

ANPSA BRACHYCHITON and ALLIED GENERA STUDY GROUP

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'Dark Knight', which may be a *bidwillii* Red Baron hybrid with *B. x excellens* 'Rosalind.' Or perhaps the bird or bee got pollen elsewhere. In Merv Hodge's garden there were no *discolor* plants at the time, nor any of the all-red form of *B. garrawayae* which is one of the few brachys I know that has the same non-fading shade of red.

Progress of brachy book : It has finally been written, but as I am not known for my artistic skills, my friend Denis Cox is Photoshopping the images to find suitable photos for the covers, and otherwise smoothing out a few rough edges. There has essentially been no rain in Brisbane, the 2 adjacent coasts and Toowoomba and the Darling Downs since January. Further inland it is worse, as much of the state missed the summer rains entirely, and over 75% of the state is drought-declared. On the other hand, the N Qld coastal strip got frequent rain through May-July, when it is normally dry.

I will put a few pictures in this newsletter that I left out of the book, often because I am not sure of their pedigrees, and I did not wish to confuse my readers too much. As I asked people to send me pictures and information, several new natural hybrids came out of the woodwork, plus the identity of the white-flowered brachy found by David Hockings near Lake Argyle in the E Kimberleys became even more uncertain. I have named it 'Argyle Pearl', and in previous newsletters it was put down as possibly a *megaphyllus* a long way from its home range.

Seed available : I have available seed of *bidwillii* Red Baron and Beau Belle, both of which seem to breed pretty true, and in any case should produce nice plants. Should flower in 3 years from a spring sowing. Sow about the depth of the seed. It may pay to cover the pots for 3 weeks or so to deter rodents and birds. After about that time the scent must wear off and they don't worry them. Germination % should be close to 100. A couple of 70 cent stamps will cover postage. I also have tiny amounts of seed of *B. x-vinicolor* and *B. discolor* and a couple of *excellens* cultivars.

Close planting : In my new garden I have planted 50 or so brachys about a metre apart, much closer than normal for most species, but OK for small species like *megaphyllus* which is slow-growing outside the tropics anyway. I shall have to prune most of the others in due course, which at least will enable me to advise people who want to plant them in tubs and so on. I expect most will flower normally if pruned in autumn or winter.



The species pictured above would fit in the smallest gardens, as it often grows to barely 50 cm. It is *B. vitifolius*, photographed at Laura in far N Qld in June this year, and Garry Sankowsky reports it will flower in any month of the year on the Atherton Tableland, and presumably elsewhere in the tropics. Not so in the sub-tropics, where it is late spring flowering. The leaves are very large, with prominent veins on their undersides, and the flowers small.

PBR brachys now on sale : A range of PBR plants bred by Des Boorman from Lismore in NSW are now on sale in many Masters (the hardware chain store of Woolworths) stores. Nearly all are based on *bidwillii*, to give small shrub size and reasonable frost hardiness,

crossed to the N Qld species *grandiflorus*, *garrawayae*, and *velutinosus* in various combinations. I have not seen any of the *bidwillii* x *velutinosus* hybrids in Masters yet. Photos of Salmon Queen are attractive, and it is the first image given below. It is a selected (presumably from the wild) form of *B. x carneus* which only grows close to Coen on Cape York Peninsula, and is a natural hybrid between *B. garrawayae* and *B. grandiflorus*. I have received material from near Coen from two sources this summer, and have grafted plants of sp. Mt. White and *grandiflorus* from Maurie Tucker, who believes the former is a *carneus*. From Garry Sankowsky I received material of his 'Coen Pink', which he thinks is a *B. x allochrous*, and Boorman thinks is a *carneus*. Garry sent Merv Hodge material of his 'Big Pink' some years ago, and Brent Vieritz and I have grafted plants from that, which I called a 'possible *muellerianus* hybrid' in earlier newsletters. It is also from near Coen, and is almost certainly a *B. x allochrous*. Both of these are growing well at Toowoomba, and Big Pink flowered last summer. Both are still covered with green leaves in late July, and I have had plenty of cold windy days already although it has not gone below 1 degree C here yet (just reached zero last winter). Markedly warmer than frosty Greenbank so far as actual temperature minima go, but the daytime maxima are lower, there are more cold days and dull days, and spells of fog are far more common, even if no rain actually gets in the gauge.

Both my all-red-flowers and green-and-red forms of *garrawayae* are still covered with healthy green leaves, as are the *albidus*, so it is surprising how cold tolerant these Cape York brachys are, if not actually frosted. Most of my *bidwillii*s are leafless or nearly so, and a few have flower buds on, as has my biggest *albidus*, and Jasper Lode, as usual, has been in flower since early April.

October Brachychiton and Allied Genera Conference in Bendigo, Victoria :

This biennial two-day Seminar in the series honouring FJC Rogers and run by the Bendigo Native Plant Group Inc. (P. O. Box 669, Bendigo 3552, bendigonativeplantgroup@yahoo.com.au) for APSVic., is on October 18th and 19th this year, and will feature the other members of the 'old' Sterculiaceae family as well as Brachychiton. I will be speaking on brachy hybrids and cultivars, Dr. Gordon Guymer, author of the last Brachychiton revision in 1988 will be covering the brachy species, and Rodger Elliot, Trevor Blake, Dr. Carolyn Wilkins from WA, Phil Hempel and Neil Marriott will be covering *Lasiopetalums*, *Thomasias*, *Keraudrenias*, *Sterculias*, *Commersonias*, *Guichenotias* and the other genera once in Sterculiaceae. Brachychiton and *Sterculia* still are, as per the fairly conservative Qld Herbarium, but are in an enlarged Malvaceae according to many botanists and some Australian herbaria, mainly on DNA evidence. All but the last 2 genera (and a few *Commersonias*) are shrubs or rarely vines, and usually small shrubs at that, and the ones well known in cultivation are all from southern Australia and usually from areas of low to medium rainfall. There are also many genera and species from northern Australia, and I shall scan some of my old N.T slides if time permits, and add a bit of new blood to the southern photos. The far-travelled David Hockings from Qld has hunted up some of his excellent photos of Qld species for me.

Victorian APS members will already know details of the Seminar from the June 2014 issue of their 'Growing Australian' magazine, but for others the first day is taken up by seminars and workshops (cost \$125), and a formal dinner (\$65), and the second day by a bus tour of private gardens and the Goldfields Revegetation native Nursery (\$45). SG member and botanical artist Mrs. Jean Dennis will have some of her excellent paintings of brachys for sale.

Subscriptions : Due to having been slack in producing newsletters for the year just past, I shall note all subs for the year 2013-2014 as paid. For the current year, it remains at \$5. Members will be entitled to a concessional price on the brachy book once I know what it will cost to print.



Above, 'Salmon Blush'.

The image below is of Des's 'Ruffles', which is *bidwillii* x Salmon Blush. So is his 'Red Pagoda', which is the next image. Shows the variation you can get from crosses of identical pedigree.





Red Pagoda.

Below is Sankowsky's 'Big Pink', growing in Brent Vieritz's garden at Beachmere on the Sunshine Coast, opposite Bribie Island.



Above, Sankowsky's 'Coen Pink'.



Above is a *B. grandiflorus*, photographed at Maurie Tucker's at Cooroy on the Sunshine Coast, this summer.

Below are a group of flowers on a *B. tuberculatus* branchlet, and below that some of the warty pods that give the species its name. It comes from just over the WA border as you drive towards Kununurra from the east, and had at least one hitherto unknown (at least to botanists) hybrid or new species close nearby. A few locals knew it existed.





This plant, labelled Jasper Belle, I have seen in a Brisbane nursery and a Toowoomba one, and I have no idea what it is. Quite nice. Tracked the source down to Humphris nursery in Victoria, but they had lost where they got it (thought it was me or Merv, hence the name). They now call it by Merv's suggested name of Bellarosa. The leaf is a bit like Robin Hood.

Welcome to new members : A warm if belated welcome to Alison Ryan, of Richmond, Vic. 3121, and anyone else that I may have overlooked.