



NEXT CLUB MEETINGS

Green Square Community Church
182 Victoria Street
(Cnr Collins Street) Beaconsfield


7pm Tuesday 10 August 2010

Workshop – it is time to repot your conifers, any still dormant deciduous trees & natives

7pm Tuesday 14 September 2010


Workshop – repot & train Azaleas, buxus, olives & pyracantha

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COMMITTEE

Patron Dorothy Koreshoff

President Neville

Vice President Sue

Secretary Jennie

Treasurer Tani

Public Officer Max

Newsletter Editor Tony

Librarian Chris

Catering Philip

Committee Philip, Gary, Jennie, Damian

MEMBERSHIP

Full Membership \$30.00

Concession \$20.00

Family \$45.00

Pensioner \$15.00

Welcome to the August Newsletter

August Meeting:

This meeting is a workshop for repotting deciduous trees, junipers, pines, natives & nursery crawl finds.

Annual general meeting



A photograph of the entry area of Bonsai Environment Nursery; taken on last months bonsai nursery crawl – notice how beautifully I captured the 'No Photos Please' sign ☺

Club memberships fees are due

You can pay at the meeting or bank details to transfer fees will be available. Appreciate your co-operation with this!

In this months newsletter:

- Trees on display at the July Meeting, see page 2
- Possum control / deterrents article page 3
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TREES ON DISPLAY AT THE SCBC JULY MEETING



Ligustrum sinensis - Privet bonsai with rat damage on lower branches



Metrosideros kermadecensis – NZ Christmas Bush bonsai



Ulmus parvifolia – Chinese Elm bonsai



Ligustrum sinensis – Small Leafed Privet bonsai



Ulmus parvifolia – Chinese Elm bonsai



Ficus rubiginosa 'Little Ruby' – Little Ruby Fig bonsai

POSSUM DAMAGE TO BONSAI & DETERRANTS

The most familiar and abundant of the many Australian possum species are the Brushtail possum (*Trichosurus vulpecula*) and the Common Ringtail possum (*Pseudocheirus peregrinus*). Both are agile climbers and are more often heard than seen, especially during the mating season.

Both species have adapted well to living in the urban environment - a source of delight and frustration to many humans!



Schefflera arboricola – Miniature Umbrella Tree bonsai showing damage from possum's feeding

Possums are now common in our cities probably for a combination reasons:

1. pressures on traditional habitat caused by land clearing,
2. the rich pickings provided by the urban environment making it an attractive place to live

From a possum's perspective, our houses and other buildings are ideal - warm, dry and close to an almost limitless food source thanks to our gardens and compost bins.

Possums eat a wide range of plant material, especially tender new growth; most plants are at risk especially in winter when tender growth is less common than at other times of the year.

Possums are protected by law so you cannot control them by hurting them in any way – because possums develop feeding patterns / habits; once they have found a suitable source of food they will continue to return to the area until the food source has been exhausted.

If possums are feeding on your bonsai you must come up with a humane way to discourage them, some possible controls are:

1. flood lights on a sensor that turns the lights on when the possum triggers the sensor; the possums can lose their fear of this sort of deterrent with time

2. similar to above technique but the sensor triggers a siren of similar noise maker – this technique can be more effective but is not so popular with the neighbours
3. a combination of the two above methods
4. traps – best set by using professionals, these are effective in catching the possum, unfortunately when the possum is released into surrounding bushland it is not uncommon for the possums to return to their old territories and feeding areas!
5. bitter taste deterrents, these are sprays with extremely bitter tastes that are sprayed on plants to protect them from feeding possums – these sprays are very effective but you do lose part of the plants before the possums feeding habits are broken.

Using Bitter Taste Deterrents

The most common possum bitter taste deterrent is based on quassia chips. This spray is effective but is not water resistant, so after wet weather it has to be reapplied. Quassia chips can be bought at a chemist or some health food stores. Once the mixture is made up it can be stored and used later.

Be consistent with the spraying; the possums soon learn that the plants are no longer palatable and will move on to a new feeding area – but you have to keep the plants protected until the feeding pattern is broken.

If you want to break the feeding pattern without sacrificing your bonsai you could put inexpensive soft leafed plants amongst the bonsai or temporarily move the bonsai and replace them with plants you are willing to sacrifice until the feeding pattern is broken.

Quassia Chip Recipe:

- * Use 3.5g quassia chips
- * 1 litre water
- * 30g soft soap.

Boil the chips in water for 30 minutes then strain.

Mix in the soap to the solution to make it soapy and help it cling to the plants.

Dilute the spray one part concentrate to three parts water. Respray after heavy rain.



Cute isn't he – though not when he is eating your prize bonsai

GARDENIAS AS BONSAI

Taken from a demonstration by Chris Di Nola and Clinton Nesci at the AABC Convention May 2010.

Gardenias when young are pretty useless as bonsai. The roots are fragile. They are better when they are about 4-5 years old and they are better to work with when they have hardened off.

The Gardenia is a tropical shrub and likes full sun and moist soil. The branches are fairly flexible and easy to work. Stock plants usually have a lot of bonsai potential and working them with wire you can get interesting shapes.

With a collected Gardenia cut back to bare wood and treat as you would a fig. Dig the tree in warm weather and best after flowering. When the roots are disturbed they can drop leaves but they will regrow. You can defoliate gardenias to get some back shooting but don't defoliate every year.

Gardenia augusta 'Radicans' don't always make good bonsai because they can't handle the cultivation as well as the larger leaf varieties.

Feed with osmocote or another slow release at repotting and use an organic fertiliser after 4-5 months.

Gardenias flower in November to December and will spot flower at other times.

Question: what causes buds to drop?

Response: Usually drying out, they are very sensitive to drying out and can drop buds and leaves if this happens.

Lifespan: As long as you keep up their vigour they will last a long time. If you don't feed them or keep them in a protected position they will weaken and get sparse. Don't let them grow out but keep pruning to keep them dense with full foliage pads.

Pure Yellow Leaves (particularly at the bottom of the branches) can be a nitrogen problem. The plant takes the nitrogen from the older leaves to give it to the new growth. Gardenias are slow growing so people forget to feed them and they don't like that. If you use a balanced fertiliser and fertilise regularly the yellowing won't occur. Liquid high nitrogen fertilisers also quickly correct this problem

Black Spots on the leaves and stems – these spots are usually scale insects. If the plant has scale you will also get Black Sooty Mould – a fungus that grows on the excess sap the scale insects expel while feeding. Controlling the scale insects controls the Sooty Mould too as the food source dries up. Scale is less common in full sun although less than robust gardenia will still be subject to scale and all that follows.

Jin and shari – flowering trees don't normally have jins and shari; the wood is not hard enough as well and it will rot easily.

Root Pruning – for the first prune do not take too much root area away; reduce by half and keep the root ball intact. Once the tree is established remove about a third of the root ball at each repot. If you are using a different soil mix to the one the tree is in don't bare root the gardenia. Remove what soil you can and then when you pot it infiltrate the new/different soil throughout the existing soil mass rather than removing all the old soil. The tree will be more likely to happily survive if you observe this practice.

All shrubby types grow more robustly than ground cover gardenias.



Gardenia jasminoides – Cascade bonsai



Chris Di Nola and Clinton Nesci with the *Gardenia augusta* 'Radicans' bonsai they produced during their demonstration



Shohin Gardenia bonsai - image from: www.shohin-europe.com/photos-mamejapan1.html

WAYS TO CREATE BONSAI – notes from the AABC

Young or enthusiastic adherents can start with seeds to really say they started on the ground level and develop their stock from there. The advantage to this method is the ability to correct early problems as they develop [like poor roots]. The disadvantage is the time it takes.



Established stock plants can be purchased from sellers and then trained to become bonsai. Sometimes it is difficult to correct early established problems with a fairly mature tree.



Tree for sale at a bonsai nursery

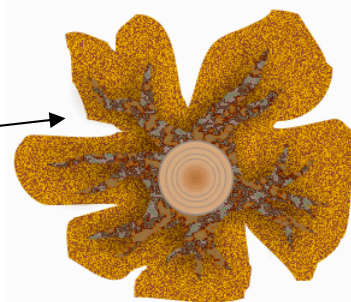
Styled and often neglected older bonsai can be purchased at sales. If they are neglected it is important to get them healthy before starting work. The stylist will reap dividends by allowing the tree to get over any neglect and be growing strongly. Take the necessary time, feed first with SeaSol or similar product and gradually fertilise as the tree starts to improve. Slowly build it up.



This image of a neglected bonsai from www.bonsai.co.uk/

If the plant is in a soil different to what you use, instead of endangering the tree by bare rooting simply infiltrate your soil into the old soil to allow fresh soil in as many areas as you can. At the next repot when the tree is stable and healthy more roots can be removed and fresh soil added.

Plan view of a bonsai root ball with wedges cut close to the trunk – over successive repottings the roots and the potting mix will be entirely renewed



After a year or so when the tree is in good health pot it up in a large pot after a careful root prune. Give it plenty of fertiliser, sun and water and it should respond with smaller leaves or needles.

Collected trees can provide some wonderful stock for bonsai. You need permission to collect from private or government property. It is advisable to get as much soil as you can when you lift the tree. The same advice settling them in a pot. Take off as much old soil as you can without disturbing the roots excessively, soak in SeaSol for some time, pot up and if there is a lot of old soil still around the roots try to create pockets into the soil ball and insert your fresh soil.

Keep the tree in semi shade and moist until it starts shooting and then move into the sun gradually. As the tree starts to develop keep fertilising until it is growing robustly. Then you can start styling.

Date	Event	Details
9/10/11 September	Bonsai Society of Australia Bonsai Show and Marketplace - Baulkham Hills Council Chambers, Castle Hill.	This is one of the top bonsai shows on the annual calendar with a stunning display of advanced trees and a large Marketplace with a couple of retail nurseries represented.
17-19 September 2010	Illawarra's Eleventh Weekend Workshop at Tops Conference Centre, Stanwell Tops	Friday night - registration & bonsai demonstration with a twist. Saturday - morning & afternoon workshop, happy hour, major demonstration Sunday - morning & afternoon workshop, lecture / demonstration
29 September 2010	Bonsai & Suiseki Tour of China Bonsai Clubs International is conducting a travelling convention of 14 days beginning 29 September 2010.	Glenis Bebb, Executive Director BCI, is handling the Australian section of the tour, and any person interested in participating is invited to contact her at: glen@bonsainursery.com.au