



Bonsai Society of Sydney Inc.

## NEWSLETTER

Meetings are held on the 4th Saturday of each month February-November from 1pm at the Forest Community Arts Centre, No. 6 Darley Street, Forestville, NSW 2087 (subject to change).

[www.bonsaisocietysydney.org.au](http://www.bonsaisocietysydney.org.au)

Next Meeting October 23, 2021 at 1.00 pm TBC

A Member of:

- The Bonsai Federation of Australia Inc.
- Association of Australian Bonsai Clubs Ltd.
- Garden Clubs of Australia Inc.

No. 124

October-November 2021

# *Lockdown has now ended – but can we return to normal?*

## President's report

Hello all Bonsai Society of Sydney members.

I hope you are all well and have survived lockdown and not become too bored!

As everyone is aware by now in the bonsai fraternity of New South Wales all have had their club meetings, exhibitions and all associated bonsai events either cancelled or postponed until this lockdown ends and we can return to what is called "normal."

The State Government has announced an end to the lockdown, Northern Beaches Council has announced their facilities can reopen from October 11.



*"Now that's a Bonsai!" Only in Australia would you find a kookaburra admiring a Japanese red pine bonsai.*

Hopefully, we can hold a meeting at Forestville on October 23. Council has been sent the required forms, we just have to wait for their reply. Galen will preside over a workshop planned, bring along any tree along to work on and receive advice. All conditions will have to be adhered to: only 21 attendees allowed; masks compulsory; everyone fully vaccinated; social distancing of 1 person per four square metres. We will keep everyone informed via email as to any information that comes to hand.

And again hopefully everything will be back to a reasonable normality in November when we can hold our AGM and Christmas get together.

Alex and Megumi's nursery at Bonsai Art in Belrose has just reopened for all your bonsai needs (but ring first to confirm they are open).

We are now into spring after what I considered to be a cold winter. Our bonsai at this time of the year are awakening from their slumber with new growth, which also means repotting of those trees that need it. Start feeding at a weaker rate with either liquid or pelletised products, check wiring and watering needs during windy days.

Warmer weather also awakens the pests who are also looking for a nice young leaf to eat or make a new home in or on. Check out Alex's Seasonal Notes to be found inside for more information.

That's all for now, hope to see you all soon brimming with bonsai enthusiasm just keep quietly working away on your trees.

Keep bonsai-ing and keep bonsai safe!

*Cheers, Galen.*

## Making a forest setting with Japanese maples

The following is my step-by-step guide to making a forest setting using Japanese maples. I completed this endeavour at the end of winter.

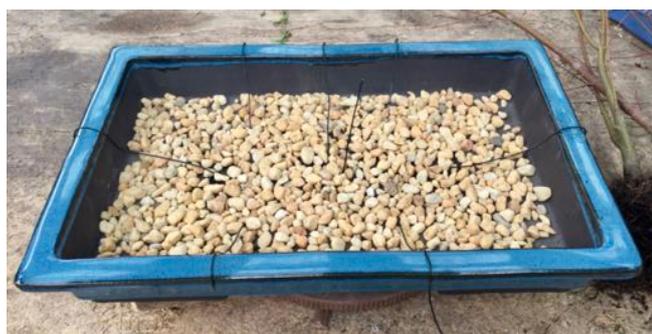
– Megumi Bennett.



1. I have selected the trees I want to use and have cleaned most of the soil from the roots.



2. I have chosen a suitable size and coloured pot and placed the trees in it to get an idea how many can fit in comfortably without overcrowding.



3. Prepare the pot, cover the drainage holes with mesh, place wires to secure the trees, then line the bottom of the pot with drainage pebbles.



4. I placed a little soil over the pebbles in the pot and even out before bedding the trees, bend the security wires over the edges of the pot so they do not interfere with the roots of the trees.



5. I removed any unnecessary branches and shortened the remaining branches then I pruned and cleaned the roots prior to planting the trees in the pot.



6. I positioned the trees roughly to get an idea of the design I wish to achieve. This may have to be done several times to get the right design.



7. I have pruned back the tops of the trees to get the right length of each, for example, the thicker the trunk the taller the tree will be.



8. This design is the one I prefer, this positioning works best for me. Three large forest trees to the left with the father tree in front and two smaller trees off to the right.



9. All trees stand well, my idea of what a forest should be. After all trees are in place I fill with more soil. Now it is time to tie the wires to the roots so the trees will have no movement before tamping and firming down the soil using chopsticks and then tidying up any unwanted potting mix.



10. The finished forest setting. Give it a good watering and water daily. Place the setting in shade for at least a week, use Seasol fertiliser only for at least a month.



11. The Japanese maple setting in spring after new growth has appeared. More sun now needed.

# Seasonal notes October-November 2021 – by Alex Bennett

Spring is a temperamental time of the year with hot sunny days followed cold, wet and windy periods. With these fluctuations, special care needs to be taken to protect any new growth from damage. Adequate water must be provided to ensure that trees do not dry out. New growth is developing fast and is very soft with little tolerance to water and heat stress. For the bonsai beginners, take note, this time of the year is the MOST dangerous time for you regarding watering.

## **Repotting**

Most deciduous trees should now be repotted. The native trees including Banksias and Figs are commonly repotted now and into late spring.

Pines and conifers should be finished by this time of year. These trees can still be wired but I do not recommend heavy cutting followed up by wiring then a repot all at once. Avoid pruning the roots on pines if the candles are producing needles.

Evergreen flowering trees such as Azaleas and Gardenias are best repotted as soon as they have finished flowering. Remember to start your fertilising as soon as they have finished flowering.

Rotate your trees every couple of weeks, so all sides can get full exposure and even growth.

Cut back any long shoots thrown out by deciduous trees.

Check wiring to make sure that it is not cutting into the bark.

Your fertilising schedule should now be at its peak to support new spring growth. It is suggested that each fortnight you use a complete fertiliser at normal strength with an added boost of seaweed extract such as Seasol®. You can pour the fertiliser on the foliage and roots. Pay attention to any trees that were repotted last Autumn or in Winter as their needs will be greatest.

I use Charlie carp®, Aminogro®, Nitrosol®, Seasol Powerfeed®, Vitarich®, Thrive®. These products I sell at my nursery. You can apply one of these fertilisers with Seasol or other seaweed concentrates. This product is not a fertiliser. However you do not want to mix the fertilisers.

## **Pests and diseases**

Remember pests and fungus can become very active this time of year. Ensure you look closely on your leaves both on top and underside. Unexplained yellowing, weak growth and leaf drop is a sign you should have a closer look. Thankfully the pests that attack your trees are not rare or exotic so treating them is pretty straight forward.

**Scale** – Eco oil is fine to use, Yates® Scale gun and also Eco Neem oil. These will need to be diluted with water. Scale gun is already premixed. Pest oil and white oil can be premixed but may have unpredictable

results with certain trees. You can test spray an area on the tree if unsure. Follow up spraying may be necessary. If unsure speak to a qualified Horticulturist.

**Aphids** – Conguard® insect spray and most other pesticides will be fine to use.

Look always at the underside of the leaves and at the tips. Look for tiny ugly brown and black bugs that distort and shrivel the new growth. Some trees may have webbing these are spiders that are attracted to the aphids. But spiders are apex predators they are hunting bugs and are not trying to eat your tree.

**Caterpillars** – Pyrethrum and Conguard® insect spray may be fine to use though picking off the bugs may all be needed.

**Curl grub/Cut worm and Mealy bugs in the roots** – Only noticeable at time of repotting remember to remove them from soil site when observed. You may use Richgro® Bug Killa, Eco neem oil.

**Thrips** – Leaf curling may be the most noticeable on your figs. No need to spray. Pluck infected leaves with finger.

**Mites** – specific Miticides and Neem oil seem to work best. Though follow up sprays may be required. These are the most common pests that you will see.

**Black sooty mould** – usually an indicator of either scale or aphids and poor location to sunlight powdery mildew – usually affects colder climate evergreen and deciduous trees. Causation is related to poor watering and fertilising practice. These are the more common fungus.

I like to use Liquid copper or Eco fungicide mixed with Eco oil.

Root rot may also be common for trees root systems usually caused by overzealous watering and not repotting in a timely matter. Usual signs are blackened soil; blackening of trunk and or branches and leaves wilting due to soil having no air to exchange with the leaves.

## **Pruning**

With the rapid spring growth, it is a good time to observe your trees, notice areas of strong growth and weak growth areas. These observations can be used to start correcting any errors in the structure of your trees or to suggest, some restyling.

Break the candles on your Red and Black pines with your fingers, never use scissors. Needle pluck Pines to remove last year's needles, this will allow sun into the new growth. This will encourage new shoots.

Remove all spent flowers on Azaleas by carefully sniping the flower stalk. That will remove the developing seed capsule which will use a lot of energy and nutrients that the tree would otherwise use for new growth.

## My very first bonsai *Ficus microcarpa*

My tree is a *Ficus microcarpa* as identified by the leading ficus expert at Bonsai Art. It is probably not my most favourite bonsai, but it is the very first bonsai I have grown and owned.

I attended a one- or two-day bonsai class back in 2003 and this was the result of that lesson.

Originally this ficus was only a straight stick in a pot about 20 cm high by 2 cm wide with very few branches.

Over the time I have owned this tree it has been neglected somewhat dreadfully, me forgetting to water it, not fertilising it, leaving the wire in place for years at a time, not repotting it, no defoliation at all. It is a wonder it has survived all of my meddling or lack of care over the years.

At this original seminar on “Learning Bonsai” I was never instructed on how to care for a bonsai, just the basic tuition. It was not until I started taking lessons at Bonsai Art with Alex first then Megumi that I learnt to look after a bonsai properly.

This tree has evolved very differently from its original form, adding and losing branches, bending branches in contrasting directions, thickening the trunk and developing larger roots.

When I was hospitalised earlier this year I couldn't be at home to look after my bonsais at all, so I had to rely on others to water them for me. Unfortunately this occurred during late January, the hottest part of summer, my bonsais were not watered regularly, so I lost a few trees and others had been damaged including my *Ficus microcarpa*. A few of the older main branches have died back. With time they may develop new branches or perhaps I might have to try to graft a branch here and there.

But it is still alive and growing and hopefully it will survive my interferences for a few more years, it will probably outlive me.

– Keith Gallie.



*Dieback to some of the branches. The cause of this was lack of daily watering during January, the hottest part of the summer.*

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** If you have a story about your favourite bonsai or any tale to tell about any of your trees then send it to me with photographs and I will include it in our Newsletter.



*Leaf size comparison. From my bonsai on the left, normal size on the right, this was a cutting grown from the original tree.*



*This Ficus microcarpa I have grown for at least 18 years, the tree itself is approximately 25 years old.*

# Cleaning a shari on Juniper as winter work

With junipers the cleaning of the shari and the branches is best done in winter.

You will need a metal brush, preferably brass, to clean the loose and flaking material from the trunk, larger branches, sharis and jins.

It is best to place a rag, plastic or paper material around the bottom of the trunk to collect the debris so as not to fall directly on the soil of the pot.



A brass brush is best to clean the trunk and branches.



Gentle strokes with the brush are best, not too vigorous.



Loose flaking bark and dirt will come off onto the rag to catch debris making cleaning up easier.



Brush the shari removing old dirt and bark from the trunk.



Brush the entire trunk to remove all the loose dirt and debris.



Excess dirt and old moss needs cleaning out from the bottom of the trunk.



Old moss and dirt is now removed from the root and trunk section at soil level.



The whole tree after shari and trunk cleaning and before wiring and repotting.



After wiring and reshaping the Juniper is repotted into a different pot.

🎄 🎄 🎄 *Don't forget!* 🎄 🎄 🎄

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
AND CHRISTMAS PARTY**

**November 27th, 2021**

*Subject to confirmation*

**A NOTE ON OUR  
BONSAI LIBRARY**

- Only 2 items per person, per month.
- Please ensure library items are returned the following month.
- If you would like to borrow something for longer, please indicate on the library card when borrowing.
- Please ensure the library items are returned correctly either to our Librarian or a Committee Member. Please don't just leave them in the cupboard or on tables.
- Please do not borrow items if you are unable to return them after more than 2 months.

Please talk with our committee if you have any questions or if you would like to see what we have on offer in our library.

Thank you for your co-operation and happy reading!

## *A beautiful Chinese Juniper to be raffled*



This beautiful 41-year-old Chinese Juniper was to be our raffle prize at the end of our Exhibition.

Now, we will have to hold the draw over until the AGM or at a more suitable time when the lockdown has ended, maybe even into the new year.

Tickets are for sale to Members only and cost \$10 each. There is no limit to the number anyone can buy.

Tickets are available for sale at our monthly meetings at Forestville and at Bonsai Art nursery.

## TOP STORY

By Leigh Taafe, Curator, NBPCA

It's not often you can send your bonsai collection around the world, but thanks to the latest stamp series from Australia Post, the National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia (NBPCA) can do just that!

Bonsai are the feature of a new stamp series released by Australia Post this July that highlight both the adaptability and fragility of nature. The Australian native species featured on the stamps are a bottlebrush, fig, and paperbark, each crafted in a different style. The NBPCA is extremely proud to be involved in this stamp issue that highlights the beauty and art of Australian native plants as bonsai. Leigh Taafe, Curator of the NBPCA worked with Australia Post in the tree selection from the Collection and he features on the Medallion cover.



Bonsai has been practised in Japan for at least 1,200 years. It originated from the even older Chinese practice of penjing, which is the art of and science of growing miniature landscapes in a pot or tray (as opposed to a single, more sparsely presented tree).

From the late 1960s, the practice of bonsai gained wide popularity and Australian artists started experimenting with Australian native species as bonsai. An emerging Australian style inspired by our landscape, materials and plant species is now recognised globally. The Association of Australian Bonsai Clubs established in 1980 represents 58 bonsai clubs across the country reflects the popularity of the art.

Thanks to Australia Post for highlighting the beauty of bonsai and the National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia at the National Arboretum Canberra.

### \$1.10 Bottlebrush as bonsai, *Callistemon viminalis*



This stamp design features a bottlebrush as bonsai, in an informal upright style (some bend or lean in the trunk). The bottlebrush is the cultivar 'Captain Cook', a dwarf form of *Callistemon viminalis*, which has a weeping appearance. Bonsai artists Derek and Sue Oakley kindly donated this bonsai to the National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia. The stamp photograph is by Leigh Taafe.

### \$1.10 Fig as bonsai, *Ficus rubiginosa*

This stamp design presents a fig as bonsai, in a formal upright style (no bend or lean in the trunk, and the trunk does not go all the way to the top of the tree). The fig is a Port Jackson Fig (*Ficus rubiginosa*), known for its thick trunk and long, twisted roots that tend to grow along the trunk's surface. Bonsai artist Max Candy kindly donated this bonsai to the National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia. The stamp photograph is by Ben Kopilow, Fusion Photography.





**\$2.70 Paperbark as bonsai, *Melaleuca linariifolia***

This stamp design showcases a paperbark (or honey myrtle) as bonsai, in a slanting style (where the apex of the trunk falls between 10 and 45 degrees to the left or right). The tree is a dwarf form of *Melaleuca linariifolia*, known as 'Claret Tops' – a cultivar named for the reddish new growth that appears on the leaf tips. The bonsai artist is David Willoughby and he kindly lent this bonsai to the Collection for display. The stamp photograph is by Ben Kopilow, Fusion Photography.

**Additional collectables**

- Minisheet
- First day cover (blank, gummed, minisheet)
- Stamp pack
- Maxicards
- Self-adhesive booklet of 10 (\$2.70)
- Medallion cover

Order your collectable stamps and medallions at [www.auspost.com.au/stamps](http://www.auspost.com.au/stamps).

This material has been reproduced with permission of the Australian Postal Corporation. © Copyright Australian Postal Corporation.

## Bonsai Art Pty. Ltd .

ABN: 30002816248

**AT HIDDEN ORIENT**  
***206-208 Forest Way, Belrose 2085***

**Ph: 0423 763 506**

e-mail: [bonsai@megumibennettbonsai.com](mailto:bonsai@megumibennettbonsai.com)

website: [www.megumibennettbonsai.com](http://www.megumibennettbonsai.com)



*A message from Bonsai Art Pty. Ltd:*

**WE ARE OPEN AGAIN!**

Yes! We are open again trading for goods and materials, operating within the restrictions that the government has set out.

*For any information regarding Bonsai, Workshops and Lessons please call us.*

*Thank you.*

## Bonsai Society of Sydney Inc. – 2021-2022 Club Calendar

2021	Workshop/Topic	Description
October 23rd	General workshop	Galen will preside over this general workshop session. So bring along any of your trees you want to work on and receive helpful advice.
November 27th	Annual General Meeting and Christmas Party	Our Annual General Meeting including the election of the Committee for the following year followed by our Christmas party.
February 26th	Ficus workshop	To be confirmed.
March 26th	TBC	

## Important Dates – 2021-2022, Calendar of Events

2021	Event/Exhibition	Details
October 16-17	School of Bonsai Annual Show	CANCELLED (TBC).
November 12-14th	Newcastle Bonsai Society Show	CANCELLED.
March 5-6th 2022	Central Coast Bonsai Club	Bonsai Open Exhibition and introducing Australian Shohin Pot Competition. For more information <a href="http://www.centralcoastbonsai.com.au">www.centralcoastbonsai.com.au</a>

# QUIET GARDEN

ABN 81005241844

## GARDEN PRUNING AND STYLING SPECIALIST



- Specialised Pruning, Styling, Hedging such as Buxus sp., Maples, Japanese black pines, Azaleas and Murrayas.
- Pest identification and plant management.
- Garden maintenance, garden consultation, weeding, mulching.
- A special pick up/delivery for overgrown plants and bonsai.
- Tree services including removal, thinning and deadwooding.

**Alex is insured and operates throughout the Sydney metro area.**

**206-208 FOREST WAY, BELROSE 2085**

**Mobile: 0401275313.**

**Email: alexbe.415@gmail.com**



A Member of:

- ❖ The Bonsai Federation of Australia Inc.
- ❖ Association of Australian Bonsai Clubs Ltd.
- ❖ Garden Clubs of Australia Inc.

Club meetings are held on the fourth Saturday of each month from February to November from 1 pm at the Forest Community Arts Centre, No. 6 Darley Street, Forestville, NSW 2087 (subject to change).

**Web:** [www.bonsaisocietysydney.org.au](http://www.bonsaisocietysydney.org.au)

**Mail:** Bonsai Society of Sydney Inc., P.O. Box 186, Terrey Hills, NSW 2084.

<b>Bonsai Society of Sydney Committee 2021</b>		
<b>Honorary Patron</b>	Megumi Bennett	<a href="mailto:bennettmegumi@gmail.com">bennettmegumi@gmail.com</a>
<b>President</b>	Galen Gannon	<a href="mailto:gig45@bigpond.com">gig45@bigpond.com</a>
<b>Vice President</b>	Diane C.	
<b>Secretary</b>	Alex Bennett	<a href="mailto:alexbe.415@gmail.com">alexbe.415@gmail.com</a>
<b>Treasurer</b>	Glenda W.	<a href="mailto:gwfreshcanvas@hotmail.com">gwfreshcanvas@hotmail.com</a>
<b>Newsletter Editor</b>	Keith Gallie	<a href="mailto:keithgallie@bigpond.com">keithgallie@bigpond.com</a>
<b>Committee Member Membership Officer</b>	Valma W.	
<b>Committee Member</b>	Jocelyn M.	
<b>Committee Member</b>	Christopher C.	
<b>Committee Member</b>	Agus N.	

**All written articles and photographs remain the copyright of the contributor. No stories or photographs are to be used in any form without the express written permission of the author.**

# BONSAI SOCIETY OF SYDNEY INC.

## Membership Application Form 2022

Full Name: .....

Residential Address: .....

..... Postcode: .....

Telephone: Home: .....

Mobile: .....

E-mail: ..... @ .....

Single Member \$35  Family Member \$40

Do you wish to receive a hard copy of the Newsletter for an additional \$10 annually?

Yes

No

*Members joining after 1st July will pay half of the annual fees to bring them up to the renewal date of 31st December.*

As a Member of the Bonsai Society of Sydney Inc., I/we agree to abide by the constitution of the Society.

Signed: ..... Date: ..... / ..... / .....

**Payment Details:** Cash (enclose securely with form)

Cheque payable to: **"Bonsai Society of Sydney"**

Direct Debit: **BSB 012-298** Account No: **499616428**

*Please post Application Form to:*

**The Treasurer  
Bonsai Society of Sydney Inc.  
PO Box 186, Terrey Hills 2084**

---

**Treasurer's use only**

Receipt No: ..... Initials: .....