





# APAB—N — 10

The Newsletter of the Australian  
Plants as Bonsai Study Group



**A Study Group of the  
Association of Societies for  
Growing Australian Plants**

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## MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS DUE NOW!!

Membership renewals fall due on July 1<sup>st</sup> for the year 2006-2007. The rates are \$13 (\$17 overseas). The rates are reduced by \$4 if you provided services to the Study Group during 2005-06. For example, if you provided the names of species you are growing, horticultural notes, an article for the newsletter or organised a display. If you check your address label, you will see the date your membership runs out. If it says 2006 June 30, then your dues are due now. Use the renewal form, and fill in the details. Please don't just put a cheque in an envelope and post it, or just attach a cryptic post-it note without your full name and address; I need to be sure my records are up-to-date.

In future, if you provide *horticultural* information in 2006-07, then in '07-'08 the reduction is \$4. It will be \$2 if you provide services other than horticultural information or only plant names. (The reduction is either \$4 or \$2.)

Additions to the species list this year have been fantastic. Please keep the names coming – they are still important.

However, we are very short on the basic horticultural information. It only takes a report of when you do your pruning and repotting this coming season to address this short-fall. With this information, we will be well on the way to writing up our information for publication. If most of us really get busy and just report what we do over the next 18 months, then our publication could be out by the end of 2008 or 2009. LET'S GIVE IT A GO!

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**Notes on**  
***Leptospermum***  
***petersonii***  
By Bob Nieass

Obtained : 1995

Height : 22 cm

Photographed : Spring 2005



As with my *Callistemon*, this little tea tree, more than likely *L. petersonii*, was purchased from the local Newcastle Aussie native nursery as semi-advanced tube stock. Once taken home it was placed onto the ground (in this case icky, sticky, white clay) at the end of our newly completed house. It was then promptly ignored except for watering.

Sometime over the next few years, the tube was knocked onto a rakish angle and the tree's trunk compensated by growing up to the light, giving me a serendipitous bend and the idea for a windswept final style. Whilst living on the clay, roots emerged from the holes at the bottom of the tube and took a firm hold. The diameter of one was 5 mm, not small in relation to the tree itself. With the discovery of the exterior roots, the tree was re-potted and the basic future shape was started using the clip and grow technique.

Two years ago (summer 04/05), when my bonsai benches were completed, it was

potted into the little free-form shell. This meant that just over half the root mass had to be removed to locate into the shell and not look out of place. After a month in a sheltered corner, it had survived and has proven to be one of my favourite trees, providing a delightful mass of white flowers each spring. The trunk's bark is becoming more and more textured with age.

Training is simple. Pruning to maintain the general windswept form is carried out regularly in the period after flowering through to the end of autumn. Care is taken to remove the dead flower heads once flowering is finished. At the moment it resides in a soil mix that is 50/50 2 mm gravel and azalea and camellia mix. Moss is maintained on the soil surface to stop the mix from being washed out due to the unique shape of the pot.

**Some Thoughts**  
**on Bonsai with**  
**Especial**  
**Reference to**  
**Australian Natives**  
By Alison Copperfield

If we agree with the Japanese phrase "bonsai represents the beauty of nature in miniature" or as one Japanese said to me "like looking at nature through the wrong end of a telescope", then we have to consider what is the scope of 'beauty'. None of us would argue with the stunning external beauty of the initial impact of a lovely maple either in new spring foliage or displaying magnificent autumnal colouring.

However, do we also see and appreciate, at the same level, the stark beauty of the lightning-struck tree? And what about the beauty of the indestructibility of a tree blown over by a gale, but moving forward to

become an inspiring raft style? Is there not also beauty in the ability of nature to overcome disastrous events?

I have no wish to become anthropomorphic about our trees, but if they are to be successful as bonsai then they have to possess and exhibit some qualities which interact with our own emotions. Some trees are so evocative that one is instantly transferred to another place and time, even perhaps to another level of appreciation. (I am quite unashamed to say that there were tears in my eyes when I saw the 'Goshin' for the first time this year in America).

If we accept that this evocativeness exists, then some of the rather mechanical, so-called 'Rules of Bonsai' could be felt as being artificial and in some cases even non-applicable, especially to our natives.

Taking into consideration that, geologically speaking, Japan has only a very recent history by comparison with Australia, then it is no longer even surprising that what a Japanese might see as evocative and what we might see are eons apart.

Our natives derive from the original landmasses of Pangea and Gondwana – shaped by our ancient soils – and overall very different climatic conditions. They are survivors of both the selective powers of time and also the lack of the climatic advantages enjoyed by many 'recent trees'.

It therefore seems to me that to try to force some of our natives into the styles designed for recent trees may not allow them to share with us, the observers, those elements which of themselves give us that treasured evocation by which, when we stand and look at a tree we are mentally transported to another place, be that which is imaginary or recollected.

I once saw a collection of about 45 bonsai trees, all sorts of species, but all in the one style: regulation informal upright, with pleasing curves. By tree 20 I was so bored and disillusioned that I only glanced at the remainder, in the vain hope that at least one of them might be sufficiently different to fire my imagination - evoke a memory - or fill me with enthusiasm to attempt something similar and so extend my own boundaries. No such luck. I left feeling thwarted and even somewhat cheated because of the almost production-line appearance of the trees.

As a corollary to this wish to create evocative trees, I take many slides of what I call 'study trees' i.e. those which in nature have the characteristics to stimulate my imagination. These trees make me wish to emulate those features which lead to the creation of a tree which has the power to enrich my imagination and send me on my way with gratitude for expanding my horizons as to what makes a tree that leaves me feeling the richer for having had the opportunity to look at it.

I therefore think that the sooner the 'naturalistic' style is recognised as being a legitimate approach to a tree, the sooner we are going to be able to see and share native trees with a very high evocative value.

**Notes on *Banksia marginata***  
By Roger Wimhurst

I am taking this opportunity to send you some information on a *Banksia marginata* that is at last showing some vigorous activity.



The plant, one of two, was purchased in a nursery in mid-2003 so I can't say what its provenance is. I suspect that it could be from Tasmania. I initially left it in the original container, commenced to feed it with slow-release native fertiliser and pruned it quite severely, but not below the bottom set of leaves. The plant responded slowly, but consistently put on new shoots and developed a pleasing shape.

In autumn 2004, I transplanted it to its current pot. The pot is not special but has a colour that compliments the plant and is useful as a training pot following reduction of the roots during transplantation. This was not without trepidation, and the plant has settled in well. During spring and in summer '04-'05 it commenced flowering activity. It currently has three flower spikes developing and there appear to be many more.

The plant is 250mm tall and 300mm wide. The leaves are 20mm x 3mm. The trunk is 20mm in diameter.

*[There are some forms of banksia that produce flowers (conflorescences) from*

*the nodes just below an apical bud. They will repeatedly flower from this region, unlike the typical flowering which comes only from an apical bud. I have not seen any formal reports of this phenomenon, but I have observed it in a small number of plants. For those who have such a plant as a bonsai, they are fortunate indeed, as there are more options for styling and still retaining the capacity to flower. Roger Hnatiuk]*

## **Allocasuarinas in Tasmania**

By Diana Jones

At the Native Plant Show [in Hobart] in November, there were no allocasuarinas. This was surprising as they are one of the easiest natives to grow as bonsai. In nature they are usually found on sandy soil near the coast, so extra sand and gravel are added to the potting mix to make it very free-draining. They tolerate drying out and so far have shown no sign of stress, even in the hottest weather. In Tasmania there are 7 species (if the botanist haven't changed their ideas again recently), 6 of which are suitable for bonsai. Only the very fast growing species *A. crassa* is unsuitable as it has a chaotic growing habit.

The sources of material are nursery stock or seeds. Seeds are cheaper, but you need to be an expert to know the species you have chosen. They start growing with a long, strong taproot. This needs to be removed as soon as possible, so for this reason tube stock are the best choice, as with pots the taproots have often been badly twisted and are difficult to extract, and the top feeder roots may have died. The few feeder roots remaining are very delicate and easily broken.

Tie the plant into the pot very gently (I usually use raffia) and support the young stem with either a wire or a stake, as it has

now lost its stabilizing roots. This is the most difficult stage, and if it survives for six months the rest is straightforward. For the first few years, as with all young trees, it needs repotting every year, but as they grow older, you can leave them for 2 to 5 years.



Fig. 1 *A. monilifera*.

The illustrations show 2 examples. Fig. 1 shows *A. monilifera*, which was purchased as tube stock in 1998. The growth habit is delicate and it produced plenty of side branches to choose from. Fig. 2 is a much older tree. Originally it was *A. stricta* but recently they have changed its name to *A. verticillata*. It was acquired in 1990 and has grown in a bonsai pot ever since. Three years ago it became too large to manage easily, so was heavily pruned and put into this larger pot to encourage it to grow. New

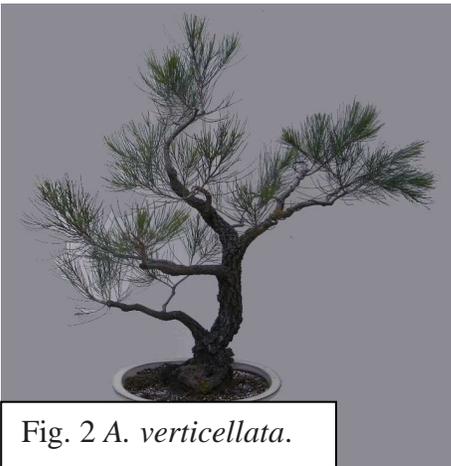


Fig. 2 *A. verticellata*.

shoots appeared on very old wood, so this winter it can undergo some refined shaping. The tree was about 20 – 30 years old when

acquired, so the trunk is knobby and looks interesting.

## **4<sup>th</sup> National Exhibition of Australian Plants as Bonsai**

Following the great success of the 2005 exhibition, another exhibition is planned for this coming November 17 – 19. Now is the time for you to start preparing trees if you live in the Sydney-Canberra-Wagga Wagga region, or photos if you live further than you can plan to deliver your trees for showing.

Two or more people can arrange for one person to drive the plants here on Friday and see the exhibition, then on Sunday another person can drive to see the exhibition and pick up the plants. It can work very well. So start talking to your friends and let me know by 30 September if you can have some plants for display. I'd also like to hear from Canberra and region people about what plants you are planning, by the same time please.

## **Growing the Queensland Small- Leaf Fig as Bonsai in South-East Queensland By Bradley Barlow**

In Brisbane, which is close to the sea, the average daytime temperature in summer is around 30° C and in winter around 20° C. The summer-time high relative humidity provides ideal growing conditions for *Ficus*.

Of special note is our local native the Queensland small-leaf fig (*Ficus obliqua*).

*[Known incorrectly as Ficus eugenioides. The naming of this species has caused confusion for some time. If you are interested in details, please contact me. Roger Hnatiuk]*

In its native environment, this tree grows all year round, but especially loves the high



humidity of summer. The tree develops strong root systems and ages into a silvery/grey bark which can craze with age. The leaves are an extra special feature as they are dark green in a wonderful contrast to the trunk and branches, but especially suitable for bonsai as the internodes between the leaves and the leaves themselves are relatively easy to reduce in size and length. This species has the ability to develop a branch ramification more typical of deciduous trees and so, with appropriate wiring, it is possible to develop grand branch proportions filled with tertiary branching and small leaves.

These attributes make this fig species an ideal tree for bonsai from 10 cm to 80cm height. Smaller sizes take much more control and experience to ensure a miniature leaf size. Bonsai enthusiasts often have small-sized figs of this species but they do not achieve the full potential of the tree as

the techniques are best learned on the medium to larger-sized stock.

I personally grow my trees under a covered roof environment providing an indoor/outdoor environment. With direct morning sun and monitored watering, this fig grows very well. However, these trees can be grown in full sun or partial shade. My trees are protected from extreme cold (lower than 5-10° C) because they are not frost tolerant. In cooler regions they would require protection from temperatures less than this. At average temperatures over this, the tree grows all year round which is another asset to the development of great bonsai.

Annual root pruning especially in the summer period can further stimulate growth in the beginning stages of design. As with most figs, a diet high in fertiliser is heartily digested by the tree, but, as with most broadleaf trees, the balance of leaf growth and leaf size is relative to the extra nitrogen provided by fertiliser. As the tree design matures, you need to balance fertiliser usage with the desire for small leaves.

Figs typically grow back strongly from old wood. The first growth spurt will provide the most rapid advancement of branch thickness; control of this can advance a fig tree design. The growth of sacrifice branching to enhance trunk or branch thickness is also easy with this species. Many older figs have been collected from the wild, grown in the ground or in foam boxes to speed the development of trunk size. This accelerated technique must be well-controlled to ensure a natural taper in the future bonsai.

The bark on healthy trees heals rapidly and many find the use of healing pastes unnecessary. These trees have milky sap which flows profusely after injury but this is easily controlled by spraying the wound with water! I find that these cuts heal more naturally and quickly without the addition of hormone healing pastes.

The tree will develop aerial roots if the relative humidity is high and especially if the tree is in need of repotting. While the use of aerial roots in some fig bonsai design is highly decorative or desirable, care must be taken to ensure that fast growing aerial roots do not develop instead of and to the detriment of the tree trunk diameter. Uncontrolled aerial roots growing from upper branches can directly superfeed the branch from the aerial root joint of the branch outwards. This can quickly create inverted taper in branches and eventually in trunks if not controlled.

Trees will develop buttressed roots more quickly if during root pruning extra roots are removed from directly underneath the trunk of the tree. The removal of downward growing roots will encourage those growing outwards from the trunk to take on the additional needs of the tree and thicken much more quickly. This will also enhance trunk taper at the base of the tree.

Figs prefer an open soil-mixture and appreciate being wet then dried to lightly-moist within a daily watering cycle.

When it comes to wiring branches, this species will respond well if wired intensely. Many people do not wire figs as they would a deciduous tree and then they are limited to a tree design with sparse foliage rather than pads. Be creative with shaping techniques to discover the most appropriate technique for the size of the branch. For example, shape mature branches and trunks with tie down wires or light rope and guy wires, while more traditional methods work well on medium and immature branching. In really hot climates, beware of excessive wire that is closely wrapped around branches as a common myth claims that the super-heated, sun-baked wire can adversely heat the milky sap and cause die back. I personally wire more loosely on figs, using a thicker wire than typical and wrapping the more pliable branching in a spring-like fashion so that the wire does not directly contact the branch as

securely as in traditional wiring methods. Fig branches do take some time to set because they remain pliable for quite a long time. The advantage of shaping older branches certainly makes up for the time required to set the branches. These trees can grow very quickly and wire-scarring is a big risk if traditional wiring methods are employed. So be vigilant during the growing periods.

Employ all traditional deciduous-tree pruning methods eg. grow secondary and tertiary branches on before cutting back to the smallest and oldest leaves. This technique will accelerate leaf size reduction and force the tree to ramify much more quickly.

The tree does not seem to suffer any special pest problems but be vigilant for any local infestations and treat with expert assistance from local nursery staff.

The Queensland small-leaf fig is often cross-pollinated with other varieties, including the Moreton Bay fig producing the small leaf Moreton Bay fig. This definitely enhances the bonsai appeal for those people who want a traditional Moreton Bay bonsai tree. However, be aware that the leaves and internodes between leaves still usually remain quite large in comparison to the pure Queensland small-leaf fig, and the tapering of Moreton Bay fig branches and trunks can also be less desirable than the pure Queensland small-leaf variety.

In conclusion, I would again emphasise the most important virtues and capabilities of this species. Some other fig types suffer die-back after pruning within branch structures, making long-term pad development impossible or risky. Some other fig species prefer to grow downwards or in a traditional weeping direction, which is very hard to develop into traditional bonsai branch pads. Others yet have leaves that are too thick and leathery and which do not reduce to the small size attainable in the small-leaf variety. Some others tend to sprout new

shoots only at the end of pruned branches rather than along the entire length of the older wood; this is very limiting to some design styles and leads to octopus-like bonsai. And finally, many figs develop very strong and very straight branches with no or little tapering along branch lengths in a bonsai. This doesn't happen in the small-leaf fig, giving it another huge advantage.

The Queensland small-leaf fig, for all these reasons, should be the first choice for more serious *Ficus* bonsai enthusiasts. After personally travelling to Asian countries and witnessing first hand their often amazing bonsai figs, I come home and more fully and confidently appreciate the value of our local variety and all of its natural advantages. This species is available from bonsai nurseries across the south-east of Queensland and especially in Brisbane.

**Melaleuca violacea**  
**var. prostrata**  
By Ruth McLucas

I acquired this plant in 2002 as a three-year-old stock plant from a nursery. I liked the complexity of its branching, the result of repeated (but random from a bonsai perspective) trimming as cuttings were taken. I removed one secondary branch that did not fit in with the flow of the other branches and wired up an 'apex' (Fig 1), hoping to fill in a gap at the top of the tree. I kept the tree trimmed back fairly hard for some time, hoping to develop good



Fig. 1. After first trimming and styling.

secondary structure. It did not respond well to this; the tree lost vigour and a major branch died. I think I did not leave enough green growth on that branch at a time when the tree was not growing strongly so, rather than shoot back, it died. The tree was probably underfed at this time, too. I have concluded that weak branches, or branches without much foliage, should not be trimmed hard. Young, vigorous shoots respond well to trimming, producing 'twin' shoots just behind the cut. Vigorous branches may also produce shoots further back, especially where they get plenty of light, but I have not yet found this to be predictable.

Benign neglect gave the tree a chance to grow unchecked and last October it flowered on the tips of the previous season's growth (Fig 2). I have also gone back to using an

all-purpose, slow-release fertilizer for all my



Fig. 2. In flower

bonsai as I was not keeping up with regular application of liquid forms. All my trees have responded well, including this one.

I am using the prostrate growth of this variety to develop a relatively broad, gently weeping crown. After its next flowering I will cut the tree back enough to maintain the overall profile and encourage development of individual branches. If left unchecked it will form a dense upper layer of interwoven foliage at the expense of the lower foliage, so I will rationalise the upper growth to both define the structure and let light through to the lower branches.

## Special Bonsai Show: Adelaide

The following is a message from Pam Russell, a long-time APAB member who grows hakeas, melaleucas and eremophilas as bonsai.

The APS (SA) Region are having their conference in Adelaide on the 11th - 13th August 2006. I thought you might like to advertise the event in the newsletter. We will be having a small bonsai display, among many other stalls, which may interest some of our APAB members.

Interstate members would be most welcome. If interested they can contact us on (08)82622599 or email: [sturtpea@iprimus.com.au](mailto:sturtpea@iprimus.com.au) for more information/ registration forms.

Bonsai will be on display on Sat 12 August 1:30 – 4:30pm.

## Royal Easter Show, Sydney: Ribbons!

By Lee Wright



The 'Escapee', *Kunzea ambigua*, shown at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Australian Native Plants as Bonsai exhibition in Canberra last year, won the 'Champion Native' at the RAS at Easter this year. Other winners are a *Kunzea* sp by 'Sue' (below).



And a *Melaleuca bracteata* 'Revolution Gold' by Lee (below).



Well done all!

## Mini Gallery of Members plants

1. The *Melaleuca linariifolia* in the photograph (top next column) is grown by Jim McK., NSW. Jim is a member of Summerland Bonsai Society. The tree is approximately thirty years old and was dug up fourteen years ago on an old dairy farm near Billinudgel, NSW during a dry spell. It had been well trampled and trimmed by cows and wildlife. The tree's natural habitat is swamp and so it sits happily in a tray of water.

Jim has had the tree in training for three years. Its height is 650mm with a trunk diameter of 140mm. The pot is a cream-glazed lotus shape.

[The leaves are large for this species and I wonder if it might be *M. quinquenervia*, the broad-leaved paperbark. Whatever its name, it is shaping well as a bonsai. Roger H]



2. I photographed these (see photos below) at Mt Tomah Botanic Gardens in January. The first Wollemi bonsai? They belonged to a member of staff of the Gardens. Merle



3. Now here is a tour-de-force from Derek in Western Australia. This is *Melaleuca raphiophylla*, swamp paperbark. It ties for 7<sup>th</sup> place amongst the most commonly grown species of Australian natives as bonsai. It is



also the most commonly reported *Melaleuca* in our database. Who wouldn't like to own a tree like this?

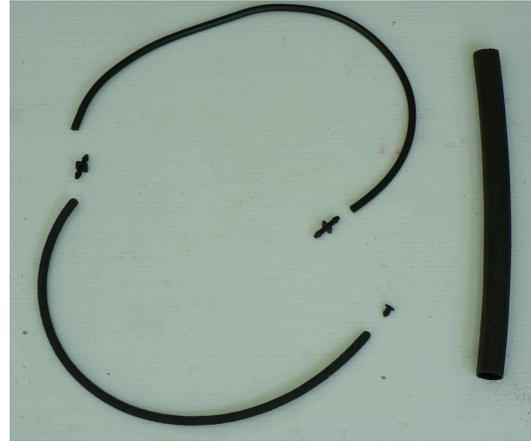
## Drip irrigation

By Steve W.

As part of getting my collection organised this year on good shelving, I installed a drip irrigation system with electronic timer. This followed last year's use of grown children to water while I was at the beach, which resulted in several near-death experiences (for the trees, not the children, though one could have been tempted).

The ingredients are the usual black plastic irrigation hose (12 or 19 mm), 4 mm flexible irrigation hose, 4mm *weeping* irrigation hose, barbed joiners (not the screw ones, which can blow off), and an end plug. Cut

the ingredients to the required lengths and join together.



The hose can be laid across small pots or coiled around larger pots.



One trick to getting it to stay in the shape you want is to put a piece of wire inside of the weeping hose, then bend it to the required shape – this is how the two figs below were done.



The advantage of using weeping hose over individual drippers is that one line can do the entire pot, whereas several individual drippers may be required for a large pot with well draining mix.



Finally, be careful using automatic watering systems. It is very easy to over water some plants. Although longer or shorter lengths of hose can be used to manage the amount of water applied, you still need to check the pots individually to ensure they are getting the correct amount of water (not too much, not too little).

## **The Soil Biota and Bonsai**

By Alison Copperfield

To understand the importance of soil biota, that is, all the living organisms found within the soil, first remember that bonsai only obtain nutriment from the soil when the nutrients are dissolved in water in the soil. Only then can they be taken up by roots.

Organic material in the soil is important for at least three reasons:

1. It is the hub of biological activity
2. Has a profound effect on the physical properties of the soil, i.e. tilth
3. It is the source of plant nutrition especially in relation to nitrogen.

The pathway from organic material in the soil to nutrients in the soil solution depends basically on the activities of the soil biota. Passing very quickly through the main stages in organic breakdown, we find that the macrobiota such as scavengers and larger detrital feeders work on the coarse organic matter to produce the 'compost' that is added to the soil. This is then acted upon

by the mesobiota and finally the microbiota. It is these last which are mainly responsible for converting the insoluble salts of plant nutrients into those forms which are soluble.

To give some idea of just how numerous they are, in one gram of fertile soil the number of beneficial bacteria may reach 10 to the power of 9 [10 billion]. If we weighed all the micro-organisms under healthy grassland, they would greatly exceed the weight of all the animals feeding on the grass. Another staggering figure is the rate at which they can multiply, many of them reach a reproductive age in 30 minutes, and thus one original cell can be the start of 300 million in 24 hours and in two days produce more individuals than the whole of humanity.

The beneficial bacteria play their part as the 'chemical factories' which keep recycling the essential elements. They help to make nitrogen, carbon, phosphorus, sulphur, chlorine, boron and molybdenum etc. available to the bonsai. That is to say, these elements need to be changed into a form that can be built into living matter. Special mention should also be made of the nitrogen-fixing bacteria and other microbiota found in the roots of legumes and some other kinds of plants.

Mycorrhizae, those fungi that live in a mutually beneficial relationship with plant roots, improve the ability of plants to obtain nutrients from soils by greatly increasing the volume of soil that is able to provide nutrients to the plant.

Another aspect of healthy soil is concerned with the structure and stability of the soil. That is, those factors which go to make up the 'tilth' of the soil. For species not needing very sandy soils such as maples, a good bio-healthy bonsai soil should, when squeezed as tightly as is possible within the clasped fist, hold its shape for 2 seconds after releasing the fingers and then break into pieces, not individual grains. This amount of cohesion (tilth) is closely related

to the amount of biota present. It is impossible to obtain these results with soil that has been in the pot for so long that nutrients and soil biota are exhausted.

High numbers of soil biota alone will not sustain soil health; diversity of species is needed if the ecosystem in the pot is to be maintained. Given the general lack of nutrients available within our Australian soils, largely due to their great antiquity, we are more than ever dependent upon the soil biota.

When old soil is removed from a tree long overdue for new soil, the old soil is either non-cohesive or the grains are separated or the soil is waterlogged, acid and with a rank smell. Non-cohesive soil may result when soil bacteria, which normally help soil particles stick together, disappear due to the lack of organic material. A rank smell may be the result of good bacteria drowning due to waterlogging. When soil becomes waterlogged several things happen:

1. Oxygen moves through the soil 10 times more slowly than normal
2. Denitrification occurs, that is, nitrogen is returned to the atmosphere as a gas and is therefore not available as a nutrient source. This chemical reduction can lead to soil toxicity
3. All microbiota dependant on oxygen drown.

Another vital function, especially of the mesobiota such as earthworms for example, is that they create their own living space and in so doing they make the macro pores within the soil. These are so important in both aeration and drainage of the soil.

*[However, most bonsaiists are not impressed to find worm castings on top of their carefully manicured moss or pebble carpets, even if it does represent soil health and fertility of their soils! They would prefer to fertilise and repot more often to create artificially healthy soils. However, I do keep earthworms in some of my larger pots. Roger Hnatiuk]*

Mention must also be made of the other side of the coin; that is, those members of the soil biota and physical conditions which represent poor soil health or are the cause of diseases or parasites of both the bonsai and other members of the soil biota.

Another problem can be the salts leaching out from the clay of pots. This is a problem with some earthenware or other low-fired pots. I have found that the best treatment is to boil the pot for 10 minutes, rinse thoroughly and allow to dry outside before reusing.

In conclusion we should now begin to appreciate that the soil biota are perhaps our most important partners in the cultivation of our bonsai. It is important that we are aware of the soil microbiota and the need to care for them as a vital part of our soil.

## **Clubs Can Contribute Too!**

One of the great happenings this past year was when the Wagga Wagga Bonsai Society got together and contributed information on the experiences of members in growing Australian native species as bonsai. Toowoomba did this a year or so ago.

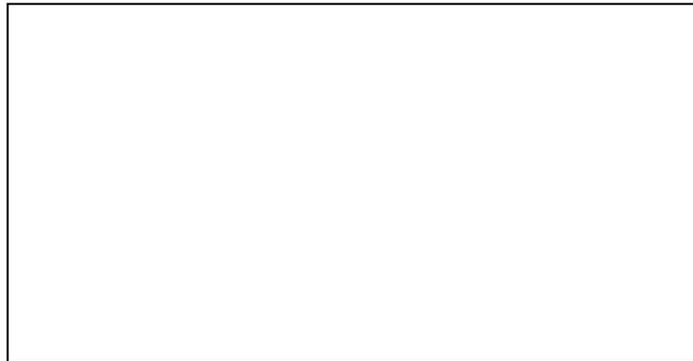
Quite often only the club joins as a member, even when there are several people in the club who grow one or more native species as bonsai. It is so helpful when a club member takes up the challenge and fun of getting their members to report on what species they are growing and when they prune and repot. Incidental notes on what succeeded or didn't are also very helpful in filling in details of what happens across the country.

So please, clubs, including ASGAP societies, get your members to help as a group. It helps the Study Group and your club benefits with lower membership dues!



# Australian Plants as Bonsai

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## Study Group Information

The Australian Plants as Bonsai Study Group was formed in mid 2001. Its aims are:

- to determine which species of native Australian plants are grown as bonsai;
- to determine the horticultural characteristics and requirements of each species;
- to determine the artistic and aesthetic qualities of species; and
- to publish information to help people grow and enjoy Australian plants as bonsai.

To become a member, please send a cheque for \$13 (Aus.\$17 overseas) or postal money order to:

'Australian Plants as Bonsai', PO Box 450,  
Jamison Post Office, Macquarie ACT 2614,  
Australia. Direct credit transfers can be made to  
Community CPS, BSB 461152, acct no. 669544.

**The Study Group Leader is Roger Hnatiuk.**  
**Contact him at the above postal address or via**

**email: [rjhnatiuk@yahoo.com.au](mailto:rjhnatiuk@yahoo.com.au).**  
**NOTE NEW EMAIL ADDRESS**