



OYAMA BONSAI KAI

Club Newsletter - July 2011

Outgoing President's Report 2010/2011

What a busy year this has been. At the 2010 AGM Freddie Bischoff, Hennie Nel and Mike Rich decided to step down and give others the opportunity to develop the experience of managing the club. They had set a high standard and it was a difficult act to follow; a big learning curve. Fortunately we had some really great meetings; who can forget the bending of big branches by Len and Carl, the Easter show, the annual olive dig and the Bonsai Bash our 25th year celebration. The year seemed to fly past. It has been a fantastic year for the club.

The Easter show

Despite the nasty stormy and wet weather, this was a success. We had fewer visitors than the previous year, but the income from donations was significantly up, which I think is a strong indicator that people really enjoyed the show. The centre piece was beautiful and pictures from the show will be available on the new web site. Although everything went smoothly, I know there were several committee members who worked hard behind the scenes to make it a success.



Carl begins splitting a trunk



Len bending a big branch

The Bonsai Bash

This is Oyama's 25th year and the committee had some discussion as to how best to celebrate it. We decided a workshop using South African talent was the best way to do this. We already had Carl Morrow in our club and we thought that Tobie Kleynhans of the Black River Kai / Swart Rivier Kai in George would also be perfect. What a wonderful Bonsai Bash it was! The workshop was exciting and Tobie had some excellent insights and advice for those participating. The demonstrations by Carl and Tobie were superb, proving that our local South African talent is world class. Peter Bruyns did an excellent job of videoing the demonstrations so all could clearly see what was going on. We thank Rudi Adams for his kind words at the end of the "bash". The unintended consequence of inviting Tobie is that the two kais have formed strong links and are committed to share knowledge, ideas and experiences.



Tobie talking about Vicky's delightful olive

The Annual Olive Dig



We had heard that the farmer is selling the area where the annual olive dig is held, so some keen members decided to go after those big and difficult trees. Rudi Adams was invited to participate as he is an honorary life member of Oyama . So extra diggers were assembled, and for the first time a chain saw was used and a “dolly” with pneumatic tyres which was invaluable in transporting the trees to the nearest accessible point where the bakkie could go. This combination of factors resulted in superb trees, which will make memorable bonsai. It will be fantastic to see them at a future meeting and hopefully at a future show. All agreed; this was one of the best digs ever held.

Tired and scratched but pleased with his tree!



This Olive when finally removed yielded 6 trees, some of which were outstanding.

Thanks

2010/2011 has been a great and fun year for the Oyama Bonsai Kai, many outstanding talks and events took place and credit for this should go to the Oyama committee who have really worked hard. No one more than the new President, Phil Levitt. I thank all the committee members for the extra hours and hard work that they have put into the club.

Many thanks to all who participated and helped to make the 2010/2011 year a memorable year for OBK!



Geoff Hoy

Incoming President's Report

It is with great pleasure and more than a little trepidation that I accepted the position of President of Oyama Kai. I have taken over from Geoff with the club on a high following the fantastic 25th Anniversary Bash. I would like to thank Geoff for his "term in office" and look forward to his support and help as the Vice President.

When I look at my trees I get depressed and impressed simultaneously! In time I'm sure some will develop into acceptable bonsai. One thing I have learnt to appreciate (if not always practise) since acquiring this addiction is patience so ; I hope to put a lot of energy into the Kai and bonsai in the Western Cape whilst my trees are developing.

I am looking forward to serving the Kai over the next year or so, with the help of the other committee members.

Here's to an enjoyable year ahead.

Phil

Bonsai Ramblings

Thanks to John de Kock!

We are happily settled in the coastal town of Mandurah about 70kms from Perth CBD in Western Australia. The state of WA is probably twice the size of SA but with only a bit over 2 mil inhabitants! The main reason why we decided to move here is that both our sons are here and asked us to come and join them. Andre stays in our granny flat and Johan and Carin have built a house about 5 minutes from us, so it is great to be together as a family.



2009 was spent mainly in settling in, house maintenance and garden reconstruction so I was

only able to start bonsai about a year ago. I first had to construct a shade house as protection from the 4 very hot and dry summer months. This last summer has been exceptionally hot but all the trees have stood up well and thrived. My growing medium is made up of diatomite pebbles from Brisbane (a sedimentary earth made up of siliceous fossils of plant algae (diatoms) originally laid down in a fresh water or marine environment. It is light in weight, chalk-like in appearance and very porous. see www.mtsylviadiatomite.com.au). Added to this is milled pine bark, coconut fibre, commercial bonsai mix from Sydney and blood and bone. The diatomite keeps the soil damp and I only water the trees 10min a day with overhead microjet misters.



One of John's Olives

I sourced the olives from a discarded olive orchard, the coleonemas come up like weeds in our garden, the spekboom I found half dead in our garden. The leaves of the African snowdrop tree look just like our SA bladdernut but I could not find it in Palgrave's tree book.

I can get reasonably priced colourful Chinese pots from a shop in Perth. I haven't discovered anyone here in Mandurah that grows bonsai and I don't fancy an 80km drive to Perth and back at night to attend meetings of the couple of WA clubs. I don't need to anyway as I have Len's monthly "what to dos"! There are hundreds of SAs here and we have contact with over 50 families. We make our own biltong and have just finished picking, stewing and freezing about 20kg of guavas from trees that were very small and only planted 2 winters ago. The people here don't know and grow guavas and how can any Capetonian survive without stewed guavas and custard!

There are photos of our house, garden, vegies and

roses on our Facebook page. Have a look. It would be great to hear from you.

Our email is johnandnaomi@iinet.net.au
Phone +61895353986
Cell +61415 799 009

(We are 6 hours ahead of you. ie our 2pm is your 8am so don't phone in the middle of the night!)

Our Skype name is johnandnaomi2 and our street address is:

14 Reynolds Avenue,
Greenfields 6210,
Western Australia.

We have a spare room so how about a visit.

Greetings,

John & Naomi

(John has invited comments on his trees shown on this page, so let him know what you think he can do to improve them. He's all ears!)



Len's What to Do Monthly

If you tell me we are heading for Spring, I won't believe you. I don't know if it's old age but boy do I feel the cold at the moment and I feel for those poor trees in pots outside. I often wonder about our collected trees which we collect around the end of May, if it were a bit warmer surely the roots would start developing a lot easier, maybe a heating pad would help?

My favorite time of the year is just around the corner, it's the time when we see new growth on Celtis and Elms, I never tire of that Spring green. I enjoy putting the trees in a different pot or changing the angle slightly to give another view to the tree. The time of year changes my whole outlook and I get a real kick potting and experimenting with different growing mediums to improve growth. Don't make potting a mechanical job, when potting you should keep your mind open to changes that should be made to improve growth. Was the soil mix correct for the tree, are there plenty of roots or few, does the soil mix still smell healthy, and not vrot smelling. Does the amount of roots tell you to prune heavily or just a light trim. Remember also that some species require heavier root pruning than others, Off hand I can think of Privet that requires really heavy root pruning. health Is the pot correct for the tree, not only shape and colour but depth and length. Remember that bigger pots keep the growing medium wet longer, but they are probably better for our climate. There is just so much to remember when potting. Not to mention the aesthetics of potting when we look at angles of trunk as well as foliage weight, height of root base from pot level, you need to be wide awake.

Hope you are ready for this time of year with all your ingredients for potting

Whilst we have had some rain let's hope it continues to pour so there are no heavy restrictions this summer. Please be aware though that because we do not have rationing we can waste water. Make sure your taps are not leaking; your hose sprinkler is working efficiently. I modify my Gardena Sprinkler by reducing by about a third the amount of holes on the sprinkler sieve by gluing the holes closed around the edges of the sieve. If you also turn your sieve plate around so it is convex rather than concave you will get a narrower stream of water.

The rains mean keeping a watch out for blocked drainage holes. Blocked holes can be caused by a variety of causes ranging from slugs or snails curled up in the drainage hole, obviously these need to be removed and eliminated. Snails and Bonsai growers just don't get along and I find the best time to catch these pests (on the job so to speak) is when it's raining, so get out the umbrella and wellies and have a walk around next time it rains especially at night, you will be amazed at the number of snails

and slugs you catch. I just drop them in a bucket of salt water and dispose of them. Snails are particular to figs, especially fig seedlings and I have seen snails slither over lush lettuce leaves to graze on figs seedlings. Don't forget that your trees need watering sometimes in winter. It's very important that we do not become complacent about watering because lots of damage can be done during dry spells and even when it rains lightly and the rain does not penetrate lush foliage... Growing medium should not be kept soggy as this will lead to root rot and a weakening of the tree in Spring or worse still the tree could die. All mosses should have been removed as they keep the growing medium excessively wet. Do not throw the moss away but put into flat trays and keep under the bench for Spring. Evergreen tree will benefit from being placed in full sun as this will dry out the growing medium reducing the chance of soggy soil. If you do check your trees when it's raining check for water logging and if you notice pots with standing water and the drainage hole is clear you need to tilt your pot to allow the excess to drain of. Place a stone under one end of the pot to keep it in that position. I had a wet situation last year in my En and that was concerning my Ficus which were balanced on the edge of a humidity tray, two of the Figs had slipped back into the tray and the pot was partially submerged for a few days. When I found them parts of the foliage had turned a nasty black colour and the foliage was looking very unhealthy. I trimmed the dead area away and prayed as they were really good little Mame's. It just shows the importance of checking your Bonsai often. By the way the figs did respond but I lost most of the primary branching and have started to re-design.

Watch out for worms as they mulch up your coarse mix and the fines that are produced block the drainage hole You will probably notice at this time of year that your growing medium (soil mix) has been compacted over the previous season, it is advantageous to just loosen the top layer of your growing medium to aerate the mix, similar to a gardener when he forks over the soil. The other thing I have noticed is that my growing medium is very often being disturbed. Holes were dug and the GM left in a pile. Then I saw two Cape Robins hard at work digging in my mix and on investigation found some white grubs. Now I have only found the grubs in pots where I have deposited thick piles of Bounce back and am presuming that they have originated from this. So if I use Bounce Back this year I will spread thinner as it has not happened on those pots.

July we is when we pot our Swamp Cypress, you will not see any growth but be reassured it is the time to pot this specie, then watch out for your Celtis to start bud swelling followed by Elms so make sure you have all the gravel and potting soil you need as well as pots for the coming season.. Look very closely at your trees and don't wait for the buds to

actually open but inspect the buds and as soon as you see a swelling jump in and pot. Elms are quite interesting at this time as the actual twig start to look more healthy possibly changes colour to a sort of red colour and then the buds swell, and burst open to a beautiful light green.

If you missed the Lime Sulphur Spraying you can still spray with Oleum and give some protection for the coming year from pests and diseases. If you have forgotten to spray lime sulphur for the pests remember that Lime sulphur still needs to be painted on your deadwood, so wait for a dry spell when the wood dries out and paint the deadwood with the Lime Sulphur, It really should have been done earlier but better late than never.

As we know Metasystox is no longer available as a systemic insecticide for the control of sucking insects and that the new replacement chemicals are Confidor supplied in a soluble or powder form or Merit a soluble chemical. I have been pestering everyone about a problem with my Diospyros being attacked and devoured with some bug leaving a trail of leaves wrapped up in a web, which is devoured from the inside. Some who shall not be named told me it was a Rhino beetle, now I have never heard of a rhino beetle and can find no reference to one in my books so I don't know if he is taking me for a ride . If anyone has heard of such a creature please let me know. I have since found out that Rhino beetle does exist, (but not on my trees.

Evergreen trees need to be placed in as much sunlight as possible and I generally feed monthly with a half strength mixture of the lowest nitrogen based fertilizer I can find.

It's still a good time to clear the benches of all pots and then clean the benches of leaves and weed that are lying on or in the gravel on your benches. Then I spray with Jeyes fluid, strong mix.

If you do some wiring at this time take extreme care as branches are VERY brittle and snap for no reason at all. We all advocate watching your wiring to prevent wire bite but I was reading recently in a magazine where Francois Jeker (Bonsai Europe issue 2/2006) actually allows the wire to bite into pines so it swells in a grotesque manner, he then removes the wire and re-wires in the opposite direction allowing it to swell again with the result that the tree looks more gnarled as it ages. I know this works well on Acacias as I have seen the results from this. It could also look okay on cork barked elms and other rough barked trees but not on Celtis or smooth barked trees.

Last of all you can settle into your arm chair with a glass of good Cape red wine and a Bonsai magazine from our library and just enjoy the season.

Wise Japanese sage say's;

"It's what you learn after you think you know it all that counts."

"Minds are like umbrellas they only function when open."

One of the most meaningful adages I have read from Lionel Therons Beginners manual:-

"There may be times when the artist is aware that his work may not be appreciated by others, but nevertheless loves what he/she produces. In the final analysis the most important factor in this activity is that you enjoy what you are doing."

Rules are meant to be obeyed slavishly by fools, but provide countenance for the wise.

Pests come in various forms and sizes. On the small end of the scale a virus On the large end is the human being

Club Calendar

13th July

President's Report	Phil
Senior Moment	Len
Main Theme	Marginal Stock Peter, Thys, Len, Carl, Freddie, Russ
Beginner's Corner (7'ish in the corner)	Bring a few trees and let's discuss basic design options and styling.

Possible Olive dig in late July - details to follow at next meeting.