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APRIL NEWSLETTER 2009

Dear Members,

Displaying suiseki is a very important subject that needs to be addressed now that, we as a club, have a lot of very nice stones that are worthy of displaying. You could compare it to framing a painting or putting the right pot with a bonsai tree. Thought and selection of whether to use a daiza or suiban can be daunting even for the very experienced.

After receiving a newsletter from the European Suiseki Association it was interesting to read that Mr. Matsuura, President of the Nippon Suiseki Association, indicated that he would like to see many more suibans used to display stones. For one thing in Australia we do not get to see or even buy very shallow suibans that are usually very expensive overseas so getting them here would be nearly impossible. Of course suibans are available here but they are not usually shallow enough so that when the stone is displayed on it, it can get 'lost'. When you see a stone displayed in a fairly deep suiban your eye immediately notices the tray and not the stone.

When you think of what sort of stones can be placed in suibans, the first thought that comes to mind would be mountain, coastal or plateau stones for example. In my opinion, say a human or animal stone would make a more dynamic display on a daiza which is then placed on a bonsai stand. If you were to display in a suiban you could do so in accordance with the seasons, in winter you can display it on a daiza and in summer you could put it on a suiban with either water or very fine sand or pebbles in the tray with the sand size to be in proportion to the stone. This tray should not compete with the stone, should be very shallow and a very subdued colour e.g. pastel browns, blues, greens and even light grey.

When displaying in a suiban it gives you the feeling of space and is visually pleasing to the eye if it is placed in the correct position of the tray. The correct placement, which is the same for bonsai, is about 1/3 in from the edge of the tray, either to the left or right depending on the movement of the stone. When placing the stone on the fine sand, the base of the stone should look as though it is rising out of the sand not just perched on top of the sand. This will be very obvious if the stone has an uneven bottom making it unrealistic when you can actually see under the bottom of the stone. The sand or pebbles should be in strict proportion to the stone and must not distract from the stone with garish colours. Colours as close to the colour of the stone is important as it would resemble scree that is found normally in nature (which is the natural decomposition of the sides of the mountain that collects at the bottom), so the colour is very important.

Displaying on a daiza can also be a bit confusing and care must be taken to have it in the right proportion to the stone. Again it can't distract from the stone either in size or colour. A stone that is low like a mountain stone for example, should have a shallow and soft sided daiza so when viewing it the stone just 'jumps' out at you. A tall stone can have a much heavier and taller daiza to give the stone an imposing presence when viewing it. Again the colour of the wood used should be complimentary to the stone colour and this can be achieved by staining, oiling, waxing, varnishing or colouring the wood. Only experience can help you to decide on what road to take.

I would like to quote what the late Alan Rochester said on displaying suiseki: "If a suiseki is displayed correctly whether on a daiza or in a suiban one can appreciate the power of nature in a small stone that is before them. If you can look at a stone that represents a mountain and imagine that it is many kilometers away with maybe an eagle soaring high above one of its plateau or a coastal shore stone with waves pounding away at it or even indigenous people of an ancient land living high up in the caves of a mountain, then you have succeeded in the art of Suiseki. The feeling you get when someone next to you can see the same as you is one of instant pleasure and if you're the owner of that suiseki the pleasure of sharing your stone with others can only be felt by the experience."

If you have a stone that is questionable and you need advice on how to display it, send a photo of it to me via email at brendap7@bigpond.com and I could advise or give my opinion on how to display it. I think that this subject is very important as it gives our stones a very special presence and professionalism when they are put on public display.

Happy Hunting,
Brenda

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

'A good Suiseki is more suggestive than realistic – thereby leaving the viewer to use imagination for full enjoyment and oneness with the stone.'

- Bob Watson

George and Johns 'Timely Timber & Tool Tips'

April 2009

Hello 'Rock Hounds'

This month, another in the 'Timber Talk' series.

Red Cedar (Australian Red Cedar / Cedar)

Botanical Name; *Toona ciliata* Syn .*Toona australis*

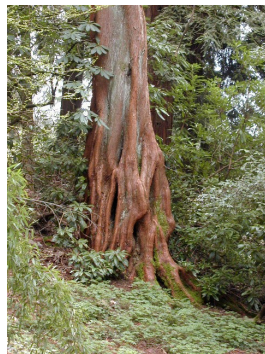
Red Cedar is a tall, deciduous tree up to 40 m in height and 1-2 m in stem diameter. Mature trees in gullies can reach 60 m high with a diameter of 3 m. The trunk is often irregular in cross-section and older trees are often buttressed to some distance up the trunk. The bark is grey or brown, very scaly and rough, and sheds in oblong pieces.

This tree was once the pride of the east coast rainforests from the Shoalhaven River in the south to Cape York. Outside Australia it extends to Papua New Guinea and the Philippines.

Cedar was eagerly sought by early settlers and loggers, probably because they were large, relatively soft (*the trees not the loggers*) and easily transportable to market by bullock team. Exploitation of this tree has almost eliminated one of the great forest trees of Australia and logging of the species is banned in State forests. What the early timber- getters did achieve, though, was to open up the country for further settlement far quicker than the search for any other material, including gold.

The timber is soft and open textured, easily worked with a distinctive odour. The heartwood colour ranges from pink to deep red-brown, sapwood is usually yellowish-white The grain is coarse, open and usually straight with the occasional presence of wavy interlocks which can produce an attractive fiddleback figure.

Red Cedar was used extensively for cabinet and furniture making and should be an ideal timber for daiza making. Supplies can be sourced through specialty timber merchants.



That's it for now
So long till next time,

ANYTHING THE GUYS CAN DO...WE GIRLS CAN HAVE A GO.

By Joan Cam

When we first started needing diazas for our stones Brenda and Jan were the pioneers for us all and began to follow the process taught by George Reissis (which he had achieved by much trial and error), finally coming up with the procedure of outlining our stone on a suitable piece of timber, and then removing the amount of wood necessary to allow the stone to sit comfortably by using chisels.

I just couldn't wait to purchase 2 lovely sharp chisels (one with a curved blade and the other with a straight blade) and a beautiful brass hammer from a tool shop in the City. Of course I didn't have much of an idea on how to use them, but I was eager to find out. Looking back at the cost now I must have thought I was going into the business of manufacturing dozens of diazas.

Brenda and Jan had begun bringing their first diazas to our monthly meetings for George to cut around the outline with his fretsaw. Then they would work with their

magical dremels, to shape legs as taught by George, and arrive at the next meeting with the beautiful finished product. It all looked so easy.

My, first attempt to follow them was during the Illawarra Tops Weekend, where I used a rose coloured floor board (retrieved from a building site where they had thrown out off-cuts), to make diazas for 3 small stones. This timber was so very hard but with the assistance of Peter McClosky and Andrew Christy from the Illawarra Club, who had knowledge of working with wood, I managed to come home with my first small diazas. Even though lets face it, a lot of the work had been due to my male buddies.

We soon realised that there was not enough time at our Monthly Suiseki Meetings for George to assist with his equipment (that was so very heavy and cumbersome), so we began our Suiseki wood workshops at Ray Nesci's Nursery at Kenthurst.

Flushed with my success at the Tops Weekend, I embarked upon purchasing my first dremel and began my exciting journey of working with timber.

However, it is one thing to watch George's clever hands deftly making the tinniest or largest of diazas, but it's another thing to handle that 'bucking bronco' called a dremel. I was astonished at the power that needs to be controlled. But if Jan and Brenda could do...so could I.

By this time, the girls had progressed to really large routers, and additional tungsten bits to obtain various finishes for their really large and intricate diazas, and I was fired up.

I started going to the annual Timber Show at Fox Studios in the City, wandering around among those interested in timber and the tools needed to work with it. Pretending that I knew a lot more than I really did and purchasing small pieces of wood that I hoped would be suitable for my use. I felt really powerful mixing with the predominately male visitors, who all seemed to know so much about the tools etc.

Now I was constantly on the lookout for suitable wood, especially during Council Clean-up days, when beautiful old furniture pieces are left on the footpath. In the beginning I needed my teachers, George/Brenda/Jan/John Cowgill, to choose the most suitable wood for my stones, as it is important to use the correct depth for the size of stone being worked.

However, I have now progressed to having an eye for what is needed, and have also become a regular at Bunnings where they have large bins of off-cuts that can be purchased for a very small outlay.

Following Brenda's advice "you don't explain what you need them for - just tell them you are using them for firewood"; otherwise the price just may increase.

I now need 2 toolboxes to transport my dremels, bits, dust masks; sandpaper etc needed for our trips to Kenthurst, and have progressed to owning 2 more dremels. One is a Router that I use to gouge out the bulk of wood from the base,(which eliminates the need for using those lovely chisels and is much quicker), prior to using the dremels with varying types of bits to get a more detailed seating. The other is the type with a flexible arm that allows me to use it as a type of pen to get into narrow places.

Over the past workshops George, Brenda and Jan have also added to their tools, with George in particular purchasing wonderful new and more modern fret saws, routers etc that he has become so proficient in using.

Recently Jan has moved to Wauchope and even though she does find it very difficult to attend our workshops, she comes down the night before.

I have gradually increased my knowledge and ability until I feel I am now at the stage that Brenda and Jan were about 5 years ago, and I really enjoy our Saturday's at Ray Nesci's.

Thanks to the patience of George and John who guide me, and the knowledge that I can get advice from Brenda and Jan at any time, I now have many of my stones sitting happily on diazas that have been manufactured by me.

We have a couple more girls who join us at our Saturday workshops - Georgina Kretschmar is quickly learning the ropes, assisted by her husband Rolf, and John Cowgill's lovely wife Diane has made some terrific diazas with a little assistance from John.

So I am now issuing an invitation to any of you girls who would like to join us at our wood workshops at Kenthurst. Starting about 9.30am 'till about 4.00pm.

We bring our own lunch, but let me warn you that Rose Nesci has a nasty habit of making something nice for us to nibble with our morning tea/coffee, that is always available at the Nursery.

Our next workshop is 18th March, and we look forward to seeing you there.

PLEASE READ: Are you going to the AABC Convention in Brisbane in May??? It has been just recently confirmed that Suiseki Australia can have a stone display.

There are a couple of stipulations that has to be adhered to as instructed by the Brisbane crew. Only one good AUSTRALIAN STONE per member. We will only have 2 or maybe 3 tressle tables for our use so over crowding would not be enhancing to the display. If you can bring a stone, could you also bring a stand to put the stone on, i.e. stone on a daiza or suiban which is then placed on a bonsai stand or flat slab.

If you do not have a good Australian stone a good overseas stone will be acceptable.

I will be there on the Friday morning from about 9 a.m. to set up the display so if you can locate me in the display room from about that time.

If you do plan to bring a stone can you let me know so I can see how many we will have. If we get too many I would hate to offend and not display them. My email is brendap7@bigpond.com

This is our chance to show what good Australian stones we do have. I hope you can help?

See you all there.

NEXT MEETING

There is no meeting in April (school holidays) but there will be a daiza workshop at Ray Nesci's Nursery on the 18th of April (the Saturday after Easter). As always bring all of your stones, equipment and lunch. We start about 9 a.m. and go till about 4.00 p.m.

ROCKS IN MY HEAD

I've got rocks here;
I've got rocks there;
I've got rocks everywhere!!
So much so it has been said,
I even have them in my head!!

I like this stone,
I like its tone,
I like 'cause it stands alone.
Woe to those who look awry;
Can't understand and wonder why.

Don't wonder why;
Give it a try'
Then in a rock, you may spy,
The wonder of Nature, old beyond measure;
In a common old rock something to treasure.

- Another great poem submitted by Frank Bryant, from Eumundi, Queensland. -

