

SHIBUI BONSAI KAI

NEWSLETTER

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MONTH: APRIL 2021



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Dear Bonsai Friends

At our last meeting Trevor was scheduled to give us a presentation, but unfortunately, he had to pull out as he was requested to work. In these trying times, with work so scarce and times so hard for us all, putting bread on the table is the most important duty and Bonsai has to wait its turn. Erich very kindly stepped in and gave us a talk on his experiences in carving Bonsai. He had brought some examples of what he has done and gave us some very useful information on what tools to use and how successful carving can be on the different species of tree. Thank you, Erich for making our afternoon so interesting for us. After our tea break, we had a hands-on workshop on some of the Junipers which had been brought along for us to see. Thank you also to Ruza for once again supplying the goodies for our tea break and the donors of the raffle prizes.

Our next meeting is to be held on Saturday 15 May at 14:00 in The Floreum. Apparently, no progress has been made with the completion of the renovations so things will be much the same as last month. So, as we were unable to see Trevor in action last month, we will try again this month and will be concentrating on Junipers, Trevor has volunteered to bring a large Juniper, sourced from Mike B prior to his big move, and will be working on it, possibly removing it from the rock on which it is planted. He has plans on using it for a workshop with a visiting Bonsai celebrity in the future. After the tea break, we will have a hands-on workshop. Please bring a Juniper for us to admire, for advice, and possibly to work on. If you have done anything which was suggested last month to improve one of your Junipers, please bring it and show us the results. The sales table and raffle will operate as usual. Naturally, sanitizer, masks and social distancing regulations will need to be observed.

Unfortunately, the number of daily reported new cases of Covid seems to be on the increase again so hopefully, we will be able to carry on with our monthly get together. Should anything change, we will get back to you, so please check your e-mails daily.

You will remember in the December newsletter, we showed you photographs of the Beech in my back garden which Trevor air-layered in September 2020. Well, here is a progress report of the results achieved so far with the decapitation being done in March, 2021:



On the left is the original stock, still growing in the garden through the black plastic bag 45 cm in height above the root, with a trunk diameter of 14 cm at the base. The top has been sealed with sealing compound. There is a heavy circle of surface roots, and some careful selection and elimination of some will need to be done in the future as well as creating better taper in the trunk. Having age on his side, Trevor will be able to take care of this. In the photograph on the right, the top part with the air-layer still enclosed, once Trevor got it home. The layer was done and enclosed, first with transparent plastic and then with black. As I mentioned previously, it started sprouting roots further up the trunk, above the black plastic, so I added more compost and covered it with grey plastic, just to be safe and keep the roots alive as we had not opened to check on the progress below. The tree was kept very damp with daily misting and I gave it additional water from the top with a watering can until the water drained out from the bottom.



Left: Black and grey plastic removed. The original layer is in the lower section, tied bottom and top with cable ties. Notice how roots developed above the tied section, and it was these roots I which I covered with more compost and enclosed with the grey plastic. Right: the layer with all plastic removed.

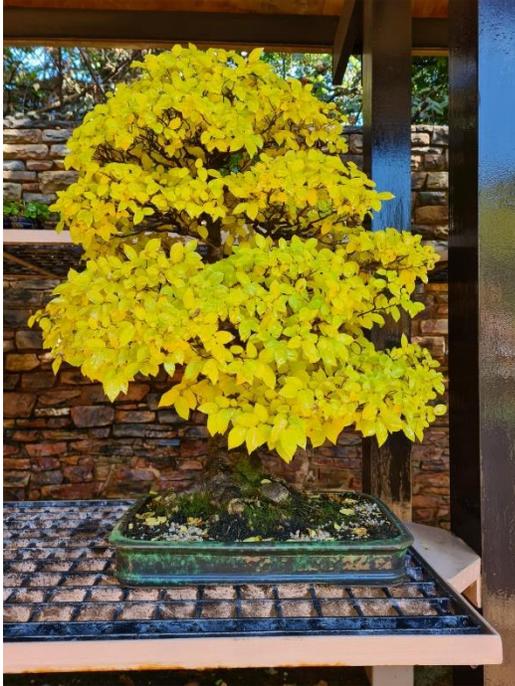


The sheer amount or volume of roots is amazing and interesting. It actually formed almost a gall of living tissue at the top of the cut.



The tree planted into a large, deep, black plastic basin. Now, all we need to do is wait for spring to arrive to see how it is going to shoot out. I have not seen it since it was cut off from the base, but I imagine, in time, a portion of the base may have to be removed in order to plant it into a shallower container. Only time will tell, but a really interesting exercise.

Just to follow up on last month's newsletter and another example of what happens when a Bonsai is not watered properly and dries out. On arrival at Brenthurst one morning, this Celtis, still with green very droopy foliage and completely dry was given a thorough soak by me. Two days later, Dave went to water and sent me the photograph on the left with the yellow, coloured leaves. Yes, it does look great, but how has the health of the Bonsai been affected? I went a week later and took the photograph on the right. Notice all the dead leaves, still lying at the base of the tree in the pot. Other Celtis, also under cover in the pavilion still have some green foliage, but turning and falling as autumn has progressed are all fine. The twiggy growth at the tips of the branches have dried out and the tree will need to be pruned back quite drastically, prior to repotting in Spring. Please take this as a lesson on what NOT to do to achieve colour in Autumn on your Bonsai. Hopefully, I got to it in time. Thanks for the photo Dave. Sorry, don't know who did not water properly.



More colourful pictures from Brenthurst:



Left: The Parrotia, some of the leaves scorched, but in full autumn colour, photographed mid month.

Right: The Azalea, semi cascade style, in the workshop area at the back, in full bloom. Hopefully all of yours were the same. This was one of the leftovers from our Azalea symposium we had way back when we were all younger, sorry, don't remember the year. Senior moment!



The Swamp cypress on the left and Chinese maple, root over rock on the right. Parrotia in the middle, and in the background, the Celtis mentioned above, and on the right, a Chinese maple Saikei. Note how the maple still has green foliage and the Celtis behind, completely bare.

And from our friend Craig in Melbourne, re the Bonsai he had on their recent exhibition:

Derry, have provided the names of the Australian native species below in case anyone is interested.

- Top left - *Kunzea peduncularis*
- Top right - *Kunzea peduncularis*
- Middle left - *Leptospermum laevigatum*
- Middle right - *Melaleuca Ericifolia*
- Bottom left - *Kunzea Ambigua*



Thanks Craig

The Bonsai at Brenthurst are all looking good, although now well into Autumn. There have not been many visitors lately, but the display area in the front is always kept spic and span. Fortunately, the weeds have slowed down as well and there is not much growth in the trees and all they need is slight tidying up from time to time. All the deciduous trees will be left now and will only be trimmed and pruned back at repotting time, probably in July or August, depending on the winter. Thank you to all for helping with watering duties, but our list of regular volunteers is getting smaller and smaller. Unfortunately, Dave, one of our most regulars is no longer able to help, so we need more please, especially towards the end of the month. In the second half of May for example, I will need to water for 11 days, as we have no volunteers. At this stage I am able, but things can change. We are having a maintenance workshop on the 22nd and will get the work area at the back tidied up and the potting mixes sorted for the upcoming busy season.

Birthdays in May: Godfrey on the 6th, Eddie M on the 7th, Mike H on the 10th, Eddie J on the 14th, Zarius on the 22nd, and Stan on the 28th.

Many happy returns to you all and we wish you many more happy and healthy years.

Sincerely

Derry

CAKE DUTY ROSTER:

May: Stan Simcox and Godfrey Jones

June: Johan Nel andVolunteer required

Each person to provide one plate of 'sweet' and one plate of 'savoury' please

REMINDER!! Please note, it is the duty of the members providing goodies for the tea break to set out the cups etc as well as to wash up afterwards and repack the tea trolley. Many thanks.

COMMITTEE:

President:	RUZA WHITAKER	(082) 873 7955	TREVOR BOTHAM	(082) 784 7581
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Banking Details: Nedbank – Rosebank Gardens Branch – 195 805:

Shibui Bonsai Kai: A/C # 1958 289 906

PS: All committee members, we will be having a committee meeting at 13:00 sharp on the 15th.

I couldn't resist taking a photo of this Japanese maple in my back garden this morning. How is this for magnificent colour at this time of the year? Anyone interested in an air layer in springtime? Maybe you can end up with something similar to the Beech mentioned earlier. All it will cost is at least one day's help and commitment at Brenthurst in the busy repotting season helping with the much needed work. No, this is not bribery and no need to report me to the NPA, just a plea for help. The colour of the bark on the thinner branches turns a beautiful red once all the leaves have dropped.

