

ASGAP AUSTRALIAN PLANTS AS BONSAI STUDY GROUP
MEMBERSHIP FORM

Financial Year 1 July 2015 – 30 June 2016

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I belong to ASGAP society: SGAP, APS, WSWA, ANPS or 'none' (**circle one**). If 'none', you are invited to join as a 'contributing member', though you will not be covered for insurance at any Group activity. Your fees are the same; you will receive the newsletter and can contribute in the same manner as an ASGAP member.

If you belong to a bonsai society, please specify:
.....

Annual Membership Fee:

New member and member who contributed information relevant to the Group or worked on behalf of the Group in <u>2010/12</u>	\$10.00
Member who has not contributed information relevant to the Group in <u>2010/12</u>	\$14.00
Overseas member	A\$20.00

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Australian Native Plants Symposium and Exhibition in Melbourne

By Ambrose Canning

Overall it was great and in a great setting, a job well done by the Victorian Native Bonsai Club. Just like other Canberra symposium's its venue was within the botanic gardens

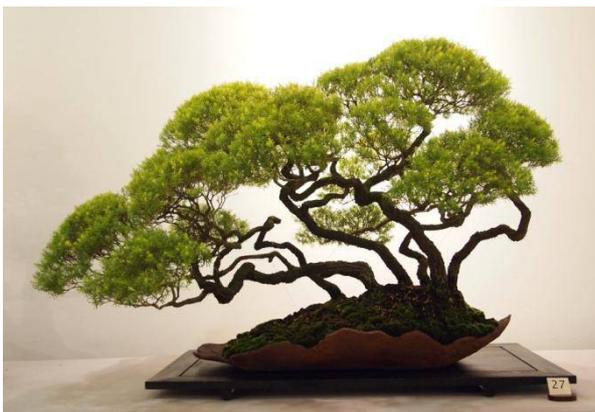


Figure 1. *Melaleuca bracteata*

(Figure 2) so giving a great backdrop to the



Figure 3. Venue Hall event. One afternoon featured a walk in the gardens lead by volunteers from the Friends of the Gardens



Figure 2. *Leptospermum laevigatum*.

and focussing on the many natives in the gardens. The exhibition was well presented in a building set up as a gallery with clean white painted walls and good lighting. It was very interesting in the exhibition to compare native bonsai styles with some, particularly older bonsai, styled in a more northern hemisphere way, while others demonstrated a more Australian tree style. There is definitely a transition going on.

[Note from 'Roger': viewing pics on the AusBonsai web site shows some wonderful achievements with the local species as bonsai. How much things have changed in the past 10+ years! Looking forward to the next 10 with great anticipation.

Also, many thanks to Quentin, Marcela and their helpers for organising and running the event. It is hard work, but the results are well worth it, as attested to by so many who attended.]

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Leptospermum as Bonsai

By Roger Hnatiuk

Leptospermum (tea trees) are becoming a favoured group to use as bonsai in Australia. We have some **XX** species from which to choose. I know of **XX** that have been tried as bonsai. Probably the front runner, in terms of frequency of use is *L laevigatum* (coastal tea tree). It lends itself readily to pot culture and bonsai horticultural techniques.

Tea trees featured well in the recent Australian Native Plants as Bonsai Symposium and Exhibition held in Melbourne (see following articles).

I'd like to highlight a species that I'm growing to love as bonsai, as well as a tree in the ground – *L. brachyandrum*. It's strong visual characteristics, that translate well to bonsai culture, are the delicately soft, grey-green leaves and the spectacular bark.



Figure 4. Pot-grown *Leptospermum brachyandrum* with peeling bark, May 2015.

The bark is very smooth, inviting touching, but the sense of hardness is always a surprise. The rich coppery hue is present for many months, though it fades to grey. Then once or twice a year it splits open to reveal the new outer layer that is a soft pastel green. The

bark peels from the smallest 1-year old twigs right down to near the base. There, a sort of rough stocking of old bark remains.

The flowers of this species are inconspicuous, compared with so many other leptos. They are small, pale white, single flowers at the base of leaves on the current year's new growth. If you don't look for them, you can easily miss seeing them.

The book *Bottlebrushes, Paperbarks and Tea Trees*, by Wrigley and Fagg, describes their habitat is beside streams, but also on steep rocky areas. This gives a wide scope for shaping the trees. I haven't seen them in the field, but would love to see photos if anyone has. There is a small grove of 'old' trees (perhaps 45+ years) at the Australian National Botanic Gardens, which is where I photographed the mature trees for this article.



Figure 5. Peeling bark from mature tree.

This lepto, which doesn't have a common name, can grow as a single or multiple trunked tree (Fig 6). It also forms a short stocking of old bark at the base (Fig 7), both in full-size trees and in a pot.



Figure 6. *L. brachyandrum* with multiple trunks and a stocking base.

This species also has the wonderful capacity to produce new shoots from old wood (Fig. 7), both in trees in the ground and in the pot. Thus you can do major re-shaping if you feel you need to.



Figure 7. Re-shooting from very old wood.

Repotting every two or three years keeps the tree in good health. Regular ordinary fertiliser works very well. Wiring can only be done on young stems, as they become very hard and brittle by their second year. Branches set quickly when wired. Tip pruning stimulates good back shooting and ramification can be achieved if you persevere. I pull out the terminal leaves/bud by hand during the growing season, as it is easy and encourages ramification. Here are two trees in training pots that are about 4-5 years old.



Figure 8. *L. brachyandrum* as if leaning out from steep slope over stream.



Figure 9. An erect *L. brachyandrum*.

The 4th National Symposium on Australian Plants as Bonsai Melbourne, 11-12 April 2015

1. An extract of the ‘Symposium Report’

by Kevin Ritchie

Presentations

With the theme of the Symposium being titled “Natives – A Victorian Perspective” the topics covered by presenters gave a great focus on the experience and the species which are particularly relevant to our part of the country, but which are also very relevant to other parts of Australia as well.

Quentin Valentine provided a slide presentation on coastal species and growth habits, including especially Moonah and coastal tea tree. The possibilities and opportunities which these species and their responses to environmental pressures inspire for bonsai development were given a great overview, which was followed up with demonstrations later in the program.

In Neil Padbury's presentation on growing of advanced stock, he discussed his experiences with field-grown stock, especially with banksias, and his learning and successes in transplanting to containers for further development as bonsai. As he said, there is still wide scope for similar work across most of our native species.

Gavin Gostelow from ACT commenced with thoughts about the transition from Chinese and Japanese bonsai to Australian species, and then moved into a wide-ranging presentation on Acacias, as found in the wild, and as they could translate into bonsai using inspiration from the wild, as well as the natural growth characteristics of some of the many species available. Gavin's discussion included consideration of garden varieties, coastal and mountain species, and semi-arid species.

Kevin Ritchie presented a coverage of eucalypts as bonsai, with a particular emphasis on Victorian species and some others which are found as planted tree specimens here. Some of the possibilities for managing better crown, root and trunk development were discussed, as well

as some of the challenges still to be resolved for some species in particular.

The *Rarely-used Species* session certainly presented a cross-section of challenges and results for a range of interesting species, including *Acacia papryocarpa*, *Araucaria cunninghamii*, *Acacia pinguifolia*, *Athrotaxis cupressoides*, *Nothofagus cunninghamii*, *Brachychiton* (various species), *Melaleuca ericifolia*, *Melia azedarach*, and *Bunya Bunya*.

The Exhibition

Our exhibition was agreed by many as being one of the best exhibitions of bonsai, and especially native bonsai, to be seen. It attracted quite a range of bonsai enthusiasts, club members and the wider public, and certainly generated much discussion and interest. With 50 bonsai plants on display, covering a range of species including paperbarks, tea trees, eucalypts, acacias, and many others, it was an excellent display of the diversity and possibilities for Australian plants as bonsai, as achieved in Victoria especially. Domain House was a great venue, and the catalogue provided excellent information on each plant.

A *Critique* session for a number of plants selected from the exhibition display was conducted on the Sunday morning, led by Quentin, Neil and Gavin. This resulted in plenty of animated discussion and debate about styles, presentation, training practices and future possibilities for the plants reviewed. It also gave some good ideas for everyone to take away for development of their own plants.

2. The following is a comment Ex Facebook “Vic Native Bonsai Club”

[Julie Healy](#) [Vic_Native_Bonsai_Club](#)

[April 28](#) ·

I know I am somewhat late with this post, but just wanted to congratulate and thank the members involved in the recent native symposium. The trees were amazing representations of our native flora, the demos, and talks all informative, food plentiful and yummy, venue delightful, time to talk with other members, make enough to go against the grain to use our native trees.

Special thanks to the organizing committee for the smooth running especially Marcela Buzz, Quentin, Barry, and Ted.

3. The following pic is from the VNBC report and catalogue of the Exhibition.



6. *Leptospermum madidum var sativum* (often sold as *L. brachyandrum* in error)

Weeping tea tree,

History: The tree has been grown from nursery stock acquired in 1998. It has been grown as a bonsai since then, needing larger pots as it grew. Root growth is vigorous. It has peeling cinnamon bark over green inner bark, weeping grey green foliage and small white flowers in late spring.

The Bonsai Society of Southern Tasmania

In partnership with the Association of Australian Bonsai Clubs

Presents the 29th Australian National Bonsai Convention



Friday 20 May to Monday 23 May 2016

Wrest Point Convention Centre,
Hobart, Tasmania

<http://www.bonsai-southern-tasmania.org.au/convention.php>



Richea scoparia by Ambrose C, Tasmania.



Australian Plants as Bonsai

If not delivered, please return to PO Box 450, Jamison Post Office, Macquarie ACT 2614.

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 \$14 (Aus.\$20 overseas) or postal money order to:

‘Australian Plants as Bonsai’, PO Box 450, Jamison Post Office, Macquarie ACT 2614, Australia.

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account name: ASGAP. INCLUDE YOUR NAME IN TRANSFER

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