

Once again the Bonsai group met in the spacious facilities of Venn Valley Vineyard (between Landkey and Swimbridge) EX32 0NN. Through commercial need Ali and Tony (the owners) have found it necessary to offer just drinks and their superb cakes for sale, although we did come across a rumour that ice cream may also be found!

Our monthly meeting was once again enthusiastic with a dozen members present and several new members were welcomed.

Our next bonsai meeting will be on **Wednesday, 6 September** at the vineyard, at 2:00 pm.

The most interesting part is members bringing their own material so that all may discuss, and more importantly we all learn to anticipate what the tree may well look like in 5 or 10 years' time.

Having said that, one of our members – Maggie Curtis – a professional potter, turned up with ten bonsai pots as her first entry into this niche area of ceramics. For a first attempt they were brilliant with extraordinary glazes and superb stylistic outside surfaces.



One of Maggie's plain pots now has a Tanuki juniper planted in it that enhances the greenness of the tree.

Betty, one of our stalwarts of the group arrived with a small Blackthorn, a largish red rectangular pot, soil, wire and a pot mesh. Totally prepared for a repot, just 4 months early! It can be dangerous repotting a deciduous tree in August; late autumn or winter is ideal. It is then that the tree is dormant after extracting all the sugars from its leaves and storing them in the trunk ready for the new growth in spring.

Ian and Norma also arrived with a delightful acer but rather young, exactly like Sue and Laura. Beautiful young trees that would really do well if planted in the ground for a while to mature and move towards initial styling.



Jenny arrived with a double trunk Cypress that needs serious work to remove the image of being a catapult! Two options were available, one to bend the shorter trunk down and around, the second option would be to style the tree into a literati with just the one tall trunk. An old trick is to use a sheet of paper to obscure the possible removed trunk to gain a greater idea of the effect of the removal of the trunk.



The next part of the afternoon was to investigate how to deal with awkward material. In this case an ordinary Christmas tree – Norway spruce. How to make it more interesting? We were all a bit short of answers until the little U-bend tree was produced to show what could be done.



A competition was introduced – what could be done with a similar tree?

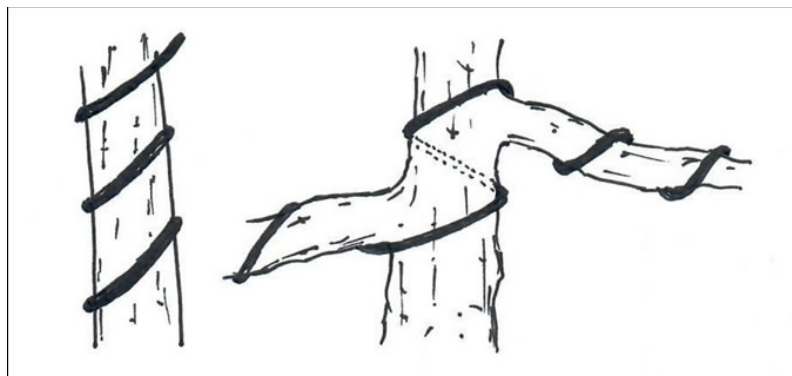
Well done Maggie. We look forward to your work in September.



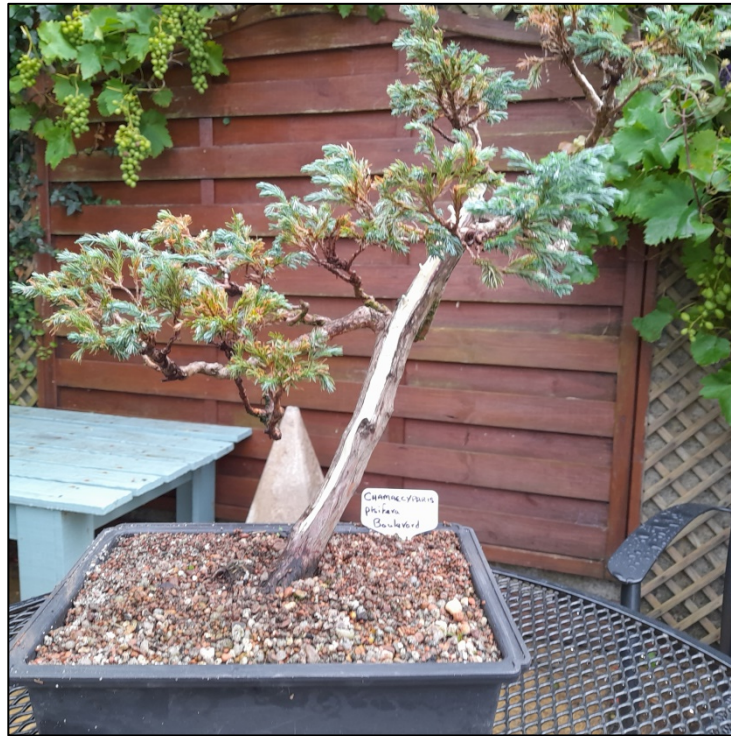
### Styling through Wiring

To style a tree into a bonsai very often branches, and indeed the trunk, need to be moved into a different position to enhance the aesthetics of the tree. The most favoured way is using bonsai wire. This is commonly aluminium covered in brown plastic (to hide it in the foliage). Copper wire is sometimes used by the professionals but needs particular care in its use.

Wiring is a skill that can be learnt with a little practice. Therefore the group this month were given a length of 2mm aluminium wire and a plastic chop stick to practice upon. The ideal spacing is about 45° to act as a support, anything less acts rather like a spring and the branch will maintain its original position! A good anchor is always required and two branches opposite each other make a firm starting point. Wiring does need practice – any old bit of branch will do until you are happy to inflict yourself on your tree!



After a short while of practice the group were set the task of wiring and placing the branches of this *Chamaecyparis Pisifera Boulevard*.



Our next meeting is on **6 September** at the usual venue of Venn Valley Vineyard @ 2:00pm.

I have been requested to look at big bonsai so we can discuss the ads/disads of their size, I am bring 4 trees, one of which I can barely pick up!!

Please bring along any tree that we could discuss as a group; this process gives a broader insight to possibilities across a wider range of material and is also a lot of fun of course.



Further details of wiring can be found at [bonsaiforeveryone.com/Techniques/TECHSWIRE.html](http://bonsaiforeveryone.com/Techniques/TECHSWIRE.html)

Any queries or help needed please email or phone me:

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