

Mini CV – Tola Smit

I have been interested in bonsai since school days but only got my 1st tree a lot later during the late 1990's. With limited mainstream media on the topic in those years, I found Kaizen Bonsai in the UK on the web and was intrigued by Graeme Potter's styling and methods and soon afterwards became hooked and slowly started buying nursery material to practise on.

I had approximately 50 trees in various stages of development when I joined Nelspruit Bonsai Kai in 2013 after attending one of their meetings and accompanied them on their annual dig in September that year. Before joining the club it was a solo endeavour with little contact with other enthusiasts.

In 2014 I was elected as Chairman of the club and has been in that position since.

With limited members in the club, the committee promoted the club quite aggressively and staged exhibitions at Ilanga Shopping Centre, the Botanical Gardens at the mothers' day concert and at some of the local nurseries to create interest in bonsai and the club. The club grew quickly to approx. 70 members but has settled on around 50 paid up members in the last few years.

The club joined BRAT and SABA during 2018 and in October 2019 at the ABC5 convention at Safari Nursery, I was elected as secretary of SABA.

I currently have in excess of a 100 trees and enjoy working on our indigenous species like Acacia, our figs, Celtis, Commiphora and obviously our wild olives.

