



Victorian Native Bonsai Club

Next meeting: Tuesday 11 November, 2014

Meetings are held at the Harry Atkinson Centre, Coburg Lake Reserve, at 7:30pm on the second Tuesday of the month
web: www.vicnativebonsai.com.au email: secnativeclub@gmail.com Find us on Facebook: Vic Native Bonsai Club

This Month...

This month's meeting will be a demonstration by Eric and Mary from Bendigo, featuring Acacia.



If you have any Acacia bonsai in your collection, bring them along for the Display Table.

A Saturday workshop / critique session will be held on the following Saturday, 15 November, at the same venue, from 11:00am to 2:00pm. Bring your trees along for advice.

Coming Events...

Ballarat Bonsai Society Exhibition
1 – 2 November
Robert Clark Centre, Bot Gardens at Lake Wendouree.

Gold Fields Bonsai Society Show
1 – 2 November
Ray Bradfield Rooms, Castlemaine.

Geelong Bonsai Club Show
8 – 9 November
Masonic Centre, Regent St, Belmont.

Committee 2014/15...

Last month saw the election of office bearers...



Quentin
President



Kevin
Vice President



Marcela
Secretary



Barry
Treasurer



Mark
Committee



Sally
Committee

More committee members are needed to help guide the Club over the coming year! At this month's meeting, talk to any of the current committee members to find out what is involved.

The new committee will need to plan for the coming year. If you have any suggestions, have a chat to one of the committee members at the next meeting, or email: secnativeclub@gmail.com



Chojo Feature Trees is a bonsai nursery located at 136 York Rd, Mount Evelyn. We offer sales, service, lessons, demonstrations and bonsai accessories for the beginner to the expert. A wide selection of starters is available including wired pre-bonsai and field grown stock. Lessons take place on the last Saturday of each month and bookings are essential. An inspiring collection of established bonsai are on display in the Gallery as well as suiseki and sculptures by local artists. Renovations are almost complete and the nursery is open weekends 9:00am-5:00pm (or by appointment). For enquiries call Jeff on 0434 622 565. Hope to see you soon.

Find us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/chojo.featuretrees>



Last Meeting...

Last month's meeting was the AGM...



The President and the Treasurer gave their reports...



Office bearers were elected. Awards were made...

Jasmine won the Junior Encouragement Award and Myles won the Senior Encouragement award...

After the formalities there was a "show & tell" of members' trees from the Display Table...



Myles (Bottle Tree)



Quentin (Umbrella Tree)



Marcela (Agonis)

This was followed by a demo on group plantings.

Marcela repotted an existing group...



Quentin created a new group planting with Allocasuarina tube stock...



The planting will be auctioned at the December meeting.

Display Table...

Many members brought along their Australian native bonsai to display...



Callistemon



Leptospermum



Kunzea

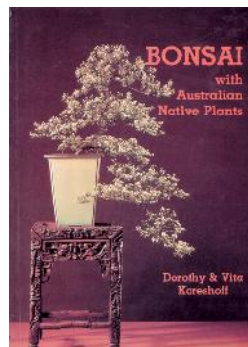
Tip...

"My work is a reflection of my personal feelings and attitude. In making bonsai, I am not too concerned with the final destination, but rather with the joyful process. I enjoy the slow process of revealing the character and identity of the tree..."

Robert Steven

Library...

Bonsai with Australian Native Plants by Dorothy & Vita Koreshoff



ISBN: 0908175663 (pbk.)
Publisher: Boolarong Publications
Publish Date: 1999, 1983
Country of Publication: Australia

Dorothy and Vita Koreshoff were veritable pioneers of the Australian Bonsai scene, and this book is considered by many to be the Bible of Oz Native Bonsai.

While some of the information may be a little dated now, it is still a good place to start.



Diatomite,
2-7mm, 35L bag = \$25

Orchiata pine bark,
6-9mm, 40L bag = \$30

Discounts for bulk purchases!



Julie Healy
0419 870 240
healys@bigpond.com

Tree Species...

Acacia Howittii (Howitts Wattle, Sticky Wattle)

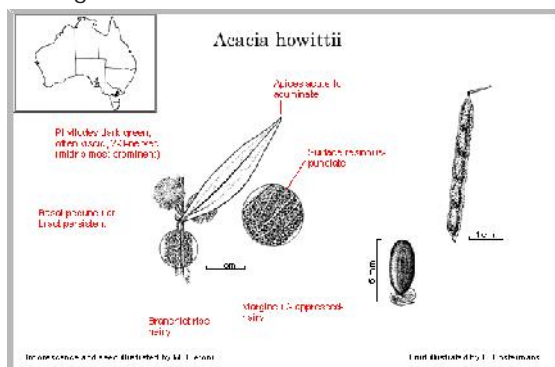
Acacia is a genus of around 1200 species, 954 of which are currently recognised as occurring in Australia. The next largest occurrence is in Africa. The plants occur in all Australian states from coastal zones to mountains to the dry inland. Collectively the Australian species are known as "wattles" and one of them, *Acacia pycnantha* (Golden wattle), is the national floral emblem. The green and gold colours of the foliage and flowers have provided Australia's official colours.

Acacia howittii is on the list of rare species of Australian plants. In its natural habitat this plant is restricted to a portion of the southern Gippsland hills, between Yarram and Tarra Valley in Victoria, a distance of only 20 km. It is not, however, considered to be under any threat. Indeed, *A. howittii* has been recorded to escape cultivation and occur as a weed of bushland in south-eastern Australia.



It is a graceful large shrub or small tree of dense, weeping habit growing up to 8m in height and spreading up to 3m. The foliage is small elliptical phyllodes (leaf-stalks or petioles that become vertically flattened, and serve the purpose of leaves) up to 3cm long, light green to dark green in colour and slightly sticky, hence the common name of Sticky Wattle. This stickiness is especially noticeable when the tree is being pruned.

Scented, pale yellow ball-shaped flowers appear in spring, held on short peduncles from the phyllode axils. The fruiting pods which follow are brown and elongated, 4 - 6cm long and 5mm wide.



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Name derivation:

Acacia- may be from the Greek "to sharpen", referring to the prickly nature of the first species discovered; another opinion refers to the Egyptian thorn (akakia), a species of Acacia which yields gum arabic; howittii - in honour of Dr Alfred William Howitt (1830-1908), an English explorer and botanist.

Position: Full sun to part shade. Turn plants regularly to achieve even growth. Will handle light frosts.



Watering: They like a lot of water when in active growth. They require less water in winter, although they should never be allowed to dry completely. Good drainage is essential.

Feeding: They like lots of fertilizer when in active growth. Use standard native fertilizers like Osmocote Native.

Repotting: Roots can be pruned without difficulty if a healthy and fibrous root mass has been obtained. Remove no more than 1/3 of the super fine root mass. Repotting has been successfully done immediately before regrowth or after flowering in late Spring.

Pruning: They must be pruned back hard in early spring (after flowering) as they are prolific growers and will quickly lose their shape. Pruning below a branch junction increases ramification. Selectively prune to achieve the natural bow in a branch by removing growth just below an upward pointing branch. They backbud well and handle cutting back to bare wood so total reshaping is possible. Cut back to bare wood at repotting time if required.

Wiring: Branches are brittle and inflexible. Exercise care when attempting to bend a branch. Some die back and loss of vigour has been noticed when branches are bent below horizontal.

Propagation: Virtually all acacias are propagated from seed. Recent success has been reported from cuttings as well. Be cautious of the long tap root on collected stock.

Pests and Diseases: Borers can be a problem.

Styles: Upright styles are more suited to Wattles. To emphasise the weeping habit of *A. howittii*, the lower branches are slightly longer, whilst further up the trunk they are somewhat shorter, thus creating an overall layered effect. The layered foliage on the first branch should have a lower drop than the foliage on the second branch, and so on.

If your experience with this species is different from the above, or you can add further information, please let us know. Email the Editor: barnesim@bigpond.net.au

The Back Page...

The Principles of Good Bonsai Design by Robert Steven

Bonsai is similar to other art forms, such as painting, sculpture or graphic arts; the same design principles used in these forms can be learned and applied to bonsai.

A good bonsai design should be artistically beautiful, with convincing horticultural clues, and should convey a thematic message.

Designing bonsai is all about composition. Composition is the placement or arrangement of the components of bonsai (roots, trunk, branches, foliage pads, crown, container and accessories) in a unified manner within the work, which results in a creation that is aesthetically pleasing to the eye, and which gives a sense of harmony to the viewer.

Before beginning to work on a design, we should always start with an idea. A general idea should be found within the bonsai material we are going to work with. Our task is to explore the tree character through the transformation process to obtain an image of a mature tree.

Bonsai material offers us the roots, the trunk, and maybe a few branches as the basic available components. These components each have their own basic characters in line, form, texture and colour. Through careful observation, we can find the design idea that best fits the material and then take the next step, which is to train new branches that will form the ramification and foliation. The design idea must include considerations of natural phenomena, horticultural clues, plant physiology, tree morphology, and environmental factors.

The principles of design are:

Balance – the shape and position of the roots, the trunk, the placement of branches, the configuration of foliage pads, the crown, and the container will determine the visual balance of the overall pose of the bonsai setting.

Asymmetrical balance is believed to be the best in composition because it suggests a more dynamic feeling and is less boring.

Asymmetrical balance can be achieved by several methods:

value – smaller darker colour can balance larger lighter colour,

colour – smaller bright colour can balance larger duller colour,

shape – small, complicated shape can balance larger simpler shape,

texture – smaller, rougher and complicated surface texture can balance larger, smoother texture,

position – a smaller object farther away from the centre can balance a larger object that is closer to the centre,

eye direction – certain shapes, which draw visual direction, can transfer weight from a heavier side to a lighter side.

Movement and Rhythm – the directional path of our eyes when we look at a work of art.

In bonsai, this movement can be created with the trunk line, branch direction, foliage shape, or the position of the pot.

Movement can also be created by repetition and action. If the repetition leads the eye through a periodical regularity, it will create a rhythm (eg, the repetition of similar foliage pads can create movement in a tree).

Movement can be created with 3 kinds of lines: the actual line, the implied line and the psychic line. All work together to create dynamic motion (eg, the trunk and branches have the actual lines to show the movement in a tree, the shape of the foliage pads will create an implied line to enhance the movement in one direction, and the overall composition can create a psychic line to direct our visual flow).

Emphasis – the intended focusing or highlighting of a particular characteristic of the design, which has the purpose of creating a focal point or point of interest. In bonsai, this emphasis can be on over-sized roots, the trunk, deadwood, or any other unique feature that stands out (eg, an over-sized rock emphasizing the theme of a tree that grows on the rock).

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Simplicity – the elimination of non-essential elements or details.

Contrast – the difference between or opposition of various elements. Contrast can create visual interest and add variation to the design.

Contrast in bonsai can be found on the lines and form of the trunk and foliage, the colour of leaves and flowers, the bark colour and texture, between deadwood and live veins, between the rock and the tree, or even in the colour of moss against the soil surface.

Proportion – the relation or ratio comparison of elements in size or quantity. In bonsai, it can refer to the size proportion of the trunk, branches, tertiary branches and twigs (eg, the size of the branches should fit to the trunk size). It can also be the relation or comparison among other components, such as grass, moss, rock, container, or accessories.

Proportion in bonsai can create perspective and dimension; it can also emphasize the chosen focal point. Good proportion in bonsai can also influence the comparative size of the tree in relation to the total presentation.

Space – the interval or distance between elements. Negative space or empty space is a very important part of any composition. Use of negative space in bonsai will give the illusion of depth; it can draw a visual distance between the foreground, middle ground and background (eg, by overlapping the components; the mind will perceive there are gaps of space in-between the components and create the illusion of perspective).

Negative space has weight and mass and it creates a balance with the positive space by giving the eye a place to rest. It provokes the viewer to interpret the visible within the invisible, the tangible within the intangible, and the presence within the absence.

Unity – the hallmark of good design. All elements and components should be composed with integrity, in a consistent manner, and successfully applied with the principles of design in mind. Unity will give a sense of visual pleasure if all the elements and components are arranged in harmony, complementary to each other, and with an appealing focal point, instead of competing for attention.

In bonsai, when unity is achieved, the creation will be aesthetically beautiful, logical in nature, and the thematic message will be well perceived, because the tree will speak for itself, conveying a silent chronicle of its life history.

Unity in bonsai design can be achieved by several methods:

Consistency – the repetition of all elements and components should show similarities in character (eg, by the line of the trunk and branches, the form of the foliage pads, the shape and colour of the container, etc.)

Relevancy – the character and arrangement of all elements and components should be relevant to the concept and idea of the design (eg, the environmental factors fitting to the pose and character of the tree)

Integrity – all elements and components should be arranged to show a logical relationship and connection as an uninterrupted union.

Unity without variation is boring, but too much variation without unity is chaotic. Do not apply the same principles equally to all bonsai designs, as one may be more important than the other, depending on the mood, the nuance, the character, and the idea we want to convey. One creation may be strong in balance, another may be strong in movement, and yet another may be strong in emphasis.

Do not hesitate to incorporate your own personal touches as a signature of your personality; without this, the creation may well suffer from lack of character.