



# APAB—N

The Newsletter of the Australian Plants as Bonsai Study Group

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## Australian Plants as Bonsai 5<sup>th</sup> National Symposium and 12<sup>th</sup> Exhibition

### Developing better Australian bonsai

at the

**Australian National Botanic Gardens**

**27-28 February 2016**

*Canberra in 2016*

We all admire the beauty of Australian flora in its natural environment, whether this is in the lush tropics or arid desert. As bonsai artists, we are inspired by their powerful trunks, elegant branches and prolific, fabulous flowers.

So how do we incorporate these characteristics into our bonsai, maximising the natural beauty of the trees we work with?

**The 5<sup>th</sup> Symposium on Australian Plants as Bonsai will focus on both horticultural approaches and bonsai styling techniques** which have been used to achieve structural development of Australian plants being used as bonsai and shohin bonsai..

**Peter Hanrahan, Hugh Grant and Doug Harris** are great additions to the APaB symposia presenters' team this year, and will join Grant Bowie, Gavin Gostelow, Roger Hnatiuk and Ruth McLucas who have been regular presenters at previous symposia.

**Themed afternoon workshops** will focus on both structural and shohin development allowing participants to apply approaches covered in presentations. Trees will be provided as part of the registration fee for these workshops.

As previously, there will also be a **BYO workshop**, where you can either bring a tree or buy one from a selection that will be available at the symposium.

**A new addition this year is a 'roundtable'** to allow those who are working with particular species to share experiences and learn from each other. This year's focus will be eucalypts. Gavin, Peter and Hugh will be there to contribute what they have learnt about working with these plants that are often considered difficult bonsai material.

As this is the 5<sup>th</sup> Symposium, it is a good **time to look back and review** what we have learnt over the past 5 years. If you attended workshops at previous symposia, we would like to hear about your successes and what you've learnt about these plant species concerned, and also about any challenges you've faced in developing the bonsai beyond the workshops. If you have photos, please send them in so they can help the conversations along.

Check out the website: <http://cbs.org.au/>

*We are looking forward to seeing everyone in Canberra in February!*

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## Styling River She Oaks *Casuarina cunninghamiana*

By Roger Hnatiuk,

If you have ever tried styling a lovely she oak, then you will have found them both easy to work with and frustrating as you try to force them into moulds of the 'standard styles'. They can be made to look like good pines, the real ones as in *Pinus* spp. But if that is the style you want, try using a pine.

It is worth a look at what they do with their branches when left to their own devices and the passage of time. I've shown some great model old trees in the past, but couldn't go past this one of Gavins.



If you have looked at a grove of old river she oaks, then you might have seen something like this [photo courtesy Gavin]:

The branching patterns are quite complex, but are vital to creating the 'feeling' of this species. By studying the tight curves and contrasting long arcs, you can reset your eye to what to do with your bonsai with this

species.

Give it a go? You might be pleasantly surprised!

## Growing advanced native stock

Neil Padbury, Shibui Bonsai

For many years I have been growing traditional bonsai species in the ground to cut down the time taken to produce larger bonsai specimens and finally thought it was time to try some of our natives. Here are some results of my trials so far.



Natives grow well enough in the grow beds –3

years in the ground: *Banksia integrifolia*, *B. marginata*, *Kunzea parvifolia* (photo above).

But how will they react to being transplanted?

**October 2014.** All the trees in the bed were dug, pruned back and potted into standard potting mix.





The same tree (above) after pruning and shortening the roots. The tree (below) seen

and root reduction



when potted into 30cm orchid pot.

Another banksia from the grow-bed. Before(below) and after (above right) pruning



### Aftercare.

One of the banksias was placed into the poly tunnel for protection from the weather and to increase humidity to see if that would enhance survival.

In a few days many leaves had turned brown.

In the following weeks the banksia in the igloo lost all leaves and did not recover.

The others were placed, in their pots, on the ground in the nursery in full sun.

**November 2014:** After a few weeks most of the leaves on the banksias had turned brown

The banksias in the nursery recovered.

**By March 2015** they were healthy and growing well (see first two photos on next page).



and after initial pruning.



I slip potted this one into a 30 cm orchid pot and allowed it to grow freely then cut back on a 12 monthly cycle.

**2012 – before and after pruning (below)**



**2013 – before and after pruning (below).**



### Developing banksia in pots:

I have noted that banksias grow and thicken quickly, even when grown in pots. The tree to the right was grown as a club project over the same time scale as the field grown trees described above.

Original plant:  
*Banksia integrifolia* in a 15 cm pot. Before



## 2014 – before pruning (below left)



The picture below shows the trunk diameter after growing on for just 3 years in the larger pot. It is now ready to work on a shape and build up ramification of the branches.



## Old tree models for native bonsai

By Roger Hnatiuk

Tree styling is often inspired by looking at trees in their native habitats, or in established gardens where they have been allowed to age gracefully. I came upon these splendid images of an un-named eucalypt mallee. The image is from the newsletter of 'Bush

Heritage' and was photographed on Bon Bon Station Reserve in South Australia, in the Cooper Pedy area [photo with permission of Bush Heritage].

Bon Bon Station covers an area the size of Sydney, but it is a stunningly beautiful desert location 'with shimmering salt lakes, freshwater wetlands, stately myall trees and



stunningly beautiful expanses of pearl bluebush' according to the newsletter. Check out this link for further information on Bon Bon: <http://www.bushheritage.org.au/places-we-protect/south-australia/bon-bon> .

On the website is this splendid image of a western myall, *Acacia papyrocarpa*. and was photographed by Julia Harris, on Bon Bon Station.





# *Australian Plants as Bonsai*

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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.

Direct credit transfers can be made to Community CPS, **BSB 805-022, account no. 03276718;**

**account name: ASGAP. INCLUDE YOUR NAME IN TRANSFER**

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