

## RAFTING BY JOHN BARNARD - APRIL 2012



This is the tree that John chose to do the demo on. He firstly explained to us that this is one of his favorite styles in bonsai since it creates a quick forest, and can be used with any tree giving you a styling headache!

The method to creating a raft style bonsai is so simple there is basically only one necessity - that the tree should have a lot of branches on at least one side of the tree. In this example (left) it is clear that there are sufficient branches on both sides.

### **Prepping the tree**

Next it is important to check for sufficient roots. Then you clean off the branches you will not need.



Then you cut little strips off beneath where each branch will become a tree (as above). This is where new roots will form. When cutting this strip (with a Stanley knife), try to keep the flap. Put rooting hormone on this spot. John explained that soft wooded trees root quite quickly while harder wooded trees like conifers can take up to 2 years to form roots. So just keep an eye out.

## **The container**

John builds his own wooden boxes for his raft style trees. He informed us that he does this since wood is a good conductor, you can make it the perfect size you require, and most importantly, you get to use power tools!



## **Planting your raft style**

First you need to place some wire through the bottom of the container lengthwise to secure the tree in place. Then put a little soil before introducing the tree. It is absolutely vital that you secure the trunk down tightly with the wires. This promotes good root growth. John told us that the slightest shift can hinder the process badly, so make sure to do this step properly! Next, cover with soil (picture below left).



Now you've got a ball of roots on one side of the container, which is partly exposed. To remedy this, place a normal plastic pot over the roots and secure with wire (picture above right). This will prevent the roots from drying out too quickly. When the new roots are properly formed you will start removing this ball of roots.

This is what it looks like when you are done.



### **General info & tips**

You can do this style planting any time of the year, since you don't damage the roots too much in the process.

You can use any type and size tree to create a raft style.

Water the tree as normal.

Hormone powders that can be used include: Dyna Root, Seradix or "Dip and Grow".

### **End results (Eventually...)**

