



TAUNTON & SOMERSET BONSAI CLUB

Bonsai Newsletter July 2022



Having received apologies from our President John Trott, our secretary Alistair and one of our Tonys, I feared that we might be down on numbers for our deciduous summer styling meeting. On the other hand we had received enquiries from three keen newbies who might boost numbers. As it turned out we had a bumper attendance of 21 including our three newbies and we had a cracking meeting with lots going on and a really good buzz among members.

Before getting down to working on trees, Brian gave us a brief verbal report on Bonsai by the Sea at Exmouth, hosted by the Exeter Bonsai Society at which he and Sara had put on a display on behalf of the club. With ten clubs attending and displaying trees it was a busy day. A full report of the show including photos of our display can be seen [here](#). A big thank you to Brian and Sara for putting on a great display. Well done!



I then gave a brief report on the Blackmore Vale Show. Four excellent displays from clubs plus lots of interesting trees from BV members. The best display trophy went to Warminster Bonsai Club but yours truly was well chuffed to come away with Best in Show for the large White Beech group that formed the focal point of our display. I proudly showed off the shield, which can be seen in the first photo of the newsletter! A full report of the show can be seen [here](#).



So, onto the workshop. I had brought along a handful of trees that I thought might be useful in illustrating some of the techniques used on deciduous trees during the summer. Now, although a couple of us took photos of the meeting, I completely forgot to take any photos of the trees I used to demonstrate. But in true "Blue Peter" style I have some that I prepared earlier....well, later really!



Young Japanese Acers can be quite vigorous through early summer, throwing out new shoots each time they are trimmed. More established ones can be more reluctant; the first flush comes in spring, you pinch them out and that's it, no more growth! Complete defoliation on a healthy tree in early June will bring a second flush of growth, increased ramification and better autumn colour. This one has just got its second flush of leaves.

Not all trees respond well to complete defoliation. Definitely don't try it on Beech; they don't like it! But you can get excellent results by removing all but the terminal leaf on each shoot, which results in many lateral shoots. Left to themselves beech will generally produce just a single rapid flush of growth in the spring; by using this technique ramification achieved in one year can be greatly increased. It's a method that can also be used on Hornbeams.



Some trees like this Alder will continue growing right through the summer. The growing tips need pinching on almost a weekly basis, which produces a constant supply of new shoots. Combining this with removal of large and scabby old leaves keeps the tree looking fresh and green. The same method could be used on the Katsura tree that Brian had brought along.



Next up was a Larch with lots of new growth and this is another species that can continue growth through the summer. If the new growth is still green the ends can just be pulled out with finger and thumb; if they start to get woody, scissors will be needed. This larch was on its third trim of the year with some shoots left a little longer where development is needed.

With my little demonstration finished, members got on with working on their trees with plenty of discussion about what they should or shouldn't do! There was a lot going on and I didn't get photos (there's an emerging trend here) of everything or everybody... so just a few highlights.

Tony gives Zac advice and a helping hand in trimming his hornbeam.



New members Paul and Cathy completing their trimming of a newly acquired trident maple.



Another recent new member Bob, gets drastic with a lovely big Acer that he had previously air-layered.

Ronnie gets some sage advice from one of our elders!



With new members and guests to talk to and lots of trees to be worked on, Tree of the Month was a bit of a rush for me and without Alistair on hand I completely forgot (again!) to get photos of the entries. What a shame as there were some excellent entries. Anyway, Tony M was a clear winner in the advanced class with his beautiful Crab Apple, while Dave G took first place in the novices with his Birch. The full ToTM sheet can be seen [here](#).

Ade Taylor
Chair