



Six weeks after The Kiccoro was pruned and shaped, a new growth bud appeared; the resulting branch will correct any off-balance created by the initial pruning.

The lightest of the three original trunks was retained and shaped with anodised aluminium wire.

Step-by-step: world-first Wollemi bonsai's birth

In October Thor Beowulf created the world's first bonsai Wollemi pine. Here he explains his pioneering process.

ON SEPTEMBER 10, 1994, a National Parks and Wildlife Service field officer, David Noble, accompanied by Michael Casteleyn and Tony Zimmerman, discovered what is now believed to be the oldest tree species in the world.

This tree is a member of the Araucariaceae family and is named *Wollemia nobilis*, after David Noble and the Wollemi National Park, north-west of Sydney, where the only grove of some 80 of these ancient trees is found.

The Wollemi pine is a stately 40-metre

tree with a tendency to multiple-trunk or coppice and can have a somewhat top-heavy crown, similar in many ways to the Bunya Bunya pine.

Two of the most striking features of the Wollemi pine are its Stegosaurus spine-like branch profile and the distinctive chocolate-brown bubbly bark found on mature trees. This has been likened to chocolate crackles - a feature which tree collectors and bonsai artists will eagerly exploit in years to come.

On October 23, 2005, my specialist bonsai nursery, **Bonsai Exotique**, bought nine

advanced Wollemi pines at the Sotheby's auction held in the Royal Botanical Gardens in Sydney.

This auction was the first time the Wollemi pines had been made available to the public. The trees were between five and six years, up to two metres tall and grown from cuttings taken directly from 15 parent trees growing in the wild in the Wollemi National Park.

The entire auction stock was known as The First Generation Wollemi Pines: Collectors Edition and was named after