

# APAB-N

the Newsletter of the Australian Plants as Bonsai  
Study Group



an Association of Societies for  
Growing Australian Plants  
Study Group

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## A NEWCOMER to NATIVES

BY Lee Wright

Early in my bonsai mania I found this lillipilli and liked the trunk. I convinced the sales assistant that it was in dire straits and got the price reduced 50%. I was totally unfamiliar with the growth habit of a lillipilli and pruned gingerly for the first season and when it sent out new shoots, I pruned harder. When a friend said that lillipillis shot back on old wood I pruned harder again. The original 4 branches were gradually reduced to two (see next page).

For a couple of years this LP became a professional workshop tree, formally attending four events for styling. It was interesting the variety of opinions on what could be done with it. One tutor suggested air layering one branch, another suggested the other to style as a single trunk informal upright or a semi cascade. I kept plodding along on my track, absorbing ideas and agreeing with branch styling, but keeping with the two trunks.

I am the first to agree that the horizontal trunk is too straight and I am styling the padding to minimise the impact of this. The tree was

pleasing me until I had the opportunity to stare at it during a committee meeting at home. Back on the bench all the major branches were guyed down to eliminate the shelving look it presented. It's working.



Lillipilli at 4-branch stage

The LP had all branches but the horizontal one defoliated in January 2004 and this was very successful in increasing the padding on the horizontal. Now I am working on increasing the padding on the lower back branch.

The LP is a guzzler and sits in a tray of water all the time. I planned to discontinue the use of the water tray over the winter (as I have with my other natives) but, despite the regular watering



Lillipilli at 2-branch stage

and cooler temperatures, it continues to consume at least 3/4ths of the contents of the water tray daily. Thank god it doesn't drink wine. The tree shows absolutely no ill effects from standing in water all the time.

The first two years I had it I had no pest problems but psylliads have discovered it and now confidor is used regularly.

#### On to water trays and other natives

Several Sydney native enthusiasts espouse the use of water trays with natives. In my ignorance I discounted the idea but am now a rabid advocate. I came home on a 40 degree day to find a trident maple and the *Banksia integrifolia* badly scorched. The trident was in training and in too small a pot to sustain the mass of foliage being cultivated to thicken the trunk. I had to cut off 3/4ths of the burned sacrifice branch. The banksia was in a training pot in excess of its requirements to encourage growth, the foliage was not extensive and the soil was still moist. But the majority of the leaves were dessicated.

I pruned the dead foliage and sat it in a water tray. The tree has never been happier. Considering the insignificant amount of foliage it has, it consumes an incredible amount of water daily. The *Banksia serrata* will use 2/3rds of its water tray, the *B. integrifolia* will go through 7/8ths – and the *serrata* has more foliage.

I repotted an *Angophora costata* and had to remove the majority of its roots – so much so that I not only tied it in the pot, I actually had to put cord around the pot to secure the tree so the light breeze that hits my protected area would not move the canopy and rock the roots. It went in a water tray. Two months later roots were protruding 4cm from the drainage holes, the tree was rock solid in the pot and loving it – tho' it is not a big drinker. The water tray has been removed over winter, particularly after I cut back hard and removed all the foliage. Today was a triumph (16 July) as several naked branches have healthy new shoots developing.

The *Kunzea ambigua* has not received the water tray treatment and is growing lushly but I often have to water it twice a day, before work and when I get home if the day has been hot.

After the Canberra seminar, natives became far more attractive and in short order I added several to my collection. The *Angophora costata* quickly proved to be far more brittle than I anticipated and the main branch snapped but was still attached. Hasn't worried it (or me, since it was going eventually). It never fussed about the damage and the leaves kept surviving. Now the main trunk is



The lillipilli as it was in Nov. 2003.

alive with new shoots and later this year I can start to consider styling possibilities.

The *Melaleuca irbyana* was purchased with a lovely crown of weeping foliage and a thick root

poking 10 cm out of the bottom of the pot that was almost larger than the nice trunk. By the time two huge roots were removed there wasn't much left underground. It suffered a bit with a lot of small branchlet dieback but a scrape at the end of the branches shows green so I am just waiting for spring. I know the rules about leaving 40% of the roots when you prune but the big roots had to go ... and there wasn't much left. But it's doing ok. And I have this feeling it is going to deserve a Mirkwood pot when the crown redevelops.

I listened to experienced members and did not fertilise my banksias, and began to get little growth and the foliage was losing the proper depth of colour. Finally I applied native Osmocote and was almost immediately rewarded with a colour return and new growth. So forget the fact that banksias don't need fertiliser because they utilize poor soil – in a bonsai pot they want food. How much/how often I still have to determine but I am looking forward to a better growing season this year.

Most of my natives have been with me too short a time to be able to speak much on their behalf but both the new ones and the longer term ones are proving to be a delight. They are no harder than exotics and they are surviving my ministrations with the same equanimity as the others.

**Notes on  
*Eucalyptus  
nicholii*  
By Peter Hanrahan**

The *E. nicholii* I currently have was started in September of 1993 or thereabouts. Over the years since, I have gathered information as it has gradually transformed from a discarded plant at the recycling area of the local dump into a good looking 800mm GUM TREE. In the following short article I will go through a year in the life of my *nicholii*.

In late August – early September I reduce the winter growth and if it required, re-pot following normal bonsai procedure. It was first potted into a

bonsai pot in 2000. Selected new branches, which have developed over winter, are kept.

During October – November I will pinch back new top growth, refine the upper branching (that is wire into shape as needed) and remove lower growth. In December I cut back the top growth harder to one to two pairs of leaves. This encourages budding back which gives more options for refinement. The *nicholii* is vigorous at this time of year and must be kept in check.

The styling of the *nicholii* comes from how eucalypts style themselves naturally. That is, I use the cut and grow method. Eucalypts drop weak branches and take the strong direction. This is happening on a yearly basis, losing about one to two branches. I consider this a positive attribute as it adds to the character. Like pines, if you allow any one part to become dominant other areas will suffer.

From January through to March the new growth is pinched back. During this time the new growth slows. From February through to August I have



*Eucalyptus nicholii*

found it detrimental to the tree's health to do any major pruning.

### Fertilising

I fertilise twice a year in spring and autumn with slow release Osmocote Native and/or Dynamic Lifter. In autumn I also use a diluted liquid fertiliser.

### Soil Mix

I use a premium native potting mix with about 20% gravel added to it.

### Styling

I have used both wiring and cut and grow methods to shape the branches. Wire is used only when the branches are young.

I have had to de-bark my tree once due to the thickness of the old bark. This was done when I saw in-ground trees de-barking during the warmer months. I debarked the main trunk with the oldest wood for two reasons:

1. I noticed old scarring under the bark. This scar became the hole in the middle of the trunk you see today.
2. The bark was becoming too thick and out of proportion to the tree.

The bark that was removed was flaky and loose and came off easily by peeling it off with my fingers. Within 2 months the grey bark was back but not as coarse.

The observation of local *E. nicholli* shedding bark in 2003 was the catalyst for this experiment. The coarse bark will come back with time.

I have carved into the base and opened it up. By using a 20mm speed bore I drilled a hole from the original cut, where the new trunk was formed, to the opening in the base. Using a mixture of lime sulphur and black paint has given the effect of fire burning out the hollow trunk.

## EXPERIENCES WITH ALLOCASUARINAS By Barry Nash

Of the almost sixty species of *Allocasuarina* (formerly *Casuarina*, family *Casuarinaceae*), it was undoubtedly the characteristic barks of *A. inophloia* (woolly oak or stringybark she-oak) and *A. torulosa* (forest oak or rose oak) that drew my initial interest to these two species as potential subjects for bonsai.

I have two specimens of *A. inophloia*, and one specimen of *A. torulosa*, all of which I obtained as young seedlings with tiny trunks not much thicker than the diameter of a match, about six years ago.

As its common name suggests, *A. inophloia* develops a fibrous bark, which peels and breaks into long thin strips (see picture next page). My healthier *A. inophloia* specimen has a ligno-tuber 4.5 cm in diameter, and both specimens are yet to demonstrate even a hint of the fibrous bark which is characteristic of the species.

In the meantime, however, the bark on the lower trunk of my *A. torulosa* showed clear signs of thickening and furrowing, and becoming distinctly “corky” in appearance, within only two years. It is now about 7 cm across at its widest, and the bark is deeply furrowed. Care needs to be taken at repotting time, if the beautiful, textured and furrowed bark is to be preserved, as it is particularly fragile and can be broken off easily.

### Pruning

Both species appear to send out shoots readily from older wood, but *A. inophloia* appears to have a much greater propensity to push out masses of new shoots from its lignotuber, especially during spring and summer. In the case of *A. inophloia*, I simply rub off the unwanted shoots when small with a finger or thumb, to minimise scarring. I might do this about three times throughout the growing season.



*Allocasuarina torulosa* bonsai in training (photo RH)

Although it is a much more tedious process (much like needle-pulling on pines), I prefer to shorten the branchlets/needles by hand-pinching at the joints, simply by pulling apart slightly at the



*Allocasuarina inophloia* tree at ANBG

(photo RH)

junction of two segments of a branchlet, until it breaks. You may find that the ends of the branchlets become unsightly, as they tend to brown off a bit after this procedure.

### Potting

I've repotted every two years, usually in late August. I tend not to remove too much of the root mass, only to slice off the dense plate of fine roots that form in the bottom of the pot, and to gently tease out the outer root ball. In their book, *Bonsai with Australian Native Plants*, Dorothy and Vita Koreshoff recommend that root pruning be done in spring or autumn when the plant is just about to send out new shoots, and warn against removing the main area of soil around the trunk at potting time. After recent years of drought, I've changed my potting mix to increase the proportion of granulated coconut fibre, with the aim of

increasing the moisture-retaining property of the mix.

### Fertilising

At each repotting, each tree would receive about 2 teaspoonsful of blood and bone. I apply a similar amount of native slow-release fertiliser twice a year: in early spring and mid to late summer (or when I think about it). This year, for the first time, I began using the large fertiliser tablets for native plants in lieu of the slow-release fertiliser granules.

The Australian National Botanic Gardens (ANBG) has readily accessible specimens of both these species. A mature specimen of *A. inophloia* can be seen at the top of the stairway on the southern side of the Information Centre, while a small group of three mature specimens of *A. torulosa* is located at the top end of the walkway in the rainforest gully. In the latter case, it can be seen quite clearly that the furrowed, corky bark extends up most of the length of the trunk – a contrast to the flared buttress effect on my small potted specimen of *A. torulosa*.

Both species are frost hardy, so remain outdoors in full sun all year round. All three trees are now approx. 60 cm tall and are still in plastic pots. If I were to change anything, I'd put all three trees into larger pots, and feed them much more frequently with weak solutions of an

organic liquid fertiliser (e.g. fish emulsion, seaweed extract, etc.), with the aim of fattening the trunk sooner.

### Latin/Greek Origins

*Allocasuarina*: from the Greek 'allos' meaning 'other', and the Latin *Casuarina*, first used by the botanist, Georgius Everhardus Rumphius (b. Georg Everhard Rumpf in Germany, 1627, d. Ambon Island, Indonesia, 1702), to describe the resemblance of the foliage of *Casuarina equisetifolia* – a native of Australia, Indonesia, New Caledonia and Malaysia – to the fine, drooping feathers of the Cassowary (*Casuaris casuaris*), a large, flightless bird native to north-eastern Australia and Papua New Guinea.

*Inophloia*: thread-like bark.

*Torulosa*: slightly uneven.

## References

1. Elliott, W. Rodger, and Jones, David L. *Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants Suitable for Cultivation, Vol. 2*. Lothian Publishing Company, Melbourne, 1982.
2. Koreshoff, Dorothy & Vita. *Bonsai with Australian Native Plants*. Boolarong Publications, Brisbane, 1983.
3. <http://falco.elte.hu/eoc/ParadisusBatavus.htm> (accessed 3/01/05)
4. <http://www.strangescience.net/rumphius.htm> (accessed 3/01/05)

# Defining, Dissecting & Disseminating Bonsai

By Dorothy Koreshoff

## Part 1

(Part 2 in next newsletter)

The term bonsai is described as *The Art Form of Horticulture*, even the term "*Highest Form of Horticulture*" is the description often applied. I'd say 'it depends'. On what? The structural form!

Within Australia, there is a move toward the encouragement & advancement as well the experimentation of various native trees as suitable subjects for bonsai. A long overdue development. But what are we about? As with many artistic pursuits, there are many sub-divisions, of which bonsai is one such sub-division.

In this case: AUSTRALIAN NATIVE PLANTS. Let me name some divisions.

This basic concept is about the endemic (*widespread, common*), indigenous (*native*) species!

A native plant in a pot, preferably of Australian origin, does not necessarily - a 'BONSAI' make. NO! It is simply a potted native tree.

Can the incentive for this native plant; in a container, be the fact that its owner is able to keep it alive? Is it really 'alive' or just existing? Can you grasp the complexity of the situation? *Am I asking too many questions?*

A short life-span will be the end result if 'afraid' of disturbing the roots too much, then; with this situation we are not developing & establishing a

long-term heritage Australian native bonsai collection.

So the myth continues that native trees are short-lived. As they age, they become weaker as roots fill the pore space thus reducing their air supply & so decreasing the plant's growing energy. Believe me! The key element for survival is in having a sufficiently aerated root system.

On the other hand, does one intend to establish a form to their plant?

If the plan is to create a 'natural' appearance. Oh! What does this mean?

- a. Left alone to grow natural; being a lazy excuse for not bothering about form.
- b. Endeavouring to re-create its natural stance means that your interpretation may not follow art principles. If this doesn't bother you that's OK. These examples though, should not be the role model for others to follow. It is a well known fact that trying to re-create from incorrect examples only denigrates the form.
- C. It is possible with various ethnic forms to use art principles to interpret the various cultural forms, i.e. this statement means that the placement of so-called traditional mass (foliage pads) stays the same, however the basic *structure, backbone, the lines or bones of the design*: whatever you name it, will therefore alter, according to varying traditional ethnicity. In other words, cultural variations if trunk & branches are angled to reach the foliage.

=====  
[Dorothy Koreshoff has raised some fascinating questions in her article. I would appreciate Member feed back. She proposes the fundamental importance of 'art principles' for both traditional bonsai and regional bonsai that she calls 'ethnic' or 'cultural'. Dennis McDermott, in an article in the Decembe 2004r newsletter of the Sydney City Bonsai Society, also expresses concerns about what is acceptable art and what is not. Indeed, bonsai has prided itself as being different from 'just a potted plant' because it embodies principles of 'art'. That probably is a fundamental difference, but like the proverbial sword, it cuts in more than one direction. The thrill, vitality and horror of 'art principles' is that they are not pleasing to everyone. And that is OK. Just prepare yourself in the art of bonsai to see some fairly non-traditional bonsai that use art principles that are different from your own. As a student exchange organisation was fond of saying

to students and families alike, when they were confronted by cultural differences: not good, not bad, just different.

*I find looking at good examples of penjing very stimulating and challenging. Initially I was repulsed because the aesthetic was unfamiliar, but I find my rejection of them was based on lack of understanding. As I studied them, by drawing them for example, I was overwhelmed with the discovery of how incredibly exciting and 'artistic' they are. They are often outside the traditional 'Japanese-western' models of bonsai. (I think I prefer this to 'Japanese' as it seems that the fixation with these 'traditional' forms is a product of the interaction of Japanese and western cultures – the Japanese 'art' seems wider and deeper than so much of what the western view admits it to be, but that is a digression.*

*Finding out what are the basic arrangements of line, form, weight, texture etc for Australian species (that are the substance of the 'art principles', that Dorothy so rightly emphasises, is where I find the excitement and challenge that face us just now. For example, we know, or can discover if we try, that some species of casuarina will bud-back prolifically, rather like a juniper. This can be used to produce tight, dense 'pads' of foliage not unlike those of Japanese black pines. Indeed, some truly spectacular plants have been produced using Casuarina equisetifolia, styling it in the manner of a black pine. I have no problem with this, but would like at least to learn what casuarinas look like in their own right. Their beauty lies in quite a different trunk, branch and crown form. The horticulture to produce the essence of this form is not difficult, just different. Looking at mature specimens is an essential part of this practice. The art principles of balance, use of space and texture still all apply, but don't be surprised if the product looks like a casuarina and not a triangular black pine.*

*As a group, bonsaiists tend to be hung up on the idea of 'rules', or so it seems to me. You will all be familiar with the comments that you must learn the 'rules' before you can break them. Let's start talking about learning the 'skills' so that we can use them to produce stunning black pines, wind whispering casuarinas, or pop bonsai.*

Roger Hnatiuk]

## **2<sup>nd</sup> National Exhibition of Australian Plants as Bonsai**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> National Exhibition of Australian Plants as Bonsai was an enormous success. Over 790 visitors saw the show. From all reports of those I talked to or overheard, they enjoyed the plants.

There were 26 bonsai on display. They ranged across a wide diversity of species and styles. Fourteen different genera of plants were there, showing some of the considerable variety of species that people are currently working on. Some of them were in training for 36 years. A selection of the plants on display are shown in *Gallery 3*, this issue.

The public's-choice votes showed what a diverse range of bonsai people find attractive. One half of the plants received 10 or more votes. Several people came up to me and told me a story about how a particular tree meant so much to them. With great feeling they spoke of how the tree reminded them of some pleasurable scene, or sound such as wind in the leaves, that was re-awakened by seeing the miniature living tree. Isn't that just what we so often speak about being a major attraction about bonsai? I was thrilled.

Three trees stood out in the public votes. First was the *Leptospermum* (or is it a *Melaleuca* as some thought?) 'Brumby Country' from Dorothy Koreshoff (see *Gallery 3*), with 138 votes. Closely following this, with 125 votes, was the sticky wattle, *Acacia howittii* (see p 1, APAB-N 6) (Canberra Bonsai Society). In third place was the coast banksia, *Banksia integrifolia* (see p 1 of *Gallery 3*) (Illawarra Bonsai Society). The *Callistemon* in full flower, Bendigo Bonsai Society, won the most public votes (213) for the photographs (see *Gallery 3*).

For most of us, it isn't the voting accolade that counts, though we happily acknowledge those whose plants attracted high praise for well-presented, even stunning plants. We are mostly motivated by a strong desire to work with plants, to aim for and achieve high quality in which ever

line of bonsai art we like. Having an opportunity to share our joy by showing the results of our work to others is high praise and thanks in itself. Volunteers underpin all bonsai shows. This show was no exception. Its success was only possible because of the efforts of the planning group and the large team of faithful, reliant and hardworking volunteers who turned out over 4 days to set-up, operate and pack up the show. Thanks to you all.

I would also like to warmly acknowledge our partners in these exhibitions, the staff of the Australian National Botanic Gardens.

Roger Hnatiuk

## Exciting Potensai !

APAB members in the Canberra region had a special opportunity to view and study a diverse range of Australian species that the Australian National Botanic Gardens maintain as a collection of pot plants. As a number of these plants have been cultivated, including pruning, for many years, their potential as bonsai could be assessed. While many of the species are not available commercially, others are, through seed catalogues, specialist dealers, or ASGAP Study Groups and member Societies. So, keep an eye out for them.

Species name
<i>Adenathos x cunninghamii</i>
<i>Baeckea ambigua/ cryptandroides/ crassifolia/ ramosissima/ spp.</i>
<i>Banksia epica</i>
<i>Beaufortia squarrosa</i>
<i>Boronia latipinna</i>
<i>Boronia pulchella</i>
<i>Bossiaea eriocarpa</i>
<i>Calytrix duplistipulata</i>
<i>Calytrix leschenaultii</i>
<i>Calytrix longiflora</i>
<i>Chamelaucium ciliatum</i>
<i>Chamelaucium micranthum</i>
<i>Chamelaucium sp</i>
<i>Chorizema sp.</i>
<i>Commersonia sp</i>
<i>Conospermum nervosum</i>
<i>Coopernookia polygalacea</i>
<i>Darwinia purpurea</i>
<i>Darwinia acerosa</i>
<i>Darwinia leiostyla</i>

<i>Darwinia meeboldii</i>
<i>Davesia daphnoides</i>
<i>Dodonaea hackettiana</i>
<i>Drummondita hassellii</i>
<i>Drummondita sp.</i>
<i>Dryandra quercifolia</i>
<i>Dryandra sessilis</i>
<i>Epacris gunnii</i>
<i>Eremaea asterocarpa</i>
<i>Eremaea dendroidea</i>
<i>Eremaea pauciflora</i>
<i>Eremaea pauciflora var lonchophylla</i>
<i>Eremaea pauciflora var. calyptra</i>
<i>Eremaea sp</i>
<i>Eremaea violacea subsp raphiophylla</i>
<i>Eremophila weldii</i>
<i>Eriostemon angustifolius</i>
<i>Grevillea acacioides</i>
<i>Grevillea minutiflora</i>
<i>Grevillea sarissa subsp anfractifolia</i>
<i>Grevillea zygoloba</i>
<i>Hakea pulvinifera</i>
<i>Hibbertia serpyllifolia</i>
<i>Homoranthus porteri</i>
<i>Homoranthus prolixus</i>
<i>Hypocalymna sp.</i>
<i>Keraudrenia hermanniifolia</i>
<i>Keraudrenia integrifolia</i>
<i>Lasiopetalum sp</i>
<i>Leptospermum sejunctum</i>
<i>Leucopogon attenuatus</i>
<i>Leucopogon melaleuroides</i>
<i>Leucopogon rufus</i>
<i>Leucopogon sp.</i>
<i>Leucopogon virgatus var. brevifolius</i>
<i>Melaleuca howeana</i>
<i>Microcorys obovata</i>
<i>Microcybe multiflora var. baccharoides</i>
<i>Microcybe multiflora var. multiflora</i>
<i>Monotoca oligarrhenoides</i>
<i>Ochrosperma monticola</i>
<i>Ozothamnus tuckeri</i>
<i>Persoonia sp.</i>
<i>Philothea coccineus</i>
<i>Thomasia tremandroides</i>
<i>Trochocarpa thymifolia</i>
<i>Verticordia mitchelliana</i>
<i>Verticordia pennigera</i>



There are 69 names in this list. Many of the species are restricted in distribution to only one state, for example there are a number of WA and Tas species which might be most easily grown or obtained there. Many of these have spectacular flowers, including when grown in pots. Some will demand some lateral thinking (dare I say outside the triangle) to determine how to effectively style them, whether 'natural' or 'creative'. If you've tried any of these, or do so now, please let me

know so I can record your experiences. Some of the species will be horticulturally as challenging as they are artistically, but some of you will rise to the challenge and succeed. Let us know.

Remember that wild collecting is a highly controlled activity, whether on public or private land. Make sure you know the rules and follow them. Don't give bonsai or yourself a bad name.

[Roger Hnatiuk]

## Horticultural Notes

### *Tristaniopsis laurina* – water gum

The following table contains horticultural notes based on those I received from Ray Nesci, and modified with what I have found in a variety of sources. Ray particularly likes this species and praises its qualities for root over rock styling, amongst others. An example of it can be seen in *Gallery 3*, this issue of APAB-N.

<b>Preliminary horticultural and styling notes for a 'water gum' (<i>Tristaniopsis laurina</i>).</b>	
<b>Lighting</b>	Thrives in full sun through to moderate shade.
<b>Watering</b>	Prefers damp soil, but not waterlogged. Can withstand normal pot drying out, but watch out for 'drought' conditions in the pot – it can be lethal.
<b>Fertilising</b>	Light fertilising every two weeks throughout the warm months, once growth commences. Any balanced fertiliser will do.
<b>Soil</b>	Use a standard bonsai mix: well draining, neutral to slightly acidic soil.
<b>Repotting</b>	Readily develops a fibrous root system upon pruning of large roots. Is a vigorously rooting tree, so annual repotting may be necessary.
<b>Pruning</b>	Branches out quite readily and compact shaping can be easily achieved. Also takes well to cutting back to bare wood. Is a quick grower.
<b>Styling</b>	Excellent response to pruning makes it suitable for most bonsai styling. Strong root growth makes it suitable for root-over-rock (see <i>Gallery No. 3</i> , this issue).
<b>Propagation</b>	Propagation reported as most commonly from seed.
<b>Pests etc.</b>	Usual pests of the family: scale, caterpillars & grasshoppers.
<b>Distribution</b>	Occurs naturally in Qld, NSW and Vic, usually along water courses.

### Future horticultural notes

Again I flag that the silence is nearly deafening. Last issue I asked for feedback on the form of the horticultural notes being presented in APAB-N. Perhaps you could let me know your reactions. Do they cover the essential information? Would you like to see other information, or presented differently?

While I know that an editor's job is a lonely one, I'd really like you to demonstrate that a Study Group Leader's job doesn't really need to be that way too. So get those pens moving, or key boards clacking. Let me know you live. Thanks to those who have contributed other horticultural information in the last months. As I get enough to make a full table, I'll include them in a newsletter.

I have received preliminary notes on *Eucalyptus crenulata* and *E. camaldulensis* from S McIntosh. I'd like to include these in the next newsletter. If you have any experience with either of these, please, please send it to me asap so that I can compile a good summary for the June newsletter. My own experience with one *E. camaldulensis* is not good. It was received from a friend and had grown far too tall (1.5 m), but had a trunk about 4 cm across. I cut it back to about 25 cm ht, and there is not new growth over spring/ early summer after nearly 3 months.

Roger Hnatiuk

## CONTRIBUTIONS

Once again the Study Group has advanced in its goals through the contributions of some generous and hard working members. Since the last newsletter, the following people have made contributions to the Group. If I have missed your name, please let me know. I apologise if I've missed anyone. Those who make 'contributions' this financial year, are eligible for the 'contributor's' renewal price (see p 13) . So if you aren't on the list, you still have until the end of June '05 to make a contribution.

Member's Name	Contribution
APS Victoria	Donation
H. Boehle	Donation
A. Copperfield	Horticultural info. & image
B. Crawford	Donation
G. Davies	Donation
M. Edwards	Donation
M. Flaherty	Donation

Member's Name	Contribution
B. Galey	Donation
P. Hanrahan	Manuscript
F. Kelly	Donation
C. Liber	Image
S. McIntosh	Horticultural info. & image
R. McLucas	Donation
J. Mifsud	Donation
J. Miller	Donation
G. Robbins	Donation & image
SGAP Qld	Donation
M. Trotter	Donation
M. & E. Wilkinson	Image
L. Wright	Horticultural info., image, & manuscript

**STOP PRESS !!**

Once again I wish to acknowledge the strong support we have received from B. Crawford, who in September 2004 graciously contributed \$250 towards the operations of the Study Group. Thank you Betty for your ongoing faith in the Group.

## Letters

B. Crawford writes: "The Captain Cook Callistemon is about to flower so I may have some photos for you soon [see p 13]. This Callistemon is too stiff and would need to be wired but there are others that do have that weeping look and I think I have found some. The natural look is something that natives need and not made to follow the overseas trend of wiring to give some bonsai a most unnatural look about them."

L. Wright requested the data entry forms I circulated early in the Study Group's life. Here is one of her replies: "New form: FAR more user friendly. I have entered the natives I have on the original sheets in Excel but it is far too cumbersome. Or maybe I got the wrong impression that the list comprised ALL plants and trying to enter and trying to edit was a nightmare."

This new format with one tree per page is, to me, far easier to maintain and allows new plants, ex-

plants to be included/interred in alpha order far more conveniently.”

G. Pope writes: “Thank you for a wonderful informative newsletter. Extremely interesting articles included in publication.” [*A tribute to all of you who have submitted such wonderful articles!*]

R. Marriott writes: “I would appreciate knowing if other bonsai members live in Vic. I don’t mind my name & ph. no. being passed on. We could all meet – work at combined quarterly meetings etc. ... I’m sure if local people could get together, the group would flourish. Imagine the articles that could come from such a meeting, even if it were only 2 or 3 members. Could we find a way of becoming known to other members? I’d love to help out but I believe we’d need permission to give out people’s ph. numbers.” [*I’ll include a note in the membership form in June, asking if you’d like to give a contact so that local groups could meet (face to face or electronically). It’s really up to you as members RH.*]

## Membership Renewals

Thanks everyone who has sent in their renewals for 2004 - 05. There are still quite a few who haven’t remembered. If you are one of these, please send it in NOW. I’ve marked your address label with a coloured spot. This will be your last newsletter unless membership is renewed. Some members have asked about direct transfers from their account to the Group’s account. This can be done by telling your bank to transfer the appropriate amount of money to CPS Credit Union Co-operative, BSB number 801003, Account number 332798. This is useful for those without cheque accounts or easy access to Postal Money Orders.

See the new fees in next article.

## Financial Report for year 2003-2004.

The Study Group finished the year with a balanced account. Total membership income was \$941.10 and total expenditure was \$928.00. As you can see these virtually balance each other. Since expenditure was nearly all for newsletter production, membership fees should

increase a bit to give some flexibility to cover likely cost increases in printing or postage.

Sales represent money received for back issues of the newsletter, while debts were for printing, postage, and stationery costs.

### APAB Financial Summary for 2003 – 2004.

	Income	Expend.
Opening Balance		910.04
Subscriptions	928	1,838.04
Donations received	614	2,452.04
Debts		-941.1
Bank Interest	2.38	1,513.32
Sales	153	1,666.32
Miscellaneous	3	1,669.32
Petty cash in hand		-4.3
Subtotals	1700.38	-945.4
Closing Balance		1,661.02

The ASGAP Study Group Coordinator, Jan Sked, has approved a suggestion I put to her, which was as follows. Firstly, membership fees need to increase a bit as just noted. However, a significant number of ‘members’ are not contributing to the central purpose of the Study Group – the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge about Australian Plants as Bonsai. For them, reading the newsletter meets their needs. For me this is good news, but it carries a heavy overhead, as this is a *Study Group*, not a publishing program.

One of the aims of the Study Group is to publish the information we compile so that as wide an audience as possible can benefit. Publication is not cheap, so I propose that we have two kinds of membership. The first is for ‘contributors’ to the Study Group, and the second is for ‘supporters’ of the Study Group.

‘Contributors’ are people or clubs who contributed at least one item to the aims of the Study Group during the *previous* financial year. Thus if you send in a list of species you are growing or your horticultural practices, an article for the newsletter, or photos of mature trees to use as style models; or make a donation of \$5 or more etc, you will be a ‘contributor’ for the next year. ‘Supporters’ are people who pay their fees, but don’t add to the knowledge-base of the Study Group or make special donations. Supporters will add to the goals with their higher

fees which will be put towards the costs of publishing the Group's information in a formal publication.

A number of clubs and societies subscribe to the Group. Your fees are as for individuals. You can qualify as a 'contributor' if you send in contributions as noted above, otherwise you qualify as a 'supporter'.

Fees for the financial year 2005-2006, due on 1 July 2005 will be as follows:

Contributors	\$9.00
Supporters	\$13.00
Overseas	
Contributors	\$16.00
Overseas	
Supporters	\$18.00

For those who need it, copy and treat this page as your

**TAX INVOICE: NO GST INCLUDED.**

I will mark your June newsletter so that you know which group you qualify for. There is still time for you to qualify as a 'contributor' for next year's dues, so let's see lots of contributions flowing in! Remember, in the last newsletter I asked especially for information on melaleucas – species being grown, pruning or styling, photos of mature trees. Only one person has responded and I know there are many more who could.

## Members' Mini-Gallery

Here is a selection of images received from members (see next page). These show plants in pots from early to advanced stages of development as bonsai. The styles range from root over rock to rounded-bush amongst others.

Taking photos of one's plants is worthwhile. The historical record of the stages of development and redevelopment is invaluable. It is hard to remember how a plant used to look, and a photo can sometimes be startling when you say, 'Did it really look like that?'

Photos are also very useful in helping you see your plants in a new light. When you are very familiar with a plant, you often overlook things that show up starkly in a photo. There may be an imbalance not intended, a stray branch poking out where you've don't want it, or a surprise at how well you've progressed.

## Study Group Information

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

- to determine the species of native Australian plants grown as bonsai;
- to determine the horticultural characteristics & 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 or postal money order for:

- contributors \$9 (\$16 overseas) or
- supporters \$13 (\$18 overseas) to:

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

Direct credit transfers can be made to CPS Credit Union BSB 801003 acct no. 332798.

'Contributors' provide information relevant to the Group or a cash donation of \$5 or more during the previous financial year or with their first subscription; 'supporters' higher fees provide support to the publications fund. Subscribers who contribute more than \$100 in a financial year receive the newsletters free.

Indicate to which ASGAP group you belong.

If you don't belong, you can join as a newsletter subscriber with all benefits except insurance at group outings. The cheapest insurance is to join your local ASGAP society. The current Study Group Leader is Roger Hnatiuk. Contact him at the above postal address or via email:

[hnatiuk1@cyberone.com.au](mailto:hnatiuk1@cyberone.com.au).

Thanks to all who have contributed. I will try to continue to publish a selection. They are all great!

## Members' Mini Gallery



*Banksia spinulosa* B. Cliff  
Rounded-bush style



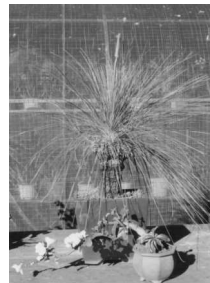
*Melaleuca* 'Snow Storm' & small leaf fig from near Warrumbungles, B. Cliff;  
both slanting style



*Callistemon* 'Captain Cook'  
B. Crawford; root over rock



*Graptophyllum excellior*, native fuchsia  
B. Cliff; informal upright.



*Xanthorrhoea* sp.,  
B. Cliff; formal upright.



# Australian Plants as Bonsai

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## Back Page Musings

I'm interested in member's experiences with grasstrees (*Xanthorrhoea*). There is enough experience around to know that they can be grown in pots, and they can be successfully grown from seed. Trunk forming species will form their trunks in no less time than it takes to grow a good trunk on a Japanese black pine, say 20 plus years. Stemless species can produce spectacular crowns in five years.

So what's the issue you ask? It seems to me that there is very little that one can do in relation to 'styling' a grass tree. Yes, leaves can be made shorter if growing conditions are very restrictive, but then the plants don't have that luxurious healthy look. These are monocotyledonous plants and don't produce real 'wood' and for all intents and purposes, don't have buds on the stem that can be awakened to produce new shoots like other plants grown as bonsai, so pruning of 'branches' can't really be done.

Does this mean the potted grasstree is or isn't a bonsai? Do we just make them an Australian exception, a bit like growing cycads or bamboo? They're spectacular and iconic plants. How do you see them in relation to bonsai? I've taken mine out of bonsai pots and put in larger, 'garden' pots – they look better and happier. [Roger Hnatiuk]