

THE MIDWAY NEWS



MIDWAY BONSAI SOCIETY

MIDWAYBONSAI.CO.ZA

February 2025

www.midwaybonsai.co.za



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Chairmans Report

Hi all,

I hope this letter finds you all well.

We had our second meeting for 2025, on the 15th Feb 2025, and the topic of the day was **Clumps** known as Kabudachi, and from the comments of those who attended, another topic we can explore again with a bit more research and material.

Thanks to Desiree for the maple seedlings that I could use to do a demo with, they will look great over the next few years as they grow, lucky you. The display table showed a cross section of the projects underway, thanks to the displayers. It really is nice to see the work that is going on, especially as this topic isn't something often seen. **BRAT (Bonsai Regional Association of the Transvaal)** is hosting the day on the 29th March at the Garden Village Nursery 82 Koot str Witpoortjie, Brakpan,



R60 entry fee, and we need to give them numbers of attendees and if they will display trees on the day for placement and display purposes, so please advise me soonest.

Please note that our **March** meeting will proceed as scheduled, focusing on the development and wiring of **Celtis** trees. However, we will take a brief hiatus in April due to the Easter holidays and multiple public holidays. Our next meeting will be in May, which will also serve as a preparation session for the New Talent competition. The winner(s) of this competition will represent our club at the BRAT Day on May 31st. The club will provide trees for the competition, and participants will have the option to purchase the tree they work on.

Thanks all and keep those scissors sharp 😊

Mack

(John Hecht)



Club news

You're Invited to our next meeting!

Join us on **15 March 2025**, as we gather for a Celtis wiring and development Workshop and to share knowledge.

Here's the agenda:

- 12:00-14:00: Work on your own trees
- 14:00: Talk and workshop on Celtis wiring and development.

Please bring your favourite trees to display on the show table.

Everyone is welcome!

If you have a specific topic, you would like us to cover, please let me know and I'll pass it on.

Looking ahead to our upcoming **workshops**, please note that these are interactive, hands-on events that may require some preparation in advance.

We'll share more details through our Newsletter and WhatsApp group, so stay tuned!



Membership fees

R350.00 for Single

R510.00 for Family

You can pay into the Club
Account, state your name
as reference to:

FNB

Heinrich Crystal

Account No: 63021469689

Branch: 250063



Program for 2025

March 2025:

March 2025: Unlock the Potential of **Celtis**: A Development and Wiring Workshop. Building on popular demand, our March event delves into the art of refining and enhancing **Celtis** trees. Join us for an immersive, hands-on session where our experts will share invaluable insights and techniques on development and wiring, empowering you to elevate your **Celtis** trees to new heights.

April 2025:

April 2025: **No Meeting Scheduled.** Due to the Easter holidays and multiple public holidays in April, we will be taking a brief hiatus. We look forward to reconvening in May with a new and exciting program!

February's meeting: Clumps

Introduction to Kabudachi Bonsai

Kabudachi, also known as the clump style, is a captivating Bonsai style where multiple trunks emerge from a single root base, mimicking a miniature forest. This style is visually dynamic, offering a full and harmonious appearance that appeals to both beginners and experienced enthusiasts. Its unique challenge lies in balancing multiple trunks to create a natural, balanced look, making it a rewarding project for Bonsai artists.

First off, what makes clump style so special? It's all about harmony. Unlike single-trunk bonsai, clump style features three or more trunks—typically an odd number for aesthetic balance—rising from the same roots. This mimics how some trees, like birches or maples, naturally grow in clusters. The trunks can vary in thickness and height, creating a dynamic, organic look. It's less about perfection and more about capturing nature's wild beauty. For beginners, it's a forgiving style to start with, blending structure with a touch of chaos.



Suitable Species and Creation Techniques

Now, let's talk origins. Clump style draws inspiration from nature—think of a grove of trees sharing a root base after a stump sprouts new shoots. In bonsai, this is often achieved artificially by planting multiple seedlings close together or encouraging suckers from a single tree. Historically, Japanese bonsai masters refined this into an art form, but it's rooted in observing the real world. It's a nod to resilience—trees thriving together despite cramped conditions.

Suitable species include Field Maples, Japanese Maples, and Privet, known for thin bark that fuses easily.



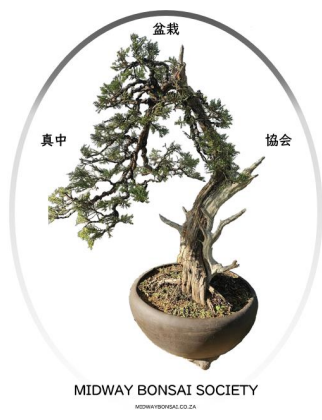
Creating Kabudachi involves starting with 9-11 healthy seedlings, planting them closely to encourage root fusion, and shaping through regular pruning. This process requires patience, as fusion can take several years, and using air layers from the same tree ensures genetic consistency.



Care and Aesthetics

Care involves regular watering to keep soil moist but not waterlogged, balanced fertilization during growth, and pruning to maintain shape. Wiring shapes trunks and branches, with repotting needed every 2-3 years. Aesthetically, balance is key, with the largest trunk often front or center, a full crown, and a visible, fused root base (nebari) enhancing the aged look.

So, how do you start a clump-style bonsai? One way is planting several young trees together in a single pot. Over time, their roots fuse, forming that unified base. Another method is cutting back a single tree to encourage multiple shoots from the stump.



Patience is your friend here—nature doesn't rush. Wiring and pruning shape the trunks, but don't overdo it. The charm lies in their natural divergence, not rigid symmetry. It's like conducting a tiny orchestra of branches!



Challenges include ensuring even trunk growth and successful root fusion, requiring careful seedling selection and maintenance to prevent dominance or weakness. Managing pests is complex with multiple trunks. Examples include Clump Style Privet, with dense green foliage, and Japanese Maple Kabudachi, offering seasonal color changes, showcasing the style's versatility.

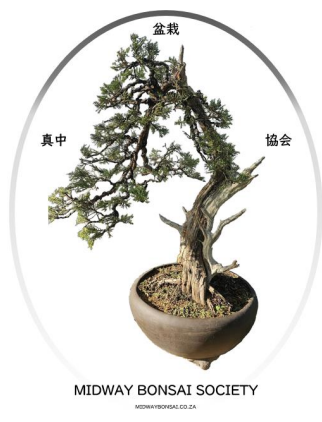


Let's chat about trunk placement. In clump style, the trunks should radiate outward from the root base, not grow straight up like soldiers in a line. Think of them fanning out naturally, with some leaning slightly for visual interest.

. The thickest trunk often acts as the "leader," while smaller ones play supporting roles. This creates depth and movement, drawing the viewer's eye across the composition. It's a balancing act—literally and artistically!



The canopy in clump style is a big deal. Ideally, it forms a single, cohesive dome or oval shape, even though multiple trunks support it. This unity ties the design together, making it feel like one tree with many voices. Prune carefully to avoid gaps, but don't force uniformity—some variation in height adds character. Picture a fluffy cloud resting atop those trunks. It's all about softness and flow, a hallmark of bonsai aesthetics.



Watering clump-style bonsai can be a bit of a puzzle. With multiple trunks sharing one root system, the soil needs consistent moisture, but overwatering risks root rot. Check the soil daily—stick your finger in a couple of centimeters. If it's dry, water thoroughly until it drains out the bottom. Good drainage is non-negotiable; soggy roots spell disaster. Think of it as nurturing a tiny ecosystem—every trunk depends on that shared foundation.



What about soil? Clump-style bonsai thrive in well-draining mixes. This keeps roots healthy and oxygenated, critical for multiple trunks drawing nutrients from one spot. Repot every couple of years to refresh the soil and trim crowded roots. Spring's the best time, just as buds swell. It's like giving your bonsai a spa day—keeping it vibrant and ready to grow.



Pruning's where the magic happens in clump style. You'll trim to maintain that unified canopy while letting each trunk shine. Remove inward-growing branches to prevent clutter and thin out dense areas for light and air. Timing matters—prune deciduous trees in late winter, evergreens in early spring. It's less about hacking away and more about sculpting with care. Each snip shapes the story your bonsai tells.



Wiring clump-style trunks is an art in itself. Since the trunks start close together, you'll wire them early to guide their curves and angles. Be gentle—too much bending risks snapping them. Leave it on just long enough to set the shape, then remove it before it bites into the bark. It's like giving your bonsai a gentle nudge toward greatness.



Clump style often feels more “wild” than formal bonsai styles like upright or cascade. The multiple trunks suggest age and survival, even in a young tree. Some artists enhance this by adding moss or small rocks at the base, mimicking a forest floor. It’s less about rigid rules and more about evoking a mood—peaceful, rugged, or whimsical.

Clump style isn’t without challenges. Crowded roots can compete for nutrients, so fertilizing is crucial. Use a balanced, slow-release fertilizer in spring and summer, easing off in fall. Watch for pests too—tight-knit trunks can hide aphids or scale. Regular inspections keep your bonsai healthy. It’s a labor of love, but the payoff—a thriving mini-forest—is worth every minute.



Jonathan Cain at the International Bonsai and Suiseki Confluence

We are delighted to announce that **Jonathan Cain** has been invited to be a demonstrator at the prestigious International Bonsai and Suiseki Confluence!

This esteemed event, hosted by the **Asia Bonsai Federation** (regional organization of the World Bonsai Friendship Federation), will take place in Mumbai from March 21 to 23, 2025.

We are incredibly proud of Jonathan and are confident that he will make Africa proud with his exceptional bonsai skills. Congratulations, Jonathan!





South Asia Bonsai Federation

A Regional Organization of The World Bonsai Friendship Federation (WBFF)

International Bonsai and Suiseki Confluence

March 21 to 23, 2025

Venue: Radisson Blu Resort & Spa, Karjat, Near Mumbai

- A two-and-a-half-day residential
- A world class Bonsai exhibition
- An elaborate exhibition of best in class Suiseki-Viewing Stones for the first time in India.
- International Bonsai & Suiseki Masters from across the globe.
- Lecture series on Suiseki by the international Authority
- A unique mentorship program for the Indian delegates
- Commercial stalls – Bonsai, material, suiseki and bonsai tools



Editors Letter

Dear Readers,

I hope you've enjoyed this month's issue of the Midway News!

If you have any questions, comments or would like to share your own tree photos, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

I extend my gratitude to Gina and Hardus for his stunning photography. If you would like to showcase your trees in our newsletter, please send me your photos.

Best regards,

Pieter Bosch

