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### **AUGUST NEWSLETTER 2008**

Dear Members,

Every year our bonsai club, Illawarra Bonsai Society has a bonsai and woodworking workshop for the weekend at a very nice church camp at Stanwell Tops. We arrive on the Friday night and stay till the Sunday afternoon.

Within that time, we have structured bonsai workshops, some people elect to work on their own trees and quite a few of us choose to do woodworking which includes making bonsai stands or making daizas for our stones. This weekend camp attracts many members from other clubs and it is a great chance to swap ideas and learn from each other. Some people just come for the social aspect of the weekend and some just come to support their partners. We have a guest demonstrator for the weekend which includes a formal demo on the Saturday night after our scrumptious dinner. The food – well that is another story, plenty of it with copious amounts of tea and coffee and lots of morning and afternoon teas. Enough of the advertisement for now.

The weather was promised to be kind to us albeit for the cold nights. Obviously Mother Nature had alternate ideas for on the Friday night the winds howled so strong it was like a mini cyclone. There went all of our thoughts of having our woodworking workshop the following day in the sun. It would be unbearable. Luckily by lunch time the winds subsided a bit and well rugged up we ventured on to creating our wooden stands for our stones. The whirring of power tools, dremels and the like drowned the sound of the wind and by late afternoon it had completely gone and our stands were well under way with the guidance of our 'Master Apprentices'.

What I thought was worthy of a mention, was one of our members, Dianne, found a wonderful stone on our last stone hunt and at this workshop it was decided to make two daizas for the one stone – as the stone had quite a few possibilities on how to display it. Maybe at the next workshop at Ray's a probable third daiza will be made as we all decided that this stone had many different views. The great thing about this is, that this stone could be displayed quite a few times but in different ways and still look very pleasing. Food for thought there!

Barry and Rosie came down from Forster to be with us and they bought with them some great stones that were found near their new retirement home along with some amazing pieces of driftwood and bleached fence posts that were works of art within themselves. Together these stones were mounted on the small pieces of fence posts which looked like any work of art found at any art gallery – truly amazing!

I have to tell you though, on the Sunday the weather was perfect – warm and no wind and there on the lawn the sawdust was flying around as if ‘Edward Scissorhands’ was on the loose. In all we ended the weekend with some great daizas just waiting to be stained or lacquered with all the hard work behind us and looking forward to displaying them all finished.

Truly, very satisfying.

Happy Hunting,  
Brenda

**THOUGHT OF THE MONTH**

‘Bonsai and Suiseki are both important channels and vehicles to keep in touch with nature.’

-Hideko Metaxus

Example below of Dianne’s stone displayed in the two different daizas.



Below: Two of the ‘Master Apprentices’ hard at work – George ‘The Master’ and Barry ‘The Apprentice’!



Below: Even the girls are hard at work.

Go Joanie!





Above: John hard at work.



Above: More finished daizas.

George and Johns 'Timely Timber & Tool Tips'

August 2008

Hello 'Rock Hounds'

Had another great weekend at the 'Tops'. Saturday was a bit of killer temperature wise for those few diehards who braved the icy wind to pursue some outdoor daiza making. I spent the morning giving tuition on the finer points of Dremeling to the better half only to be told after lunch "I'm going for a sleep, you can finish off the hand sanding". From master to apprentice in one fell swoop or should that be sand.

Ever spent hours trying to carve the inside of your daiza to accept a stone with a particularly difficult base? The chalk and mark method is time consuming and frustrating to say the least. The easy alternative is to take the stone to your local lapidary club (or friendly tiler) and persuade them to use their \$200.00 plus diamond blade to remove the offending area on the base of your stone. I actually read an article in a bonsai magazine where this method was approved as long as you did nothing to 'Enhance' the visible part of the stone !!!!!.

This month we'll tell you how to get the perfect base by 'Enhancing' the daiza instead.

This method was introduced by George who has furthered the technique to fashion complete daizas.

Apart from the usual woodworking tools you will need;

Tin of Plastibond epoxy filler

Colouring agent; powdered oxide or liquid tint

Plastic film e.g. Gladwrap

Mixing paddle; narrow spatula / paint scraper or even a 'paddle pop' stick.

Flat plastic lid or stiff board to mix on

Disposable gloves

\* Mark your outline in the usual way and start to remove the wood, being careful not to go outside your finished line. You'll still want a snug fit around the finished edge of the stone and daiza.

\* Keep checking the depth of the stone as you go making sure that the stone is in the correct position. The aim is to remove enough material so the stone finally fits into the marked outline of the daiza. Don't worry if the stone is not seated firmly, extra material can be removed from the bottom of the daiza but not the finished outline.

Once you are satisfied that the stone will sit correctly, you can begin the next stage.

\* Remove all traces of wood shavings and dust; this is necessary to allow the epoxy mix to get good adhesion to the timber. The best method is to blow out whatever you can, and then press 'Bluetack' into the daiza to remove any small remaining particles. If you haven't got Bluetack, chewing gum works just as well, preferably yours or someone else's (remember the disposable gloves?). *Do not use any liquid for cleaning; the timber must be dry for the filler to bond*

\* Put enough of the filler for the job onto your mixing board. This will depend on how much void you have to fill but normally 1/3 to 1/2 would be enough. A little extra is better than not enough.

*You should be wearing the gloves and avoid inhaling the fumes i.e. DON'T SNIFF THE Tin .*

\* Next step is to colour the filler to try to match the timber, using oxide or tint. Both items are very concentrated so use only a little. This step is not necessary if you are sure that none of the filler will be seen when the stone is in place, however it's good practice for some later tips.

\* Once you're satisfied with the colour you can add the hardener. The normal mix is 50 to 1 but it doesn't have to be exact. More hardener will cause the filler to set more quickly so don't overdo it. Make sure that the hardener is well mixed with the filler.

\* Put the filler into the bottom of the daiza without getting any on the finished (top) surface, and then lay a couple of layers of gladwrap on top of the daiza.

\* Place the stone on the gladwrap and gently press into the daiza and filler making sure that the stone is seated correctly. Hold the stone steadily until you feel that the filler is starting to set; this could be 5 – 10 mins.

\* Once the filler has set and before it is really hard, remove the stone and the wrap, you should have a near perfect mould of the bottom of the stone.

\* If excess filler has oozed from the top of the daiza, this can be removed with a sharp blade. Do this while the filler is semi set, once it has hardened you will have to sand or grind it off with possible damage to the daiza.

\* If you're unsure, practice on a scrap piece first just to get the hang of it.

More about the use of filler in later tips.

So long till next time,

G&J

### **WHERE AND WHEN**

Our monthly meetings are held on the third Wednesday of every month (except school holidays) at the Don Moore Community Centre, North Rocks Road, North Rocks, N.S.W. commencing at 7.30 p.m. sharp. If you would like to contact me regarding any information on the meetings, daiza making workshops or offering articles to be included in the newsletter please do not hesitate to contact me directly at [brendap7@bigpond.com](mailto:brendap7@bigpond.com) or you can telephone me at (H) 02 9547 2157, (W) 02 9522 9399 or on (Mob) 0412 384 834.

Following is an article from another 'NON BELIEVER' who is a member of our bonsai club and after reading his article you could come to the conclusion that he is silently 'hooked' to the art. Just between you and me, I have seen his suiseki collection and for someone who is not into stones he has quite a collection!!

### **\* Rocks in My Head \***

I started Bonsai in 1999, at a community college in Bankstown. From the first class I was hooked, the more information I could get the better. I would be driving along and all of a sudden I would see a tree in a garden or park and dream of that tree in a pot, in my yard. Every class our teacher would bring in different trees into the class to help explain the different styles and techniques, and then in this one class, all the trees she brought in were growing over rocks, "Now that's amazing!" I said, our teacher just smiled and continued to explain the finer details of this style. By the end of that class, I started to notice rocks as well as trees and started to collect nice ones to try this new style I had just learnt.

Well, the classes went on and I was so happy on Tuesday afternoons for I knew that for 2 hours that night bonsai was on the agenda, taking in little trees that we had been working on in varying stages, it was so much fun. Until one night the teacher walked into the room carrying nothing more than a box

that looked quite heavy. Where are the bonsais I thought to myself? “Tonight we are going to talk about Suiseki”, our teacher explained. What in the hell is that, I thought it sounded like trying to call a pig named Seki.

Well to my surprise out of the box came a whole new world - little mountains, small hut looking things and some abstract shapes that resembled people and animals but they were all just rocks. As the night progressed, it was explained to me that they were referred to as stones, not rocks (tomato, tomato) same thing just pronounced differently. She had stones from all over the world and most of them had little timber stands individually made for them, they were truly amazing. I really enjoyed the mountain stones and what astonished me that these little treasures were all made by Mother Nature herself.

The next day, I found myself looking through my collection of rocks for any that might resemble something like Suiseki, with a good imagination I had no problem in finding all the Suiseki I wanted, to tell you the truth I had nothing.

Nine years on and my interest in Suiseki has grown somewhat, along with my knowledge of both bonsai and Suiseki. I take great pleasure in teasing a few of my very good friends about their Suiseki collections. I often ask them why they need so many paper weights and door stops, but to tell you the truth I also have a few hidden away at home.

I have been giving some thought to all the differing aspects of Suiseki and this is what I’ve come up with:

Musical Suiseki = The Rolling Stones.

Dispute Suiseki = When the Palestinians give the Israeli tanks Suiseki.

Proverb Suiseki = A rolling stone gathers no moss.

Cartoon Suiseki = Fred Flintstone and his daughter pebbles.

Australian Movie Suiseki = Picnic at hanging rock.

Noel’s Suiseki = The Stone Age (a reference to one our Bonsai members)

Medical Suiseki = The Gall Stone.

Hunting Suiseki = To kill two birds with one stone.

Food Suiseki = Rock Lobster.

Australian Saying Suiseki = Stone the crows.

Discipline Suiseki = The Romans gave the Christians discipline with Suiseki.

Spice Suiseki = Rock Salt.

Sweet Suiseki = Rocky Road.

Bad situation Suiseki = Between a Rock and a hard place.

Destination Suiseki = Rockhampton.

Lullaby Suiseki = Rock-a-bye baby.

Furniture Suiseki = Rocking chair.

Archaeological Suiseki = Stone Henge.

Tradesman Suiseki = Stone Mason.

UBD Suiseki = Stony Creek Road. (In Sydney)

Distance Suiseki = Just a stone’s throw away.

Sexy Suiseki = Sharon Stone.

Love Suiseki = Romancing the stone.

Gay Suiseki = Rock Hudson.

Queen Suiseki = We will Rock you.

Temperature Suiseki = Stone cold.  
Impossible Suiseki = To get blood from a stone.  
Dumb Suiseki = To have rocks in my head.

I hope you had a bit of a laugh reading this. Can you think of anything else that might be funny, there has to be more of them.

Thanks for reading  
'Skippy'  
(Alias Chris Di Nola)



....and the winner is Bruce Harkness from Sandgate in Queensland...

Suiseki Tragic: On mobile to long suffering wife;

“Yes dear, I have only found one stone worth bringing home.”

“No dear, I have not backed the car into the pond like last time.”

“Yes dear, I did put the roof racks on the car.”

Wife:

“Good, drive carefully.”

- **CONGRATULATIONS, WELL DONE!** -

### NEXT MEETING

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> August at 7.30 p.m. The theme for the night will be funny, strange and even ‘naughty’ stones. See what you can find and bring them in to share. For those of you who came to our workshop weekend at Stanwell Tops please bring along the daizas you made to show to the other members.

See you all then,

Brenda