

## President's Report

Andrew Ward

At present I am teaching a unit of work on popular culture. Part of this course involves students analysing songs of protest. I remember these songs, perhaps a little differently to others, as the music that formed my music education curriculum. To many Gen X people these songs held strong significance.

Amongst the songs I have rediscovered was one by Bob Dylan, possibly one of the most respected protest songwriters, most definitely influential in the popular music genre for over five decades. The lyrics to his song, '***The Times They Are A-Changin'***' have provided me with some insight into what would appear to be a perpetual issue.

Dylan's lyrics do not need expanding; I know that others will interpret particular aspects of his song with particular biases. Essentially however, Dylan's words do resonate of the necessity for change; that to ensure the longevity and continuation of anything, that there will be evolution.

Should we consider dinosaurs; they became extinct for a reason ... Perhaps it was that they were a species of habit; they did the same thing always, and continued to repeat the same things, even when change impacted on their very existence. Perhaps it was with dinosaurs, that they wandered to the same watering hole every day and, even when that watering hole turned into a mud pool and then to quicksand, they did not change their habits. Quite possibly, if dinosaurs had realised that change was necessary, they would have sought other watering holes and might possibly still exist.

Change does not always equate with improvements, I remember the resistance I initially held to paper cups for coffee – disposable coffee cups have certainly evolved into something that is now functional and far more environmentally friendly than the old polystyrene disposables.

My grandfather made coffee using a stove-top coffee brewer, this gave way to instant coffee, which has in turn given way to a variety of barista and alternative coffees. There has both been a coffee revolution and evolution. I wonder what will be next?

My early classroom experiences of printed materials were of gestetner run prints, the purple ink prints always smelt so much better than the black ones. The classroom environment was one laden with chalk. How things have changed, from gestetner to print room, to black and white printer to colour printer – even printers that collate, fold and staple! The classroom environment often still has other smells, but the cloud of dust has given way to the cleaner alternative of whiteboard markers and data projectors. Chalk dermatitis is now a thing of the past, how lucky we are!

The Carpenter's song ***Please Mr Postman*** has a very different connection to 2015 song audiences as to those in 2005. Where once we all relied on mail to deliver written information, it changed to fax and today for many it is email. I remember listening to Karen Carpenter singing 'I've been standin' here waitin' Mister Postman, So patiently ... ', you too can but think.

While I congratulate everyone on a busy and strong bonsai year, including another successful annual show, it is important that we do not rest on our laurels. I encourage you to think of ways in which we can continue to evolve and improve, and thereby encourage more people to become active participants in developing, growing, and showing bonsai. Please share your thoughts with me or any member of your committee.

A book is a collection of many chapters. When we arrive at the end of one chapter, it is really the start of another. With the conclusion of a book, it is not the end of that story. The end of a book allows us to create another chapter, another story, another evolution, a new beginning.

Consider the power of Dylan's conclusion to ***The Times They Are A-Changin'*** with the phrase 'the first one now will later be last'.

I hope that all our members and friends have a safe and happy Christmas and New Year. Be sure to remain focussed on your little trees, to look after each other, and to strive to spread the positive benefits of bonsai amongst others. I look forward to seeing you on Tuesday 2 February 2016 when we return to our regular bonsai meetings on the first and third Tuesday of each month. Be sure to keep an eye on our website ([www.bonsaisa.org.au](http://www.bonsaisa.org.au)) and also on our club Facebook page (Bonsai Society of South Australia Inc) for regular updates over summer.

**Milk as fungicide** – published in Neutrog e-feedback, Spring 2015

Believe it or not, milk is an effective fungicide in the war against a number of fungal diseases, including powdery mildew, black spot and rust.

A number of studies both here and overseas have confirmed this and have suggested this completely non-toxic spray may even be better than conventional chemical fungicides.

It has been around to be twice as effective on grapevines and roses and a wide variety of other plants, including pansies, violas, hydrangeas, zucchinis and cucumbers.

It is believed that milk works in two ways – firstly it is a germicidal effect (killing the fungal spores), and secondly, stimulating the plant's immune system so that it becomes more disease resistant. For the treatment of black spot and rust (where the fungal spores penetrate and develop within the leaf surface), it appears that milk is only effective as a preventative fungicide. As both are related to long-term leaf wetness, if milk is to work effectively it must be applied before the damp and wet weather conditions occur, before new growth has become infected and the plant must be sprayed thoroughly to achieve the maximum possible leaf coverage.

Mix one part milk with ten parts water and thoroughly spray over the rose or other infection-prone plant. This needs to be applied every five to seven days for three applications. Reapply after rain.

#### **Other tips to minimise powdery mildew, black spot and rust:**

- Remove and dispose of any diseased leaves into the rubbish bin (not the compost)
- Apply a layer of mulch so there can be minimal splashing of remaining fungal spores from the soil to the lower foliage of the plant.
- Ensure plants are happy healthy and well-nourished with regular fertiliser applications.
- Apply GOGO Juice monthly.

#### **Seasonal Notes**

##### ***Matt Sharp***

Summer is a busy time of year but not necessarily with your trees. In between last minute Christmas shopping and cooking turkeys it's easy to forget to look after your bonsai but with the arrival of the hot weather there are some things you need to keep on top of.

**Shade** is an important consideration and while in previous months I've said it was a good idea to get your trees out into the sun you now have to start thinking about giving them some protection. I usually put up shade cloth after Christmas but if there's a particularly bad heatwave I'll do it earlier. I have a dedicated area where I'm allowed to keep my bonsai (otherwise the whole back yard would be covered in trees) and half of this gets shaded with 50% white shade cloth. I've taken a leaf from the vegetable growers and avoided green shade cloth as green will block out the bits of the spectrum that plants prefer. The deciduous trees get put under the shelter as does anything in really small pots as they dry out so quickly. Everything else gets full sun.

**Watering** is now the paramount task and will continue to be so for the remainder of summer. If you neglect other tasks like applying or removing wire, trimming or fertilizing the worst that can happen is that you'll fall behind in the development of your bonsai, but it only takes one forgotten watering to lose a tree forever.

**Deciduous trees** will still be growing strongly so you should be removing at least some of the larger leaves to allow sunlight into the branches. Consider a complete defoliation of your Ash trees to coax another round of growth. Keep an eye on any wiring and remove any that might be damaging the bark. If you need to reapply, wind the wire in the opposite direction if possible to avoid marking the branch.

**Evergreen trees** will also be growing strongly and can generally tolerate the hot weather better so keep them trimmed and under control. Pine trees might have stopped growing candles so give them a good feed and you can coax another round of growth. If you're lucky you can get back budding on older branches and these are invaluable for next year's growth and improving taper within the branches.

Most of your trees will be hunkered down in mid to late summer and there is little to do but keep them well watered. The exception are those bonsai that love the hot weather so there is plenty to keep you busy if you have Olives, Jade, and Figs in particular. These trees can be fertilised, trimmed, pruned and wired as long as they are showing growth. Figs and Jade even prefer to be rootpruned this time of year especially if the nights are warm. It's also a good time to repot native trees, particularly Eucalypts as long as they don't have any new growth. It's harder to generalise about natives so let each tree be your guide.

Since we're talking **gum trees**, some people mistakenly believe that gum trees don't need much water since they thrive in our dry climate. But the truth is that in the wild they send down massive roots deep into the water table and take up huge volumes of water, therefore your potted Eucalypts are actually pretty thirsty. In fact only my Willows take more water and I found that they respond well to standing in a tray of water, particularly the River Red Gums.

Still looking for something to do? If your backyard isn't completely full of plants then try planting some ficus seeds or take a cutting of a jade.

Summer is a time to spend with family and friends but don't abandon your bonsai completely. Lazy hot days in a shady spot working on a tree with the radio on and a beverage close by is what it's all about.

## Creating Kokedama Moss Balls

Andrew Ward

You might have seen quirky sphagnum moss balls with little indoor plants being sold at craft markets or through gift stores and florists. There has been quite a surge of interest in these 'moss balls' over the past 12 months or so.

While on a recent trip to Sydney, Kym James (Nepean Bonsai Society) demonstrated how to make Kokedama – Moss Balls. I learnt how simple it is to create little soes or accents that can be used to display bonsai.

*The art of Kokedama literally translates from "koke" meaning moss and "dama" meaning ball. This moss ball has experienced a resurgence as a modern art form useful for uniquely presented plants and flowers. Instructions and classes on the how-to for this skill abound on the Internet and plant forums. A Japanese moss ball makes a personalized gift or simply an interesting accent for a favourite plant specimen. You can practice the art of Kokedama yourself with just a few items and minimal skill.*



### What is Kokedama?

Kokedama is a form of Japanese garden art that is centuries old and tied into the practice of bonsai. It is an accent to that mode of plant display where a moss ball is the focal and supporting point for a sculpted tree or plant. The moss ball is fixed to a platform or suspended from string with the plant growing out from the sphere.

Kokedama is the practice of taking the root ball of a plant and suspending it in a mud ball, which is then coated with soft green moss. It is a living planter as well as a distinctive display piece. They may be fixed to a piece of driftwood or bark, suspended from a string or nestled in a clear, attractive

container. Hanging many of these as a Kokedama moss garden is called a string garden.

### Materials for Making Kokedama Moss Balls

Kokedama traditionally uses a carefully composed 'soil' with a heavy clay base that is used to create 'muck'. There are many recipes for muck, but the essential components are peat, clay and cow manure. Some people use coco-peat instead of peat, others add finely cut up sphagnum and vermiculite.

I'd previously experienced poor results from creating more traditional Kokedama, so when Kym James demonstrated the different approach to creating Kokedama, I was more optimistic about the long term potential for these creations continuing to grow. Rather than wrapping the roots of the plant in muck, Kym's approach uses a free-draining potting medium, with some muck being an optional ingredient.

#### What you need:

- Small piece of pantyhose
- About 20 – 30 cm of 2.5 mm aluminium wire
- Accent plant
- Small ball of muck (about the size of a large marble)
- Sphagnum moss
- Green moss
- Cotton thread (any colour ... it will rot eventually)
- Rubber/Protective gloves
- Decorative nylon string (if hanging the ball)
- Potting soil
- Seamungus liquid
- Water



Select your plant using a guideline of ease of care, light situation, and ability to tolerate damp soil conditions. Many appropriate plants are available from garden centres and nurseries for use with terrariums and indoor gardens. These include Aglaonema, Philodendron, Dieffenbachia, Syngonium, Spathiphyllum, Parlour Palms, Ferns, Ivy, Peperomia and other tropical/subtropical jungle plants are suitable for the project. Avoid any succulents and cacti, as the soil ball will remain too moist for these types of plants.

For the moss, you can use dry floral moss that you soak or harvest some from your surroundings.



### Creating Your Japanese Moss Ball

I suggest using gloves – or just be ready to scrub your hands well after creating your Kokedama.

**Step 1:** Assemble all the items you will need for your Kokedama so that you can be time efficient.

**Step 2:** Cut a small piece of pantyhose. If you are using the toe section then you will not need to tie the piece of pantyhose off. If you are using another section (with two ends) you will need to tie one end off and turn the pantyhose piece inside out so that the knot is inside of the Kokedama.

**Step 3:** Using the aluminium wire, thread the wire in and out of the edge of the open piece of pantyhose. It is a bit like making a very small tadpole net, you will create a support for the open end of the pantyhose that is able to be closed off after you have added 'soil' and your plant to the Kokedama.

**Step 4:** Holding the stocking in one hand, add some potting medium into the stocking.

**Step 5:** Add a small ball of muck (optional).

**Step 6:** Add your accent plant/s into the hole that you have reinforced with the wire, then add more potting medium so that you have filled the piece of pantyhose.

**Step 7:** Close off the aluminium wire tie (not too tight around the stems of the plant/s) and then shape the planted stocking into a ball.

**Step 8:** Add some sphagnum moss and tie this on with cotton thread, keep adding sphagnum and overlapping the cotton thread until the sphagnum covers the ball completely. This could become your completed ball.

**Step 9:** (Optional) If you have access to a range of green mosses, substitute some sphagnum for the green moss. You will need to continue overlapping the cotton thread so that the moss is secured to the ball.

**Step 10:** Soak the ball into a Seamungus liquid solution, keep the ball in a moist, shaded and cool part of your garden. Regularly water the ball so that it is kept moist.

**Step 11:** (Optional) Use coloured nylon thread to overlay the moss, this thread will not rot away and will be a feature of the ball, you can also add hanging threads so that you are able to hang your Kokedama in the garden.



### Aftercare

It remains to encourage the moss to grow on the Kokedama, you will need to keep the moss ball out of direct sun, and it will develop with time. You will need to keep the ball moist, roll it in water regularly and spray a fine mist of water over the ball so as to encourage the moss to grow.

I look forward to seeing Kokedama moss balls being developed and used by members of our club as accent plants for bonsai. They are a lot of fun and a creative way of getting others involved in our passion.

### Royal Adelaide Show Report

Andrew Ward

Chris Xepapas judged bonsai at The Royal Adelaide Show over three days. This year competitors received a written critique for the suggested future development of their trees.

The split staging of the competition has benefits for all trees that are exhibited, with no tree being inside for more than 4 days at a time. Judging was held on Thursday 3, Monday 7 and Thursday 10 September. Champion bonsai in each section were returned to the final staging of judging and a Grand Champion bonsai was awarded. Prizes were substantial, with \$100 awards being presented to each of the 7 categories and a \$300 award, The John Michell Memorial Award for Grand Champion Bonsai, being awarded.

#### **First Prize Winners of each section were:**

##### **First Staging**

Class 93 – Bonsai, one, deciduous, over 600 mm **Richard Grace**

Class 94 – Bonsai, one, evergreen, under 150 **Chris Drinkwater**

Class 95 – Bonsai, one, evergreen, over 600 mm **Louis Skeklios**

Class 99 – Bonsai, one, Australian Native Plant (other than Ficus), over 600 mm **Chris Drinkwater**

CHAMPION BONSAI LESS THAN 150 mm (Prize \$100) **Chris Drinkwater**

CHAMPION BONSAI OVER 600 mm (Prize \$100) **Louis Skeklios**

##### **Second Staging**

Class 109 – Bonsai, one, deciduous, 300 mm to 600 **Tom Short**

Class 110 – Bonsai, one, evergreen, 150 mm to 300 mm **Tom Short**

Class 111 – Bonsai, one, evergreen, 300 mm to 600 mm **Chris Drinkwater**

Class 113 – Bonsai, one, Ficus, 300 mm to 600 mm **Greg Paterson**

Class 117 – Bonsai, one, deciduous, 300 mm to 600 mm **Jack Kay**

Class 119 – Bonsai, one, evergreen, 300 mm to 600 mm **Jack Kay**

Class 123 – Bonsai, one, Australian Native Plant (other than Ficus), 300 mm to 600 mm **Jack Kay**

CHAMPION BONSAI BETWEEN 150 mm – 300 mm (Prize \$100) **Tom Short**

CHAMPION BONSAI BETWEEN 300 mm – 600 mm (Prize \$100) **Tom Short**

##### **Third Staging**

Class 126 – Bonsai, one, deciduous, any size, incorporating carving/deadwood

**Chris Drinkwater**

Class 127 – Bonsai, multiple planting, deciduous, tray over 400 mm **Greg Paterson**

Class 129 – Bonsai, one, evergreen, multi-trunk, all on same root **Greg Paterson**

Class 136 – Bonsai, one, Australian Native Plant, root over rock style **Chris Drinkwater**

Class 138 – Bonsai, one, Australian Native Plant, any size, incorporating carving/deadwood

**Chris Drinkwater**

Class 143 – Bonsai, multiple planting, deciduous, tray over 400 mm **Ruth Creedy**

Class 146 – Bonsai, one, evergreen, any size, incorporating carving/deadwood





## **Ruth Creedy**

Class 147 – Bonsai, multiple planting, evergreen, tray over 400 mm **Ruth Creedy**

During the 2016 Royal Adelaide Show a lot of interest in bonsai was again nurtured through the competition benches and also through the display garden. Malcolm Roberts and Janice Kain worked with the support of The Royal Adelaide Show so as to create a lake garden incorporating bonsai. A number of bonsai were on loan to the display from members of The SA Bonsai Society and also from Newman's Nursery.

Congratulations to Malcolm and Janice for the recognition they received for the garden display.

## **Judge, Chris Xepapas, leads workshops**

*Andrew Ward*

Chris Xepapas, an Association of Australian Bonsai Clubs Level 2 Visiting Tutor, was the guest of The Royal Adelaide Show and The South Australian Bonsai Society, on his September visit to Adelaide. Chris is from The Bonsai Society of Southern Tasmania, and has been practicing bonsai for over 20 years. He is one of the local talent demonstrators at the next AABC Convention, to be held at The Wrest Point Convention Centre, Hobart from 20 to 23 May 2016.

Chris's flights were sponsored by The Royal Adelaide Show. This was the third year of an ongoing commitment by The Show to support competition bonsai in South Australia by providing airfares to bring a bonsai judge from interstate to judge bonsai at The Royal Adelaide Show. While in Adelaide, Chris's visit was supported by The South Australian Bonsai Society who used this as an opportunity for Chris to demonstrate at our meeting on September 1 and to also conduct workshops for our members.



*Alan Jabs concentrates on trimming and wiring*

Chris demonstrated on a ground grown Juniper x media that had been sourced from Shrua Khouri. Shrua had grown this plant as potential bonsai material at his parents' property at Robinvale, prior to the moving to Bendigo. The material had a lot of character and Chris was able to explain a number of styling techniques in his demonstration at our club meeting. The tree was raffled with the winner being Rod Villis.

On Saturday 5 and Sunday 6 September Chris held workshops for our club members, with a number of observers present on both days. A number of trees were worked over the two days and feedback from participants was very positive.



*Luke Swalling works on his tree. Geraldine Kuusk in the background*

## **Mt Crawford Dig**

*Matthew Sharp*

It was late September when we held a dig targeting *Pinus Radiata* in the managed forests of Mt Crawford.

It seemed that an unusually large number of people were lining the roads to cheer us on until we realised that we were on the exact route of the annual Bay to Birdwood Classic that was on the same day. There were a few puzzled looks from the onlookers as I waved when I drove past, probably wondering why a Mazda CX7 was being included in the rally.

There was a good group of about 20 members waiting in the Mt Crawford forest carpark while I discussed a few options with the park ranger in attendance. The rangers there are familiar with our club and are always really helpful in suggesting locations for digs, which is a good reflection on our club and the way we conduct ourselves on digs.

### **Choosing Locations**

We had a couple of locations to try so we headed off in a convoy to the furthest point, only to get split up at the first turnoff due to confusion surrounding my directions! We eventually made our way across many dirt roads to a plantation made up mostly of 15 to 20 year old trees with a lot of second and third generation growth in the understory.

At first glance it seemed to be lacking in any decent material but with a bit of persistence the group found some decent candidates. The best places were at the edges of clearings where the sun reached the ground and the saplings weren't as compelled to grow thin and straight, reaching for the light.

Other fruitful locations were where large trees had fallen over and young saplings were forced to grow around and through the obstacles, creating some movement in the trunk. The ground was dry but sandy and the trees we dug usually had a supply of feeder roots close to the base, the main effort required in digging them up was locating and severing the tap root.

### **Time to Change**

After a few hours the main group left this plantation to an area closer to the information centre with very old mature pines and a greater variation in the age and size of younger trees that had grown in their shadow. This was a much prettier spot and some of us had our lunch in the shade of the old trees. Once again it took a bit of persistence to find suitable material but after a while we became adept at spotting trees with a bit of movement.

I only took the one tree myself as space is at a premium in my backyard but I was pleased to see the back of utes and SUV's packed to the gills with potential bonsai.

My own tree has survived the transplant so I hope there is a good survival rate with the others. Remember with collected pines – don't be in a hurry to work on them, give them a couple of seasons before you do anything drastic.

## **The SA Bonsai Society 2015 Annual Show**

*Andrew Ward*

After much discussion, preparations, publicity and negotiation in the lead up to the annual show on Saturday 10 and Sunday 11 October, it was time for the doors to open to visitors.

Prior to our annual event a number of members met to discuss developments that could be implemented so as to allow our annual show to become more of an event, rather than a static display of bonsai with sales table. Members of 'The Show Review Group' were Philip Ekers, Malcolm Jenkins, Sue Hines, Heather Mathews, Marie Petersen, Janet Sabey and Andrew Ward. The group worked collectively in response to feedback that was collected at our 2014 show.

Discussion of a number of areas was addressed, including:

- Approximately 25% of the hall was used ineffectively, many people by-passing the demonstration, novice display and ikebana area.
- No themed display.
- An area for Australian natives as bonsai.
- An impression that the display was very much the same as in previous years.
- Bonsai being cluttered into the display area.
- Lack of activities to keep the family involved.

- No snacks or ability to purchase something more than an instant coffee or cup of tea.
- Nowhere to sit and relax/socialise/take in the event.
- Difficulty in bringing in display trees through the sales area.
- No area for volunteers to relax/eat away from the gaze of visitors.
- EFTPOS facilities for sales.
- Highly visible 'Membership' and 'Bonsai Problem' Table.

In planning for our 2015 event all efforts were made to address these concerns and plan for improvements. These included:

- Swapping the area previously used for demonstrations, novice display and Ikebana for the sales area.
- Having a themed display (will change every year), which included the use of electronic media showing visuals of international bonsai on the main screens, subtle 'up-beat' contemporary music in the background.
- An Australian natives as bonsai section.
- Use of different bonsai for the display wherever possible, although not always possible. So as to facilitate a 'different feel' exhibition, it was a goal that bonsai that had been displayed in the previous years were in different positions.
- Use of tokonoma to create a visual 'wow factor' as visitors entered the hall.
- Adequate space being allowed for all bonsai with accent plants and stands for each bonsai.
- Activities for children including a 'scavenger hunt', build a bonsai (plant a bonsai), colouring activity, doodling. Parents had a place close by to 'supervise' their children during activities.
- Excellent quality and affordable coffee and snacks (chocolate brownies and Anzac cookies) allowing visitors the opportunity to stay and participate longer in our event.
- Tables set up fanning from the newly repositioned demonstration area that gave people somewhere to sit and relax, but also somewhere to sit and watch the demonstrations.
- Demonstration area moved to the south-west end of the hall (adjacent the emergency exit) so as to provide 'entertainment' for people at tables.
- Novice tree exhibition to be in a section of the hall, still adjacent to demonstrations, but in a section of the hall with more visitor traffic.
- Ikebana to be displayed as a central part of our show, not at the sidelines.
- Movement of trees and equipment facilitated through the clear area in the hall by moving sales to the north-west section of the hall. Trolleys used to move trees and equipment wherever possible.
- Hall dividers used to create an 'island effect' screen – allowing displays on both walls, and encouraging visitors to move around the hall further (no 'dead-ends').
- Trestles dressed with table cloths so that legs of tables were not seen and all edges were even.
- Volunteers kitchen closed from public view, allowing volunteers an opportunity to prepare food, sit and eat, away from visitors if they so desired.
- EFTPOS facilities (with investigation into The SA Bonsai Society having permanent EFTPOS facilities).
- 'Membership' and 'Bonsai Problem' Table was prominent, but needs better signage for the future.

As in previous years, this year's club show did not happen without the contribution of many people. Members, with support of their partners, family and friends, worked intently in the lead-up to the show with preparing bonsai for display, ensuring plants and other items offered for sale on the trading table were of a suitable quality, preparing food, ordering trestles and dividers, ensuring raffle prizes were ready (and raffle tickets too), publicity and promotion.

During 'bump-in' on Friday 9 October, throughout the weekend, and at the close of our show members volunteered to ensure that the weekend went smoothly. It was great to see so many people staying for longer time at our show and asking questions. A common observation was 'normally my child is bored after 10 minutes at a garden show, but she was happy to stay for a couple of hours'. Our capacity to engage with a broader audience showed the strength of our club and members.

We had 18 new memberships from the weekend – welcome to the new members of The SA Bonsai Society. I hope to see these new members bringing along trees, participating in club activities and enthusiastically developing bonsai well into the future.



Our annual show continues to be our club's major annual event, ensuring that membership activities are financed into the next twelve months. Thank you to everyone who put in a contribution through the weekend. Our club's future continues to be strong.

## **CHINESE GARDEN OF FRIENDSHIP**

### **PENJING COMPETITION**

Celebrate the art of Penjing as the Chinese Garden of Friendship, Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, in collaboration with Bonsai Environment, host their second Penjing competition for Chinese New Year celebrations in 2016.

**Entries are open now and close at 5pm (AEST) on Friday 11 December 2015.**

For more information visit [Chinese Garden of Friendship](#) for full terms, conditions and prize packages.