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BONSAI TIMES



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From The Presidents Desk

2010 the start of another decade and our Bonsai life moves on, does not seem long since we were all worried about the Millennium and what was going to work. Now our trees that we had then are just ten years older but are they better trees? Let's ask ourselves the question.

I hope you all had a great Christmas and festive season and that the summer has not been too hard on all of your trees. I must admit my second summer in Auckland I am enjoying. The humidity has not been too bad.

This year we will have a lot of great opportunities with the Hamilton Bonsai Club Convention in October. Robert Steven is a world class demonstrator, and I would recommend all who can to attend. You will not be disappointed.

There is also the AABC Convention in Sydney. This is in late May with Salvatore Liporace, another world rated demonstrator. If you didn't see him in Timaru here is your second chance.

I hope all the clubs are up and away and thinking what they can do to attract more members onto our great hobby and pastime.

I would like all clubs to give regular feed back to our editor Dianne so we can all see what is happening around the country and share in your success. If any club has had some major success in getting new members also please advise Dianne as the future of our organization needs new members.

Also please keep any important information about club changes of address and personnel up to date. Advise the Secretary Brian Ellis mandb@es.co.nz.

Sincerely

Lindsay





***BONSAI TIMES
brings you the
inspiration,
motivation and
encouragement
to create
remarkable
bonsai.***





BONSAI TIMES

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Konnichiwa. Another year has begun and unfortunately I'm already running behind schedule. I've got a great excuse which you will be able to read all about in the next issue. Temptation and inspiration are two key words that have filled my life this year. What a way to start a year. In February I took the opportunity to take part in Goshu Bonsai Japan Tour.

As the tour left from Brisbane I went via Sydney to view the Australian National Collection in Canberra. Pictures in this issue. The Japanese highlights of the tour included Kokufu-ten, Green Centre Market, Omiya Bonsai Village, Japan National Bonsai Museum and the gardens and temples of Kyoto. All in the next issue.

I trust you had all had a great Christmas and now are full of inspiration for the New Year. Basil Bryant was inspired over fifty years ago by a little maple seedling. This led to winning the Vision to Reality Award at the National Convention last year. I hope you enjoy reading about the journey of Amy.

Gordon Bowers of Thames passes on some valuable information on natives. I promise that everyone will learn something from this extensive article.

Remember, for most of you your Sub's are now due so if you want to read all about Kokufu-ten and the rest of my tour please forward your payment to our Treasurer as soon as possible.

Last but not least now is the time to start thinking about registering for the next convention, being held in Hamilton with Robert Steven as the lead demonstrator. A great event not to be missed.

Dianne



THE JOURNEY OF AMY



Basil Bryant was the 2009 winner of the Vision to Reality Award donated by Dianne Miller.

Here you can read his winning entry the story of his success with Amy a little maple that grew into a winner.

“I enjoyed this entry as it not only told the story of Amy but of the whole Bryant family as it shared Basil’s journey in exploring the art of Bonsai”

My introduction to the wonderful world of Bonsai commenced in 1960. As a family we had moved to another town in line with my work. We had left behind a home that we had spent several years working hard to develop to another, which as they say, went with the job, a rental house. We were young and missed the hard work that we had become used to, so frankly we were at a loose end. You would not think that this would be the case, caring for four children should have been enough, but I suppose that was nearly fifty years ago, when we were young.

My wife, Val, had nurtured a wish to learn pottery, so it was not very long before she was enrolled at an evening class at the local college where she was lucky enough to have a very good tutor. After a while she went on to develop a considerable skill, she became an accomplished potter. I, for my part, was lucky to become the recipient of some really outstanding Bonsai pots.

I had been reading how people had cultivated small trees in containers to replicate those growing freely outside. This was in that period after the Second World War, when many Eastern cultures surfaced in the West. My thoughts were captured on how these small trees in the process of time matured into something of real beauty. They were known then as “Ming” trees. It was not long before the name “Bonsai” surfaced. I became fascinated with Bonsai. I must have conveyed my ideas to our next door neighbour, a really kindly person named Amy. Before long she produced a clump of five Maple seedlings that had sprung up in the middle of her garden. I only knew them then as Maples later on the botanical name of *Acer Palmatum* came to light followed

by the Japanese name Momiji.

Here I was in 1960 with the start of a Bonsai collection made up of five maples and also an acorn which the children had brought home on their return from school. A myth that should be exposed. That is someone came up with the idea of starting trees off in orange skins. Oranges were cut in half, the insides removed and a seedling was planted in that. It didn't work for me, it was a myth busted.

The Maples were growing strongly, one a little stronger than the rest. I thought it appropriate that this particular tree should be named Amy after, of course, my next door neighbour who had initially given me the trees.

Having obtained some empty baked bean tins, the young seedlings as well as the acorn were introduced to them, their new homes. It was not long before the acorn had sprouted and the maples looked perfectly at ease in their changed environment.

About that time a book on Bonsai came to my notice, "Bonsai Made Easy", I think it was called. One of the many of "The Sunset" series that were on sale then. My journey really started here. There was more to Bonsai than just planting a few seedlings in empty cans. The book was full of information and illustrations and showed that I had a lot further to go. It was from this book that I gleaned my early knowledge and my enthusiasm.



A replica of how the first tree would have looked.

Val was making great strides with her pottery, she produced her first Bonsai pot and was very proud of her effort. We happily introduced Amy to her new home, the new pot. Val went on to make many fine pots over the following years. I was the lucky recipient of many that I consider to be outstanding works. It was not long until my trees, all six of them, were sitting in locally made containers.

1965 the trees were progressing favourably but I was naive to expect that good Bonsai's would materialise quickly. While there are many ways to hasten their growth, patience is something you begin to understand and is one of the basic requirements. This was the year we had another work related move, one of many to follow over the next twenty or so years. Amy was going to endure the cold winters of the King Country, the biting southerlies of South Taranaki, variation of the days in Manawatu, four seasons in one day it was aptly coined and then the balmy summers of the Bay of Plenty surprisingly so we had three good years in

Lower Hutt.

It must be admitted, the enthusiasm for Bonsai sometimes waned, without the support of other collectors the trees were sometimes neglected, luckily the trees survived. I pay tribute to my ever supporting wife who did what I should have been doing many times over. It was in Lower Hutt in 1981 there appeared in the newspaper an advertisement for the annual general meeting of the Wellington Bonsai Club, their first annual general meeting if I remember correctly. What a thrill after stumbling along by myself for over twenty years to have the opportunity to meet and work with fellow Bonsaists. Over the last few years there has been a huge turnover of members in the Wellington Club, but there is still a core remaining that I have known for a very long time.

My first Bonsai pot

In the early days there were many visiting tutors from overseas such as Tommy Yamamoto and others, their names escape me at the moment, but from New Zealand there was

Bob Langholm. Bob was exactly what a fledgling club needed. He had knowledge and enthusiasm, I found that very stimulating and he certainly assisted with my knowledge of Bonsai.



Early club members' names that come to mind are - Bevan Hussey, Joyce Adams and David Bell. Bevan was our first president and he has served in that roll many times, for his efforts he has been made a life member of the club. Joyce is still a regular at club meetings and always brings along a tree so that she involves herself in discussions with her enthusiasm and her attention to detail. David has moved to Auckland and still receives our newsletters.

It was great to take my tree to club meetings, for it to be part of the scene. Although the tree had grown a lot it was the overall shape that I was struggling with. It took a little while for me to accept its present style. One thing I have learned is that it is not always possible to correct imperfections in design but, what is needed is the ability to deal with the challenges you face. That is one of the challenges of Bonsai, accepting things that don't always appear right at the time but you try to fit something in to a design as you see it.

Can I paraphrase the words of Thomas Aquinas, that is it better to rectify an apparent problem or, accept the situation as it is, therein lies the skill or knowledge to know the difference. That is not always clear cut.



The tree as it appeared in Lower Hutt some twenty-five years ago.

1983 was the year for a

big change in our lives. I had reached the retirement age in my job so we decided to move back to Feilding, the place where I had started work so many years before.

It was when we were transporting our Bonsai's and associated gear by means of a hired trailer from Lower Hutt to Feilding that one of the freakiest accidents occurred. It was on the road coming in to Otaki. For those who know that particular piece of road, this happened over the bridge and approaching the township. The road has what can be called a reverse camber. That is the level on the road leans the other way to what is normal. Here we were cruising along nicely, when I glanced to my left and to my utter surprise there was the trailer passing us at a good speed before crashing into a power post. It was revealed that the trailer's a-frame had broken off. My Bonsai pots and other miscellaneous gear were spread over the side of the road. This meant obtaining another trailer, gathering up all my gear and continuing on to Feilding. The only damage was to my favourite Maple Amy, which had a broken branch. Thank goodness it was not serious and it was easily fixed. Amy bounced back to life. We were lucky to come out of the incident as lightly as we did.

During the early part of the 1980s I attended a seminar conducted by Joy Morton and, fortunately, she had spent some time on Maples. She recalled that in the early stage of her Bonsai journey, she had, under the guidance of her tutor, spent some time doing that tedious job of removing the surplus buds on Maples during the winter maintenance. The choice of bud and the direction it takes determines the future shape of the tree. Herein lies the proof of dedication and patience. It was a talk that I remember well.



Above: Amy revealing the beautiful colours of autumn, that Maples produce.

In this, as I reflect on nigh on a half century of association with this tree, I ponder on the theme of the essay VISION TO REALITY.

Certainly when I started out dreaming of those beautiful old Bonsai's, never did I think that in terms of age I would have something approaching those mature trees. That was my dream, that was my vision. Although the tree is relatively young compared with some of those old masterpieces, at least a good start has been made. As for reality, in bonsai there is no end of the road, there is always progress, the tree continues to grow. Each day it grows and changes, a tree that has seemingly peaked today will be ready for a higher level tomorrow. That is the reality, as had been said "Bonsai is a living art".

I consider myself very fortunate that one of my family, living in the Bay Of Plenty, is keen to accept the tree one day. For my part I am overjoyed that someone is going to continue with Amy's destiny. Amy, I am sure will be pleased to return to those balmy days in that beautiful part of the country.

Now the tree has the shape that I admire, the continuing challenge will be keeping its shape with a little judicious pruning, wiring, debudding and bamboo shapers.

After being associated for almost fifty years with my Maple I reflect on the wonderful time it has been. It has meant obtaining more trees and amassing a collection. While some trees rate equally with my Maple there is still a special feeling for my first acquisition, you can say it is like a first born.



Sitting nicely in one of Val's pots Amy, in her fiftieth year, reveals all, splendid in her Winter state, anticipating another forthcoming Spring.

A ROUGH GUIDE TO NATIVES AS BONSAI



Many natives have a juvenile and a mature form of foliage. Often as bonsai we will only see the juvenile foliage, as the conditions for mature foliage have not been met. It may theoretically be possible to grow some trees with the mature form of foliage, by air layering for a mature tree, but if this were so, pruning would likely induce juvenile foliage anyway. Kahikatea will always be seen in immature foliage, as it doesn't show the mature form until it reaches two metres in height.

Cuttings from quite a few natives show the tendency to retain their differentiation; e.g. a cutting taken from a branch may continue to grow as a branch, even though it is upright in a pot – I have a kawaka [New Zealand cedar, *Libocedrus plumosa*] which I took as a cutting from the tree at the gate of Karangahake School, and which I have grown for four years; it has a very two dimensional growth pattern, and I have had to cheat and wire a branch toward the back to add depth.

As is true for Australian natives, New Zealand natives may be intolerant of too much phosphate (you can use the Osmacote for Native Trees as a fertiliser for natives trees – even though it is designed for Oz). Phosphate in fertilisers can damage mycorrhiza, so it can lose its ability to pull in nutrients [see next paragraph]

A fair number of New Zealand natives are a bit touchy about having their roots disturbed. A lot of Northern Hemisphere bonsai books, say to comb out the tree's roots, and then trim off a third of their length when repotting/root pruning – DON'T DO THIS!! Bare rooting is also not a good idea. Most natives will do better if some of their original soil is carried over into the new pot. The mycorrhiza in the soil are essential for the survival of the tree. [Joy Morton told me a friend of hers (a botanist) had taught her this about New Zealand natives]. Some trees are hardy enough to cope with some of the harsher treatments which are more common among bonsai techniques e.g. wiring and bending, but if you treat all natives with respect, you are less likely to suffer disappointments as one of your favourites takes on a brown hue, and its bark shrivels and dries. This also applies to watering – some trees will not tolerate being let dry; whereas some Northern Hemisphere trees will look sad and droopy when dry, and perk up within hours of watering, some New Zealand natives will not tolerate their roots drying out, and will die – no chance for recovery. Best to have a well-draining soil, and

water regularly, than to miss out for an hour too long in the heat of summer!!

Pohutukawa and totara are generally fine; coprosma and corokia are fairly tolerant. Kowhai have a reputation for being a bit on the touchy side if their roots are played with – they generally like their roots [particularly the root hairs] to be kept wet. Tea tree (manuka, *Leptospermum scoparium*), is internationally renowned for how touchy its roots are. In fact, not so much 'touchy' as 'inclined to die'. So, partial combing out is OK for some, but definitely not recommended for others.

In his December 2008 visit to the Hamilton Bonsai Club, Nobu (Nobuyuki Kajiwara) told us that in Japan they do not bare-root trees, but only comb out a small amount of roots, and trim, so half to one inch around the rim of the pot is replaced with fresh soil. This goes well with the treatment of natives – not disturbing too much of the root-mass, retaining the original soil with the mycorrhiza.

The pie-wedge technique is useful for replacing soil with species with sensitive roots; once every year or so [as the tree needs it], a wedge of the fine roots (between the major surface roots) is cut out with a very sharp knife, and new soil is introduced to the area, and settled in with chopsticks or similar. This gives roots a chance for new growth and vigour, without major stress to the tree.

Although some native species are able to be grown from [semi hardwood] cuttings, often the best way is to grow them from seed; The majority need to be from fresh seed. A few (e.g. totara and pohutukawa) can also be grown successfully from air- or ground-layering.

POHUTUKAWA (*Metrosideros excelsor*)

Where the tree grows in nature is an indication of what you can do with the tree as a bonsai, and these trees suit most bonsai styles. They go well on rocks; they have nice bark and leaves; they tend to do their own thing, so it is often best to use "New Zealand styles". Often multi-trunked, single trunk trees are uncommon in nature. There are some good examples of natural growth patterns on the Coromandel peninsular.

Roots tolerant to manipulation, etc when repotting trees. Tolerant to a wide range of climates, from hot and dry to cool and wet, but they are not happy where the mean temperature is less than 10°C. Pohutukawa need shelter from frost; young small plants and growing tips are prone to damage.

They grow in a variety of soils – scoria, limestone, sand, loam. Closely related to the Rata (*M. robusta* Northern rata and *M. umbellata*, Southern rata), and hybrids are not uncommon; these [both the rata and the hybrids] are more cold-tolerant.



Pohutukawa have flaky bark as mature trees. Not too tolerant of wiring and manipulation: the channels within the tree are structured differently than most other trees, and can easily be disrupted, leaving the branch to die. Ties and weights work on older branching. Wiring may be done carefully on the growing tips and green shoots, and immature plants [i.e. those that were mentioned as being frost-tender] to direct growth. Clip and grow works well, although new growth doesn't always appear where you may expect (so you have to work with what you are given, rather than 'designing' a tree, sometimes). Flowering occurs on second years' growth, so prune after flowering to maintain next year's flowers. Aerial roots are also common. Will readily back-bud on old wood,

and will grow from cuttings, air layers, and (fresh) seed. The leaves get thick and leathery as the tree gets older, and the underside of the leaves white and velvety; the young trees have shiny, mid to dark green, thinner leaves, with the underside also green. Seed is very fine but quite hardy; may be sown thinly on top of a fine seed raising mix. Seedlings do well in direct sunlight, and well-watered.

KOWHAI (*Sophora*)

Species from the pea or Legume family. Thin barked, bruise's easily if wired. Wiring can actually kill some branches [my personal experience is that copper wire is tolerated less than aluminium wire – perhaps as not as malleable]? The wire also scars them unevenly. It may be better as a clip-and-grow, or simply tie the branches down [weights]? Don't flower if trimmed – watch for the flower buds in January, then trim to leave these. Prune after flowering. Need to be sprayed on a regular basis for bugs, caterpillars and butterflies. They have their own special caterpillar, but the cabbage white types are also quite partial to them.

Their natural habitat is by rivers, or in the mountains, so they like to be kept reasonably moist. Do not play with their roots too much once again, like many of our natives they are not partial to over zealous root pruning or stimulation. Make a great little bonsai.

Sophora tetraptera is a tree up to 12 metres tall. Leaves can be up to 15 cm long with leaflets 3.5 X 8mm. The golden yellow flowers are up to 5 cm long. There is no divaricating juvenile form. Its distribution is on lowland stream sides and forest margins on the



east-ern side of both islands. 'Dragon's gold' variety – quick growing, abundant flowers.



Sophora microphylla is a tree to about 10 metres tall. Leaves are up to 15 cm long, however what differentiates it from *Sophora tetraptera*, is the small leaflets are never longer than 1 cm. The flowers are slightly smaller as well and are coloured pale to golden yellow. It may have a divaricating juvenile form. Its distribution is through all of New Zealand in lowland and lower mountain forests, along rivers, forest skirts and open places.

Sophora prostrata and its varieties is a prostrate or bushy shrub up to 2 metres tall – alpine origins. Leaves may be up to 2.5 cm long, usually smaller. Leaflets are no larger than 4mm [reduce to ~1mm as bonsai]. They have small flowers. Grow

from cuttings or [fresh] seeds. Soak overnight and sow in a warm, light spot. *S. prostrata* seeds do not have as thick a testa (outer coating) as the other two, and do not need as much soaking.

Kowhai is another of New Zealand's deciduous trees, losing its leaf over winter. In August and September the flowers arise from branches naked of leaf.

COROKIA: [Korokio] – *Corokia cotoneaster*.

Also called/nicknamed the "wire netting tree" – for obvious reasons. The second part of the botanical name implies the similarity in leaf shape to the cotoneaster. Most have dark to black bark. Many varieties of colour and leaf size (e.g. Geentys green 15 x 5 mm spoon shaped mid-green



Above: The bark and leaf of *Sophora microphylla*

Right: *Sophora prostrata* a divaricating habit



Above: *Sophora microphylla* flowers

Right: The seed of *Sophora microphylla* with their tough testa or seed coat



leaves, or 'cappuccino', with 10 x 4 mm coffee coloured leaves). Some have very small leaves e.g. silver knight or dark prince, with 1.5 – 2.5 mm long leaves. They have small yellow star-shaped flowers, followed later by berries (red through to yellow). They do not like wire – use clip and grow. Wire may bruise the thin bark, and branches may be brittle at the junctures (e.g. trunk to branch, or forking of a branch); as usual [in this article], young soft shoots may be partially trained with wire.

These plants are often sold as hedging, and as a rule of thumb, if suitable for hedging, then [probably] suitable for bonsai. Grow from seed, and cuttings. Grow well, prune well - buds back ok on old wood. Tolerate root manipulation at repotting, etc. Repot and prune in Spring, after flowering. OK with dryish weather.

BEECH

Beech seem to do best as groups and forests, rather than as individual trees [here in the north]? They do not like having their roots reduced or pruned.



From
"Which



Left/Above: Flowers and berries of the Corokia

Native Tree”, by Andrew Crowe, Red Beech and Silver beech do well as container trees. They may be grown from fresh seed, which is best collected at the end of summer.

Hard Beech *Nothofagus truncata*

Found from the north of Canterbury through to Northland. The only native beech found commonly growing north of Auckland.

Red Beech *Nothofagus fusca*

Found from Otago through to the northern extent of Waikato [eg TeAroha]. Leaves of young trees can become very red in Winter and Spring. Tolerant of containers.

Silver Beech *Nothofagus menziesii*

Doesn't shed leaves like in large quantities in Winter and Spring, unlike the other two. Tolerant of containers. Can be found from the bottom of the South Island through to Auckland and the Coromandel Peninsula in the north.

On our Auckland trip, I saw that Lindsay Muirhead has a Black Beech collected from North Canterbury – it will be interesting to see how this copes with Auckland's climate, as they generally prefer cooler temperatures. This will, I am sure, look fine as a single specimen tree in a few years, if it survives.

KAHIKATEA [NZ white pine] *Dacrycarpus dacrydioides*.

These trees look dead, but they aren't always. As bonsai, we will see only juvenile foliage, as they do not show mature foliage until over two metre tall. The mature foliage is in flattened, overlapping scales, similar to cypress, or some junipers. Apparently, if you take cuttings from mature trees, you may circumvent the immature foliage [but I don't know if this is possible in a bonsai].

These trees are often found in swampy areas, or along riversides; they don't mind wet feet, and in fact, in summer, it may be a good idea to put your pots onto a shallow drip tray filled with water to stop them drying out. Sometimes when they look dead, it is because they are – if they have dried out too much in the hot summer sun. They have straight trunks, and once again they do not like wire! They are good as groups/forests. Kahikatea have similar fibrous roots to totara. Older trees are not frost tender.

TOTARA: *Podocarpus totara*; common/ Maori name is Totara.

In the wild, totara grow in forests, groups or on their own, and can be found over all of the North Island and large parts of the South Island. These trees grow up to and over 35 metres by 4 metres. Their leaves are about 2.5 cm long, narrow at both ends and very sharp on the unattached end, and are a dull brownish green. The bark is furrowed, flaky and slabby.

All podocarps have separate male and female trees, the females having a small red fruit.

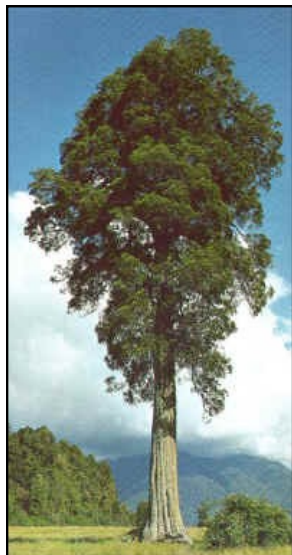
Totara are a quite hardy tree, and they grow in most situations – dry or wet (but not swamp); calm or windy; flat or steep country, so therefore will represent most bonsai styles in a realistic manner.

Formal upright, informal upright, slanting, both cascades, clumps, groups, rafts, etc.

Podocarps in New Zealand - There are four New Zealand Species.

Podocarpus totara .- the common Totara, slowish growing, green to bronze foliage, with some variants

P.totara aurea – golden totara - faster growing, yellow/gold foliage, dense pads



P. totara 'Manapouri Blue' – bluish foliage, softer, shorter, fatter needles
P. halli – the mountain Totara grows in higher altitudes.
P. acutifolius – yellow/green foliage, thin sharp needles [as name suggests] - the South Island.
P. nivalis – Alpine shrub.

Quite possibly all of these trees would be OK for bonsai to a lesser or greater degree. The young shoots on the *P. totara* are frost tender. Also, these trees seem to go dormant, especially in winter, but are not usually killed by frosts – trees may appear to be dead (like the kahikatea) but they are not, so please do not be hasty and throw them out prematurely!!

Totara as bonsai:

Totara are good tree for bonsai, and we should make more use of them.

Propagation – Air layers GOOD (for *P. acutifolius*, anyway [gb]).

Cuttings – OK.

Seedlings – go very well. You can find many if you have a female tree nearby!

Roots are good, and they don't mind being meddled with. They are generally evenly spread, debatable as to forming good nebari [some barely show any surface rootage as bonsai] with good trunk base and taper. Inverse taper can be a problem at times, but this can generally be fixed.

There does not seem to be any major differences between juvenile and adult forms. These are hardy trees, happy in sun or partial shade. Trees need relatively free draining soil – don't let them get too wet in the root department. The wood is good and hard - good for carving, so not much preservative is needed. This can make it hard to bend trunks and branches once they get past around 1 cm in diameter. The tree will tolerate wire, but the thicker bits need to be wrapped or braced or templates used as the bark/wood may mark or break.



Totara seem to be tolerant of some of our modern sprays and fertilizers, unlike some of our other natives, but not many pests seem to trouble it, and simple natural fertilizers will suffice. Some sort of pruning is necessary and natural! Totara respond well to being nipped back and they pad or cloud up well. Sandra feels that in the Nobu style of pruning we should use the Northern trees style of pruning [1 flush of growth/year; Summer pruning: - eliminate completely the extension growth, inducing the tree to break buds (inner buds); Spring pruning: - structural] Feeding should be done on a regular basis, but please do it more often than me, as I often forget for months! It should be done 2 – 3 weekly in Spring and Summer, and 5 – 6 weekly in Winter and Autumn. Water well(ish), but don't overdo it, as they are not a swamp tree.

I feel that the totara is almost our best and easiest New Zealand native to grow as a bonsai, and it is a stately and proud tree!!

Others podocarps – overseas.

P. cunninghami – South. American. Very similar to our totara.

P. lawrencii – Tazmanian native – similar foliage to 'Manapouri blue', but green in colour, and softer. Faster growing?

P. macrophyllus – native to China and Japan. Not hardy enough to be outside all year round in temperate climates. Much larger leaves/needles.

The golden types (hybrid) have dense pads and are hardy, but have suffered with the high tem-



peratures of late. Wire relatively easily, especially with the newer greener branches. Golden totara are relatively fast growing – compared to the 'straight' green variety. Totara are not usually troubled by bugs. Roots are OK for repotting – i.e. you can play with their roots without doing too much damage. Keep potting mix on the dampish side; neither too dry nor too wet [they don't like continually-wet feet]. They do not develop really good nebari.

At the other end of the scale is the needle-leaf totara, *P. totara acutifolia*, with fine thin needles, and a more supple branching, more adaptable to wiring than the mature of the 'straight' Totara species, whose branches can become brittle as they thicken. This also appears to be a reasonably fast-growing variety.

COPROSMAS

There are more than 30 types of small-leaved coprosmas; a number have divaricated growth habit, with twiggly branches growing at wide angles. They can show a variety of leaf forms, from small soft needle-like leaves, to oval/rounded waxy and glossy leaves [also known as 'mirror tree', I presume due to its shiny leaves] Good for smaller bonsai, they grow well from seeds or cuttings, and prune well, many budding back on old wood. They come in a variety of colours, and every few years another variety is introduced to the garden centres, with names like 'Tropical Fruit Salad' or 'Hawaiian Sunset'.



TEA TREE – Manuka - *Leptospermum scoparium*

Stiff needle-like leaves, with a prickly tip

WHITE TEA TREE - Kanuka - *Kunzea ericoides*

Leaves soft to the touch, not prickly at the tips, about 1 cm in length

Both of these may be grown from seed or semi hardwood cuttings.



Trees may be wired while shoots are supple. The flaky, papery bark may need protection from wire, as the branches can grow rapidly, causing cutting-in.

They are [internationally] notorious for being touchy about their roots, but may be nice little trees if this problem can be overcome. What I do with my manuka is cut off 1 cm from all sides with a very sharp knife, and the same from the bottom of the root mass, placing the reduced root mass back into the pot onto a layer of soil, and filling in the sides with fresh soil, packing with chopsticks to firm in place. To lower the whole mass, I replace the bottom layer with a few mm less than I have removed, and over time [of several years] I will drop the layer to the desired height for the pot. I have done this twice [two trees, once each], and both thrived – [until one dried out too much when the neighbour didn't water whilst I was away for 4 days!! (The tree is now in recovery, as am I.)]

With input from the following club and committee members [often from information from club nights]!

Pohutukawa	Jeff and Les
Corokia	Melody
Kowhai	Sandra and Louise
Totara	Sandra & Jeff
Kahikatea	Tane Mahuta [Noel]
Red beech	Melody

This article is by Gordon Bowers who is based in Thames and a member of the Hamilton Bonsai Club.



Nobu visits again



Every year Nobu visits New Zealand for his annual holidays. Fortunately for us he is happy to run educational workshops. Last year, in late November, Hamilton Club enjoyed a weekend visit and the topic was Root Development. Here Peter Mudie passes on some of the knowledge gained.

When Nobu arrived for the workshop in December he wanted to talk about roots, and root structure. As part of this we discussed how to improve the flare of the trunk where it meets the soil. One of the techniques that can be used is to air-layer the trunk close to the ground. This will produce new shallow roots growing in the right direction to help form a better trunk flare and Nebari.

When looking at the celtis Ann had brought in to work on Nobu suggested air-layering the trunk (either completely or just in the one area) to get a better root flare.



The celtis was one Ann got from Adriaan and Poppie in 2005 and had been grown on in the ground for a couple of years before being put into a pot in 2007. The tree had been pruned heavily and the branch structure is starting to develop.



The first task was to prepare the sphagnum moss which would act as a mulch to retain moisture.



The base of the trunk has a few very large roots but Nobu thought we could improve the look by lowering the trunk and getting roots from higher up the trunk.



There was a supply of ready prepared soil mix and chicken wire was prepared to help retain it in place.

Rather than risk losing the tree it was decided to air-layer only part of the trunk rather than do the whole thing. Further sections can be done later on.

Using a very sharp knife Nobu cut through the bark and cambium layer to the hard wood underneath.



All of the soft tissue was removed with a scraping action—leaving anything behind would not force the tree to produce new roots.

Rather than leave a straight edge to the top of the cut, Nobu used the knife to produce a saw tooth shape with clean edges to the cuts.



To hold the soil in place a fence of chicken wire and fine mesh was built around the rim of the pot. Pieces of 4mm wire were used as supports to hold the wire in place and provide anchorage points for a layer of wire to cover the pot to stop birds from getting at the soil.

A layer of fresh, free draining mix was then applied, making sure to cover the wound completely. This is what the new roots will grow into, allowing Ann to cut the old heavy root off at the next repotting.

The sphagnum moss sieved earlier was put on the surface of the soil. This helps to retain moisture.

A layer of chicken wire is put over the top and secured firmly to the wire supports to stop birds picking at the sphagnum moss.



Finally Nobu and Ann discussed watering and the future treatment of the tree.



After three months the tree is healthy, there has been no sign of any weakening of the foliage on the side where the air-layering took place. Patience is now required to let the new roots grow. The final test will be when it comes to repotting.

WATCH THIS SPACE!

In the beginning

There has been great interest in the Australian bonsai scene in this country and many of us have travelled abroad to take part in their conventions. A number of their artists have jumped over the Tasman to give us instruction. And now a number of our clubs have joined the AABC. Finally, as Editor of the Bonsai Times I was asked to write an article about the bonsai scene here for their national magazine 'Wired'. I thought you might enjoy reading the full version of the edited one that appeared.



Here in New Zealand we have had a great challenge to create our own identity in the art of bonsai. Being at the bottom of the world and upside down can cause different thinking and points of view.

The first recorded origins of bonsai in New Zealand go back into the 1950's - it could be earlier. There were a number of keen artists who had seen these visions in books or on their travels, so the journey began. When I started bonsai in 1980 there was only one book available to purchase, the internet did not exist and confusion reined supreme. I decided there and then that this art would never

develop if one did not just take the bull by the horns and have a go. I was prepared to take risks and experiment. I had nothing to hold me back, the book that I purchased didn't make any sense as to be honest trees just did not look like that in New Zealand. Being a purist at heart to me bonsai was about the tree, not about me making the tree be what I wanted. I tried to bring out the inner beauty that was there for my eyes to see and what I created was an expression of my visions from the reality around me.

This is the true spirit of bonsai design in New Zealand. As we have not been influenced too much in the beginning by imported trees, visiting experts and are free spirited so our trees reflect this. This country is long, narrow in parts and essentially coastal. There are extremes of weather – long hot summers, freezing winters in the south, degrees of frost in the lower north and the one common denominator lots of wind, especially in coastal areas. Overall there is a temperate climate and ideal growing conditions for all types of plants. Rain is rarely in short supply so this is bonsai heaven.

The visual panorama is of windblown Kanuka and tea tree. Huge Pohutukawa (*Metrosideros excelsa*) trees hanging on for dear life over massive cliffs along the coast line, their roots extending for metres over nearby rocks. Then in contrast massive stands of White Pine - Kahikatea (*Podocarpus dactyloides*); tall and straight reaching for the sky with their knees up amongst the forest floor. Lush ferns Ponga (Silver fern, tree fern, *Alsophila tricolor*), their umbrella like canopies of beautiful bright green fronds sway in the breeze revealing their silver underbellies. The brilliant yellow flowers of Kowhai (*Sophora Microphylla*), in Spring along the river banks and the massive Kauri (*Agathis australis*) which can take ten men hand in hand to surround in a giant

hug.

Of course there is a vast array of introduced species that grow well in the environment. Large windblown pines. Stands of oak up long driveways and road frontages in the country. Lush maples glowing with all their colours in Autumn. Juniper with massive trunks and branches torn in the prevailing winds. Giant cedars sending their canopies out to cover those beneath with their fine needles.

Eventually in the late 1980's after a few clubs had formed bonsai in New Zealand began to grow. This was happening on both islands with club 'Get togethers' and eventually conventions. By the 1990's supplies and advice began to be readily available. Those with a mind for business set up Bonsai Shop's, potters got to work and teachers came out of the woodwork. As with organisation, influence begins. Visitors arrived from afar passing their great knowledge. Many made great journeys of discovery and came back with words of wisdom. Debate began and confusion reigned supreme.

Eventually out of the dust friendships began to form. Understanding and growth began. Minds opened. Opinions became varied and views were aired and listened to. This was great for bonsai in New Zealand as we were able to share something unique in the world – our bonsai vision.



Bonsai is alive and well and growing stronger every day. There are over seventeen clubs, a national bonsai association, and hundreds of individuals who practise bonsai on their own without this support. There is a national convention held each year, this alternates between islands. These are looked forward to and well attended. Exhibitions are held by individual clubs and workshops are held with local and internationally known artists. There are several established artists who are keen to share their knowledge and views.

Now it is up to the artists of New Zealand to grow along with their trees and from the friendships and bonds formed nationally and internationally the spread of knowledge will grow continually and fill all of us with pleasure and happiness from being a part of nature and its beauty.

I'd like to knowledge everyone's support in creating our magazine Bonsai Times and for all club and individuals members enthusiasm over the past three years. Bonsai has moved forward at an extreme pace since the establishment of our national body. Please continue to support your local people and encourage all new members. We have a bright future. Winning a silver medal at the World Bonsai Friendship Federation Convention in Puerto Rico for this magazine was a great acknowledgement of the work that goes into creating this publication for you all. I could not do this without your support so thanks again and keep those articles coming.

NZBA CONVENTION 2010



The Hamilton Club will be hosting the 2010 Convention at the Hamilton Gardens on October 15th to 17th

The headline speaker for the event will be Robert Steven from Indonesia. Robert is much in demand worldwide to showcase his talents and enthusiasm. He has demonstrated at conferences in Malaysia, India, the Philippines, Singapore, Vietnam, China, Puerto Rico, South Africa, Slovakia, Thailand, Australia and the USA.

Robert started collecting Bonsai in 1979 and currently has a permanent exhibition at his home with over 500 trees. He has won many international awards for his trees and has held various positions with the Asia-Pacific Bonsai Friendship Federation (ABFF) and the Bonsai Clubs International (BCI).

Robert is very active in writing articles on Bonsai and Penjing for a variety of newspapers, magazines and websites. His first book "Vision of my Soul" has proved to be a worldwide success and his second "Mission of Transformation" was published in mid 2009.

As well as Robert giving two demonstrations there will also be demonstrations by some of our own well known members, Dianne Miller, Sandra Quintal and Louis Buckingham. Making their convention debuts will be Les Simpson and Peter Mudie, winner of the 2009 Emerging Talent award.



On the Friday we have arranged for a guided tour of Hamilton Gardens for those who arrive early. This tour gives a fascinating look into the themed gardens which make Hamilton Gardens such a popular tourist destination.

The demonstrations, exhibition and trade stands will run over two full days and there will be the usual gala dinner on the Saturday evening.

To help you arrange accommodation we have teamed up with Visit Hamilton and

there will be a free online booking service on their website www.visithamilton.co.nz

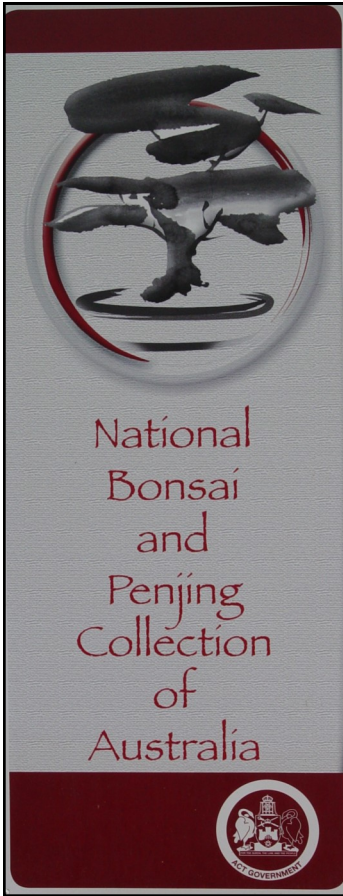
The club has set up a website for the convention <http://bonsaiconvention.net.nz> – all the forms are downloadable from there. This website has been donated to NZBA for the free use of clubs hosting future conventions to have their own websites.

Registration forms included in this newsletter, from your local club or contacts:

President : Peter Mudie
Telephone: 07 871 9510
email: peter@lrd.co.nz

Secretary: Jeff Richards
22 Normandy Ave, Melville, Hamilton





On a recent stop over in Australia I took the opportunity to visit the National Bonsai and Penjing Collection in Canberra, the state capital. The collection has now been open for just over a year and has become established in its temporary home. The plan is to move it to Canberra's International Arboretum, which is currently under construction, in approximately two years time. There were a number of Native Australian trees like a very old Victorian Banksia Integrifolia to more typical species like Cedar and Swamp Cypress. The display was clean and crisp with an extensive use of timber slat backing, stone and concrete stands, some being moveable.

The day started off as a lot of fun as my son, Matthew and I had a lot of difficulty in finding exactly where the collection was located within a park. After two hours of driving around in circles and listening to a lovely patient voice on the Navman (our GPS) we found it after an extended walk in the park. Visiting places I don't think either of us will return to. Anyway it was with great fanfare and a thunder storm, in the nick of time that we arrived.

I was glad that we both had persisted with getting results for our efforts as the collection is outstanding. We were greeted at the entrance by two very cheerful fellows who made us feel very welcome when they discovered that we had actually crossed an ocean to get there.

Right: This is the view as you walk back to the entrance. These smaller trees are great examples of what can be achieved with a little effort and knowledge. Every way you looked another fine tree met your eye.





There was a steady stream of visitors during our visit. This was wonderful to see as the voice and views of bonsai are getting out there.

I think Australia can be exceptionally proud of their collection. It brings to mind something that we should consider achieving in time.



Every tree was named botanically and common name. The current artist and any previous artist as well as the number of years in training or when it began its life as bonsai.



Preview

I was very fortunate to be able to join a group of artists from Australia and New Zealand to fulfil a long held dream. This was a ten day tour of Japan hosted by Lindsay and Glenis Bebb with the main point of interest being entrance to the Koufu ten. Furthermore was a visit to the Green Centre and Oymia Bonsai Village.



In the next quarters magazine read all about Koufu-ten, highlights of the gardens of Kyoto and much more.

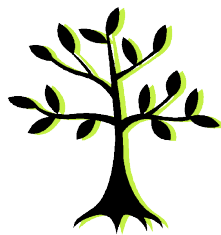
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Bonsai Clubs International



Bonsai Clubs International (BCI) is a non-profit educational organisation, advancing the ancient and living art of bonsai and related arts through the global sharing of knowledge. We educate while promoting international friendship and building world relationships through cooperation with individuals and organisations whose purpose is consistent with ours.

Bonsai is a unique, living art-form enjoyed and practised by diverse

cultures, utilising the lessons of nature to improve the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of mankind and our relationship to the environment.

Glenis Bebb and Ian Glew are the Australian directors of BCI and would be happy to provide further information.

Email addresses respectively:
glen@bonsainursery.com.au
iglew@b022.aone.net.au



Have you ever thought about joining BCI?

Clubs or individuals are able to join Bonsai Clubs International (BCI) which is the longest running Bonsai organisation in the World.

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www.bonsai-bci.com

DVD FOR HIRE

TITLE	DESCRIPTION	FEATURES	Rating
Finding the Bonsai Within 98 minutes	Working with difficult trees. Ponderosa Pine Wiring Techniques	Andy Smith	7
In Full Circle	Japanese-Style Garden. Design and Implementation	D Slawson & P Krause	
Bonsai & Pottery		Alan & Beverley Van	
Bonsai at his home		John Naka	4
Juniper Forest Demonstration		John Naka	6
111-Tree Florida Elm Demo		John Naka	5
39 Tree Stewartia Demonstration		Saburo Kato	6
Two Shimapaku Plantings	Includes Rock Plantings	Yuji Yoshimura	6
US National Bonsai & Penjing Museum	Comments on trees viewed one by one.		7
Demonstration	Accent Plants	Kieko Yamane	6
Newstead 2 Bonsai Extravaganza 2006	UK selection display for the Ginkgo Exhibition	John Hanbys Newstead Bonsai	7

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 To arrange the hire of a DVD contact

Les Simpson: Simmys@xtra.co.nz
Telephone: 07 823 2162

Unique Opportunity

After more than thirty-five years involvement in the Art of Bonsai, Leo Jury has decided it is time to reduce his collection. These trees have been admired by many knowledgeable bonsai hobbyists over the years.

They show the many years of time and TLC that has been bestowed upon them and they need to go to someone who will appreciate their value. Regretfully, they are now being offered for sale. Most of the trees have a photographic record of their development which will be given with each tree sold.

If you are coming to New Plymouth in the near future, please phone Leo 06 753 5476 to arrange a suitable time to inspect the collection with a view to purchase.

Would club secretaries please bring this notice to your members attention. Thank you Leo Jury



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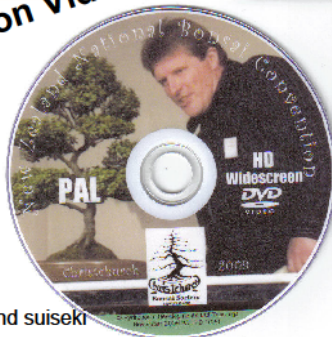


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