

SHIBUI BONSAI KAI

NEWSLETTER

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Dear Bonsai Friends

Well, here we are on day ? of lockdown and no idea of how much longer it is going to last. Unfortunately, there is nothing we can do about it except continue with the sanitizing, wearing masks, practicing social distancing and isolating ourselves. Hopefully, with all the spare time on our hands you are all getting the ideal opportunity of working on your Bonsai. With the weather starting to warm up, some of the Bonsai are already starting to bud out and you are able to get on with your repotting programme for the year. Some of the Celtis, Maples and Elms at Brenthurst are already showing signs of new growth. With things as they are at the moment, it is doubtful we will be able to get much repotting done, but I have given all the trees a liberal sprinkling of fertilizer just to give them a boost.

I have had a meeting with Mrs Oppenheimer regarding 'succession' and the future of the Heritage collection at Brenthurst. I am very happy and relieved to let you know they are very satisfied with how things have been going and would like things to continue in the future. We also spoke about future developments and ideas about the possibility of improving the promotion of Bonsai. So, we have more thinking to do, and I am personally confident we have more to offer. As long as I am physically able, I am willing to carry on as in the past, but my bones are creaking and it is not as easy as it used to be to do things and we need somebody younger, stronger and completely dedicated to Bonsai to start getting involved. This is a great responsibility for the future of the collection and for Bonsai and needs to be addressed sooner rather than later. It is hard to believe we have been there for 10 years now. All the staff are now back to work and the garden is getting back to its former glory after the cold and frosty winter we have had this year. They will be opening for garden for tours by the public in mid September so if you would like to organize a group tour, please contact the garden office 011 646 4122. Hopefully this will happen and then we may be able to do some repotting and much needed weeding.

The Johannesburg Botanic Garden has been reopened for public exercise purposes only and I went to see how the renovations of The Floreum are getting on. Unfortunately, there is only the brickwork shell remaining – the roof and all window and door frames have been removed so it would appear nothing has happened during lockdown. The roof over the gate entrance has been retiled but that's about all. So, I can't see us having any meetings in our old venue this year. Once the restrictions have been lifted and we are permitted to meet as a group, we may be able to use the other venue around the corner, the

Environmental Education Centre in Thomas Bowler Avenue. Hopefully the staff at the office will soon be able to give us more information.

There is nothing more in the cupboard after these two articles by Ruza and our friend from Bela-Bela, Ian Pringle.

Hello Derry

I am sending you my first attempt at carving to include in the newsletter, that is if you don't have anything else.

I am attaching two photos of my garden collected Celtis. Neville gave me a grinder for my birthday and I have been wanting to use it for some time but have been a little reluctant, first of all it's a big noisy machine and second of all I have never carved so don't really know what I am doing. As most of my Celtis are from the garden I thought I would practice on the small one first.



This is the before picture and below the after. I have used Lime Sulphur on the deadwood, but it is quite rotten so I don't expect it to last too long, particularly at the nebari, you can almost see right through the trunk. It was a good practice session but I still have to get used to using the different burrs and finding out the how best to use them.



Many thanks Ruza. Looks like we have a star at carving.

And from Ian:

Thanks again for an informative Newsletter. A note on Water potential.

The Water Potential Gradient in Bonsai

Notes compiled from the Meter Environment website.

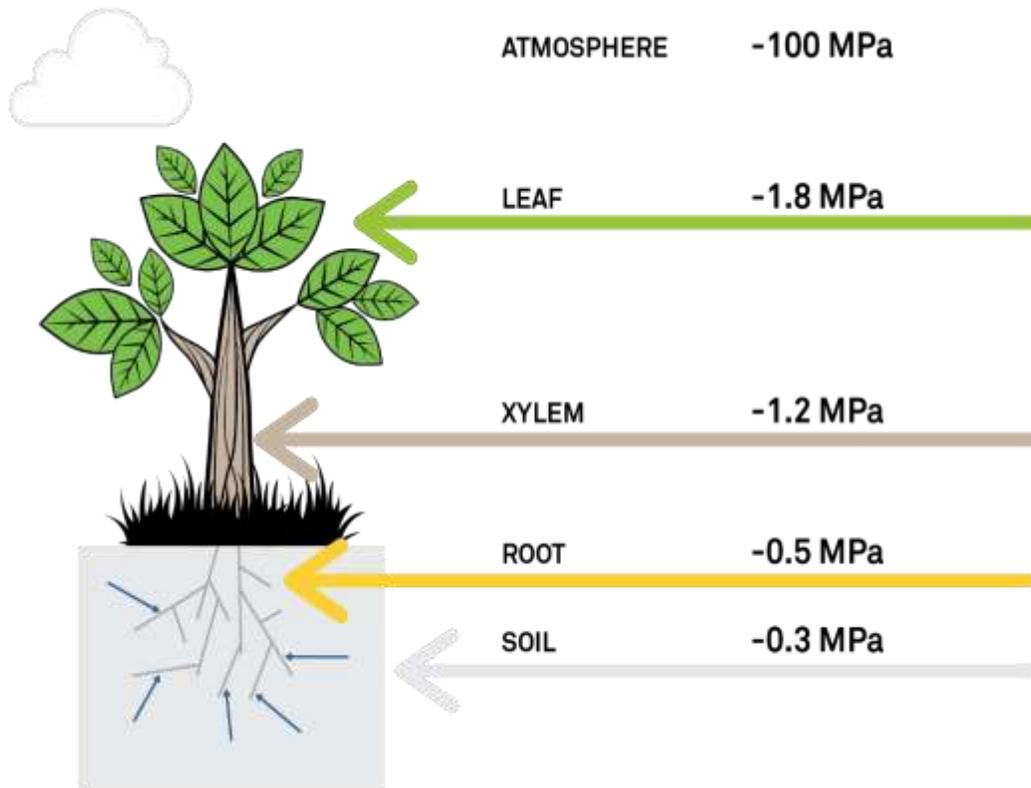
Transpiration and the resulting water potential gradient, depicted in Figure 1, is the driving force behind the soil-plant-atmosphere continuum or water potential gradient. This gradient is critical for moving water from the growing medium to a tree's leaves so that photosynthesis can take place.

The water potential of the growing medium at the start of the continuum is determined largely by the grain size, sorting and packing of the particles in the growing medium.

The growing medium is at a typical $\Psi_w = -0.3$ MPa and the roots are slightly more negative at a $\Psi_w = -0.5$ MPa. This means the roots will pull water up from the growing medium and pass it on to the ever decreasing water potentials of the xylem systems in the stem, branches, twigs and finally out through the leaves at -1.8 MPa, to the atmosphere at a $\Psi_w = -100$ MPa, where the water evaporates.

(1,2MPa = 12 bar = 120m water column)

Figure 1. Water potential gradient in a system



Trees are phenomenal hydraulic engineers and use these water potential forces and sap pressure to generate enough force to split rocks and buckle sidewalks. Using only the basic laws of physics and the simple manipulation of potential energy, trees can move water to the top of a tree over 110 metres tall.



Figure 2. a) Coastal redwoods (*Sequoia sempervirens*) are the tallest trees in the world. Tree roots can easily generate enough force to (b) buckle and break concrete sidewalks.

Many thanks Ian, much appreciated.

That's all folks, the cupboard is now bare. We need your news for all to share next month please.

I had an e-mail from Roy Nagatoshi recently and he sends his regards to all his friends in South Africa. Both he and his wife are well and just spent a few days in Las Vegas celebrating their wedding anniversary.

As mentioned last month, subscriptions are now due. EFT's would be appreciated to account as per below.

Birthdays in August: Only one, Zeno on the 8th. Many happy returns to you Zeno, and we wish you many more happy and healthy years.

Hope you and your family are keeping well and stay safe.

Sincerely

Derry

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