

ASGAP BRACHYCHITON & ALLIED GENERA STUDY GROUP

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**Financial matters :** Subs run from June to June, & remain at \$ 5 within Australia, & \$ 10 overseas. A tick in the relevant spot below shows where you are financial up to according to my records.

2004-05                      2005-06                      2006-07                      2007-08                      2008-09                      2009-2010

**New hybrids created :** Approaching flowering size here are *B. bidwillii* (Beau Belle) x *B. muellerianus* (an apricot-pink clone) seedlings. Trevor Garrad, a semi-retired nurseryman cum farmer, breeder of the widely used *Syzygium* Tiny Trev, & brachy fancier, gave me a flowered plant of the same cross (but done using different clonal parents), which is a pale apricot-pink. He also gave me cutting material of 2 different clones of a cross between his equivalent of Robin Hood (*acerifolius* x *bidwillii*), but using parents not as good as Merv used (but they gave a good result), x 'Jerilderie Red', an x-*roseus* (*acerifolius* x *populneus*) hybrid about 100 years old. Maybe even a little more. I very rarely get a pod set on a *roseus* tree, unlike virtually all my other mature brachys except maybe Griffith Pink.

Small seedlings include *albidus*, *chillagoensis*, *bidwillii* Beau Belle x *garrawayae*, *bidwillii* K10 x *garrawayae*, Robin Hood (*acerifolius* x *bidwillii*) x *bidwillii*, Robin Hood x *muellerianus*, Robin Hood x *discolor* [has reddish bark & red-veined leaves close in shape to juvenile *discolor*], Robin Hood x *garrawayae*, Robin Hood x x-excellens (*discolor* x *bidwillii*) 'Rosalind', Rosalind x *garrawayae*, Rosalind x *spectabilis*, & various line-breedings within *bidwillii*, which may be the most variable of all brachys. Older seedlings include *bidwillii* Beau Belle x *vitifolius*

Rockhampton member David Long reported poorer than usual brachy flowerings up there too, probably due mainly to the dry. He has some *spectabilis* hybrids I have not seen yet, including *excellens* (not Rosalind in his case, I think) x *spectabilis*, & *excellens* x [*acerifolius* x *bidwillii*]. South Australian member Matthew Oxford has had good results with Beau Belle, Belladonna, Clarabelle, an *excellens* called 'Noel's Surprise' bred on the Sunshine Coast & marketed by Trevor Garrad, & others. Quite a few of these have been used as street trees by the City of Playford (part of Adelaide, I think).

**Taxonomic changes :** The Qld Herbarium has not, as yet, adopted the suggestion by some botanists, largely on the basis of DNA data, that the family Sterculiaceae be merged into the family Malvaceae, which includes *Hibiscus*, *Sida*, *Gossypium* (cotton) & *Abutilon*. However, it has removed many genera previously regarded as part of Sterculiaceae, & placed them in the family Byttneriaceae. Genera with Qld representatives are *Abroma*, *Commersonia*, *Dicarpidium*, *Hannafordia*, *Keraudrenia*, *Kleinhovia*, *Lasiopetalum*, *Melochia*, *Rulingia*, *Seringia* & *Waltheria*. A lot of genera from other states of Australia would also now be in Byttneriaceae, which leaves the new Sterculiaceae a far more homogeneous group, containing the genera *Argyrodendron*, *Brachychiton*, *Firmiana*, *Franciscodendron*, *Heritiera* & *Sterculia*. The changes in all Qld land plants are listed in the 'Census of the Queensland Flora 2007', edited by Peter Bostock & Ailsa Holland.

There are also new *Brachychiton* species listed in the above publication, but I will discuss these after I am able to talk at length with Gordon Guymer, who has been doing the revisions of the local Sterculiaceae. One horticulturally quite well known species, *B. sp.* Ormeau, makes the list but it & several others in the list have yet to be officially described. *B. sp.* Exmoor Station is not on the list, although Guymer knows it exists, as I showed him plants 2 or 3 years ago.

Guymer describes 3 new species of *Commersonia* in 2006 *Austrobaileya* 7(2): 365-372, where he also renames the former *Rulingia procumbens* as *C. procumbens*. Two of the new species, *C. perkinsiana* & *C. inglewoodensis*, have attractively toothed leaves which are also slightly serrate, but small flowers, with diameters to 8.5 & 3.5 mm respectively, & coloured pale magenta & white-cream respectively. Both are less than 10 cm tall, with the former being small erect shrubs, suckering from rhizomes. *C. inglewoodensis* has trailing stems to 90 cm & a non-rhizomatous taproot. The known population of some 50 plants in a small area of a state forest near Inglewood gives it Endangered status. The other small

species is only known from a coastal headland at Stockyard Point in Byfield Conservation Park, & a 'conservation status of Data Deficient is recommended until further information is obtained.' The third new species, *C. macrostipula*, is allied to *C. bartramia*, but differs from that species 'by its ovate to ovate-lanceolate stipules, & leaves with shallowly serrate leaf margins & finely velutinous abaxial tomentum.' It is endemic to N-E Qld, from Isabella Falls north of Cooktown, south to Tully. It can be a shrub or a tree to 10m high. Guymer also gives a key to *Commersonia* subgenus *Commersonia*, including *C. procumbens* & 6 other existing species.

**Finale :** June is here, & it is actually raining ! My rainfall for the first 5 months of 2008 was 333 mm in 40 falls, most of it in January. A couple of inches. On the 5<sup>th</sup> there is the book launch of my major excuse for neglecting other things for the last year, the revised & updated version of 'Mangroves to Mountains', written by myself & 3 other people. It is a field guide to the plants of S-E Qld., with over 2700 colour photographs of over 2200 species, published by our local (Logan River) branch of SGAP.

In the near future I will visit the N.T. & try & take some better photographs of some of the Top End brachys, palms & cycads. Best wishes to everyone for the coming financial year.