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### **APRIL NEWSLETTER 2008**

Dear Members,

Last Saturday we had a daiza making workshop and the discussion came up about what timbers to use for our stones. This got me thinking as how we source our supplies of wood. Some of us have become the best scavengers, or should I say environmentalists and recyclers for the want of a better word. Whenever there is a council cleanup we are always on the prowl for old bits, and we think the best bits of wood that are just there for the taking.

In today's very modern and materialistic world, a lot of people do not hold onto old pieces of furniture like they used to. Timbers like Australian Red Cedar, Oak and Maple etc. There are always remnants from tables, chairs, chest of drawers and bed heads on the footpaths just waiting to be recycled and it seems such a crime to let it go to waste. Some of these timbers are quite expensive if you went to a specialized timber merchant or visit a timber expo and usually the pieces you purchase are usually fairly small as they mainly cater to the craftsperson and hobbyists.

Collectively as a club, we have collected quite a substantial booty of some great timbers and they have all responded well to stains, varnishes, waxes and polishes.

On one occasion my car came to a sudden stop when I noticed some large pieces of what looked like red cedar nicely cut up into 2 foot lengths. My pride at finding such good timber vanished quickly when I got out of the car to find out that someone had cut up a beautiful old piano just to get rid of it! All of the black and white keys were in a box and that was when I was more determined to take it home to do something more useful with it and save it from being dumped at the local tip. If only that piano could talk what tales would it tell?

For the girls, I think Australian and Western Red Cedar are the best to work with when you are just starting out in making daizas for your stones. It is a beautiful colour to start off with, lovely texture, easy to carve either by hand or by using a Dremel, sands to a very smooth finish and it can then be varnished, oiled or waxed to a fabulous luster. If you want to know what colour the wood will turn out when it is varnished, just wet the underneath of the stand and the wood will respond and show you what it will look like. We do this on all timbers in fact, as some timbers are tight or open grained and they all respond to the final finishes differently.

On our Australian stones, my opinion would be to use some of our own great timbers so the end result will be uniquely our own, like they do in other countries. Some of the timbers that have been used

successfully at our workshops are Camphor-Laurel, Australian Red Cedar (becoming quite rare), black-hearted Sassafras, Grevillea Robusta (Grevillea), Banksia, Tassie Oak and the famous Huon Pine.

When choosing the wood for your stone, try to match as closely as possible to the colour of the stone. Remember, the stone is the important part of your display, not the daiza. The daiza is only there to impart an importance and regality to your stone and to elevate it to its own importance to set the stone apart. Light coloured daizas are mostly no-nos much in the same way as light coloured bonsai pots are.

Jan, one of our members has a great stone that looks like an island covered in white houses, so with great thought she selected a slice of Camphor-Laurel with definite circles radiating from the centre (the growth rings). When it was complete the tree's rings resemble the waves coming into the shore of the 'island' and it made for a very nice display with a lot of thought that went behind it. Remember, let your imagination run wild and great ideas will evolve.

Next time you are out and about, don't be afraid to stop and rescue these poor remnants of timber – remember you will be doing something good and creative for the environment!

Happy Hunting,  
Brenda

### **THOUGHT OF THE MONTH**

'Consequently, man has become too materialistic pursuing only momentary enjoyment and is apt to forget Nature, the mother of all.' - Onuki Chuzo

George and Johns 'Timely Timber & Tool Tips'

April 2008

Hello 'Rock Hounds'

Those of you who attended the last workshop would have seen George's collection of some timber samples and we thought it may be an idea to bring you some technical info and hints on the different species that you may come across in your search for that ideal piece of Daiza material. 'Timber Talk' will be featured now and again in future 'TTTTs'

Our tip for this month covers the marking out of the baseline of the stone onto the face of the timber. *The baseline is the line where the stone and daiza meet.* Usually the stone has a distinct baseline that is the widest part and it is fairly simple to place the stone on the timber and draw the outline, particularly if the stone has a near flat base. If the stone has a baseline that is smaller than the rest of the stone, the task sometimes becomes a little more complicated. This situation could occur with some shelter, balance and abstract styles.

1. The first step is to determine where the base line will be. Look at the stone and try to imagine how it will sit in the Daiza. You can mask the lower section of the stone with piece of paper or timber and adjust the angle until you see the ideal position for the stone to be placed.
2. Once the baseline is determined you need to mark the outline on the stone. This can be done with a rubber band, pencil or chalk line or even a high water mark (*place the stone into a container of water to the appropriate depth, works with porous stones*).
3. If the baseline is simple, you can begin by removing small amounts of timber from the daiza base at the point where the stone is to be set. Using the trial and (*not too much*) error method, you will be able to mount the stone.

4. If the baseline is more complicated, you may have to use a template. A template can be made from any thin clear plastic material that is reasonably stiff. Front panels of shirt boxes and the like are good; cling wrap type material is no good.
5. Turn the stone upside down and place the template sheet on top, you will be able to see the marked baseline through the clear sheet. Using a fine permanent marker, trace the baseline onto the sheet. You will need to cut along this line so take time and be as accurate as you can.
6. Once you are satisfied with the outline, mark the sheet to indicate the front / face of the stone. Using a pair of scissors, carefully cut around the outline, if in doubt about your accuracy, cut slightly inside the line. You now have an inner and an outer template; you can use either one of these.
7. If using the outer template, place it over the stone and check that it is sitting on or close to the baseline. Make any adjustments that may be needed.
8. Once you are satisfied with the template, place it onto the timber making sure that the front / face is positioned correctly and draw the outline onto the timber. You can use the inner or outer template. If you've cut the template on the line, this will be the finished edge of the inside of the daiza. If you cut the template inside the line, the inside edge will be slightly smaller and you will be able to adjust the final placement of the stone. (*You can always remove extra timber if needed, but it's difficult to put it back if you take too much*). Once the outline is transferred to the timber, start carving using your normal method.

Next month we'll bring you the first of our Timber Talk articles featuring the popular WRC.

So long till next time,  
G&J

### **STYLES IN BRIEF**

- Alan Rochester

#### House Shape Stones – (Yagata-ishi)

In the world there are a number of simple and sometimes primitive forms of dwellings that man has constructed to live in. All of which can be represented in this classification and should not be just restricted to the more traditional form of this category of 'hut stones', although these shape stones are still highly sort after.

With most forms of 'house' or 'hut' stones one requirement for a good stone is that it should possess an overhang that suggests a roof of sorts that extends right around the stone.

The stone should also have concave or eroded sides and/or pillars that suggest poles holding up the roof are highly prized. Also there can be hollows or cave like formations that suggest an entry or maybe windows are desired as well are stones that have small peaks on the top that suggest a chimney.

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I know quite a few people who are 'non-believers' as far as suiseki is concerned. Of course whenever the subject comes up we are always told that we have 'rocks in our heads!' I recently put them up for the challenge to write an article, funnily enough, about the stones that they have collected!!!!!! In the next couple of newsletters I will publish their articles – some in jest and some quite amazingly astute! Let you be the judge.....enjoy!

Read the first of these articles on the last page of this newsletter which was written by Chris Allnutt who is an avid bonsai enthusiast.

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**MEETING DATE**

There is no meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> of April, due to school holidays. Our stone collecting trip to Kangaroo Valley is quickly approaching on the 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> April and we will have a report for you as to the goings-on and successes in our next newsletter ---- stayed tuned!

**VALE ALLEN CROPP**

**13-1-32 TO 1-4-08**

It is with great regret and sadness that one of our loyal members has passed away recently after a long illness.

Allen has been a great friend and inspiration to all who knew him.

He was heavily involved in bonsai and suiseki for many years and we all admired his talents. He had very definite ideas on all aspects of design and presentation and his views were always strictly related to the Japanese tradition.

He was a true gentleman and a gentle man.

We will miss you. May you rest in peace.