

AABC 2013 convention

Advice to workshop participants and observers

1. Advice to participants

Overview of workshop process

During the workshop, you will work with an experienced bonsai artist (the instructor) to style the tree that you have brought to the workshop. Instructors differ in how they run their workshops: some involve all participants and perhaps observers in discussion of styling options; others only work one-on-one with each participant. The following information would apply in most workshops.

The instructor:

- may seek your views on styling and features that you like, but will generally make the main decisions about styling;
- may provide a sketch of their vision of the final tree;
- will generally do the main cutting and bending;
- will advise on tree placement in the new pot if you are re-potting.

Participants are responsible for:

- being set up and ready to go at the start of the workshop.
- waiting for advice from the instructor before commencing work on the tree; you may need to be patient as they assist other participants on rotation.
- ignoring any alternative advice offered by observers; you are paying for the instructor's expertise.
- wiring and trimming.
- any preparation required for re-potting, including root pruning. Consult the instructor on placement before pruning the roots as placement may require more roots to be left or removed in some areas.
- cleaning up their area at the end of the workshop; bins and cleaning materials will be available.

If you think you need someone to help you during the workshop, please pre-arrange this with the person.

What to bring

It is most important that participants bring:

- good plant material to work on.
- all the tools and equipment you need. Borrowing tools, wire etc from other participants is not appropriate.

Plant material

Bring the best material you can find and afford. This should be advanced stock with several styling options. You may also consider the time of year and the particular expertise of the instructor, for example pines, azaleas, junipers, banksias, landscapes. The flexibility of some conifers even as advanced stock makes them ideal for workshops as they offer more potential for short term changes rather than having to wait for the growth to happen in deciduous trees. However, if you have a deciduous tree you would love advice on, by all means bring it but you might have to be content with pruning and sketches for the future tree.

Plant material must be clean, healthy and weed free. Remove dead leaves and twigs. Expose the nebari before the workshop commences.

Tools and equipment

Note: power tools are not permitted at AABC workshops

- Tools (clearly identified in some way, eg coloured paint or engraved with your name)
- Turntable
- Wound sealant if used
- Chocks and wedges
- Selection of wire in appropriate sizes
- Raffia or other bandaging if expecting to bend hard
- Notebook and pen/pencil for notes and sketches
- Water sprayer to mist foliage, roots and moss as necessary
- An apron
- Disposable gloves
- Camera (for before and after shots)

If re-potting or making saikei in the workshop:

- Pot or tray prepared with drainage hole mesh and anchor wires
- New potting mix
- Muck if doing a saikei
- Soil surface finishes eg gravel, moss.

2. Advice to workshop observers

Instructors differ in how they run their workshops: some involve all participants and perhaps observers in discussion of styling options; others only work one-on-one with each participant.

The following points apply to observers in all workshops:

- Leave all advice on styling to the workshop instructor, unless invited to contribute. Unsolicited advice from observers is disrespectful to the instructor and may be confusing to the participants.
- Listen attentively to the instructor's advice to participants: it is not appropriate to interrupt the instructor or participants at any time.
- Remain within the area outlined for observers.
- Leave the room if you wish to have a conversation.