

Winter 2016



SA Bonsai Newsletter

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President's Winter Report 2016

Andrew Ward

Planning is everything!

A change of seasons brings with it the onset of rain, some really lovely slow and soaking rains that finally break through more than the surface soil in our gardens. Many parts of eastern Australia are experiencing extreme weather patterns at present with storms, heavy rains, ensuing flooding, and king-tide damage, while Adelaide has received a decent break in the season.

Some members are experiencing the joy of autumnal colour with their bonsai. If you have a deciduous tree that has a particularly beautiful autumn colour, then it is worth the time to mark that plant so that it is identified as having these characteristics and then developing these trees into bonsai. It will usually be the case that it takes no more energy to develop a tree with sought after colourful foliage characteristics, as it will to develop one less interesting into a bonsai. This simple **planning** and identification of the trees that have the characteristics that you want to see in your bonsai, the process of developing beautiful trees becomes simpler.

Many of us **planned** and recently attended the AABC National Convention, hosted by The Bonsai Society of Tasmania, in Hobart. The weekend had over 200 delegates from throughout Australia with thirteen from South Australia. The host club did well with their **planning** and organisation, with the event very well supported by the majority of their members. Demonstrations and presentations, together with the networking opportunities of being with other bonsai enthusiasts from throughout Australia, challenged our thinking on bonsai in many respects.

Robert Stevens began his presentations at the convention with the thought provoking statement 'bonsai do not have a front, they have a viewing angle'. Robert's statement provided a foundation for much discussion throughout the weekend and could be interpreted in many ways, each interpretation dependent on a number of variables associated with the viewers experiences. It has been consistently my experience that the way we view bonsai, the angle at which we view the trees, our experiences with the tree species or styles, will markedly change the personal interpretation of different bonsai. Perhaps we can take away from this experience a reinforced understanding that bonsai is more than a tree in a pot; it is a range of other factors and that the term 'front' is an oversimplification of combined factors that influence how we appreciate and view a little tree as a bonsai.



Many Australian bonsai enthusiasts pursue bonsai as a pastime, an extension of gardening, a creative hobby. We often do this while juggling responsibilities and obligations associated with family, friends, work and other life demands. Sometimes achieving balance between all of our life elements can be quite a challenge. Satisfaction can be gained through recognition from other bonsai enthusiasts that what you are creating in a bonsai is looking good. Satisfaction can be gained through being part of a group and volunteering time with others. Many people have different reasons to pursue bonsai, but I know that at the basis of participating in a creative hobby, like

bonsai, is that it should not be too challenging and that it should be pleasurable. With a little attention to **planning**, you are hopefully achieving this with your little trees!

When **planning** and delivering a program of activities to our members, we do need to occasionally push boundaries so that members feel included in activities at all levels. We know that not everyone will want to grow azaleas or *Portulacaria afra* as bonsai – however there will be universal lessons that can be transferred to other aspects of bonsai culture and I would hope that others are able to access and transfer this information across bonsai experiences

Our club is fortunate to have both a breadth and depth of bonsai experiences amongst its members. Members are generous in sharing information and experiences amongst each other and this is seen very strongly at our monthly workshop nights where everyone 'rolls up their sleeves' to help each other. Our May workshop night was a flurry of activity, with committee and other members helping out with workshopping members' bonsai. Janet was teaching the second bonsai lesson to our beginner group, and there was a group following up on administration and trading table organisation. Much of this works through considerable **planning**, and because of our members have a can do approach and support each other. Through the peer support and wide variety of member experiences, I know that The SA Bonsai Society is in a strong position to tackle challenges ... we are so much more than a one person club.

Kelvin Rodrigues has presented at our meetings twice this year. This month Kelvin shared with us some of his experiences with 2 and 3 needle pines. Information included being in tune with your pine bonsai and also **planning for bonsai development**. Kelvin addressed a range of factors, including nutrition, watering, controlling the energy of growth in your pines, soil, pH and repotting. I think that pines are often maligned as being too difficult when they are a lot tougher and predictable to work with than credited.

It's been a while since we last had an olive dig. Malcolm Roberts has arranged a dig for our members at a southern 'rural' location. The olives are apparently well 'sheep chewed' and have considerable character and age – there should be some nice material for use into the future. If you **plan** to come along, then please meet by 9.30am on Sunday 3 July at Hungry Jacks' carpark, Hackham (corner of South and Penney's Hill Roads). Be sure to come prepared – refer to the article on collecting suitable material for bonsai. The trees that you propagate and prepare now will become your champion bonsai of the future.

There are many **plans** that are coming to fruition that you will start to see more of at The SA Bonsai Society. We will be using more electronic media at our meetings, including using a camera to allow us to project demonstrations onto the screens so that all members attending the meetings are not only able to hear what is happening but can see too. We will be sharing footage of club activities with members at our meetings. We will have EFTPOS facilities on our trading table from the June workshop.

It is at this time of change that most sincere thanks go to Bruce Sparrow who has been our capable Newsletter editor during the final period of the printed version. Bruce oversaw the transition into electronic media and has decided to redirect his energies given that his particular expertise is print publishing.

The SA Bonsai Society is part of another national bonsai group, The Bonsai Federation of Australia (Southern). BFA Southern has **planned** a weekend of bonsai activities in Bendigo on Saturday 23 and Sunday 24 July, called [Bonsai Lakeside](#). The weekend features opportunities to participate in workshops with Tony Bebb, Joe Morgan-Payler, Steve Jarrold and Don DeLucca. It is not often that we have the opportunity to experience these four experienced Australian bonsai artists in one location. There are opportunities to participate in workshops with each, or to work quietly on your own projects on site with advice from one of the demonstration team. The weekend includes a bonsai car-boot sale in the carpark of the Bendigo Rowing Club, a bonsai display, and access to bonsai potters and vendors. Opportunities to experience break out activities around Bendigo for you or your husband/wife/partner are available also.

Our busy schedule continues with The Royal Adelaide Show. Janice Kain has developed a **plan** for the display and is working with a team that includes Chris Drinkwater, Malcolm Roberts and Malcolm Jenkins to develop a bonsai display garden at this year's show. There will be a cry for 'help' from members to help with prefabrication of the design so that it is easily moved onto site at The Royal Adelaide Show from mid-August. This coincides with the substantial **planning** that has gone into arranging this year's Horticulture Schedule and Bonsai Competition. There are substantial incentives to participate in this year's bonsai competition; I strongly encourage all members to participate and enter the competition.

The OzAsia Festival continues in Adelaide this year, with Moon Lantern Festival on Saturday 17 September. This was a very popular event last year, with many people experiencing difficulty getting along to Elder Park on the evening. We will again be displaying a small exhibition of bonsai at this event, sharing a stall with The Asian Women's Consultative Council. This is an opportunity to distribute pamphlets for our October Show (now printed in English as well as in Chinese and Vietnamese). **If you would like to be involved with this, or any of the many events that our club attends, please make your availability known to our Secretary, Philip Ekers.**

I hope that you are also making **plans** to participate in our annual show on Saturday 15 and Sunday 16 October. Your support helps to ensure that this weekend is a continuing success for our club. We have consistently strong

attendance figures at our annual show, not without the extensive work of members in publicising the event and ensuring that the event has a wide audience. We will again have the coffee cart, children's activities, sales table and extensive displays ... it is a show for all of our members, please be mindful of keeping this weekend free and encouraging your friends and family to come along.

Enjoy the 'reprieve' that winter and the cooler weather provides from constantly watering your bonsai. Remember however that rain does not always fall in the pot, so supplementary watering will often be necessary, even though plants are not transpiring as they would when in active growth. Use the time to reflect, read up and **plan** with your bonsai. It is the planning today that allows us to have the outcomes we desire in the future!

Keep well!

Brenda Parker talks about Suiseki and Soe

Annie Reid

Visiting AABC Visiting Tutor, Brenda Parker described her time in Adelaide as 'coming home'. Originally from SA, Brenda remembers rock collecting along the coast as a youngster – an interest that gradually broadened as she encountered the treasures waiting for discovery in other parts of Australia. Her dedication and enthusiasm eventually lead to her Presidency of Suiseki Australia in 2007, a position she still holds.



The first stage of Brenda's presentation at the April meeting for Bonsai SA explored the world of Suiseki (Sui – water; seki – stone), the beautiful stones shaped by nature over time and collected by enthusiasts all over the world.



Suiseki Image 1 – courtesy B. Parker

She explained how certain types of rock convey a sense of the broader landscape – of distant mountains, waterfalls and other features of the natural landscape. These types of Suiseki are most often displayed in a Suiban or ceramic tray surrounded by sand or fine pebbles. The colour of the material beneath the rock in the Suiban is often best matched to the colour of the rock itself, suggesting the scree that has eroded from the rock over time. However this is not always the case as in *Suiseki Image 1*, where a bolder contrast has been the preference.

To express a winter theme the stone could be placed in a Suiban containing sand, while a summer theme might better be expressed using water.

The second Suiseki category involves rocks resembling man-made objects (old thatched huts, bridges) as well as human and animal figures. Such stones are usually presented on carved wood platform called a Daiza although a cushion placed on something like a bamboo stand also makes an appropriate base for a stone of this type.

Biseki are a category apart from Suiseki because they have been polished to bring out their colour and character. Biseki means 'beauty stone' and although not Suiseki, they are often displayed with them at exhibitions.

Daiza

Brenda is one of an enthusiastic group who meet regularly to build the stands required to display beautiful and unusual rocks. While the group has access to the tools necessary to make the traditional wooden Daiza, their collective experience has discovered methods of construction that are relatively simple and economical:



Australian stone – courtesy B. Parker

DAS modeling clay is a fine texture medium that air-dries and hardens, ready for staining and varnishing with a mat varnish. The clay can be purchased from outlets such as Office Works – approx. \$16 for 1kg bag. The process involves rolling out the clay then tightly wrapping the stone in Gladwrap before pressing the stone into it and pushing up the sides of the clay against the rock. The sides are made level and smoothed into a Daiza style edge. An important part of the process is to remove the stone for about half an hour as the clay dries to prevent shrinkage.

Black Glue Sticks used with a glue gun enable the user to dribble glue over the base of the stone, creating a shallow 'nest' that acts as a stand.

Ekodeck is a wood plastic composite made from recycled plastics, wood waste and adhesive resins. Resistance to weather makes it an ideal Daiza material for the displaying stones outdoors. This material is easily carved with Dremel tools.

Because Suiseki involves the collection and appreciation of stones naturally formed by nature it is imperative that they remain unaltered and should be left to reflect their natural patina. The only preparation recommended by Brenda is the application of two teaspoons of Morning Fresh Concentrate, gently massaged into the rock. Should anyone have a varnished rock requiring 'renovation', the suggested remedy is at least a twelve-month stay in the weather.

Brenda concluded her presentation on Suiseki with a very neat segue into the next section of her presentation by reminding us that accent plants can be used to compliment Suiseki displays.

Soe (Accent Plants)

Soe is the small accent or companion plant that accompanies the exhibition of a bonsai, a suiseki and/or a scroll. An harmonious combination of these elements are traditionally displayed in a Tokonoma or alcove.

Originally Soe were the herbaceous plants found close to the yamadori or tree collected from the mountains. For this reason it is important in the art of display that the Soe accompanying a particular bonsai must have some relation to it.

For example a Soe of ferns or succulents is not considered appropriate to accompany a pine. Small grasses can make very attractive Soe and are readily grown from Budgie seed. Mosses, ferns and miniature bamboo are popular although any number of small plants could work well.



Most often Soe are shown in very small, unobtrusive containers that can be placed on a variety of thin bases – wood, bamboo, lacquer and even bamboo blind slats. Soe may also incorporate miniature figurative accent items such as animals and people.



Nearai (Ne – root; aria – washed) is another method of presenting an accent plant. Either as a single or mixed planting, these are grown in pots and when the pot is full of roots the plant is removed and displayed on a flat container. With a less dense root system Nearai can be covered in moss to hold roots together.

Kokedama or moss balls are similar in that they too can be displayed as accent plants on flat dishes.



While not the main focus of the display, the Soe should support the theme being expressed and accentuate the bonsai or suiseki as the principal focus. In fact all accent items should be carefully chosen to emphasise something natural or in nature, for example the time of year or a specific region. Positioning of the Soe in relation to the Bonsai within the display space is also very important. Brenda emphasized that both elements must 'talk to each other', meaning that direction is an important consideration and Soe and Bonsai must face each other with the Soe positioned forward from the Bonsai. The height of the Soe must also be carefully considered and should not be higher than the bonsai stand. It is suggested that several strands of grass might be level with the top of the bonsai stand but this is considered the limit. The aim is to enhance the bonsai as a focal point, not to overpower it.

Brenda concluded by encouraging us to enjoy creating Soe and to continue practicing the art of display using the principles she had outlined for us.

Beautiful examples of Soe can be found on the following two websites.

[Bonsai Tonight](#)

[Walter Pall Travelogue](#)

What's been happening . . .

Alan Jabs

A weekend at home with Brenda Parker

The weekend of April 2-3 entertained many SA Bonsai Society members with two workshops conducted by visiting tutor, Brenda Parker.

Participants were captivated by Brenda's easy manner, expertise and the way she encouraged each participant to extend him or herself.

Day one: We were in the northern suburbs and after the threat of some damp conditions overnight we set up around the garden with a large variety of trees to be worked on. Two sessions along with a lunch time barbecue ensured a very pleasant day . . . and some well refined trees by the end.

Day two: Brenda is back, closer to the city and again the weather is extremely kind to us with it being a very warm and sunny day.



Brenda shows Annie and Sven the finer point

Again the tables are set up to allow access to shade or a place in the sun for those of us who are closet sun worshipers.

Participants again come with a variety of trees to test Brenda and the day is also an opportunity to learn about Azaleas with Brenda offering very useful tips on striking cuttings. This had participants rummaging through cuttings on the tables looking for suitable pieces to take home and try.

As with the Saturday session all go home extremely satisfied with the day's efforts as well as knowing that being involved has given each of us that little bit more knowledge and new skills.

Festival of Flowers

The Festival of Flowers is combined display by a number of Adelaide's Gardening Clubs and the inclusion of the SA Bonsai Society was our first invitation to participate. Our aims were mainly promotional, although being involved with other societies can be financially beneficial as well . . . an event well worth supporting.

The weekend began with bump-in late on the Friday afternoon and as school holidays were about to commence, there was no waiting to access school grounds as students were eager to depart for the long break. With entry to the hall our task was to organise the trees and sale items which our volunteers made sure was done efficiently.

The Festival opened for business bright and early Saturday morning and there was a steady stream of visitors throughout day. Along with our bonsai display to view, there were many other groups offering a range of different plants to look at or purchase. Most of our members who volunteered to mind our stand went home with a lot more than they came with . . . as well as fresh ideas for new projects.

The Sunday was equally as busy and an interesting sale was made – two mature bonsai trees were purchased by local celebrity gardener, Milton Vadoulis. These trees now have a new home at his garden centre at Gawler.

Andrew presented a short general demonstration to an audience of interested visitors and members from many of the garden societies.

Bump-out was even smoother than the earlier bump-in!

Mark this event in your calendar for 2017 as we will be back.

In short . . . a wonderful weekend.

SA Bonsai Society – Adelaide Hills Group

Following the successful Brenda Parker *Backyard Workshops* an invitation was thrown open to all to attend a Saturday session at Lindy Wilhelm's home for the following Saturday.

Several from the 'flatlands' took up the invitation and made the journey to Woodside.

Ahh . . . the country air! Nothing like it on a sunny autumn day with the hills starting to show that colour indicating that colder days would soon be upon us. The warmth made for a very pleasant day out of doors where we sat and chatted all things, but mostly bonsai.

A tour of the garden and it was clear that if one planted it in this environment it would grow. Everything seems to self-seed here so the hills are truly alive.

We met members of the Hills Group and over lunch enjoyed a variety of conversation topics. After lunch, out came the Dremel and a nice Olive got 'the treatment'.

The Hills Group has now been set up as an annex of the SA Bonsai Society and is looking for new members as well as for current society members to get involved. The group meets on the second Thursday of every month at the Uniting Church Hall, Janes Place on the corner of Mann and Hutchenson Streets, Mount Barker, commencing at 7:30 pm. Contact Lindy Wilhelm for more details.

Home Expo 2016

Autumn seems to be a very busy time of the year for promoting the SA Bonsai Society. The Home Expo was held at the Wayville Showgrounds and Philip and I did the bump-in on the Friday ready for the ANZAC long weekend.

After being directed to our spot we put up the tables and began to place the display trees when after a quick trip to get more tables, we were informed that we were in the wrong location – not our fault I might add!

So a quick 'exit stage left' with all our stuff and we were ushered to the right spot where soon, all was neat and tidy, ready for action the following morning. Fortunately I arrived home early enough to still enjoy lunch and tinker with yet more trees to take on the following day for display.

Saturday and just before we opened to the public, our humble stand was visited by Dr Harry from Better Homes and Gardens fame. He was most interested in what was on display and certainly knew his trees, citing his favourite Banksia as we discussed the one on display.

This year we had a workbench set up and several of those who volunteered brought in trees to work on, thus value adding to our display. This in fact drew more than a few observers simply because someone was actually doing something. It proved a big plus that we will replicate again next year.

Sunday proved as busy as Saturday and Monday drew the crowds after opening later due to ANZAC day activities.

As this was a three day event, thanks must go to those who offered their time to help out.

Kodomo no Hi

The weather gods were still with us for our outdoor promotions and so we set up bright and early at the Cowandilla Primary School for the 2016 Kodomo no Hi.

Many hands made light work of the set up and members provided numerous trees for showing.

This year we expanded the display by having two work stations with both Andrew and me working on trees throughout the day. This alone was a huge success with both of us being photographed, videoed and stop motion filmed as we worked on our trees.

There were many questions asked of volunteers supervising the stand, particularly relating to bonsai and what we do as a club. Flyers were handed out promoting the 2016 October Show which bodes well for a very large crowd this year.



Member volunteers came and went throughout the day and at the close of day, Andrew and I completed the bump-out.

With the event declared a success, we shall certainly return next year.

These events are an important way of promoting the club but we need to expand our base of members who are prepared to give a little of their time to assist.

Please considering volunteering for at least one of the autumn events in 2017.

Information about working with Azaleas – Brenda Parker workshop

Heidi Richter

All parts of an azalea are poisonous.

Never let moss grow up the trunk. Brush it off with a soft toothbrush.

Fertilising

September to December – Osmocote for Azaleas, Powerfeed or Charlie Carp

January to the end of April – Every 4 weeks, use a fertilizer high in potassium, eg Tomato feed, Orchid food or Just Potash (from Bunnings)

Transplanting

Azaleas can be repotted all year round even when they are in full flower.

Make sure the soil has good drainage. Test this by squeezing the soil in your hand. When you open your hand, the soil should fall apart, **not** stay in a compact ball.

It is time to repot when you see the fibrous roots on the side when lifting out of the pot. Cut the bottom half of the soil off with a wavy knife. Rake the soil off around the edges and remove the loose fibrous roots. Rake off the roots under the trunk, they are dead. Put fresh soil into the pot, building a mound to make sure there will be soil under the trunk. Don't put fresh soil over the top roots. Finally soak in water mixed with Seasol.

Pruning

When cutting off a branch, always leave a stump which can be cut off 1-2 years later – unless it is a tiny branch. **Always** immediately seal the cut.

Trimming can be done up to December. Stop pruning from January.

Pack your bags ...

Annie Reid

It should be the bonsai enthusiasts dream location for a bonsai convention – the home of bonsai – Japan!

Its all happening next year in Saitama City, a northern suburb of Tokyo, from 27 – 30th April. But be warned, if you think you might like to go, its time to book now because not only will everyone be flocking to the conference, it is also the cherry blossom season and every other tourist will be planning their trip to Japan.

The sage advice would be to use a travel agent because efforts to book accommodation online often end in disappointment, even this far in advance of leaving. It appears that agents reserve accommodation knowing they will eventually fill it thus explaining why all hotels appear full.

Booking accommodation aside, this event promises to fulfil all expectations providing opportunities to observe the great masters at work, including Kunio Kobayashi and Chiharu Imai.

More than 300 bonsai, satsuki, shohin, and suiseki masterpieces will be exhibited – some of the finest in the world!

There will also be an extensive sales area and although the purchase of plants might be fraught for us, one can only imagine the quality of stands, pots and tools that will be on offer.

I was fortunate to visit the [Omiya Bonsai Art Museum](#) last year and was in awe of the ancient, beautiful trees on display. An impressive feature of the museum is four Tokonoma each constructed to illustrate a style between simplicity and elegance. A visit to this museum will be an integral part of the 2017 convention as will the opportunity to tour the numerous beautiful bonsai nurseries threaded throughout Omiya.

An event not to be missed!

Visit the [World Bonsai Convention](#) website for information and registration.

Notes on the Hobart Convention



Scots Pine



Fir group

It was busy, it was fun and it was rewarding! The 29th Australian National Bonsai Convention in Hobart has been and gone – and we loved it – we hope that you did too!

Rob White's comment, as one of the organisers, suggests some relief that all the hard work was over but more importantly, that the convention lived up to expectation. Certainly those who ventured across the strait from SA returned with fond memories and lots of ideas – although some memories may be suspect – Andrew Ward grins sheepishly when he suggests that his memories of Hobart include 14 drops – that's how many drops you can 'squeeze' from an empty bottle of red!

The Convention attracted 203 delegates together with many partners and the program began with 80 people taking the ferry from the Wrest Point jetty to the Museum of Old & New Art (MONA).

That evening, over 100 people attended the Welcome Reception where Dorothy Koreshoff, accompanied by the Bonsai Society of Southern Tasmania's (BSST) oldest (Herbert Harding) and youngest (Taki Xepapas) members opened the Exhibition.

The Exhibition was particularly successful because while 800 approx. were expected to pass through the doors, the final number exceeded 2200. As Rob White explains 'With so many people coming to the Exhibition, and over 200 bonsai 'tragnics' attending the Convention, it is not surprising that the sales tables did a roaring trade over the weekend'.

Delegates were entertained and educated by international demonstrator, Robert Steven, and the three national demonstrators, Grant Bowie, Quentin Valentine and Chris Xepapas, all had very keen audiences.

It was Will Fletcher's overview of the Tasmania flora and guidance to those species that lend themselves to bonsai that particularly inspired Howard Hamon who attended the convention. Howard urges us to try more local plants as bonsai and was particularly taken with the Coastal Paperbark (*Melaleuca ericiafolia*) and Tea Trees (*Leptospermum*). Howard noted that the Paperbarks on exhibition were heavily styled while others were allowed to grow more naturally. The BCI award winning Paperbark by Chris Xepapas was a heavily designed informal upright that went against all the natural movement of these trees in the wild. With minimal foliage and the look of a bonsai pine, Howard concluded that it worked extremely well.

Another of our local delegates, Malcolm Jenkins, suggests that it is Tasmania's strict quarantine restrictions that accounts for the number of native trees cultivated as bonsai in this state. The Myrtle Beech (*Northofagus cunninghamii*) is popular bonsai material and Robert Steven worked on this material exclusively for all of his demonstrations.

Malcolm also noted that Robert prefers to call the front of the tree the 'viewing angle' and that he considers all non-conifer species to be 'deciduous'. Now there is something to ponder!

Hugo Welling was impressed by the idea that if a lower branch has dense foliage close to the trunk, balance is best achieved by making sure that the first branch above it on the other side of the trunk, is longer with the foliage pads further away from the trunk.

While the weather for the convention proved typically Tasmanian and visitors to the top of Mt Wellington looked *down* on the clouds from the summit, there were moments of sunshine that saw delegates enjoying breaks on the boardwalk and taking advantage of all that Hobart has to offer. And as Howard concluded, a weekend away with a group of like-minded eccentrics is good for the mind and should taken at every opportunity.

All photos courtesy of Howard Hamon

Royal Adelaide Show Bonsai Competition

Entries are now open for entries in the 2016 Royal Adelaide Show Bonsai Competition. We will again have an interstate bonsai judge for each of the three stagings of the competition; the plan is that the judge will also be used for workshops while they are in Adelaide and also for demonstrating at the September bonsai meeting on Tuesday 6 September. The Royal Adelaide Show has continued their commitment to bonsai with a dedicated area for staging, short staging periods inside the hall, and a focus on the health and security of your bonsai.

Exhibitors whose total entry fee is \$50 or more will be issued with a full show pass. Other exhibitors will be given admission tickets for the day/s on which exhibits will be judged and/or removed if required, during the show. All exhibitors who wish to enter the Showground during The Show will need an exhibitors pass.

Prize money continues to be attractive across the competition. In addition to prize money of \$15 for first prize and \$8 for second prize (multiple planting bonsai attract first prize of \$24 and second prize of \$12) in each class of the competition. There are \$100 awards for:

- Champion bonsai less than 150 mm,
- Champion bonsai over 600 mm,
- Champion bonsai 150 mm – 300 mm,
- Champion bonsai 300 mm – 600 mm,
- Champion bonsai root over rock,
- Champion bonsai multiple planting/tray,
- Champion bonsai incorporating carving/deadwood,
- Champion Novice/Junior bonsai.

There is an additional \$100 award and specially commissioned unique trophy for The John A Michell Memorial Prize for Grand Champion Bonsai

In following on from 2015, all exhibitors will receive a written critique for each of their bonsai entries, many exhibitors found this to be particularly useful last year.

Further information is available from [The Royal Adelaide Show website](#)

Collecting Suitable Material for Bonsai

Sourced 11 July 2012

Collecting etiquette

This requires that only those items which are to be removed be dug, that holes be filled in, that no rubbish be left behind, that any gates opened are closed, and that no structures or remaining plants be damaged.

- When entering an area do not start digging immediately. Instead locate and tag plant material which appears to have bonsai potential.
- Decide on how many plants can reasonably be cared for and then select the tagged items which will be collected.
- Make sure the tree is alive. If dormant, scratch a twig to see if there is green cambium below.
- Dig surface soil away and check for satisfactory surface roots.
- Evaluate the taper and trunk diameter.
- After removing a plant fill in the hole with soil and with any branches and foliage which had been removed.
- Before leaving the area, remove the tags from plants which were tagged but not dug.

Method of digging

- After selecting a plant for collection it is important to establish a new balance between the amount of foliage and the amount of roots remaining after digging. This is done by removing all branches which will not be needed, shortening the height of the tree where appropriate, and removing much of the remaining foliage.
- Around the trunk outline a circle in the soil which has a diameter less than the diameter of the intended container.
- With a sharp shovel or spade, make vertical incisions, cutting the soil and roots below this circle to a depth equal to the length of the tool's blade. Should the soil be hard a Mattock or Pick can be used. Dig to a depth of 300 mm and then cut towards the tap root. When the tap root is exposed you can cut it or snap it to be able to remove the root ball. Assistance in digging is

always most welcome. Use a pruning saw or lopping shears to cut heavy roots. A lifting bar would also not go amiss.

- If time and circumstances permit, defer removal of the material from the ground and leave it in place for collection later. This gives the plant the opportunity to grow new feeder roots and to begin recovering from this initial shock while still retaining its downward growing roots.
- If the material is to be removed, dig a trench just outside the root ball and tunnel into the root ball. Under the root ball cut the downward growing roots. Continue until its root ball is free to be lifted from the hole.
- Keep as much of the root ball (roots and soil) intact as possible. If all of the soil falls off the roots, put some in a container to use when potting the plant.
- Wrap the root ball in sheet plastic, a plastic black bag or hessian, tying it securely with twine to help keep the root ball intact.
- After the collected plant has been moved to the transportation, moisten the root ball to keep it from drying out.

Post collection care and cultivation

The collected material may need a second pruning after arriving in the work area.

- The length of the roots and branches to remain is determined by the shape of the tree and the dimensions of the training pot.
- The length of the major roots should be slightly shorter than the dimensions of the bonsai container into which they will ultimately be planted.
- The tree is then planted in a nursery container or in a nursery bed. It will rarely be planted directly into a bonsai container. Tie the plant securely in its container to prevent it shifting.

The first watering should be thorough and an anti shock solution such as Superthrive®, Dispirin, Vitamin B12 (Brewers Yeast), Kickstart and or Willow water should be used.

- Plants having tall trunks can be wrapped with Hessian or Rope to reduce moisture evaporation. As the weather gets warmer they should be sprayed with water every morning and evening so that the covering remains moist while the soil is not too wet. An intermittent mist system if available will help to prevent dehydration.
- Collected trees need to be protected from sun, wind and extremes of temperature for two to four weeks, or until they appear to no longer be stressed.

Intensive care needs to continue after the plant begins sprouting.

- Sprouts may be a result of food stored in the plant rather than as a result of nutrients currently being manufactured by the plant.
- Excessive new growth should be removed to prevent weakening the plant and to channel existing nutrients into those growth points which are to be retained.
- Protect the plant to prevent the new buds from being scorched by the sun as well as to reduce evaporation of moisture from the leaves.
- After a month gradually reduce the time spent under shade.

In about six weeks as the plant appears to be recovering, begin applying small quantities of diluted fertilizer to stimulate leaf, branch and root growth.

If additional root reduction is necessary, wait a minimum of one year and preferably two before making any drastic cuts on the roots.

Personal items that should be taken with you

- Suitable clothing for protection against the elements.
- Sun Screen
- Gloves for hand protection.
- Plasters for blisters
- Eye drops in case of grit or dust ending up in your eyes.
- Clean drinking water for drinking, washing hands, injuries and plants.
- First Aid Kit
- Toilet paper or tissues
- Refreshments including energy boosting items.