



Yarra Valley
BONSAI SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Q3 – July to Sept 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

Markting: 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**

A Great Day Out – YVBS Nursery Tour

Perfect weather, plenty of trees and a great turnout from members made our recent YVBS Nursery Tour a fantastic day out.



COOLWYN WHOLESALE NURSERY Monbulk

We started the day in **Monbulk at Coolwyn Wholesale Nursery**, first exploring some of **Nick and Adam's own stock** before being treated to a fantastic tour of the wholesale nursery. The owner generously shared the history of Coolwyn and gave us a behind-the-scenes look at the operation. It was a rare opportunity to see such a large conifer nursery and there was plenty of discussion about the bonsai potential hiding amongst the rows.

CONIFER GARDENS NURSERY Ferry Creek

From Monbulk we headed to **Conifer Gardens Nursery** in Ferry Creek, with its selection of conifers and maples providing another chance to hunt for promising material. The bargain section proved particularly tempting for anyone who enjoys looking beyond the obvious.



BONSAI SENSATION NURSERY Narre Warren South

Next stop was **Bonsai Sensation Nursery**, where Tien's range offered everything from starter material to developed bonsai, along with pots, tools and other bonsai essentials. Members also enjoyed a generous 10% discount on the day.



BONSAI ART NURSERY Heatherton

Our final stop was **Bonsai Art Nursery**, home to Trevor's collection of bonsai and an impressive range of Satsuki azaleas. With discounted deciduous stock to explore, there were still plenty of opportunities for one last find before heading home.



Of course, a nursery tour wouldn't be complete without a few trees finding new homes, and members came away with some great material - and perhaps a few more trees than originally planned! A big thank you to everyone who joined us and to the nurseries that welcomed YVBS along the way.

Meeting Reports:

July – Bonsai Basics – Fertilising

with Lindsay H.



Following our AGM, Lindsay gave an insightful talk on fertilisation, sharing practical tips on feeding and maintaining healthy bonsai. The topic proved popular, with members picking up plenty of useful ideas to take home and put into practice.

What does a tree need to grow?

Wood is a complex organic material made up primarily of carbon, oxygen, and hydrogen. The typical composition of wood is approximately 50% carbon (C), 42% oxygen (O), 6% hydrogen (H), 1% nitrogen (N), and 1% other elements, including calcium (Ca), potassium (K), sodium (Na), magnesium (Mg), iron (Fe), manganese (Mn), sulphur (S), chlorine (Cl), phosphorus (P), and other trace elements.

For comparison, the human body is composed of approximately 18% carbon, 65% oxygen, 10% hydrogen, 3% nitrogen, and 4% other elements. Same elements, just different composition.

Trees obtain carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen through photosynthesis and water. The remaining essential nutrients are absorbed through the roots from the soil, making nutrient replacement an important part of bonsai cultivation.

WHY do we add fertiliser?

Bonsai are grown in relatively small containers with limited volumes of soil. As trees grow, they gradually use the available nutrients, and regular watering can wash nutrients from the potting mix. Fertiliser is therefore added to:

- Replenish nutrients that have been depleted from the bonsai soil.
- Supply nutrients that may be lacking in the growing medium.
- Promote healthy, vigorous growth, important at all times especially when implementing clip-and-grow bonsai techniques.

WHAT is a fertiliser?

Fertilisers supply the essential nutrients required for healthy plant growth. The three primary macro-nutrients are:

- **Nitrogen (N):** Promotes vigorous leaf and stem growth.

- **Phosphorus (P):** Encourages root development.
- **Potassium (K):** Supports flowering, fruit production, and overall plant health.

In addition to these macro-nutrients, fertilisers often contain trace elements that are required in small quantities for healthy growth and normal plant function.

Types of fertiliser

Fertilisers are commonly available in two forms.

- **Solid (Slow-Release) Fertilisers:** Solid fertilisers release nutrients gradually over time. They may be applied directly to the soil surface, placed in fertiliser baskets or tea bags, or mixed into the soil. Examples include:
- **Organic:** Rocket Fuel, Rooster Booster, Dynamic Lifter, Blood and Bone

- **Inorganic:** Osmocote
- **Liquid Fertilisers:** Liquid fertilisers provide nutrients that are readily available to the tree and are typically applied during watering. They should always be mixed according to the manufacturer's recommendations. Common examples include: , PowerFeed, Charlie Carp, Maxicrop

When SHOULD Bonsai be fertilised?

Bonsai are generally fertilised throughout the growing season. Typical schedules include:

- Solid fertiliser: Approximately every 6–10 weeks (often every one to two months).
- Liquid fertiliser: Weekly, fortnightly, or monthly, depending on the grower's preference.

When should Bonsai NOT BE fertilised?

There are several situations where fertilising should be reduced or avoided.

During winter dormancy for deciduous species.

For approximately one month after re-potting, allowing roots to recover before encouraging new growth.

Certain species, such as Banksias, require particular care as they are sensitive to excessive fertilisation.

Fertilising programmes may also be adjusted to achieve specific horticultural goals.

• **Maintenance of advanced Bonsai:**

Established bonsai often require less vigorous growth to maintain their shape rather than promote new development or refinement, so fertiliser application may be reduced.

- **Pines:** To encourage shorter needles:
- **Dual-flush pines:** Stop fertilising after de-candling.
- **Single-flush pines:** Avoid fertilising while candles are actively extending.
- **Deciduous Species:** Reducing fertiliser during periods of rapid extension growth can help produce shorter inter-nodes for finer branch ramification, and smaller leaves.

Fertiliser CONTAINERS

Many growers place slow-release fertilisers into small containers rather than directly onto the soil surface.

Common options include:

- Fertiliser baskets
- Tea bags

These help contain the fertiliser as it breaks down, preventing fine particles from entering and clogging the bonsai soil while making replacement easier.

TYPICAL liquid fertiliser compositions

PowerFeed

- Nitrogen (N): 12%
- Phosphorus (P): 1.4%
- Potassium (K): 7%
- Charlie Carp
- Nitrogen (N): 2%
- **Phosphorus (P): 0.4%**
- **Potassium (K): 0.75%**

Maxicrop

- Nitrogen (N): 4.6% (as urea)
- Phosphorus (P): 1.2%
- Potassium (K): 3.1% (as phosphate)
- Sulfur (S): 0.06% (as sulphate)
- Iron (Fe): 0.05% (as EDTA)
- Copper (Cu): 0.05% (as sulphate)
- Zinc (Zn): 0.03% (as sulphate)
- Manganese (Mn): 0.03% (as sulphate)
- Boron (B): 0.01% (as borate)
- Molybdenum (Mo): 0.0002%
- Added water: 79%

Summary

Because bonsai are grown in shallow containers with limited soil volume and sometimes inorganic soil mixes, regular fertilising is essential to replace nutrients lost through plant growth and watering. Both slow-release and liquid fertilisers can be used successfully in combination, or with the choice depending on the grower's preference, the species being cultivated, and the stage of development of the tree. Fertilising schedules should also be adjusted for seasonal growth, recently repotted trees, and specific bonsai goals.

As with many aspects of bonsai cultivation, there is no single correct fertilising regime. Different practitioners achieve excellent results using different methods, and growers are encouraged to develop a programme that suits their climate, tree species, growing objectives, and personal situation.

Upcoming Events

BUNNINGS LILYDALE

SPRING LAUNCH

3 October



PHOTO: BUNNINGS LILYDALE TABLE MAY 2026

TUESDAY MEETINGS:

13 October

Root Over Rock Demo & Workshop.
Display table theme: Spring Flowers, or Member's Choice.

10 November

Azaleas.
Display table theme: Azaleas – any style, or Member's Choice

8 December

Christmas Breakup and Informal Discussion on Member's Trees.
Display table theme: Your favourite tree, or Member's Choice.

SATURDAY WORKSHOPS

31 October

28 November



PHOTOS: YVBS SHOW 2025 - MEMBER TREES

August – Tree Development Night

Members brought along a great range of trees for discussion, with Nick M (Kumo Bonsai), Shawn G (UKIYO Bonsai) and Steve M sharing their knowledge and offering suggestions on styling, development and overall presentation.

It was a great opportunity to see how different approaches can change the direction of a tree, and to hear ideas from other members. There was plenty of discussion, questions and some very different possibilities explored.

The evening also gave us a chance to start getting a feel for the trees that may be presented at this year's exhibition. With the plan

to display fewer trees to a high standard, seeing the potential exhibition trees early will help us plan the overall layout and presentation of the show.

Sharing ideas and seeing different approaches helps us all look at our trees differently. It was a great evening of learning, discussion and inspiration, with plenty of ideas to take home and put into practice.



Our planned August Tree Development Night was cancelled at short notice and will be revisited at a future meeting.



September – Show Preparation and Tree Selection



Members brought along trees for fresh perspectives and styling ideas, with senior members sharing advice on development, structure and presentation.



September's meeting gave members the opportunity to bring along a tree and explore its potential—whether it was being considered for this year's show or simply needed some fresh ideas.

With a good selection of trees on the tables, there was plenty to look at and discuss. Members were able to talk through different possibilities for their trees, from styling and branch selection to improving structure, proportion and overall presentation.

Senior members shared their experience and offered suggestions on styling, development and ways to improve each tree's overall aesthetic.

It was particularly useful to see how the same tree can sometimes be taken in quite different directions, depending on its strengths and the desired outcome. For newer members, it was also a chance to hear the reasoning behind different styling decisions and

pick up ideas that can be applied to their own trees.

The evening also helped us start planning the exhibition display, giving us a better idea of how many trees may be presented and how we can arrange the room.

This year we're aiming for a more curated display, with fewer trees presented to a high standard. Seeing potential exhibition trees early gives us the opportunity to consider how they will work together as a group, rather than simply looking at each tree individually.

Most importantly, the evening was about learning together. YVBS members are at all stages of their bonsai journey, and every tree brought along created an opportunity to share

ideas, ask questions and see things from a different perspective. Whether a tree was close to exhibition-ready or still had plenty of development ahead, there was something to discuss and something to learn.



Display Table

Air-layered Trees — or Members' Choice

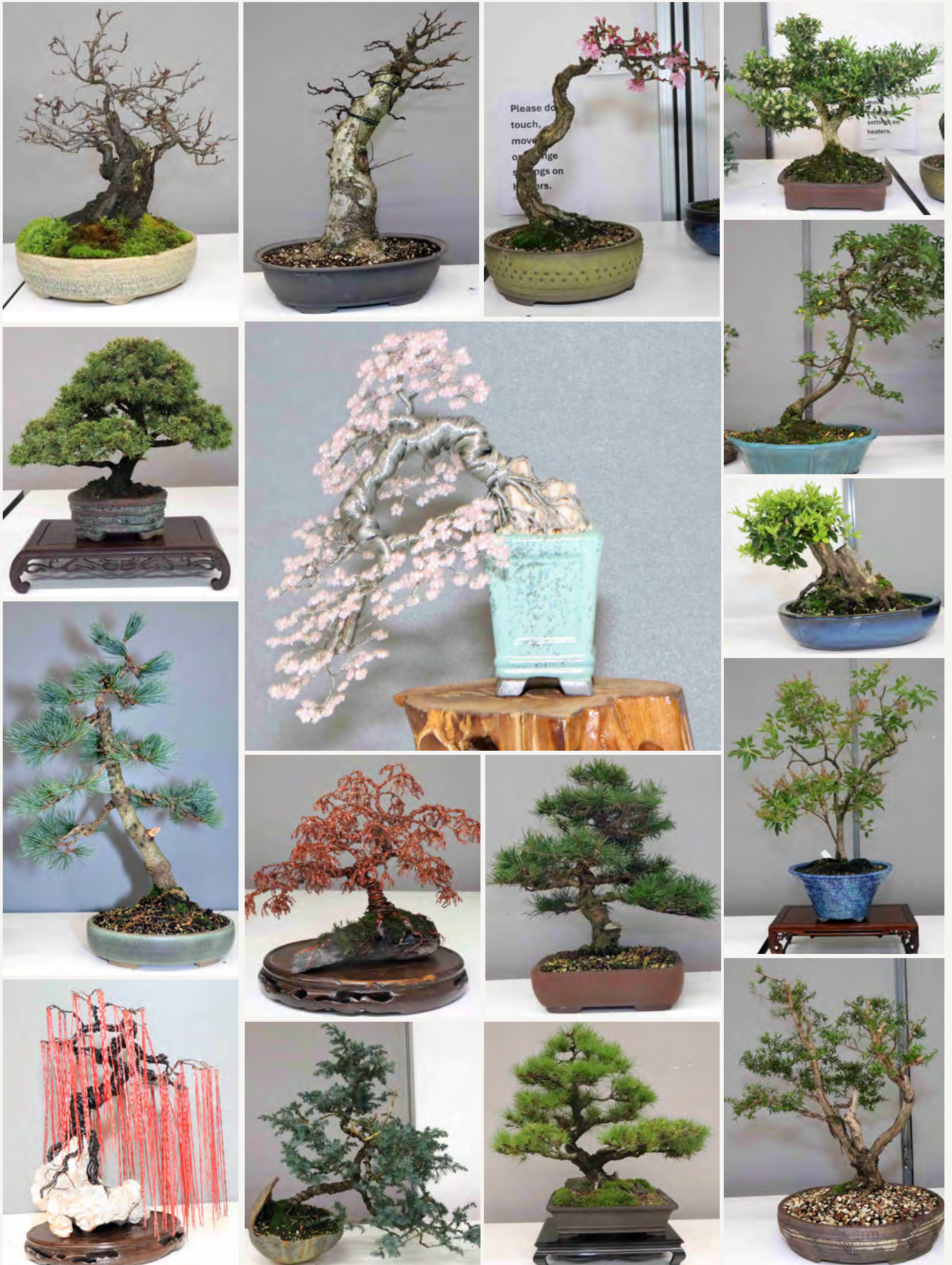
The display table added another interesting element to the evening, with members bringing along a great selection of trees to share, a good reminder of the variety of material within the club and the different stages of development our members are working towards.

Thank you to everyone who brought along a tree and contributed to the discussion, a great way to learn, experiment and improve together.



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





YVBS AGM Recap

Our July AGM was a chance to reflect on YVBS and look ahead to another year.

Our Club, Our Purpose

Members were introduced to our refreshed YVBS Value Statement:

"We enhance your bonsai journey by inspiring you to become a better bonsai artist through harmonious environments for friendship, learning, and celebration of this ancient art."

The statement will help guide the club and feature across our website and communications.

A Fresh Look

YVBS also unveiled its updated logo, retaining the character of the original while giving the club a fresh identity.

Our newsletter has moved to a quarterly format, with a new design, more bonsai content and digital editions archived on the YVBS website for future reference.

Meeting Updates

A possible change to the monthly meeting day and time was discussed at the AGM. No change has been confirmed. The alternative day and meeting time will be finalised and announced once confirmed.

Our 2026–27 Committee

President: Steve M

Secretary: Lindsay H

Treasurer: Ken G

Marketing: David R

Membership: Marlene J

General Committee:

Nicholas R, Stefan D, Elaine B and Catherine F.

The Vice President position remains vacant, with expressions of interest welcome.

Thank you to everyone who has volunteered their time to support YVBS and help the club continue to grow.

TREE MAKERS COURSE

Stefan D



I recently attended the spring class of the Fundamentals of Australian Bonsai program at Tree Makers Bonsai Studio in the Blue Mountains, run by Hugh Grant. The course is structured as three four-day intensives across the year, covering repotting, growth management and design.

The course began with a lecture on repotting theory and practice, describing seasonal energy flow, soil selection (his akadama and pumice mix) and techniques for achieving results for trees at different stages of development.

Hugh demonstrated his approach on a trident maple before we started on our own projects.

Under Hugh's guidance, I tackled a refined kunzea in an abstract container, maintaining the root ball and tweaking the planting angle in a new pot. I also worked on a severely root-bound cedar, carefully finding the nebari and beginning its transition into a new container and soil. It was great to experience two differing root development challenges!

On the final day, the students worked together on a large yamadori Nothofagus, performing a secondary repot to remove the remaining original soil. I left with techniques for intentional practice, a clearer sense of how to progress my trees, and plenty to reflect on before the next summer intensive.



Bonsai Care Calendar

– October – December

Looking Ahead

Late spring brings rapid growth and warmer weather—focus on watering, heat protection and timely pruning.

October – Mid Spring:

Growth & Refinement.

Strong spring growth calls for vigour control and structural refinement.

- Growth is strong and trees need regular attention.
- Feed actively growing trees regularly.
- Trim new growth to encourage ramification.
- Let branches needing thickness extend before pruning.
- Check wire frequently for biting.
- Increase watering as temperatures rise.
- Watch for pests and fungal problems.
- Maintain good sun and airflow.

November – Late Spring:

Manage Vigour.

Rapid growth needs regular maintenance to maintain balance and refinement.

- Warm weather and strong growth require balance.
- Continue feeding healthy, active trees.
- Trim or pinch vigorous new growth.
- Defoliate only suitable, healthy deciduous trees.
- Check and adjust wire regularly.
- Water thoroughly as conditions warm.
- Protect sensitive trees from harsh afternoon sun.
- Monitor pests and disease.

December – Early Summer:

Water & Heat Management

Summer brings a focus on root protection and consistent moisture.

- Summer care shifts toward moisture and heat protection.
- Check watering daily, especially shallow pots.
- Water thoroughly through the entire root ball.
- Provide afternoon shade during extreme heat.
- Protect pots and roots from intense sun.
- Continue light trimming where appropriate.
- Reduce feeding when trees are heat-stressed.
- Check wire as branches thicken.

AABC August Update 2026



Hello all!

We trust that you are doing well and preparing for spring growth on your Bonsai. These updates are designed to be for everybody to keep up to date with what is happening in Australian Bonsai and the role of AABC. This update is full of announcements.

I would like to start this update with some exciting news and another **new initiative from AABC** for the benefit of the Australian Bonsai community – this time especially for our Bonsai potters.

New Bonsai Pot Prize

The AABC National Bonsai Pottery Prize will launch at the 39th AABC National Bonsai Convention in Liverpool next year. This prize will be open to Australian Bonsai potters to showcase their talents and win awards in various categories. In partnership with the American Bonsai Potters Association and The Trophy, Belgium, the winners of these awards will have the opportunity to exhibit on the international stage. Full and exciting details will be published soon, but if you are a potter and wish to know more about this opportunity, please contact **Frank at secretary@aabcltd.org**.

AABC New Stylist Award

The AABC New Stylist Award will run again, after a successful launch in 2026 in Hobart, and will run on the Friday afternoon of the convention weekend. This competition is not necessarily designed for those new to Bonsai, but more those with moderate experience that are new to contributing assistance and knowledge at your local club level. We want artists with the longer-term view toward identifying future possibilities for their inclusion in the Visiting Tutor Program, which is directly funded by the profit share from our National Bonsai Conventions. We are just reviewing how the event went this year and the requirements and nomination form will soon be available from **Frank at secretary@aabcltd.org**.

39th AABC National Convention

The next convention, hosted by the Illawarra Bonsai Society in Liverpool NSW from **21 – 24 May 2027**, with the slogan Bonsai Generations, will feature **Shinji Suzuki** and his son **Hiroaki Suzuki** in Australia for the first time. This event will also feature Australian demonstrators Andrew Edge, Andrew Sellman, Evan Marsh, Janet Selby and Kahn Linh, along with some local club members in a team's competition to give us an action-packed weekend of Bonsai and fun.

Registration numbers are steadily growing and you have until **31 October** to **save \$50 on your registration** with the early bird rate. Workshops are also filling very fast, so get in quick to secure your spot. Please note the workshops are add-ons and can only be included with your registration for the convention program.

AABC Convention in 2028

We are happy to announce that the 40th National Bonsai Convention will be held from **19 – 22 May** and will be hosted by the South Australian Bonsai Society Inc, in Adelaide. They last hosted a fantastic convention in 2015 and we are looking forward to seeing their beautiful Bonsai and heading back for some great hospitality, after all these years. Of course, no more details can be promoted until we meet in Liverpool next year, but early planning promises another great event.

Visiting Tutor Programme

We are excited to announce a new addition to the Visiting Tutor list and are very happy to have another female tutor to the list. Kim De Korte, owner of Lilliannah Bonsai from Hope Island, Queensland and member of the Gold Coast Tweed Bonsai Club has been doing Bonsai for over 35 years and recently demonstrated at the Bonsai Open event on the Central Coast NSW. You can contact **Kim at trees@lilliannahbonsai.com.au**

Separately, the Visiting Tutor Program (VTP) is getting a little bit of an overhaul, with some small changes to procedures and an increase in travel funding to the clubs, after many years. We are also encouraging clubs to do joint applications to share a tutor's time around those clubs in close proximity and also to allow for private tuition with club members during a visit. Clubs cannot receive the funding until all paperwork is submitted, including the assessment report for the tutor. This is because these reports are the only way for the tutor to progress through the VTP system to achieve level one.

I am off to Malaysia for the **10th World Bonsai Convention**, which is sure to be an amazing event. See you soon.

Be Well. Stay Safe. Do Bonsai.

Tony Bebb
President AABC Ltd

Club Sponsors

The following organisations are valued sponsors of our club, please support them when you can.



Dean Shaw (Dean)
dean@bonsairoots.com.au
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CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

This certificate is proudly presented to

YARRA VALLEY BONSAI SOCIETY

Cire Services wishes to thank you for your generous donation to our Community Hubs 2026 Trivia Fundraiser

Cire Community Hubs Team



SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY



2026 BONSAI EXHIBITION AND SALE

- BONSAI**
Established trees and beautiful specimens
- POTS**
A great range of styles and sizes
- STARTERS**
Perfect for beginners and enthusiasts
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\$5.00 - under 16 free

24-25 OCT '26

10AM TO 4PM

CHIRNSIDE PARK
COMMUNITY HUB
33 KIMBERLEY DRIVE
CHIRNSIDE PARK

Visit our website: www.yarravalleybonsai.org.au

SAT 7th NOV
9AM to 5PM
SUN 8th NOV
9AM to 5PM



GEELONG BONSAI SHOW 2026

NEW LOCATION

Eden Oak

20 Adams Ct, East Geelong



Bonsai Society of Victoria BSV

Bonsai Exhibition & Sales

10th & 11th of October 2026

Box Hill Town Hall

1022 Whitehorse Road, Box Hill

Presented by the Bonsai Society of Victoria, our Exhibition showcases a broad range of traditional Japanese styles as well as contemporary approaches to bonsai art.

Our sales area will include established bonsai, nursery stock, collected trees, starter trees, imported & local handmade pots, display stands, tools, wire and accessories.

Entry \$10

Children under 12 free

Opening hours

Saturday: 9:00am - 4:00pm

Sunday: 10:00am - 4:00pm

Continuous Demonstrations on Saturday and Sunday

For more information visit

bonsaisocietyvictoria.com.au

Bonsai Society of Victoria

secbonsaivic@gmail.com

