



THE MIDWAY NEWS

5. TREE OF THE MONTH: BUDDLEJA BY JONATHAN CAIN

IT BELONGS TO THE SCROPHULARIACEAE FAMILY WHICH IS CHARACTERISED BY SIMPLE OPPOSITE LEAVES. THE LEAVES ARE NARROW AND OBLONG. IT IS A SHRUB OR SMALL TREE, 2-10M IN HEIGHT. THERE ARE ABOUT 100 SPECIES WORLD WIDE. THE FLOWERS ARE BISexual OCCURRING AT THE END OF THE BRANCHES.

THE BEST RECOGNISED SPECIES FOR BONSAI IS BUDDLEJA SALIGNA (SALIGNA MEANING WILLOW) COMMON NAME FALSE OLIVE, WHITE OLIVE AND BUTTERFLY BUSH. BUDDLEJA SALIGNA IS ENDEMIC TO SA AND OCCURS ALL OVER SA WITH THE EXCEPTION OF LESOTHO, KWA ZULU NATAL COASTAL BELT AND THE ARID WESTERN HALF OF SA.

WHY IS BUDDLEJA USED?

- THEY HAVE A HIGH SURVIVAL RATE AFTER BEING REMOVED FROM THE WILD.
- THEY BUD EVERYWHERE ALLOWING GOOD BRANCH PLACEMENT.
- THE BRANCHES GROWTH IS FAST.
- THE LEAVES REDUCE TO ABOUT 5MM.
- THE BRANCHES CAN BE BENT WITH WIRE.
- THE BARK CAN BE CARVED WITH AN INTERESTING GRAIN AND TEXTURE.
- IT IS AN EVERGREEN TREE SO DOES NOT LOSE ITS LEAVES IN WINTER



Appearance: BARK IS FISSURED AND FLAKY WITH BRANCHES AT 4 ANGLES. IT IS MORE GREY THAN BROWN. THE OLD TRUNKS ARE FLUTED APPEARING MUSCULAR DUE TO ITS VERTICAL SAP FLOW. THE STEMS CAN ALSO BE TWISTED WITH DAMAGE CAUSED BY TERMITES. LEAVES ARE OBLONG, GREEN ON TOP WITH PALE GREY BELOW. FLOWERS ARE CLUSTERED WHITE TO CREAM PRODUCING A FRUIT OF ABOUT 2MM. THE WOOD IS TOUGH AND HARD MAKING IT GOOD FOR JINS AND SHARIS.



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POSITION: PROPAGATION IS EASILY DONE THROUGH SEED AND CUTTINGS. SEED WILL GERMINATE IN ABOUT 4 WEEKS, ALTHOUGH ERRATIC. CUTTINGS NEED TO BE HORMONE TREATED.

PRUNING: CONSTANT LEAF REMOVAL IS ESSENTIAL FOR SMALL LEAVES AND RAMIFICATION. THERE IS VERY LITTLE DIE BACK, SO TIGHT PRUNING IS POSSIBLE. FOLIAGE MAY BECOME VERY DENSE LEAVING A HIDING PLACE FOR PESTS. IT IS APICAL DOMINANT, SO THE GROWTH ON TOP WILL ALWAYS BE STRONGEST. BECAUSE OF THE ALTERNATING PAIRS OF LEAVES IT IS A GOOD SPECIES FOR CLIP AND GROW THE TREE HAS A VERTICAL SAP FLOW. TWO BRANCHES MAY BE LIVING ON THE SAME VEIN. BY REMOVING A LOWER BRANCH TOO CLOSE TO THE TRUNK MAY STOP THE FLOW TO THE UPPER BRANCH. A LOWER THICK BRANCH MUST BE REMOVED IN STAGES.

DUE TO VERTICAL SAP FLOW EACH BRANCH WILL HAVE A SPECIFIC ROOT. THE IDEA IS NOT TO HAVE TWO OR MORE BRANCHES DEVELOPING ON THE SAME VEIN BEING FED BY THE SAME ROOT. OTHERWISE GROWTH RATE ON THE BRANCHES WILL BE SLOWER THAN OTHER BRANCHES WHICH HAVE ONE ROOT. IN ORDER TO THICKEN THE BRANCH ALLOW IT TO GROW, AND THEN LATER CUT BACK AND STYLE. LARGE WOUNDS WILL NOT HEAL EASILY SO WHEN REMOVING A LARGE BRANCH RATHER MAKE A FEATURE LIKE A JIN OR A SHARI. THE WOOD IS EXTREMELY HARD AND RIGID WITH A DRY WEIGHT 1100KG/M³. (NATAL MAHOGONY 600KG/M³, HARDEKOO 1200KG/M³). IDEA FOR CARVING. THE BONSAIS ARE WATERED REGULARLY WHICH CAUSES ROT. SO SEALING DEAD WOOD IS VERY IMPORTANT. LIME SULPHUR IS SOMETIMES USED. THIS LOOKS WHITE AND IF SPILLED ONTO THE LIVE WOOD CAN KILL A VEIN. A BETTER SOLUTION IS WOOD GLUE, WHICH GIVES A GOOD BROWN AESTHETIC APPEAL TO THE DEAD WOOD THIS NEEDS TO BE REAPPLIED EVERY 2 YEARS.





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WIRING: THE BRANCHES ARE BRITTLE AND BREAK EASILY, SO BE CAREFUL. WHEN WIRING ON REGULAR PRUNED, THE GROWTH RATE IS SLOWER, SO WIRE CAN BE REMOVED AFTER 3 TO 5 MONTHS. WHERE THE TREE GROWS FAST THE SHAPE SHOULD BE RETAINED AFTER 2 TO 3 MONTHS FROM

REPOTTING: ANY TIME OF YEAR, IF THE ROOTS ARE NOT BEING CUT, BUT BEST FROM MAY TO SEPTEMBER. BE CAREFUL OF REMOVING ROOTS AS THE ROOT IS FEEDING A SPECIFIC BRANCH. YOU MAY LOOSE AN IMPORTANT BRANCH. DEEP POT IS BEST OTHERWISE BRANCHES TEND TO DIE. NATURAL COLOURED POTS SUITE THE BEST. WHERE THE TREE DISPLAYS MUSCLES A FLUTED POT IS COMPLEMENTARY. REPOT YOUNG TREES EVERY 2 YEARS AND UP TO EVERY SEVEN YEARS FOR OLD TREES

FEEDING: THROUGHOUT THE YEAR WITH A GENERAL FERTILIZER.

WATERING: CAN WITHSTAND LONG PERIODS OF DROUGHT IN THE WILD. IN A POT YOU WILL LOOSE BRANCHES.

PROPAGATION: PROPAGATION IS EASILY DONE THROUGH SEED AND CUTTINGS. SEED WILL GERMINATE IN ABOUT 4 WEEKS, ALTHOUGH ERRATIC. CUTTINGS NEED TO BE HORMONE TREATED.



Buddleja – Artist Unknown