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The Bonsai Society meets at the Bellerive Community Art Centre,
17 Cambridge Rd, Bellerive at 7:30 pm on the third Tuesday of the month
(February – November)

Website: www.chooseit.org.au/bonsai

Newsletter No 224 – December 2011

This will be our last newsletter for this year, but it gives me the opportunity of wishing all members and their families a Very Merry Christmas Season and may you all enjoy good health and much happiness in the coming year. Travel safely, and enjoy our beautiful island home!

Our November meeting was opened by President Noel Kemp at 7.45pm. Seventeen members and two visitors, Jon Bouffard and Leigh Montgomery, were in attendance, there was an apology from Gill Roberts who was enjoying the delights of Tasmania's east coast.

Venues are still to be decided for the forthcoming visit from Andrew Ward, and members were again asked to register their interest for his workshops, to assist in deciding how many will be required. If anyone has not yet done so, could they please let the Secretary know as soon as possible.

The Society has received a letter from Grant Bowie, Interim Curator of the National Bonsai & Penjing Collection of Australia. The NBPCA will be moving to a new site and, having identified a "Frost Free Area" intended to house trees which are a bit frost tender where they can be displayed all year round, are looking for support via the bonsai community to assist with the cost of this building. All donations over \$2 are tax deductible. Cheques can be sent to NBPC, PO Box 956, Canberra City, ACT 2601.

Our Next Meeting: will be held on Tuesday, February 21st 2012, commencing at 7.30pm.

Reminder for our Christmas barbecue at Risdon Brook Dam on Sunday 4th December, from 11am to 4pm. The Society will provide sausages and patties, tea, coffee and soft drinks will also be available. Members are asked to contribute something sweet and/or savoury and their own wine or beer if desired. Hopefully our weather will have settled down, so sunscreen and a hat could be very useful. There are some delightful walks so I'm told. Directions were provided in the November newsletter.

Saturday 14th January 2012 at 12 Clearwater Court, Blackmans Bay - venue details for our January get together, commencing 12 – 12.30pm. Tel. 62295741 – in case you get lost! On the Southern Outlet follow directions for Blackmans Bay. There have been a few changes with completion of the Kingston bypass which, at time of print, is not quite finalised. However, regardless of this, you will come to a VERY LARGE ROUNDABOUT with 4 other exit points, again follow Blackmans Bay via Algona Road. At the next roundabout turn right, you will go across another roundabout, then pass the Illawarra School on the left, note the massive development on the right – complete with the wooden fence going nowhere! – turn left into Wells parade, then take the 2nd street on the left. Ours is the 6th house on the left. As usual, it's a BYO everything.

Raffle: Prize was a bonsai pot won by Evelyn.

From the Library: Our librarian, David Budd has asked me to mention that he is missing a copy of **Bonsai Today, No. 108**. If members could check their bookcases etc. just in case it's been slipped into their personal collection by mistake, it would be most appreciated. David has also asked if anyone knows Sean Bradley, who attended the April, May, June & July 2009 meetings.

Happy Birthday to those celebrating their special day – your birthstone choices are turquoise or zircon. Special greetings to President, Noel Kemp!

Display Table: Lovely display of members' trees appeared – Tony Hewer brought in a European Larch (twigs yellowish-green in colour) and a Japanese Larch (twigs reddish in colour); Rob White showed his 15 year old maple; Visitor Jon Bouffard asked advice on what he thought was a *Pyracantha*, but has been advised it's a Tasmanian pepper, Will suggesting it could benefit from a feed of Seasol; Helene Browne used succulents to effect; Ambrose displayed a 20 year old azalea which had a single apricot coloured flower; Diana also brought her white azalea, which she has kept indoors during its flowering period, and a *Callistemon* which is almost ready to display its pink blossom; Noel had three varieties of *Cotoneaster*, including *horizontalis*, a fuchsia, *Coprosma* (NZ mirror bush), a Chinese Elm which had been cut back hard and has begun to sprout on old wood, and a Chinese Elm in the root-over-rock style; David also brought along a *cotoneaster*; Visitor Leigh Montgomery asked some advice on a *Banksia marginata*, and showed is a well-established Ash with a very short trunk; Ona brought her "crazy" azalea; and Trish has a lovely low growing *melaleuca* which likes to be kept wet.

Meeting closed at 7.55pm after which Will Fletcher showed us some of his latest bonsai landscapes incorporating rock and water features, and experimenting with Tasmanian plants which like to be kept very wet. Plants used include *Baeckea gunniana*, a low growing shrub from the high country and a good plant for pot cultivation; *Melaleuca squamea*, (also known as Swamp Honey Myrtle) has mauve flowers, and is found in swampy coastal areas usually in heathland; and *Diselma archeri*, an alpine conifer, found in Tasmania growing on the western coast ranges and Lake St. Clair at altitudes ranging from 910 -1220 meters.





Don't be confused – Will wasn't trying to emulate the Devil's Marbles – or was he?

After his bonsai landscape presentation, Will gave us a brief commentary on his trip to Central Australia, complete with some spectacular shots of Uluru, Kings Canyon, Devil's Marbles and the Painted Desert.

Thanks Will, for an interesting and informative presentation.

(Editor: The above photos are courtesy of Ambrose Canning. And I would like to say “Thank you” to Ambrose and other Society members who contributed photos and/or articles to this year's newsletters. Hopefully, there will be more members willing to have something appear in the newsletter, whether it's photographic or written material.)

Selecting a tree for a Workshop

N.R.Kemp 18/11/11

Our Workshops with Andrew Ward are 26-27th May. 2012. Do you have a tree or two, or three, for yourself (or Andrew), to choose from?

What to choose? Deciduous or evergreen?

A personal choice, with deciduous you will see the seasons manifesting themselves via the leaves. Conifers will – except for some species such as the larch *Larix* spp. which are deciduous – remain (wait for it) ever green; they will produce attractive (usually lighter) green foliage in Spring.

Deciduous species?

Japanese, or Trident Maples (*Acer palmatum* ad *A. buergerianum* respectively) are the traditional deciduous species for bonsai and, especially Japanese Maples, are usually readily available in most local nurseries. Don't feel restricted to these two species though, there are plenty of other trees to choose from e.g Liquidambar or Sweetgum (*Liquidambar* spp.), Elms (*Ulmus* spp, e.g. *U. parvifolia* Chinese Elm, *U. procera* English Elm), Zelkova/Japanese Grey-Barked Elm (*Zelkova serrata*) to mention but a few.

Evergreen species?

Suitable for bonsai include Cypress (*Macrocarpa* spp. or False Cypress (*Chamaecyparis* spp. e.g. there are dozens of variations of *C. obtusa*), Juniper (*Juniperus* spp.), Pine (*Pinus* spp.), Figs (*Ficus* spp.). Azalea (*Azalea* spp.), our own Myrtle (*Nothofagus cunninghamii*) and of course that old standby: Cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster serotina*, *C. horizontalis*, *C. thymifolia*); the list goes on.

Size?

A minimum size for a workshop candidate might be about 30 cm; the upper limit can depend on available material, your bank manager and your physical well-being/age (big trees means big pots!).

Shape, branching, etc.

Important factors to consider when choosing the individual specimen are:

- the diameter of the trunk – don't have it too thin, it may be easier to wire into shape but how many years will it take to have it look like a presentable tree, as compared with a pencil?
- the shape of the trunk – if it already has some interesting curves or angles, rather than being dead-straight, that might save some difficult wiring
- a good taper is preferable to a parallel thickness of the trunk, steer clear of a reverse taper (the trunk thickens as it goes up the tree)
- branching, look for branches down low on the trunk (dig down with your fingers, if necessary, to find out how far down the roots are). Sometimes trees can be buried too deeply and even though you might think the lower branch is low enough, on re-potting it you might find the lowest branch is higher up the trunk than anticipated. Find a tree with plenty of branches. If they are sparse, then it restricts your future bonsai potential; also, make sure they are not in only one or two planes (something akin to espaliered would be the worst example of what not to choose). Don't have too many heavy branches towards the top of the tree; these can be lopped off but it may restrict the ultimate design of the tree.

When you have bought the tree/s fertilize it/them regularly for the next month or so to get it/them growing well before autumn.



Christmas Greetings to you all