society recently held another **Introduction to Bonsai Training Course**, hosted by Lindsay H, with an enthusiastic group of participants eager to begin their bonsai journey.

The first session, held on 2 May, focused on the fundamentals—exploring what bonsai is and introducing the classic tree styles and shapes that underpin the art form. Attendees came prepared with their tools and notebooks, ready to learn. Each participant received a comprehensive training course booklet, along with their own trees to begin working on during the session and to continue developing at home.

The second session, held on 23 May, built on this foundation, allowing participants to further refine their techniques through hands-on practice and guidance.

It's always encouraging to see strong interest in these courses, with both new and returning members gaining confidence and practical skills to support their bonsai journey.



Annual Sale Day

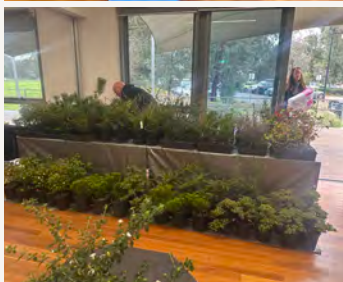
Our annual Sale Day was held in May and seemed to be the busiest ever. The line-up at the door prior to opening was the longest yet, and there was a steady stream of buyers appearing throughout the morning.



All sellers seemed to be happy with their turnover—there were a lot less goods taken home at the end of the day than there were on arrival.

Hopefully members picked up a few special pieces to take home with them.

The next opportunity to sell or buy will be in association with our Annual Show in October.



Upcoming Events

TUESDAY MEETINGS:

14 July

Annual General Meeting, plus "Fertilisation Regimes" by Lindsay H.

Display table theme: "Pines and Cedars", or Member's Choice.

11 August

"Nursery Methods & Tech vs Bonsai" with Jason B.

Display table theme: "Yamadori Trees", or Member's Choice.

8 September

"Show Preparation Workshop and Tree Selection" with Steve M.

Display table theme: "Spring Flowers", or Member's Choice.

SATURDAY WORKSHOPS

25 July – 1:00pm to 4:00pm

29 August – 1:00pm to 4:00pm

26 September – 1:00pm to 4:00pm



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This year, our Annual General Meeting will be held at the July meeting, giving it some space from our **Bonsai Exhibition** in October.

All Committee positions will be declared vacant, with elections held where needed.

If you're interested in getting more involved, we'd love to hear from you. No bonsai expertise is required—just interest and enthusiasm.

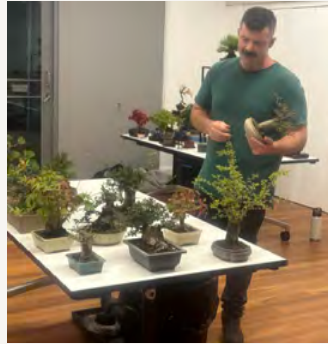
To nominate, contact Lindsay H (linhad14@gmail.com, 0403 800 671) for a nomination form.

We're always keen for fresh perspectives, and being part of the Committee is a rewarding way to contribute.

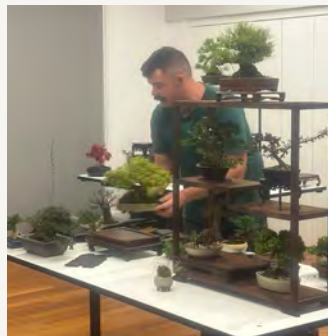
Meeting Reports:

April – Shohin Bonsai

with Nick McCarrey (Kumo Bonsai)



Nick presented on Shohin bonsai, bringing an impressive selection of his own trees. The topic proved popular, with many members also showcasing their trees.



Nick shared tips on development, styling, and species selection. He emphasised early movement, then trunk thickening through sacrifice branches and ground growing.

Using tiles or plates beneath trees helps improve root flare, while jin and shari can be introduced progressively during development.

Favourite Shohin species include Pines, Junipers, Elms and Maples, with several practical insights shared:

- **Chinese elms** are ideal for air layering and can be styled before separation.
- **Olives** can be trunk-cut and replanted to root, then carved and styled (using lime sulphur mixed with sumi ink).
- **Juniper bark** can be cleaned efficiently with a small pressure washer and treated with camellia oil.

- **Buxus harlandii** features attractive flaky bark and tolerates hard pruning but prefers greenhouse conditions.
- **Pine** refinement focuses on encouraging inner buds, with annual needle plucking and candle cutting on healthy trees.

Nick also outlined his preferred soil mixes and how they support different stages of development:

- **Young stock:** commercial cactus mix for fast drainage and strong early root growth.
- **Conifers:** equal parts akadama, scoria and pumice for balanced moisture and airflow.
- **Flowering species:** equal parts akadama, scoria, pumice and kanuma to support health and flowering.
- **Japanese maples:** 2 parts akadama to 1 part scoria and pumice for stability and consistent moisture.

Fertilising is adjusted to the tree's stage, with higher feeding rates for developing pines and lower nitrogen for refined trees.

The session concluded with a collaborative Shohin display demonstration by Nick and Dean.

Key principles included:

- Placing the most dominant tree (often a pine) at the top
- Creating inward visual flow
- Incorporating variety in form and colour
- Maintaining asymmetry (typically 5 or 7 elements)
- Avoiding repetition in species or pot colour

The interactive setup encouraged audience participation and highlighted experimentation in achieving balance and harmony.

May – Bonsai Development with Tien (Bonsai Sensation)



Tien from Bonsai Sensation shared practical insights into developing bonsai from young stock, drawing on years of trial and error in his nursery.



Tien broadly categorises trees into two groups: those that back bud well (such as figs and deciduous species), and conifers like pines and cedars, which require different handling.

A key focus was early trunk development. Ground-growing seedlings can thicken to around 10 cm in just 2–3 years, but preparation is critical.

Before planting, remove the tap root, introduce movement by wiring the trunk, and plant at a slight angle.

Tien demonstrated how wiring and bending—while slowing growth—help create movement and encourage low shoots, which must be carefully managed so they don't weaken the apex.

He emphasised two priorities in development: taper first, movement second. Taper is achieved by cutting back the trunk, sealing the wound, and allowing a leader to run to heal and thicken. Strong shoots above the cut aid healing, while others should be controlled to maintain short internodes.

Ground growing is particularly effective for faster wound closure, and trees should not be potted into bonsai containers until scars are nearly healed.



Species-specific tips included:

- **Blue Cedar:** Highly top-dominant—retain the original apex to drive trunk thickening while wiring a new leader.
- **Black Pine:** More forgiving, with easier development of low sacrifice branches.
- **Itoigawa Juniper:** A standout variety with finer foliage, strong growth, and reliable back budding.

- **European Hornbeam:** Excellent for bonsai, but requires careful management of sacrifice branches to maintain balance.
- **Chinese Quince:** An underrated species making a comeback, valued for its bark, colour, and reliability, despite slower ramification.

Tien wrapped up with stories from his bonsai journey, including building his nursery around shohin development, and a few memorable tales—among them, stolen trees and one that eventually found its way back.



June – General Workshop

Learning, sharing, community



Members sharing trees and advice in a relaxed workshop setting, supporting growth at every stage of bonsai development.



Our June meeting was a great reminder of what makes the **Yarra Valley Bonsai Society** such a valuable and welcoming community.

Members brought along their trees for a relaxed, workshop-style session, where some of our more experienced members generously shared their knowledge. It was fantastic to see trees at all stages of development on display, with plenty of practical advice offered on styling, structure, health, and future direction.

There was also a strong sense of momentum throughout the session, with members moving between trees, comparing approaches, and

building on each other's ideas. The informal format encouraged open conversation and made it easy for newer members to feel included, while more experienced growers were able to share deeper insights in a practical, hands-on way. It's this balance of learning, sharing, and doing that continues to make these workshops so valuable for everyone involved.

These hands-on discussions are always a highlight, giving everyone the opportunity to learn in a supportive environment—whether you're just starting out or refining more advanced techniques.

The willingness of members to share their insights and experience continues to strengthen the collective knowledge of our group.

As always, the meeting wrapped up with our raffle, adding a bit of fun and excitement to the evening.

A big thank you to everyone who brought trees along and to those who took the time to offer guidance and feedback. It's this spirit of collaboration that keeps our society thriving.

We look forward to seeing even more trees—and familiar faces—at our next meeting.



Display Tables

Always a highlight of our gatherings, showcasing a diverse range of trees contributed by members. From refined, exhibition-ready bonsai to trees still in development, it offers inspiration at every level. It's a great opportunity to appreciate different styles, species, and techniques up close, while sparking conversations and ideas. Members and visitors alike are encouraged to take their time, ask questions, and enjoy the craftsmanship on show.







END-Of-Month Saturday workshops are held on the last Saturday of the month.

Our regular last-Saturday workshops are a relaxed, friendly space to work on trees, share ideas, and get advice from fellow bonsai enthusiasts. There's always something interesting happening, with trees at all stages of development on display. Visitors are always welcome—bring along a tree for guidance or simply come along for an introduction to bonsai. There's no cost or obligation, and members are encouraged to make visitors feel welcome.

Saturday Workshops





Bonsai Care Calendar

JULY – SEPTEMBER

Looking Ahead

Work done in late winter and early spring shapes your bonsai's strength and refinement for the year. Stay observant—your trees will show you what they need.

July – Mid Winter:

Protection & Preparation

Winter is quiet, but not a "do nothing" period—good habits now set up spring success.

- Most deciduous trees are fully dormant—an ideal time to refine structure. Carry out heavier pruning while the branch framework is clearly visible.
- Deciduous trees are dormant—ideal for structural pruning.
- Begin re-potting before buds swell; ensure good drainage and avoid heavy root work in extreme cold.
- Protect sensitive species from frost and wind.
- Water less, but check soil regularly during dry spells.
- Clean trunks and remove excess moss.
- Inspect wire to prevent biting.

August – Late Winter:

Buds Begin to Stir

A transition month where timing is key.

- Continue re-potting; conifers can follow late in the month.
- Start light fertilising toward month's end.
- Avoid root disturbance once growth begins.
- Plan wiring and styling, but delay heavy work.
- Gradually reintroduce sun exposure.
- Watch for returning pests.

September – Early Spring:

Growth & Energy

Growth accelerates quickly.

- Feed regularly to support development.
- Trim new growth to encourage ramification (avoid weak trees).
- Wire while branches are flexible; monitor closely.
- Finish re-potting early in the month.
- Increase watering as temperatures rise.
- Optimise sun and airflow to reduce fungal risk.
- Begin refining structure and direction.



Goldfields Bonsai Society

Spring Exhibition 2026

Sat 12th & Sun 13th Sept

9:00am to 4:00pm Daily

Daylesford Town Hall

76/78 Vincent St, Daylesford VIC

Entry - Adults \$5, Children free

Raffle prizes

Demonstrations, Sales area - bonsai, pre bonsai, hand made pots

Information : Vanessa : 0429664304

Club Sponsors

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MONDAY TO FRIDAY 9:00am – 5:00pm / WEEKENDS 10:00am – 3:00pm
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253 Centre Road, Narre Warren South, VIC 3805

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Visit our Facebook page and website BONSAISENSATION.COM.AU for more information

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 35 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.

AABC June Update 2026

Key Highlights

The 38th AABC National Bonsai Convention in Hobart was a great success, showcasing the strength and growth of bonsai across Australia. Hosted by the Bonsai Society of Southern Tasmania, the event delivered outstanding hospitality, a high-quality exhibition, and strong public interest, with around 1,150 visitors attending in addition to delegates.

The standard of trees and displays continues to improve, highlighting the dedication of artists and organisers nationwide. The convention also raised valuable funds through auctions and raffles, supported generously by clubs across the country.

A highlight was the introduction of the AABC New Stylist Award, with six participants competing. Congratulations to Tony Birt (Tasmania), who won the inaugural award and received a five-day scholarship at the National Bonsai and Penjing Collection—an exciting new initiative supporting emerging talent.

Looking ahead, the 39th AABC Convention will be held in Illawarra from 21–24 May 2027, featuring international demonstrators Shinji Suzuki and Hiroaki Suzuki on their first visit to Australia.

Planning is also underway for a 2028 convention in South Australia. Full details and registration for this event can be found here:

illawarrabonsaisociety.org/2027-aabc-national-bonsai-convention

The AABC continues to focus on strengthening the bonsai community through improved communication, education, and national initiatives.

These include a proposed Australian Potters Award, a potential National Bonsai Register to preserve significant trees, and ongoing improvements to the Bonsai Clubs Australia website.

National conventions remain central to funding educational programs such as the Visiting Tutor Program, helping share knowledge and raise standards across member clubs. Clubs are encouraged to stay engaged, share updates with members, and consider hosting future conventions as part of supporting the wider bonsai community.

