

Albury Wodonga Bonsai

newsletter- January 2016

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Fees have been set at \$20 per member or \$30 per couple for the coming year. You can pay Neil at a meeting or post subs to Neil at P.O. Box 135, Yackandandah, 3749

Next Meeting: Tuesday, January 26, 2016 at Harry's Hut, Olive St. South Albury at 6:30 pm (starting with a meal for those who wish to bring something to eat/cook on the barbecue)

For those who have not been before, Harry's Hut is the meeting room at the Gardens beside Brown's Lagoon. Entry off Olive St., opposite the end of Nurigong St., South Albury.

Topic for next meeting: Figs, natives and summer plants

Summer is a great time to be working with sub tropical plants and Ficus species are a great example. Bring your figs to show off or ask questions about or just come along and learn more about how we look after figs as bonsai.

Don't feel constrained if you don't have figs. Native plants and other plants that respond well to work in summer, such as olives, are also welcome. Members are welcome to bring other species to any of our meetings to work on or ask about.

Last Month:

Last meeting was 2 months ago, in November. Those who came along enjoyed a meal and some bonsai talk. We discussed our displays/response to at the Albury and Myrtleford Shows; a possible workshop for beginners (possibility of applying for a small community grant); another workshop with a guest demonstrator, and our new web site. Check it out at <http://www.alburywodongabonsai.com/home.html> Any suggestions/feedback talk to Les. Hope

Ian made it home ok. He called in to say his car was in 'limp' mode so had to head for home early.
At the

Bonsai Events:

National Bonsai and Penjing Collection has scheduled public bonsai activities for the first week of March in Canberra. Activities include guided tours of the bonsai collection, a couple of workshops and demonstrations and a 'gala cocktail and demo evening. Most of these events are free but the evening cocktails will attract a charge to cover the cost of food and drinks. See attachment for more details. Here is a link to the events -

<http://www.ausbonsai.com.au/forum/viewtopic.php?f=25&t=21218>

You will note that on Thursday there is a "Masterclass with Pavel for Club Nominated Participants & Club Nominated Observers (Not a public event) "Participants must be nominated by their club. If you would be interested in attending this event as either participant or observer you will need to let us know before the meeting next Tuesday so that we can consider those who want to go and somehow select one name to send in.

Get Well Rodney:

Our Rodney has been spending some time in hospital over the last couple of months. We're all looking forward to you getting back to the bonsai and club meetings mate.

Proposed 2016 program:

Members at the November meeting tossed around lots of possible ideas for meeting topics. Here's what I've come up with. Still time to make changes if you want to propose some alternatives.

January: annual Ficus workshop – figs, natives and other summer species

Feb: Developing a bonsai – slow V fast growth

Mar: Pruning and pinching – What's the difference and when do you do it?

April: Natives as bonsai - Annalea

May: Fusion to create interesting trunks and shapes – Les??

June: Shaping bonsai – wiring V pruning V hook and hold

July: Root pruning and repotting

August: Plums and hawthorns

September: Collecting trees for bonsai – what to look for and when

October: Suggestions welcome

November: Suggestions welcome

December: no meeting due to proximity to Christmas.

Seasonal Notes:

We've had all sorts of weather this summer. Hot and dry for a while with an early bushfire thrown in for good measure then almost a week of cooler, rainy days and now back to hot and sunny again. All that adds up to: 'watch the water'. Hope you have managed to keep the water up to yours when it was hot.

I was a few days late putting up my shadecloth this year which, along with a watering system malfunction, means I have burnt leaves on a few plants. A few burnt leaves may not look nice but does not usually spell death for your bonsai. Most will simply grow a new set of leaves and continue to grow, provided they are rehydrated promptly. If you are unlucky enough to come home and find a wilted tree, or worse, one with brown, crispy leaves take immediate action. Water immediately. If possible soak the entire pot in a container of water for a few hours. Really dry potting mix can be hard to re-wet and soaking will ensure that the root ball is wet all the way through. I usually leave the remaining leaves on the tree, even if they are burnt. Any green will help feed the tree and it will recover quicker. If you just can't stand the look of scorched leaves you can defoliate. Hopefully you will have caught it in time and the tree will shoot out fresh leaves and keep growing.

I'm currently watering twice each day – morning and again at night – to keep water in the rootball through the hot days. I also have a couple of trees that just cannot hold enough water so they get to sit in a shallow tray of water to make sure they have enough moisture for the whole day. Smaller bonsai sit on humidity trays to keep them damp for longer.

Fertiliser is a must when we water so often. Try to apply some sort of fertiliser every 3-4 weeks. I attended a workshop with Grant Bowie from Canberra recently. He mentioned that he fertilises every second Monday and is seeing great results from the more regular applications.

Spring and Summer are time for trimming. How you trim depends on the stage your bonsai are at and what your aims are. Young trees that you want thicker can be allowed to grow long shoots before trimming. I leave some of mine to grow all season if I want them to thicken quickly and prune the long growth in winter. Others are allowed to grow to around 1m long then cut back. Trees that are closer to being showable are only allowed to grow 30-50 cm before cutting the shoots right back to 1 or 2 nodes. New shoots will then grow and the process can be repeated several times over summer.

Trees that are already approaching desired thickness are pruned even more regularly. Shoots are only allowed to grow 4 or 5 nodes (leaves or pairs of leaves) before pinching the shoots back. Spring growth is often very vigorous. If you find that the first node of a spring shoot is too long to be useful in the ramification of that part of the tree it can be cut right back near the base. New shoots will still grow from dormant buds on the older wood and will usually have shorter internodes.

This year I defoliated my Japanese maples. I don't often do this but I am trying to control the shoots on these trees a little better. Japanese maples have a tendency to produce many buds at nodes and along the branches and trunk. I have found that if I leave them all to grow, not only does the tree get congested but the branches and trunks tend to thicken where there's lots of shoots leading to ugly

lumps and reverse taper. By defoliating I can see where those excess shoots are and can remove them early enough to prevent problems. One result of defoliating this year was that I had masses of new buds grow from all over the trunks and branches. That kept me busy selecting which were in good spots and rubbing off all the others. Interestingly I don't think leaves are any smaller as a result of defoliation this time.

My Bonsai Notes:

No contributions from members this month!!!

About time someone gave us some words or pictures of their bonsai journey.

Even if you just email me some pictures I'll put them in so we can all enjoy something different. If you want to add some words that would be even better.

If you can't get to a meeting (or even if you can) why not email Neil neil@shibuibonsai.com.au with a question or a comment or even a few photos to go in the newsletter?

Does anyone have anything for next month's



Members and visitors are always welcome to bring a tree (or 2 or even more) to our meetings if you want to show off your successes (or failures!), to work on a tree, or to ask about a problem.

Fees for 2015 are now due. Please forward your payment to Neil ASAP.

We also need to confirm members contact details to keep club records up to date. Please complete this membership details form and lodge it with your payment.

Name:

Postal address:

Telephone:

Email address:

Membership type: family

Individual

Concession