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President's Message

President's Message

This is feeling like one of the warmest winters in a long time. So now that I have jinxed the weather, I am hoping that you are enjoying your trees and catching up on various maintenance tasks before the spring repotting season. Not feeling confident on repotting? We will be showing you how this is done at this Saturday's meeting with this demo starting between 10:45 and 11AM and running for around an hour

A massive thanks to Sean Hartley for stepping in as our guest speaker for our June meeting, regaling us with stories of his bonsai apprenticeship in Japan, preparing and being involved with high end bonsai exhibitions, and his love of the Juniper with the best dead wood and prickliest needles, the Toshō. We are lucky enough to have Sean providing a fully prepared session of Pines and Junipers for our September meeting where he will be able to impart his knowledge and experience on these. In the meantime, if you would like to work with Sean, he runs private classes and can be reached on 0401 156 106 and sdhartley@hotmail.com

July Meeting – Quentin Valentine

For our meeting this Saturday (25th July) we will be rejoined by Quentin Valentine to present and demonstrate on Deciduous Trees. As a Melbourne native, he is perfectly experienced to talk about all manner of species that fit into this category, but will be focusing on species that grow well in the Greater Brisbane area, including Elms, Trident

- ❖ **Next Meeting Saturday 25th July 2026**
 - ❖ **Quentin Valentine presentation July 25th**
 - ❖ **Quentin Valentine workshop July 26th**
 - ❖ **August meeting 22nd 2026**
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Maples, Celtis, Liquidamber and more. He presentation will start at 12:30 will be discussing the how best to style and care. Quentin will also

be circulating in our normal pre meeting workshop, so feel free to ask questions.

For those wanting some more in-depth time with Quentin, we will be running paid workshops on the Sunday. Don't have worthy trees or not sure about what workshops are all about? Come along as a **Free Observer**. Quentin loves all species of bonsai, so will be a opportunity to work with and observe a knowledgeable artist.



Absolute Beginners/Refresher Training

June's Bonsai Health 101 was a great success. Thank you to Rod for hosting, and for our members that attended.

July's topic is repotting. How to repot, soil mixes to use, when best to do it, and post repotting care.

It will start between 10:45 and 11am and run for around an hour.

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Still to come in the series

- August – Tree giveaway, repotting and simple wiring of trunk for movement
- September – Styling trees for beginners
- October – How to manage your trees with warm weather coming and Wiring

Annual Exhibition 2027 – Change of Date

A heads up for this. Our normal 4th weekend of March 2027 is Easter weekend – an awful time to run an Exhibition

The committee is therefore moving it to the second weekend, with set-up Saturday 13th March for the Exhibition to run on Sunday 14th.

AGM

Lastly, we will be looking to move our AGM from February to April (after the Exhibition). As this will be greater than 12 months from the last AGM where reports are presented and committee elected, we will look to host a Special General Meeting later this year to pass this resolution.

Hope to see you all on Saturday 25th July 2026 at Wellington Point Community Hall, where we start setting up from 10:00.

Nick

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Redlands Bonsai Society JULY WORKSHOP



Redlands Bonsai Society is proud to present:

Quentin Valentine

Quentin Valentine is well known in Victoria as a skilled bonsai practitioner. His commitment to the art and his willingness to share knowledge and experience with others is widely acknowledged.

Quentin worked in horticulture for 30 years and took up bonsai in 1989 after borrowing a book from the library. He thought, "I could do that easily," and so he did—helped by the wide variety of plants he was already propagating in his backyard.

**One tree remains from the first batch:
a Shohin Liquidamber!**

As his interest grew, Quentin joined a few bonsai clubs and visited the Japan Seminar House to seek advice and develop his skills.



SATURDAY DEMONSTRATION
25 JULY 2026: 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Sunday Workshop
26 July 2026

Location: Birkdale School of Arts Hall
*Join us for a hands-on bonsai workshop,
offered in two separate sessions:*

Morning Session: 8:00 AM – 11:30 AM

Afternoon Session: 12:30 PM – 4:00 PM

Workshop Fees
\$70 - Members
\$85 - Non Members

**OBSERVERS
ARE FREE !!**

He is prepared to tackle almost any plant material and has experimented with an increasing number of Australian species.

Today, Quentin maintains a number of significant Australian native bonsai, while continuing his interest in pines, deciduous trees, and broadleaved evergreens.

He has also had trees displayed at the National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia in Canberra.

Quentin was instrumental in setting up the Victorian Native Bonsai Club in 2013. He served as its founding president and continues to share his expertise through meetings and workshops.

Wellington Point Recreation Hall, 347-371 Birkdale Rd, Wellington Point QLD 4160
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REDLANDS BONSAI



Photos from May Meeting



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Tony who is also known as AKA Tonys Tin's had a published article in the newspaper on his bonsai. Nick's presented Tony with a framed copy of his article Well Done Tony.



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Beginners/Refresher discussion

The club has started a series of 20-minute beginners lessons to be held before the club meeting starts each month (between 10:30 and 12:15). We have run the first of these last meeting around health 101 what do you need to know when starting in Bonsai. We were encouraged to see several of our new members take part in the discussion and we look forward to presenting more topics on what you need to know to start your bonsai journey.

I have also been thinking back to what beginners most want or need to know early in their bonsai journey. This may be useful for our senior members to reflect on and discuss with newer members. It is difficult to understand something without the right background knowledge, and the more we learn, the more we can build our understanding.

With that in mind, here is some introductory reading on repotting your bonsai, which will be covered in this month's beginners' class. This may help with asking questions around this subject.

Repotting Our Bonsai

How to recognise when your bonsai needs repotting, prepare the right materials, prune roots safely, and care for the tree afterwards.

Why Do I Need to Repot My Bonsai

A bonsai lives in a very limited volume of soil. Over time, the roots fill the pot, the soil particles break down, drainage becomes poorer, and the tree has less access to oxygen, water, and nutrients.

Repotting refreshes the growing environment, removes exhausted soil, encourages new fine feeder roots, and helps the tree remain healthy in a shallow container for many years.

Repotting is not simply moving a tree into a new pot or up potting (next size pot). It is a controlled maintenance process that includes removing old soil, checking root health, trimming selected roots and settling the tree into fresh, free-draining bonsai mix.

Signs Your Bonsai Needs Repotting

- Water runs across the surface or straight through the pot without soaking evenly into the root ball.
- The soil stays soggy for too long, smells stale, or has broken down into fine, muddy particles.
- Roots are circling tightly around the inside of the pot or emerging from drainage holes.
- The tree is growing weakly despite appropriate light, watering, and fertilising.
- Leaves are unusually small, pale, or sparse compared with the tree's normal growth.
- The tree has not been re-potted for several years, especially if it is young, vigorous, or fast-growing.

As a general guide, young or fast-growing bonsai may need repotting every 1–2 years, especially if you're leaving top growth to thicken your trunk size. As a rule of thumb, most established deciduous trees every 2–3 years, and slower-growing conifers or mature trees every 3–5 years. Always judge by the tree's condition, species, pot size, soil breakdown, and root density rather than by a fixed calendar alone. Although the calendar is a good opportunity to understand when the best times are to undertake this work.

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Best Time to Repot

The safest time for many bonsai is just before active spring growth begins, when buds are swelling but leaves have not fully opened. At this stage, the tree is ready to produce new roots and can recover from root pruning more quickly. Avoid repotting during extreme heat, severe cold, flowering, drought stress, pest outbreaks, or obvious illness unless the tree's survival depends on emergency action.

Tools and Materials

- Fresh bonsai soil mixes appropriate for the species.
- Root hook, chopstick, or bamboo skewer for loosening soil.
- Sharp root scissors or pruning shears.
- Concave cutters or stronger cutters for thick roots if required.
- Drainage mesh to cover potholes to stop mix from falling out.
- Aluminium tie wire to anchor the tree in the pot. (Important if the tree sits in a windy position)
- Clean pot, either the same pot or a suitable replacement.
- Watering can with a gentle rose or fine nozzle.
- Small brush, tweezers, and a work tray or mat to keep the process tidy.

Clean and sharpen cutting tools before starting. Dull tools crush roots instead of cutting them cleanly, which can slow recovery. If the bonsai has had disease issues, disinfect tools before and after use.

Choosing the Right Soil Mix

Bonsai soil should drain freely while still holding enough moisture for the species. A good mix supports oxygen around the roots, resists compaction, and allows water to move evenly through the pot. Common ingredients include akadama, pumice, lava rock, scoria, coarse sand, pine bark, coir peat and other graded bonsai substrates. Avoid ordinary garden soil because it often compacts in a shallow pot and can suffocate fine roots.

A balanced starting mix for many bonsai is roughly equal parts pumice, lava rock, scoria and pine nuggets. Trees that prefer more moisture may need a slightly more water-retentive mix, while pines and other species that dislike wet feet need a free-draining blend. While bonsai growers often agree on many topics, soil mix is usually a matter of personal preference. Start with the basics and refine your mix as you learn.

Step-by-Step Repotting Method

Step 1 Prepare the Pot

Cover each drainage hole with mesh and secure it with small loops of wire. Thread tie-down wires through the drainage or anchor holes before placing the tree in the pot.

Step 2 Remove the Bonsai from its Pot

Water the tree the day before repotting so the root ball is slightly moist but not waterlogged. Cut the old anchor wires. Gently loosen the edge of the root ball with a root hook or potting sickle, then lift the tree from the pot by supporting the trunk and root mass together. Avoid pulling hard and damaging the trunk.

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Step 3 Remove Old Soil

Use a chopstick or root hook to tease soil from the outer edges and bottom of the root ball. Work patiently from the outside inward taking your time as this is an important step. For many routines repots, it is not necessary to bare-root the tree completely. Leaving some undisturbed soil can reduce stress, especially for older bonsai.

Step 4 Prune the Roots

Remove dead, damaged, circling, or excessively long roots that are thick. Shorten thick roots that dominate the pot and encourage a flatter, radial root system. Preserve plenty of fine feeder roots because they are responsible for absorbing water and nutrients. Beginners should be conservative it is better to remove too little than too much.

For a healthy Deciduous tree or Australian native, moderate root reduction is often acceptable, but conifers and some, weak trees, newly collected material, and stressed bonsai should receive lighter work. Never remove a large portion of the roots from a weak tree unless guided by an experienced grower or responding to a serious root problem. Especially if you've already reduced a large amount of the foliage

Step 5 Position the Tree

Place the bonsai slightly off-centre unless the design calls for a formal central position. Check the front, planting angle, trunk movement, and surface roots before adding much soil. Once the position looks right, tighten the tie-down wires over strong roots or the root mass so the tree cannot wobble. If not tied tight young new roots may break off if disturbed by wind or any movement.

Step 6 Add Fresh Soil

Add bonsai mix around the roots in small amounts. Use a chopstick to work soil into air pockets, especially beneath and between roots. Continue until the soil surface is firm enough to support the tree but not compacted. The final soil level should usually sit slightly below the rim of the pot to make watering easier.

Step 7 Water Thoroughly

Water gently but thoroughly until water runs clear from the drainage holes. This settles the soil, removes remaining dust, and ensures the entire root ball is evenly moist. If the soil level drops after watering, add a little more mix and water again lightly.

Aftercare: The First Few Weeks

I cannot emphasise how important aftercare is in the repotting itself. Place the bonsai in a sheltered position with bright light but protection from harsh sun, strong wind, and heavy rain. Keep the soil evenly moist, checking daily, but avoid keeping it constantly saturated. The tree should be stable in the pot; movement can break new root tips as they form.

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Delay fertilising until the tree shows signs of renewed growth, such as extending shoots. For many trees this may take several weeks. Avoid heavy pruning, wiring, defoliation, or styling immediately after repotting unless it was planned carefully as part of the seasonal work and the tree is strong enough to handle it.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Repotting at the wrong time of year, especially during extreme heat or while the tree is flowering.
- Removing too many roots from a weak, old, or slow-growing tree.
- Using garden soil or fine potting mix that compacts and holds too much water.
- Failing to anchor the tree firmly, allowing new roots to tear as the tree moves.
- Leaving large air pockets around the roots.
- Fertilising immediately after heavy root pruning.

Quick Repotting Checklist

- Confirm the bonsai needs repotting.
- Choose the correct season for the species and your local climate.
- Prepare fresh, sieved bonsai soil, mesh, wire, and clean tools.
- Remove the tree gently and inspect the roots.
- Prune dead, damaged, circling, or excessive roots conservatively.
- Position and anchor the tree firmly in the pot.
- Work soil carefully into all spaces around the roots.
- Water thoroughly until the drainage runs clear.
- Protect the tree while it recovers and wait for new growth before fertilising.

Conclusion

The best repotting work should be calm, deliberate, and suited to the individual tree and should not be rushed. If the bonsai is healthy and your timing is right, and the roots are handled carefully, repotting will strengthen the tree rather than harm it. In a few weeks after repotting you will see your tree flourish.

If you are worried or in doubt about the process, reduce the amount of root pruning, keep more of the original root ball intact, and focus on improving drainage with your new mix, stability, and aftercare. As you gain experience this becomes second nature. Repotting can be a daunting task to undertake when you are first faced with the unknown.

Now you should be ready to ask the right questions.

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RBS Meeting Protocol

Our meetings are held at the Wellington Point Recreation Hall, 347-371 Birkdale Rd, Wellington Point QLD 4160, unless otherwise noted. Our annual show is generally held at the Donald Simpson Centre in Bloomfield Street, Cleveland. You will find the yearly program on the last page of our newsletter. Watch this space for the 2026 program calendar or check out the website. The hall will be open at 10:30am for members and visitors' workshops, with the demonstration for the day from 12:30.

Foundations Development Program

See Course information above - please talk to Karen if you wish to join in this program.

Learners' Group

The group is designed for informal tuition and coaching from 11am to 12:00 pm on meeting days when a demonstration or presentation is scheduled. Senior members will be available to offer advice and support. Please check program calendar at end of newsletter for dates.

Sign-in and Raffle

All members are required to sign in as they arrive. The sign in sheets are located on the front table as you enter the hall. If you don't want to sign into the meetings, please talk to one of the executive committee members.

There will be a raffle at each meeting and tickets are available for purchase at the sign in table.

Fees for 2026

Our membership fees for 2026 are \$25 for a single, \$35 for a family and we have removed the monthly \$2 entry fee.

- Fees are due in December for the following year
- New members who join the club in the first 6 months of the year pay full membership fees
- Members joining after 30 June pay half fees for that year, with full membership fees due in November for the following year.

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- Any member who has not paid their fees by 31 January for that year will be deemed unfinancial and not eligible to exhibit in the annual show, sell products at the show or meetings or vote at the AGM.

Banking details for on-line renewals are:

Name: Redlands Bonsai Society Inc

BSB: 633000

Account Number: 169724416

Workshop Meetings

We aim to provide several workshop meetings throughout the year. These are great opportunities for people of all stages of their bonsai journey to come together, discuss and work on their trees. The more experienced members of the club are available to answer any questions and assist you in deciding the future style and care of your trees.

Remember advice will vary across the members, so weigh up the information and follow the advice you are most comfortable with.

Committee Members for 2026

President: *Nick*

Vice President: *Tony*

Treasurer: *Eugene*

Secretary: *Clare*

Newsletter: *Rod*

Member: *Karen*

Member: *Noreen*

Member: *Mel*

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REDLANDS BONSAI SOCIETY - PROGRAM FOR 2026				
Month	Date	Day	Meetings Activities	Times
April	25	Sat	Members Workshop & Learners Group	10:30am - 12:30pm
			Workshop Meeting with Side Presentations - Mini Presentation - Lesser-Known natives with Stephen. Build a bonsai. Bring back the winning trees. Bring back your Foster Trees	from 12:30 pm - 4pm
May	23	Sat	Members Workshop & Learners Group	10:30am - 12pm
			Guest Demonstrator - Marcela Ferreira (Victorian Native Bonsai Club)	12:15pm for a 12:30pm start - 4pm
	24	Sun	Workshops with Marcela	2 Sessions - 8:30am - 4:00pm
June	27	Sat	Members Workshop & Learners Group	10:30am - 12pm
			Sean Hartley Wiring and getting your trees ready for exhibition,	12:15pm for a 12:30pm start - 4pm
July	25	Sat	Members Workshop & Learners Group	10:30am - 12pm
			Presentation - Quentin Valentine (Victoria) - Elms	12:15pm for a 12:30pm start - 4pm
	26	Sun	Workshops with Qunetin	2 Sessions - 8:30am - 4:00pm
August	22	Sat	Members Workshop & Learners Group	10:30am - 12pm
			Workshop Meeting with Side Presentations - Mini Presentation - Lesser-Known natives with Stephen	Demonstrations from 12:30pm
September	26	Sat	Members Workshop & Learners Group	10:30am - 12pm
			Pines and Junipers Presentation	12:15pm for a 12:30pm start - 4pm
October	24	Sat	Members Workshop & Learners Group	10:30am - 12pm
			Presentation - Rod Vert (Victoria) - Eucalyptus Genus & Bonsai Pots	12:15pm for a 12:30pm start - 4pm
	25	Sun	Workshops with Rod Vert	2 Sessions - 8:30am - 4:00pm
November	28	Sat	Members Workshop & Learners Group	10:30am - 12pm
			Workshop and Christmas Party	12:15pm - 4pm

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