

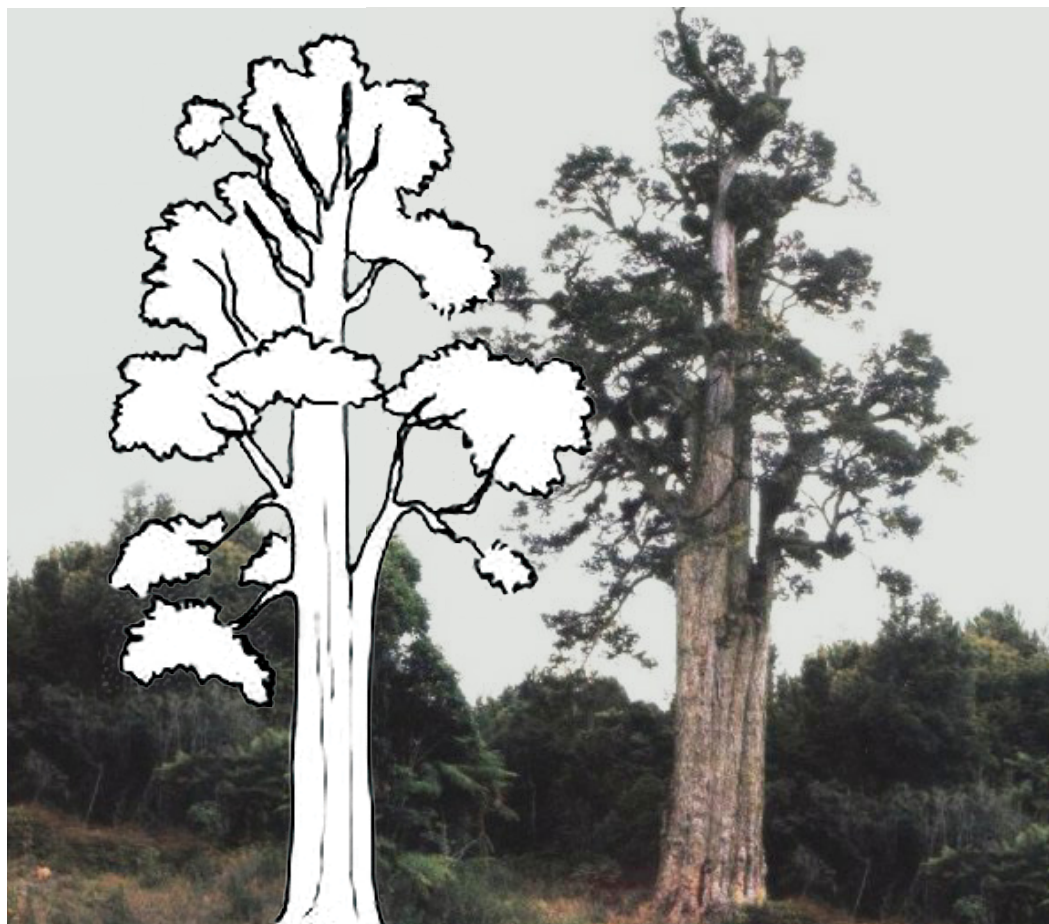
BONSAI TIMES

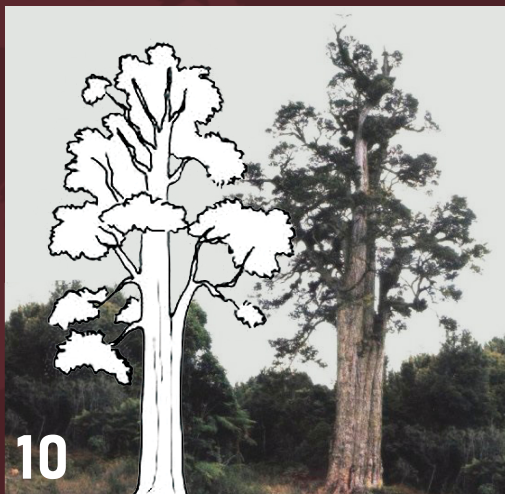


Official publication of the NZBA
www.bonsainz.com

Volume 15 Issue 02

2021





10

BONSAI TIMES

Brings you the inspiration,
motivation and encouragement
to create remarkable Bonsai.

07 AN ARGUMENT FOR
BREAKING THE RULES

10 BREAKING THE RULES:
DEVELOPING A NZ STYLE

15 BREAKING THE RULES:
CULTURE AND ART

23 ALAN VAN AWARD

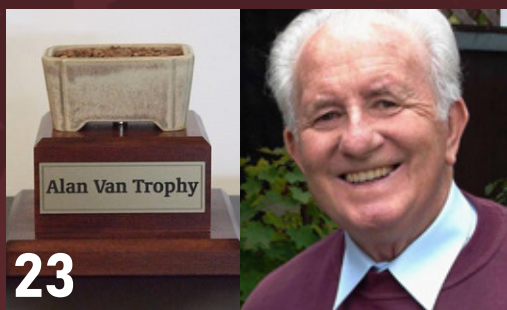
24 VISITING DEMONSTRATOR -
KEES DE JAGER

29 NOTES FROM THE NZBA
COMMITTEE

30 NZBA MEMBERS GALLERY



15



23



24

COMMITTEE

PATRON

Keith Lowe MNZM

PRESIDENT

Les Simpson

simmys369@gmail.com

VICE-PRESIDENT

Tony Bywater

tonyandjude1@outlook.com

SECRETARY

Lynn Slobbe

lynn.slobbe@xtra.co.nz

TREASURER

Carl Crosado

carlcrosado@gmail.com

COMMITTEE

Kelly O'Meara

Sandra Quintal

Brendon Covich

Steven Yin (Web Administrator)

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Four issue a year in colour posted to your home. NZ\$45.00. For overseas, add \$10/year for postage.

A digital copy of the previous issue of Bonsai Times will be available for subscribers to access online after the most recent issue is published.

CAPITATION

Capitation fee for affiliated clubs with 4 members or more is \$2 per member, due annually on 1st September

PAYMENTS

Please post cheques payable to NZBA, to:

Carl Crosado - Treasurer NZBA

27 Endeavour Street,

North New Brighton

Christchurch 8083

Online banking: 03 0239 0025146 00

Please include your name/club as reference and advise the treasurer of your payment.

EDITORIAL

Enquiries and information:

The editor - nzbamag@gmail.com

SUBMISSIONS

Closing dates for submissions no later than 14 days before publication – mid February, May, August and November. All correspondence addressed to this magazine will be regarded as for publication unless clearly marked “NOT FOR PUBLICATION”. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without the written permission of the publisher. Bonsai Times accepts no responsibility for the return of manuscripts or photographs. Electronic submission is preferred. Text should be in either .doc or .pdf formats. Photographs should be submitted as 300 dpi .tiff, or high quality .jpeg files. Photographs should not be embedded in MS Word files.

Contact the editor if you have any queries.

ADVERTISEMENTS

Advertising space within Bonsai Times is available to purchase.

Full page adverts are \$100/year

Half page adverts are \$50/year

Contact for enquiries:

Les Simpson (simmys369@gmail.com) or
the Editor (nzbamag@gmail.com)



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings,

The winter months seem to have lingered on with plenty of cold snaps and wet weather. Pruning and repotting are the major features of these months. I have found it very difficult to arrange a fine day to attend to these basic needs of bonsai when I happen to be home.

In the previous issue of the Bonsai Times I reported that we were beginning to get traction with the various roles and tasks the NZBA has to perform.

Unfortunately our new Treasurer, Myra has been forced to resign. She has recently been given increased responsibilities at work making it impossible for her to carry on as the NZBA Treasurer. So NZBA is in the market again for a treasurer.

We need a complete replacement for Carl Crosado or we can split the position into an Accounts Treasurer and a Fees Treasurer. We are advertising but we found in the past that advertising in the Newsletter or Bonsai Times is not enough. It requires each club to have a look at their members and do some shoulder tapping. We do not have to have an accountant for these positions but someone conversant with Excel spreadsheets and good with figures would be the ideal person.

The NZBA committee has decided to have the AGM on the 17 October via a ZOOM meeting similar to what we did last year. The reasons for this are that the convention is always a very busy time and we generally have to squeeze the AGM into the programme. The convention is also very late in the year. Because we are an Incorporated Society, the Companies Office expect us to submit a signed financial statement which has been approved by our AGM by about October and certainly before the start of December. It was also thought we would get better representation particularly from the South Island by staging the AGM half way through October.

The National Convention will be held in Kumeu, Auckland 27 – 28 November. The Auckland Bonsai Society have been working very hard to stage this

event. Initially they were interested in overseas demonstrators further afield than Australia. Because of Covid 19 they reduced their sights to Australia. We hope that the two Australian demonstrators they have organised, Samuel Thompson from the Australian National Bonsai and Penjing collection in Canberra, and Tony Bebb from Brisbane, will be able to come. All the NZBA competitions including the National Bonsai Competition, National Suiseki contest, Photographic competition and the Emerging Talent Contest will take place at this convention.

Les Simpson
President NZBA

[Since receiving the president's message, the National Convention in Auckland has been cancelled due to the Covid restrictions. – Ed.]



SAVE THE DATE

**NEW ZEALAND
NATIONAL
BONSAI CONVENTION**

CANCELLED DUE TO COVID

HOSTED BY **THE AUCKLAND BONSAI SOCIETY**

EUDAI

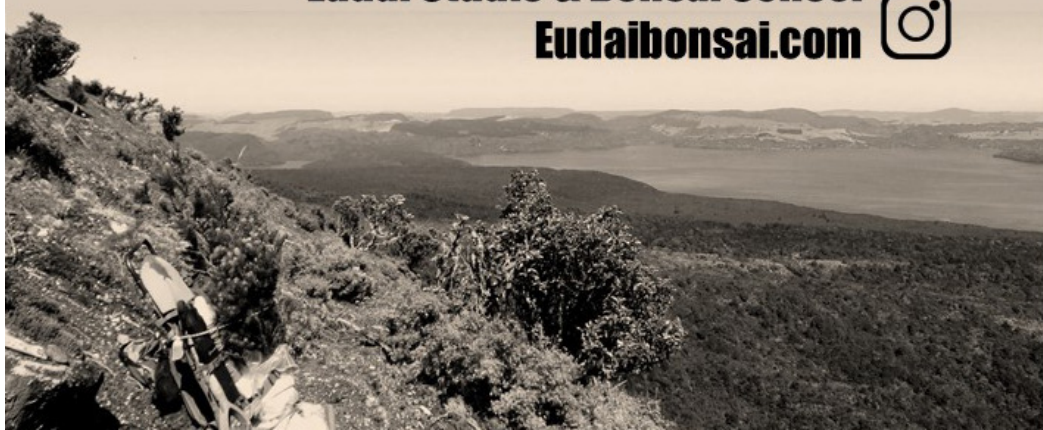


BONSAI

N E W Z E A L A N D

- **Bonsai, Yamadori and Raw Material**
- **Tools, Wire and Consumables**
- **Kiwi Bonsai Ceramics**
- **Yamadori Collecting Adventures**
- **Bonsai and Ceramic Ferrying**
- **Online Virtual Bonsai Design**
- **One to one Tutoring**
- **Progressive Learning Programmes**
- **Workshops and Demonstrations**
- **Collection Servicing and Maintenance**
- **Commissioned Tree Styling**
- **Commissioned Tree Carving**

Artist Samuel Brierley
Eudai Studio & Bonsai School
Eudaibonsai.com



AN ARGUMENT FOR BREAKING THE RULES

Kees de Jager

Ever since I started practicing bonsai 15 plus years ago, I have been taught that there are “rules” that govern and describe what a bonsai should be, e.g. “It needs to form a triangular shape”, “the branches must start 1/3 the way up the trunk and radiate in a 1, 2, 3 spiral arrangement”, “the first two branches must be at the front and the apex must lean towards the front like a bowing man”, etc.

I have also been taught that there are styles and categories that the trees fall into; Formal upright, Cascade, Slanting, Mame, Shohin, Kifu etc.

The more I study bonsai and the more I learn about it the more I am beginning to question a lot of these so called “rules”, and I am realising they don’t always work, especially when using New Zealand native species.

There is a quote attributed to John Naka that I really like, “Do not try to make

your little tree look like a bonsai, try to make your bonsai look like a little tree”. The way I interpret this is to say, don’t force the material to become something it doesn’t want to become. The “rules” that we have all been taught have been developed in Japan over centuries of using Japanese temperate species of conifer (Pine, Spruce, Cypress, etc.), and deciduous trees (Maple, Apricot, Elm, etc.).

These species generally grow according to the local Japanese climate and have been shaped accordingly. It’s this growth aesthetic that has shaped and inspired the development of bonsai and its “rules” over time, but the local climatic conditions, and resulting growth patterns found in our New Zealand native species are completely different to those found in Japan.

Anyone who has spent time studying the form and growth habits of our

**“DO NOT TRY TO MAKE
YOUR LITTLE TREE LOOK
LIKE A BONSAI, TRY TO MAKE
YOUR BONSAI LOOK LIKE A
LITTLE TREE” - John Naka**

local trees, both native and exotic, will quickly see that very few of our native species grow according to the Japanese aesthetic. Predominantly they have rounded crowns and are either multi-trunked / branched with an upwards growth habit e.g. Manuka, Pohutukawa, Kowhai, etc or have very long straight trunks with the crown only occupying the top 1/3 of the total height with very little if any taper e.g. Kauri, Kahikatea, Rimu, etc.

Another characteristic of our native flora that can make some of our species challenging is that some have vastly different juvenile growth habits from that of their mature adult forms. This makes it difficult or impossible to recreate a mature specimen in miniature using young material e.g. Kauri, Kowhai, Lancewood, Kahikatea etc.

Even many of the exotic species that grow here are shaped differently to how they would look in their native environment due to our local climate.

Now I'm not saying that learning the "rules" of bonsai isn't important, and for any beginner they will be crucial to understanding the art form and how to go about learning to create their own bonsai. But if we all only followed the rules all of the time then every tree would be the same as the next, and scope for creativity would be severely limited. Imagine if there were "rules"

for painting or sculpting that every artist followed without questioning their relevance, every painting or sculpture would be the same. How boring that would be.

I now believe that for anyone who wants to advance their development and grow as an artist in this field we must loosen the hold the "rules" have on us and become more flexible in our interpretation of what constitutes bonsai by taking inspiration from our local environments and culture. This is the only way that we can create truly unique works of art that reflect who we are culturally and as artists, as well as paying respect to our own local flora.

This process is already well under way in many other countries. In China where bonsai probably originated and are known as Penjing, they have many regional "schools" including Lingnan, Yangzhou, Suzhou, Sichuan and Shanghai each having different stylistic characteristics reflecting the vast regional differences found in China.

Many other countries like Indonesia, Africa and India have developed their own unique styles using local tropical tree species that reflect how these species grow in their native environments. They look very different to anything coming out of Japan but they are still considered bonsai.

Even in Australia there are local artists such as Hugh Grant and Scott Martin that are pushing the limits of what is possible to achieve with local native species like Kunzea, Ficus, Leptospermum and Melaleuca and they are creating trees that truly reflect the Australian bush aesthetic.

It was through viewing these geographically variable styles and learning about the cultural and environmental significance that inspired their creation that I have become convinced that bonsai here in NZ needs to follow this trend. There will always be a place for styling temperate

northern hemisphere species according to the Japanese aesthetic, but we need to find our own identity when our native species are being used.

I hope by writing this I can stimulate some discussion throughout the bonsai community and maybe we can begin to develop our own Kiwi style that reflects who we are as a unique culture and is relevant to attracting and retaining the next generation of local artists.

ROBERT LANGHOLM

FREELANCE TEACHER AND DEMONSTRATOR
OF ALL ASPECTS OF BONSAI

-Beginners to advanced-


Over 40 years experience in agriculture, horticulture and bonsai

New Zealand's top private bonsai garden
Bus tours and private visits by appointment

Robert (Bob) Langholm QSM
41 Taumata Road,
Mt Albert, Auckland

phone (09) 629 3662 or 027 286 3321
bob-si@ihug.co.nz







Your local specialist

BONSAI

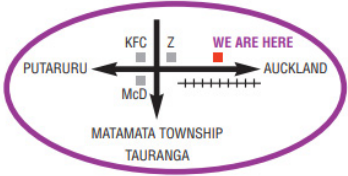
Bonsai | Bonsai pots | Plants suitable for Bonsai

Creating living landscapes...whether it's miniature or mature, be inspired!

KAIMAI GARDEN CENTRE

SH 27 on the Northern Boundary
of Matamata Township
Open 7 Days 9am - 5.15pm
Toilets and easy parking – even for buses



BREAKING THE RULES: DEVELOPING A NEW ZEALAND STYLE

Tony Bywater

Kees de Jager argues that we should forget the Japanese “rules” for developing bonsai and develop our own. I think he is absolutely right to point out that our NZ native trees often do not fit the rules primarily developed for Japanese trees.

At the same time, I recognise that the rules - I prefer to think of them as a set of guidelines - are there for a purpose.

**IF OUR TREES DON'T MOVE
US IN SOME EMOTIONAL WAY
- WHY ARE WE DOING IT?**

And that is to guide us in achieving a successful image that paints a picture or tells a story about a moment in nature. They are a road map to something that will “look right” and which at the same time is botanically sensible; that is, something which would (or could) happen in nature – for example the effect of shading, what makes a tree lean over, and what happens when it does. In many senses, “styles” are exactly the same - useful terms to describe

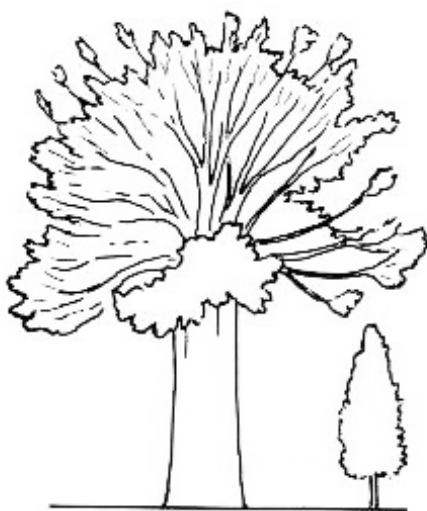
a particular image and, perhaps more importantly, to help us to create a suitable mental image or plan in the first place.

Successful images are about line and form, texture, proportion, balance and composition, all the artistic elements that Robert Stevens talks about in “Vision of my Soul” or David de Groot in “Principles of Bonsai Design”. In my view, these are two of the best books around to explore the artistic side of Bonsai. So to me the “rules” or guidelines, and for that matter the styles, are simply a means to an end. They are not important in themselves, what is important are the images we create. What we should all be striving for is to create images that have meaning to us, if you like, that “move” us in an emotional sense. That’s why bonsai is an art form. If our trees don’t move us in some emotional way – why are we doing it?

Which brings us to New Zealand natives. There’s no question that we have some pretty unique trees in New Zealand. I don’t know anywhere else in the world where you will find a needle leafed conifer that grows in an almost perfect broom style (there may be – I just don’t know about it), but Kauri does. So the real question to me is not whether we should or should not break the rules, it’s how can we translate the

images of our native trees into a bonsai form? Because bonsai do not duplicate naturally grown trees, they abstract the essence of different species and forms to evoke the image of a naturally grown tree, sometimes with a fair amount of poetic license.

I can think of no better source of inspiration in the quest to translate the images of our native trees into bonsai form than the exquisite line drawings in Andrew Crowe’s book “Which Native Tree”. There we see the mighty Kauri, encapsulated in a simple line drawing, reproduced here with the permission of the author. If you want to grow a bonsai Kauri, make it look like the one in Mr Crowe’s book!



Kauri

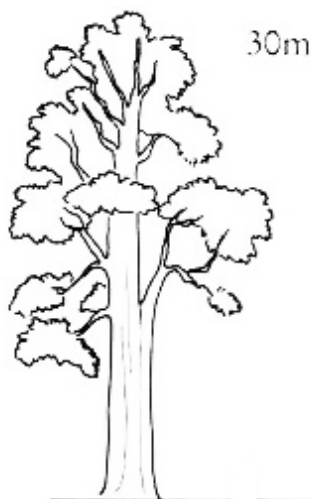
The Kauri really is quite special in its form; there's nothing else quite like it that I'm aware of. But there are a few of our natives that typically share similar forms and in those, perhaps, we have the possible beginnings of a New Zealand style (or several) that Kees asked us to consider.

Probably my favourite image in Andrew Crowe's book is the drawing of a Mountain Beech, page 43 in the edition I have. Most of the beeches have a similar form. I've tried to think of a suitable name for this image and the best I've come up with is "Layered Upright". There is a photograph of a needle juniper in a small book called "Practical Bonsai" by Paul Lesniewicz and Hideo Kato (page 112 in my edition) which exactly captures this image.



Mountain Beech

So I know it's possible. How many of us try to grow Mountain Beeches (or Black Beech, Silver Beech, etc.) in this form? Or do we follow the Japanese aesthetic of an informal upright as outlined in "the rules" as Kees suggests?



Totara

Think about some of the giants of our podocarp forests - Totara of course, but also Matai, Miro, Kahikatea, Rimu; they all share a similar form. Generally they follow an excurrent branch structure* (branches emanating from a single leader) but with a rounded crown rather than a pyramidal outline – and always on top of a long straight trunk. Andrew Crowe's book captures this brilliantly in the drawing of a Totara. I can think of no better name for this style than "Podocarp style". But I'm willing to bet that most of us style these trees as the

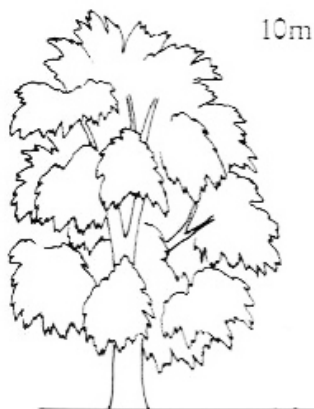
Japanese would style a pine. Perhaps, as Kees suggests, it's time we changed!

There's also a number of NZ natives that follow a rather unruly broom style, with ascendant branches but distinct foliage pads rather than the typical continuous outline of the broom style. How about "Layered Dome" style? To prevent it looking like a bush, it will be important to expose the trunk and branches so that glimpses of the structure of the tree are visible beneath the foliage. The drawings in Andrew Crowe's book of a Kowhai and a Kapuka/NZ Broadleaf are two examples.

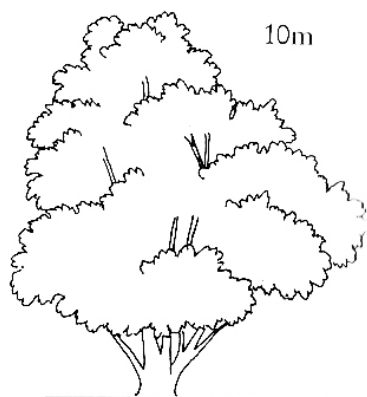
There's a few other natives that have a distinctive form which I think we ought to be able to translate to a bonsai form, Akeake, Hohere (decurent flame style*?), Manuka/Kanuka are some that come to mind. But I'll leave that to others to contemplate.

All drawings are taken from the book "Which Native Tree" by Andrew Crowe and are reproduced here with the permission of the author.

** See David de Groot, "Principles of Bonsai Design"*



Kowhai



Kapuka (NZ Broadleaf)

勤
勉

Kinben Bonsai

Demonstrations.

Workshops.

Private tuition.

Carving.

Yamadori &
much more.



KINBEN BONSAI

Phone Brendon on 027 459 8843

Email: brendon@finishedfloors.co.nz

Facebook @kinbenbonsai





A Shinto shrine in Japan, courtesy of Japanexperterna.se

BREAKING THE RULES: CULTURE AND ART

Matthew Hutson, Whanake Bonsai

I'd like to start by thanking Kees for writing the opinion piece I am in turn responding to. I think it's extremely important for the continued development of bonsai as a craft that we have discussions like these, and frequently look at what we teach and practice with a critical eye.

Without adapting and evolving, bonsai will only decline in relevance and popularity, as it has in Japan. It is known that without outside influence, Japanese bonsai would be in a much worse position than it is now. Having said that, I also think it's becoming increasingly and unfairly popular to look down on Japanese bonsai as an outdated approach, or a hurdle in the way of progression. I would argue that the 'traditional' or Japanese approach should be treated with more of the

reverence it deserves, and looked at with more appreciation and understanding for what it is.

Having read Kees' article, I'd like to point out that he makes it very clear he isn't out to bash Japanese bonsai. He does say that he believes it is "crucial to understanding the art form" and clarifies that the Japanese aesthetic is a result of the influence of the Japanese climate and the way their native species respond to that environment. These are both very valid points, but I think a little more emphasis needs to be put on the understanding of Japanese bonsai as a result of their history and culture. I don't want to go into the history of bonsai in Japan in depth, and how it has developed over the years, but I would like to touch on a couple of points.



*Taikan Ten exhibition in Kyoto, Japan.
Courtesy of Bonsai Empire.*

In Japan, the religion known today as Shinto was the exclusive faith of the people before Buddhism was introduced from China in the 6th century. Put simply, Shinto is the reverence for the kami, or deities, who are believed to inhabit natural elements, such as trees, rivers, rocks, and mountains. Because of this, nature is not a secular subject in Japanese art and culture, and so a portrayal of a natural scene is not just a literal depiction, but rather a portrayal of the sacred world. To this day, there are around 100,000 public shrines dedicated to the Shinto belief, and numerically it is still Japan's largest religion.

Delicacy and exquisiteness of form, together with simplicity, characterise traditional Japanese artistic taste. The Japanese tend to view the traditional Chinese arts generally as being too grandiose or showy.

When we consider these two points in relation to the way bonsai is practiced in Japan, their aesthetic approach starts to make a lot more sense. Rather than a direct portrayal of nature, Japanese bonsai is and always has been an interpretation of the natural form, but simplified, exaggerated, and perfected to highlight the reverence the Japanese culture sees in it. The simple form of nature as an expression of purity and perfection, with emphasis on strength or delicacy, are in turn the main characteristics seen in Japanese bonsai.

Let's close that door for a minute and turn our attention to China, the other powerhouse in the creation of miniature trees. Since the 3rd century CE, calligraphy has been considered supreme among the visual arts in China. It is believed that the appreciation and production of quality calligraphy requires heightened personal qualities and unusual aesthetic sensitivity, and the comprehension of its finer points



*Trident maple penjing.
Courtesy of Peggy Greb, USDA*

is thought to require experience and sensibility of a high order. The aesthetic importance of line in calligraphy, what is essentially a linear art, have had a significant influence on the other arts in China. Consider the Chinese approach to bonsai (or penjing) then, where the expressiveness of lines in the trunk and branches (and sometimes foliage pads) are of the highest importance, and greatly affect the perceived quality of a tree.

To take a step back and consider everything discussed, we inevitably conclude that the nuanced differences in the practice of miniaturising nature are down to the influence of cultural identities, unique to each region. To bash a certain approach as being 'too refined', 'too conformist', or 'unrealistic' then, is to strip it of its cultural relevance and view it through an unfairly distorted window.

Heading in a more practical direction, Kees also discusses some of the 'bonsai rules' often thrown around as a 'how to' guide to grow a perfect specimen. He rightly suggests that we need to abandon these rules to pursue bonsai at a higher level, but also says that these rules "govern and describe what a bonsai should be". I've always thought this has been an unfortunate interpretation of what these 'rules' were originally intended to be, and to blame the Japanese for their implementation is unfair.

We're all familiar with the 'rules' in question, but to reference them and quote Kees;

"It needs to form a triangular shape", "the branches must start 1/3 the way up the trunk and radiate in a 1, 2, 3 spiral arrangement", "the first two branches must be at the front and the apex must lean towards the front like a bowing man", etc...

These 'rules', and others like them were never intended to be implemented as a strict set of rules that must be followed, but rather as a guideline to help beginners begin to understand the practical approach to creating a bonsai. And you know what? They actually work pretty well. If I took two complete beginners, gave them each a piece of nursery material, told them both to make me a bonsai, but only gave one of them this set of 'rules', I think I know which one would come out ahead.

What is unfortunate though, is the way these basic guidelines have penetrated and influenced greater bonsai pursuit. As an example, I heard from a credible witness that a prestigious award within NZ was given to a particular tree because it "followed all the rules perfectly". Having seen the tree in question, I'm not saying it wasn't worthy of recognition, but I do take issue with the reasoning behind awarding it. The fact that these guidelines continue to be touted as a standard to judge a tree by is disheartening in the least.

More recognition should be given to the overall visual sensitivity of a tree and container combination, rather than whether two branches come from the same spot. To further our collective pursuit of bonsai, I agree with Kees that we need to “loosen the hold the ‘rules’ have on us and become more flexible in our interpretation of what constitutes [good] bonsai”.

How this relates to the incorporation of native trees and their use within the bonsai culture in NZ is a more difficult issue.

Tony Bywater’s response perfectly captures my own opinion on the matter so without dragging this discussion out further, I will say that I believe the devil is really in the detail. By looking at the specific growth habits trees exhibit in NZ, we can incorporate these into bonsai design without requiring a huge overhaul of the way we practice the craft. Take this image for example of a shohin *Leptospermum polygalifolium*



Leptospermum polygalifolium

from my time practicing in Australia. This tree doesn’t really break any of the traditional bonsai moulds, yet at the same time it has a distinctly ‘Australian’ billabong appearance. The finer details are what define it, for example the pendulous branches, sudden changes in direction of the trunk, deadwood hinting at shaded out branches and a rough, earthy pot.

As a more extreme example, have a look at this *Kunzea ambigua* I designed with Ryan Neil of Bonsai Mirai. Again, this tree doesn’t necessarily drift from typical bonsai practice, it still has roughly triangular sub-canopies, tapers from bottom to top, exists in balance with living and dead wood and maintains an overall sense of balance. It



Kunzea ambigua with Ryan Neil of Bonsai Mirai.

is also however, undeniably influenced by the harsh Australian environment that created it.

As a good example of how this could relate to the New Zealand aesthetic, let's consider this next image. If memory serves, this is a group of *Melaleuca bracteata* on display at the 2019 AABC convention, created by Quentin Valentine,



Melaleuca bracteata, by Quentin Valentine

president of the Melbourne based Victorian Native Bonsai Club. Although this is an Australian tree, and references the Australian environment, it is not at all dissimilar to a scene we would see from a coastal pohutukawa group, or prostrate kanuka scrub of the Bay of Plenty region. It also doesn't drift too far from any bonsai moulds.

This last example brings me to my final point of discussion, which is how we continue to develop an independent identity for NZ bonsai. Australia has recently experienced its own bonsai renaissance, with native material being used successfully in ways that have seen it become a powerhouse in the international bonsai community. I was lucky enough to have taken part in that, having been a prominent member and promoter of the globally recognised Victorian Native Bonsai Club.

As a club, we championed the use of native material to reflect the native environment, catalysing the aforementioned 2019 AABC convention, the first national exhibition in Australia to exclusively use native material.

This exhibition received global coverage and was touted by many in Australia to have been the most impressive exhibition in the country to date. The success of the exhibition only further cemented to the greater Australian bonsai community that the best way to develop as a unique and independent voice is to champion that which is most unique to you. Other international communities have had similar success championing their native material, namely the US and Europe, and have done so without having to cast off any Japanese shackles of oppression.

□

Kees concluded his article by saying, *“I hope by writing this I can stimulate some discussion throughout the bonsai community and maybe we can begin to develop our own Kiwi “rules” that are more relevant to attracting and retaining the next generation of artists.”*

I agree with the sentiment he expresses but offer a different perspective. It is my hope that as bonsai culture within New Zealand continues to develop, we can begin to champion the use of our native material in a way that references our native environment, but doesn't become disconnected from the roots of the ancient craft. To do this, it is important we start to explore the possibilities within our country, begin to understand and overcome the horticultural

challenges unique to our native flora, and gain a deeper understanding of what the characteristics are that make our native material truly unique.

It seems to me that New Zealand is about 10 years behind Australia in this regard, but no doubt our trajectory is the same. I'm certainly looking forward to the ride.



Part of the 2019 AABC Convention in Melbourne

Hamilton Bonsai Show

At the Hamilton Gardens Pavilion on
Saturday 30th & Sunday 31st October
9am - 4pm

*Traders include - Arbonsai,
Light 'n Earth, Geyser Pots,
Ian Gear, Adrian Bird, Ken
Wong, Whanake Bonsai,
Eudai, and Bio Leaf*



**Entry - \$5 for adults
& 12 up (under 12 free)**

EFTPOS available

Phone 07 871 9510 for more information

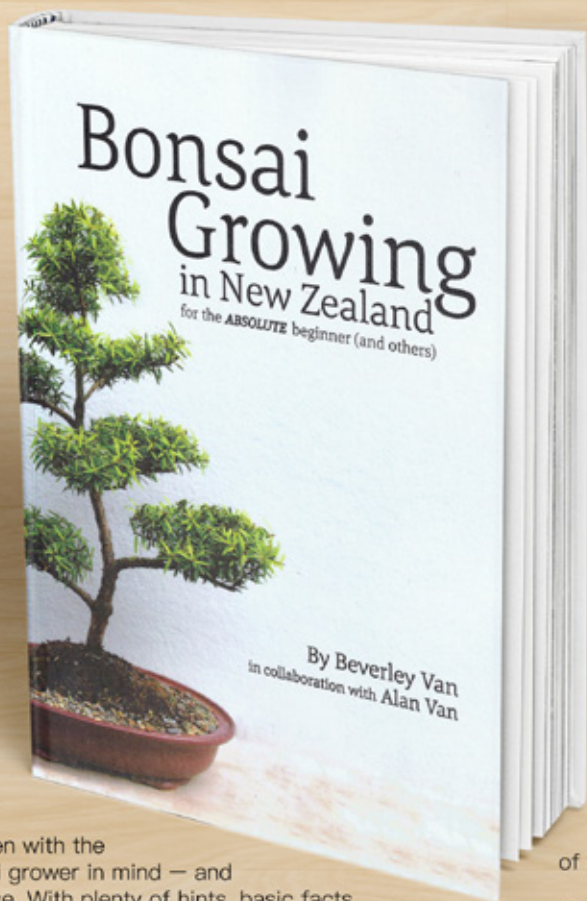
*Need help with your
own tree? Bring it
to the show for
advice and guidance*



**HAMILTON
BONSAI CLUB**.co.nz

Bonsai Growing in New Zealand

By Beverley Van
in collaboration with Alan Van



This new book has been written with the new-to-bonsai grower in mind — and others of course. With plenty of hints, basic facts, case histories, and plenty of illustrations, this book also explains how some of the author's own bonsai were created. Written for all New Zealand enthusiasts but especially for those about to start growing bonsai, this is going to be the perfect addition to everyone's bonsai library.

170 pages
of text and photos.

Price \$49.95 (plus
\$6.50 postage)

For further information on how to obtain this first ever New Zealand bonsai book, email vanzsai@xtra.co.nz



ALAN VAN TROPHY: BEST TREE/POT COMBINATION

Beverly Van

The Alan Van Trophy for the Best Tree/Pot Combination was first awarded in 2014.

Alan first became interested in bonsai and pot making when he and I were married. At that time, he also became a member of the Avon Bonsai Society. I had been growing bonsai for some years and making 'thrown' pots (made on the pottery wheel). But then, luckily, we met a master craftsman who agreed to make plaster moulds for us for making slip-cast pots. We supplied the photos and he made his wonderful moulds. I continued throwing pots and Alan made the slip cast ones.

His meticulous attention to anything he did meant he produced not only beautiful pots but his trees also displayed the thought he had put into his tree styling.

Because Alan suffered from extreme deafness he relied heavily on his sight. Which meant he took greater notice of the finer details with his tree styling and care.

The Alan Van Trophy, awarded for the best combination of bonsai and container, is a relatively new national trophy, first awarded in 2014.

Selecting the most appropriate container can sometimes be a hard task. The container should always be secondary in importance to the tree. However, if an unsuitable pot is chosen, the colour, size or shape will invariably draw attention away from the tree to the pot.

Alan felt that some growers were not always matching pots to tree in order to create a harmonious combination and so he felt (hoped) that this award would encourage growers to pay more attention to their selection of pots. Obtaining the right pot can be difficult so we continued to make bonsai pots so as to provide a wider range of bonsai pots available locally.



A DEMONSTRATING ARTIST VISITS AVON

Kees de Jager

On the weekend of the 22nd and 23rd of May the Avon Bonsai Society of Christchurch hosted visiting national demonstrator and bonsai artist Sean Heseltine.

This was the first time in many years that our club had invited and hosted a guest demonstrator. The decision to do so was spurred on by the cancellation of Japan Day, normally held in Christchurch each March, due to uncertainty caused by Covid restrictions. Our club has had a tree display and put on styling demonstrations for the public for the past several years so the loss of this event meant we were now looking for something new to keep our members busy and focused.

Several of our members, myself included, attended the South Island mini convention over the weekend of 7th and 8th of November 2020 where we were all lucky enough to see Sean in action. We all agreed that his style of demonstration was highly informative and entertaining so it was with little difficulty that our committee decided to invite Sean to visit our club.

We arranged with the Canterbury Horticultural Society to use the Kiosk Room in the Christchurch Botanical Gardens which had all the facilities and space we needed to hold both demonstrations and workshops for club members. It also had the added bonus of being open to the public to stop in and see what we were up to, giving the club some good exposure to potential new members.

The planned programme for the weekend was to hold two 2 hour demonstrations on Saturday using locally sourced nursery stock trees, a club member supper later that evening and then on the Sunday to hold two 3 hour workshops for a maximum of 6 people in each to work on their own trees with Sean's guidance.

We had purchased several trees for Sean to choose from: a Mountain beech (*Fucospora cliffortioides*), Tortured Kowhai (*Sophora prostrata*), Golden Totara (*Podocarpus totara*), Korokio (*Corokia cotoneaster*), Star Jasmine (*Trachelospermum Jasminoides*) and a Juniperus sp.

For the first demonstration, Sean talked everyone through styling the Juniper into a semi cascade style. Unfortunately



the tree had been recently re-potted and during this process, came out of its pot. Sean was unsure if it would survive but took the opportunity to talk about the desirable properties to be looked for in tree roots when selecting material to work on from a nursery.

The Idea was for Sean to demonstrate using only material that was locally grown and easy to source for anyone that wanted to try out the techniques he was describing.

After lunch Sean began working on the Tortured Kowhai and talked everyone through the process of styling it in a weeping style tree.

This was very well received and his way of explaining the fundamentals of tree morphology came as a real revelation for some of our members. He made them look at and think about bonsai not just as an art form but as miniature versions of mature trees, much like John Naka once said, "Do not make your trees look like bonsai but make your bonsai look like trees".

It was very encouraging to see members of the public coming in during the demonstrations and talking to club members. We were fortunate in that the weather, although cold, was fine and had brought a lot of people into the botanical gardens over the weekend.

On the Saturday evening we held an informal supper for Sean and our club members which was a great opportunity for our members to talk with Sean and ask him questions.

Sunday morning started bright and frosty with another fine day in the garden city. The first of the two workshops kicked off at 9.00 am with all 6 participants as well as a few observers in attendance.

I took part in this morning session and worked on styling a Douglas Fir that I had collected about 12 months before, with some good suggestions from Sean. I am very happy with the end result of this initial styling.

At mid-day there was a brief break for lunch before the afternoon session started with another 6 members coming in and many of the morning members staying to watch, talk with the public who came in, and soak up the excellent advice being offered by Sean.



The weekend wrapped up around 3.00 pm with Sean needing to get away for his long drive home. But not before we all agreed that the weekend had been a total success and enjoyed immensely by everyone who took the time to come in and take part over the two days. Our club has been inspired to host other demonstrators in the future and I would urge all other clubs to do likewise.





**Monthly Meetings
Sunday Workshops
NZBA Demonstrators
Free styling advice**

Contact us. First meeting is free!

ABS Club President: Brendon 027 459 8843

Email: aucklandbonsaisociety@gmail.com

Facebook: Auckland Bonsai Society

Web: Auckland Bonsai Society Google sites.

NZBA SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE DUE!

Club capitation (\$2 per member) and individual member subscriptions (\$45) for 2022 (Volume 16 of Bonsai Times) are due as of the 1st September.

Payments should be made to:

NZBA 03-0239-0025146-00.

For clubs, please include the club name and either "Capitation" or "Bonsai Times" as reference. For individuals include your name and "Subscription" as reference.

NZBA IS LOOKING FOR A NEW TREASURER!

You do not need to be an accountant but it would help if you are good with numbers and know how to operate a spreadsheet.

Interested? Contact the secretary,
Lynn Slobbe at lynn.slobbe@extra.co.nz



NOTES FROM THE NZBA COMMITTEE JULY 2021

NZBA Website

The NZBA Website can be found at www.bonsainz.com and the club page at www.bonsainz.com/nzba-private-club-area. Affiliated club secretaries have now been sent the password.

NZBA Treasurer

As you may be aware, our new recruit as treasurer has had a change in circumstance at work and has reluctantly withdrawn from the position. So we are recruiting again! If someone is interested in taking over the current treasurer's role, that would be great; otherwise it can be split into 2, an accounts treasurer, and a fees treasurer. Again, if you are interested, know someone who would be interested, or know someone in your club who you think would do a good job, please let the NZBA secretary know. It is not necessary to have an accounting background but someone who is good with figures and is familiar with spreadsheets would be ideal.

Bonsai Times

Volume 15, issue 1, this year's magazine, has been sent out. Just a reminder that subscriptions for 2022 (Vol 16) are due 1 September. Also please note we no longer print a B&W copy only the colour copy at \$45 annual subscription.

Your club reports, articles, letters and questions as well as photos for the gallery are required so please send directly to the editor at nzbamag@gmail.com and if you want any further information contact the NZBA secretary.

We are still looking for an editor for the Bonsai Times. If you are interested, know someone who would be interested, or know someone in your club who you think would do a good job, please let the NZBA secretary know. Layout design, printing & distribution are currently carried out by others so this is for the editorial roll only.

2021 National Convention

~~The convention will be held November 27-28 at the Kumeu Community Centre, Auckland.~~

This has been cancelled due to Covid.

NZBA MEMBERS GALLERY

Readers are invited to send photos of their trees for publication in *The Gallery* to the editor at nzbamag@gmail.com. Photos may be single photos of a tree, or sets of up to three photos of the same tree for example in different seasons, or at different stages of development.

Please include the common name of the tree, its height and number of years in training. Owner's names will not be published to protect your security.



Golden Totara

55cm - 29 years in training



Cotoneaster

20cm - 7 years in training



Pohutukawa

20cm - 17 years in training



30th August 2009



5th August 2011



13th October 2015



Japanese Maple
78 cm - 16th April 2021



12th August 2016



5th May, 2019

CLUBS

Auckland Bonsai Society

President: Brendon Covich
aucklandbonsaisociety@gmail.com

Secretary: Ross Phillips

Meetings: 2nd Thursday 7:30 pm,
Auckland Horticultural Council,
900 Great North Road,
Western Springs, Auckland.

Avon Bonsai Society

President: Jane Bodle
cluckmed@yahoo.com
Secretary: Alison McIntosh
alisonmc99@gmail.com
2/15 Celia Street, Sumner, Christchurch.

Meetings: 1st Wednesday 7:30 pm,
Isleworth School, Farrington Avenue,
Bishopdale, Christchurch.

Bay of Plenty Bonsai Society

President: John Vercoe
jvercoe@xtra.co.nz
Secretary: Sue Vercoe

07 572 4345
Meetings: last Sunday

Blenheim Bonsai Group

John Simpson - 029 4783 464
Rod Wegener - 021 755 100
Ainsley Vincent - 03 5728335

Meetings: 2nd Sunday, 1:00 pm
Selmes Nursery, 141 Battys Road,
Springlands, Blenheim

Bonsai Study Group

Bob Langholm - 09 629 3362
bob-si@ihug.co.nz
41 Taumata Road, Mt Albert, Auckland

Christchurch Bonsai Society

President: Dale Thompson
Secretary: Sandra Martin
chchbonsai@yahoo.com
Meetings: 2nd Wednesday, 7:30 pm,
Cotswold Preschool, Colesbury Street,
Bishopdale, Christchurch.

Eudai Studio and Bonsai School

President: Sam Brierley - 07 307 8483
eudaimoniabonsai@gmail.com
18 Rambler Drive, Whakatane
Meetings: 1st Sunday pm,
phone for details.

Franklin Bonsai Club

Gerry Boy - 021 0236 1499
gerry2013@yahoo.co.nz

Gisborne Bonsai Club

Heather Deere - 06 868 9519
tetia@slingshot.co.nz
Meetings: 2nd Saturday, various
locations in Gisborne.

Gore Bonsai Society

President:
Sarah Baldwin - 027 508 8739
Secretary: Lisa Anderson
beak.lisa@gmail.com - 03 207 1856
Meetings: 3rd Saturday or Sunday after
Phone for details of time and venue.

Hamilton Bonsai Club

President: Peter Mudie
pkmudie@gmail.com

Secretary: Gordon Bowers
- 07 868 6787

Meetings: 2nd Sunday 2.00pm,
St Francis Church Hall, 92 Mansel Ave,
Hamilton

Hawkes Bay Bonsai Society

President: Noel Cameron - 022 173 6170
noel.cameron@raywhite.com

Secretary: Josh Weaver - 027 234 0637
weaverjosh@gmail.com

Meetings: 2nd Wednesday, 7:30pm, Clive
Community Church Hall, Napier

Kapiti Bonsai Club

President: Eugene Ferreira
021 0248 8887

Secretary: Paula Rowe - 027 354 1312
Meetings: 7.00pm, 2nd Monday, Location
varies, email kapitibonsai@gmail.com or
message Facebook group to confirm.

Kenzo Bonsai

President: Martin Walters - 021 629 192
enquiries@walterselectrical.co.nz

Secretary: Sarah Walters 021 917 086
sarahc74@hotmail.com

Meetings: 1st Sunday of the month,
Chatswood

Manawatu Bonsai

President: Greg Tuthill
manawatubonsai@gmail.com

Meetings: 3rd Tuesday, 7:00 pm,
PN Community Leisure Centre, 569
Fergusson Street, Palmerston North.

Matamata Bonsai Club

President: Graeme Hancock
kaimaigc@gmail.com
Kaimai View Garden Centre,
State Highway 27, Matamata.

Meetings: By arrangement,
contact Graeme.

Nelson Bonsai Club

President: Mark Poulter - 021 261 3329
mpoulter14@gmail.com
55 Templemore Drive, Richmond, Nelson.

Meetings: 1st Monday, 7:30 pm,
members house (Apr to Aug);
Stoke Garden and Landscapes,
59 Saxton Road (Sept to Mar).

New Plymouth Bonsai Club Inc.

President: Stuart Skene
stuartsk.20@gmail.com
Secretary/Treasurer: Nicola Stevenson
Nicola@omahanui.co.nz - 027 464 2022

Meetings: last Sunday, 1:30pm,
The Royal New Zealand Foundation
for the Blind, 131 Vivian Street,
New Plymouth.

Otago Bonsai Society

President: Lynn Slobbe - 03 453 4551
Secretary: Jo Douglas
bonsaiotago.obs1@gmail.com

Meetings: 1st Tuesday, 7:30 pm,
Mercy Hall 42 Macandrew Road,
South Dunedin, Dunedin.

Rotorua Bonsai Club

President: Selwyn Hatrick - 07 348 5353
selwyn_h@slingshot.co.nz

Secretary: Rick Merrington
rick@gargoyles.co.nz - 07 347 4065
Meetings: 2nd Sunday, phone for details

South Canterbury Bonsai Society

President: Dave Geddes - 027 616 0172

Secretary: Wayne McLay - 03 684 5768

wayne-mc2@xtra.co.nz

Meetings: 1st Wednesday

(February to November), 7:30pm,

Arts Centre, Gleniti Road, Timaru.

Wellington Bonsai Club

President: Steven Yin - 022 416 198

Secretary: Brenda Cooper

PO Box 30-621, Lower Hut 5040

info@bonsai.org.nz

Meetings: 1st Sunday

(except January), 1:00 pm,

Hutt Valley Tramping Club rooms,

Philip Evans Reserve, Birch Street,

Waterloo, Lower Hutt



Fern Valley Bonsai Nursery

We are growers of field grown bonsai, providing bonsai artists with thicker trunks as a good foundation for future bonsai.

We have maples, elms, swamp cypress, hornbeams, ficus, hackberries, and white olives in stock. We also have stock established in timber growing boxes.

Pay us a visit in Tauranga or we can courier too.

Contact: Adriaan and Poppie

Tel. 07-552 4900

E-mail: engelbrecht@xtra.co.nz

Visit us on Facebook or our website





nzbamag@gmail.com
www.bonsainz.com
facebook.com/bonsainz

BONSAI TIMES