

Somerset Bonsai Society Annual Show

25 - 27 May 2024

Willowbrook Nursery and Garden Centre, West Buckland, Wellington, Somerset TA21 9HX

Another year and another summer bonsai show. Although judging by the weather, you could be forgiven for thinking that it was still winter! As in previous years, Willowbrook Nursery and Garden Centre were kind enough to host our show and I must take this opportunity to thank everyone there for their help and support.



The marquee's up and trees are ready.

In the preceding weeks it looked like we would be setting up in the rain; however we were lucky and able to complete the setup without getting drenched. Saturday dawned bright and sunny and the forecast for the day was sunny periods interspersed with cloud but no rain. By lunchtime there had been a few visitors but not the numbers we usually see. Even the café, always packed to the rafters, had tables available. Something was awry. A quick Google provided the answer. Apparently, there was some sort of football match on and who knew that Somerset had so many Manchester fans amongst its residents. Oh well at least it gave us a chance to work on some of the trees that we had brought along for demos! Saturday night it rained, boy did it rain! We arrived on the Sunday to find the field flooded and everything in the tent wet. Well at least we didn't have to do any watering. I wish I had taken a picture of the resident ducks swimming around the picnic tables but I was too busy trying to dry out the posters and membership forms.



An old collected Hornbeam, is first to greet visitors.

The rest of the day passed slowly. We did have visitors, some hardy souls who had braved the storms in order to see our trees and welcome them we did. As with previous shows, there was a wide variety of interest and experience amongst the visitors and it was nice to chat with novices, experienced practitioners and people who had thought about starting but needed a bit of confidence. Interestingly, we met a few people who had been growing bonsai for many years but had not considered joining a club, hopefully some of them will come along to meetings.



Lots of deciduous trees this year.



A flowering Laburnum, a Bog wood landscape and a shohin Hawthorn

The final day was a mixture of sunshine and showers and footfall had picked up so we entertained a steady flow of visitors. Information and advice were dispensed, the sales table gradually emptied and spirits started to lift. In between tea and cake, we started to plan our next show outing, Blackmore Vale show on the 23rd June. Which trees would we bring and how would we set them out? Talking of setting up shows, I must thank our President John Trott for donating the lovely brown table coverings that you can see in the photos. They really showed off the trees and will greatly enhance our future displays. Thanks John.



A rugged old collected Larch.



A Japanese Maple group planted on a natural stone.



A Pyracantha, flowering just in time for the show



A large, hollow trunked Katsura, takes pride of place.

Unlike previous years, we didn't have to pack up the marquee as the Garden Centre was going to use it for a dog show. All we had to do was get the trees out, pack away the table cloths and take down the sales table. All of this we managed to do before, yes you guessed it, before it started raining.

So, if you are around the Taunton area, during the last weekend in May 2025 and it is not raining or there is no football on, you are welcome to pop in and see our show. In fact, come along anyway, we really are looking forward to seeing you.

--- Alistair --