



Bonsai Northwest Melbourne

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March 2021 Newsletter

In this Issue:

- Next meeting
- Bonsai Northwest Exhibition and Sale 15 & 16 May 2021
- Coming events
- Last month's meeting
- Bonsai Northwest member competition
- Library news
- Trident Maple - Bonsai Species Guide

Club Details

www.bonsainorthwest.com.au

bonsainorthwest@hotmail.com

7B Batman Street
Aberfeldie Victoria 3042

President: David Nassar
Contact: Barry 0422 619 641

Meetings are held at the
Aberfeldie Community Club,
7B Batman St, Aberfeldie at
7:30pm on the first Monday of
the month (no meeting in
January)

Social Media

Click on icon to access:



[bonsai_northwest](#)

Next meeting - 1 March 2021 - 7:30pm

We will be holding our Annual General Meeting (AGM) at the March meeting night. The AGM should only take about 20mins. This will be followed by a progression (show and tell) talk of established trees on stage from a few of our members.

The club will operate to similar guidelines as last month with the addition of Mandatory Mask wearing. This may change as we believe the government may announce relaxing of the mask wearing rules on 26 February. We will email you to let you know if this changes.

Here are the guidelines for the meeting night:

- Mandatory mask wearing inside unless eating or drinking (this could be relaxed before our meeting night)
- Everyone must sign in before entering the club. We will have a QR code available to download on your smart devices to register or you can physically sign your name and provide you details at the door
- Raffle tickets will be available at the door as you walk in. Please buy some raffle tickets to help support the club. The raffle will only be open for the first hour and will close at 8.30pm.
- Spread yourselves out throughout the room
- Bring your own coffee and tea as we cannot offer self-serve coffee, tea and biscuits. The Bar will be open for purchase of drinks.
- The Sales table will be open for purchases.
- The Library will be open for borrowing and returning items

Looking forward to another great night at the club.

Bonsai Northwest Exhibition and Sale 15 & 16 May 2021

We will be holding our exhibition on 15 & 16 May 2021. We need your help. The show can only be a success if members volunteer their time to help out over the weekend.

We will have a roster available for everyone to put down their names to volunteer for a few hours (or more) over the weekend. This is vital to having a great show. We also expect members to prepare at least one tree for the exhibition.

Remember this is your club and every member should be a part of this. More information about the exhibition to come later but for now please volunteer your time to help and start preparing your trees for the exhibition.

Coming events

Yarra Valley Bonsai Club Sale

Date: 27 February 10am – 1pm

Venue: Chirnside Park Community Hub, Chirnside Park 3116

Vietnamese Bonsai Club Exhibition

Date: 6 & 7 March 10am to 5pm.

Venue: Vietnamese Cultural Heritage Centre 90 Knight Ave Sunshine

Victorian Native bonsai club Exhibition

Date: 19 March 5.30pm to 8.30pm and 20 March 9am to 4pm.

Venue: Preston Shire Hall Corner Hall & Gower Street

Last month's meeting - February 2021

First meeting of 2021 and what a great turnout at our workshop night. It was great seeing so many happy and excited faces.





Bonsai Northwest member competition

Don't forget the club will be running a bonsai competition for all members to take part. It's all about turning raw stock trees into a bonsai over the next year. We have extended the cut-off date until 18 March due to the snap lockdown.

Rules and Criteria

Tree must be developed from raw nursery stock costing no more than \$25.

It must have been purchased from either a garden centre, nursery or hardware store.

You can't have;

- propagated the tree
- been gifted the tree
- bought it from a bonsai nursery
- dug it up from a garden

It can't;

- have had any work done on roots prior to purchase
- be converted into a tanuki

Entry

\$5 per entry payable by bank transfer. You can enter as many times as you like just as long as you pay \$5 for each tree entered in the competition.

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When depositing, please use the reference "Comp (your surname)".

The tree voted as feeling the most like a "bonsai" by the committee at the end of the competition wins the kitty (dependent on how many entries) which will be converted into a voucher for the sales table for you to spend on your next bonsai purchase.

To be eligible to win:

- You must have deposited money by 18 March 2021
 - You must take a photo at time of purchase with receipt, label, tree and entry reference visible which will count as the first photo
 - You need to submit a photo of the progression once every two months (six photos in total) over the 12 months the comp is running with your entry reference number. Submission due dates are;
- 18 March 2021 (initial)
 - 4 April 2021
 - 4 June 2021
 - 4 August 2021
 - 4 October 2021
 - 4 December 2021

You can email in your photos to bonsainorthwest@hotmail.com or send email directly to myself on lukedalli@hotmail.com.

Photos will be published in the newsletter over the next 12 months so you track the progress of other club members (read competitors).

At the December AGM, all competitors will be asked to bring in their trees for display. The committee will announce the winner.

How to get disqualified:

- Using someone else's images
- Doctoring images
- Missing deadlines for images
- Killing your tree
- Sabotaging someone else's entry

If the December AGM gets postponed, competitors will be asked to take photos from every angle and judging will take place remotely on images.

Hope you all get involved and enjoy the process.

Thanks

Luke

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Library News



Bonsai Maples - How to grow *Acer buergerianum* and *Acer palmatum*: history, secrets and growing techniques, by Andrea Meriggioli.
English, Soft cover, 21 x 28 cm format, 480 pages, full colour.

Everything you need to know about growing and nursing bonsai trees of the species *Acer palmatum* and *Acer buergerianum* ! The book is richly illustrated, with more than 700 photographs and drawings, guiding the reader step by step through each section. Included are the newest, ground-breaking bonsai techniques, perfectly adapted to the natural character of maples.

This publication aims at making each single detail and aspect of the techniques available for all, in a clear and practical way. The first part has an important history of the genus *Acer*, starting from its origins. In every section of the book, each single species and its cultivars are portrayed thoroughly, to give detailed and specific information useful to bonsai practice.

A very comprehensive book, with some truly great information and photos. You cannot be seriously into Maples and not read this book!



Andrea Meriggioli.

Thanks to his frequent work and study visits to Japan, as well as with the aid of a number of translations of specialised texts, Andrea Meriggioli, from Trieste, Italy, has been able to expand his knowledge of the genus *Acer* over the years, learning directly from the most famous bonsai masters in Japan.

Trident Maple (*Acer buergerianum*) - Bonsai Species Guide by Ian Barnes

Acer buergerianum, the Trident maple, is grown in many parts of the world as a "Street" tree due to its tolerance of pruning, dry soil and air-pollution; these attributes also make it excellent material for bonsai culture. Native to Korea, China and Japan, Trident maples can reach heights of 10 metres or more.

Acer buergerianum differs from its *Acer palmatum* relatives by virtue of its 3-lobed leaves (as opposed to the 5-lobed leaves of *Acer palmatum*). Leaves are dark-green above and blue-green underneath, turning beautiful shades of orange and red in autumn. New buds are a red / brown colour. Bark is buff and flakes revealing a soft-orange under-bark. In maturity the bark becomes darker.



Trident maples are a very vigorous species, particularly when grown in the ground and are very suitable for field growing to develop large trunks suitable for bonsai. The tree is strong and can take aggressive pruning / styling very well.

Bonsai Cultivation Notes

Position:

Acer buergerianum prefers lots of light, although it should be protected from too much direct sunlight during hot summer afternoons to avoid leaf-burn. Thick-trunked Trident specimens are often planted in relatively shallow bonsai pots that may dry quickly during the summer; these should also be provided with some shade from the afternoon sun. Roots have a high moisture content and are susceptible to frost damage.

Watering:

Be careful not to over-water; a well-draining soil mixture is advised.

Feeding:

Feed once a week for the first month after leaves appear in the spring to help strengthen new growth. Thereafter feed every two weeks until autumn.

Pruning:

Allow new growth to extend to 2-5 leaf pairs / nodes and then prune back to one or two pairs of leaves (depending on position on tree) throughout the growing season. Keep on top of the most vigorous shoots in the apex and upper branches to stop them becoming too thick and weakening the lower and inner branches. Continued pruning of these apical areas will distribute vigour throughout the tree.

Trident maples are very suitable for defoliation and leaf pinching techniques. To reduce the leaf-size, remove 30% of the tree's biggest leaves once every two years. With defoliation and increased ramification of the branches, leaf-size can be reduced dramatically.

Prune all branches back hard after leaf-fall or in late-winter. Removal of large branches or trunk-chopping should not be carried out in early-spring, as this can cause excessive sap-loss.

Wiring should be carried out with care as bark marks easily and branches thicken quickly.

Trident maples are very easy to approach and thread graft new branches and roots. However, they also back-bud easily and continually.

Repotting:

Annually as buds extend (early spring). Use a very free-draining soil mix. Tridents have very strong and vigorous root growth that is very suitable for the creation of good trunk-flare and nebari. Tolerant of aggressive root pruning.

Propagation:

Easy to propagate from seed; sow outside as soon as ripe. Air-layer in late-spring. Take hardwood cuttings in winter, softwood cuttings in summer.

Pests and Diseases:

Aphids, caterpillars, scale insects, mites and leaf-scorch.

Styling:

Suitable for all forms, except formal broom, with single or multiple trunks, in all sizes.

Acer buergerianum have powerful roots and are particularly suited to root-over-rock forms.



Example of a Trident maple (*Acer buergerianum*) bonsai.



This unusual root-over-rock style Trident maple received a Kokufu Award, the highest award presented in Japan for distinctive quality bonsai, at the 90th 2016 Kokufu Bonsai Exhibition.

Trident Maple Defoliation

New buds on Tridents come out in spring and the tree will be in full foliage by mid-spring. If left like this, the inner buds will be shaded and within a year they will all die. Also, the outer branch tips will thicken while the inner branches die and the tree will lose its soft look.



Trident maple bonsai, in full foliage by mid-spring.



If tree is not defoliated, inner buds will be shaded and die.

So, to protect the inner buds and create soft branching, perform defoliation. The goal is to get light to the inside of the tree so the back buds don't die. It also gets branching (ramification) and smaller leaves in quicker time.

Defoliation technique

Trident maples have an opposite leaf pattern, meaning new shoots extend from the centre of each pair of leaves. So, you cut back the shoots to the very first pair of leaves and then remove the remaining two leaves. It can be done in a single step; hold the shoot and the two leaves together and cut both the shoot and the first pair of leaves at the same time. Do this on the outside canopy of the entire tree. This will redirect the energy from the outside canopy to the inner buds and create growth balance. And, because the leaves are cut, the outer branches will cease to thicken. This allows light to enter, strengthening the inside and also creates a soft branch pattern.



New shoots extend from the centre of each pair of leaves.



Cut back shoots on the outside canopy of the entire tree.



Cut back the shoots to the very first pair of leaves and then remove the remaining two leaves.



Or, in a single step; hold the shoot and the two leaves together and cut both the shoot and the first pair of leaves at the same time.

In about one month, new leaves will appear. If the tree is strong, defoliate again. In one growing season, you can defoliate 2 or 3 times.

When you defoliate, you can also remove unwanted branches. Long branches can be cut back and congested areas can be thinned to 2 branches.



When you defoliate, you can also remove unwanted branches.



Defoliation helps create fine branching in a short amount of time.



Trident maple bonsai, outer canopy defoliated.



A Warning about Defoliation

Trees must be horticulturally and/or aesthetically ready for defoliation.

A tree must be healthy and vigorous before any leaf-cutting is carried out. The removal of the leaves from a tree is debilitating and will temporarily weaken any bonsai. Trees that are showing signs of disease or weak growth, trees that have been recently repotted or hard pruned, are not suitable for defoliating.

Defoliation is also a technique intended for "finished" bonsai; ie, a tree with trunk, primary, secondary and tertiary branches established. Defoliating a tree that requires branch or trunk building will greatly slow down development of these parts.

After defoliation, a tree's water needs will be lessened and watering should be reduced accordingly.

No fertilisation of the tree is required until the tree puts out at least two new leaves on its growth points.

Do not repot the tree after defoliation. (The double stress of simultaneous repotting and defoliation is to be avoided).

Always allow plenty of time for the tree to recover. If you wait too long to defoliate, you might put part, or all, of the tree at risk. Don't defoliate if there are less than two months of summer left. Defoliated trees need plenty of time to recover so that they will be at full strength going into winter.