

Dear Members,

Brachyscome multifida var. multifida and B. multifida var. dilatata although fairly common are ideal for planting in almost any situation throughout the garden, particularly where splashes of colour are needed all through the year. They are pleasing as border plants; using the different coloured varieties and equally attractive cascading over a pottery container or hanging basket. Because of the long flowering period, they are one of the more rewarding plants I have.

The easiest way of identifying the two different varieties is by their leaf shape:-

Brachyscome multifida var. multifida has fine leaf segments (narrow linear & awl-shaped)
Flowers - mauve or white.

Brachyscome multifida var. dilatata has coarser leaf segments (broad linear or wedge-shaped)

Of the var. dilatata forms seen in cultivation, there is one likened to a small cushion with small mauve flowers;

an attractive pale pink form;
dark mauve with deeper green foliage;
light mauve variety.

B. multifida forms have been sold as B. rigidula.

Differentiate on the achene:-

Brown & winged for B. rigidula

Black & warty for B. multifida

EXCURSION TO ULUPNA ISLAND - JOY COOK:

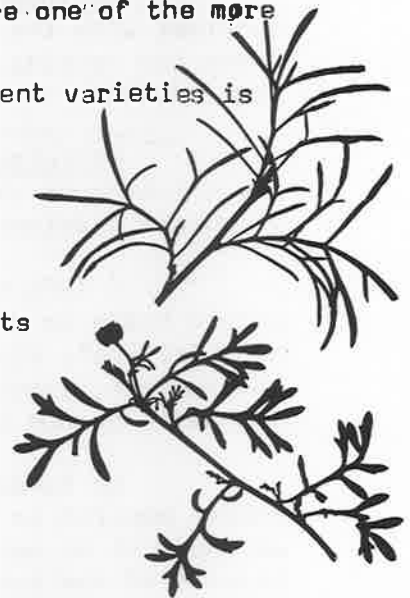
Rain and floods may have spoilt the weekend outing for many Melburnians on the 15th & 16th Oct. 1983, but members of the B/H Study Group who congregated on the banks of Ulupna creek never allowed the threatening grey skies overhead to dampen their enthusiasm for daisy spotting.

Some of us enthusiastic enough to want to get back to nature, camped on the banks of Ulupna creek and were either lulled to sleep or kept awake by the incessant croaking of a colony of frogs that only worked the night shift. Others sought the comforts of a Motel, but were enticed into our camp on the Saturday night to bask in the warmth of our glowing camp fire and partake of a delicious barbecue followed by toasted marshmallows - beautifully cooked by Evan Schaumann.

Judy Barker produced a scrumptious box of chocolates which we were told had been presented to her for speaking to a group. We all enjoyed those chocolates so much we were quite adamant that before the B/H Study Group embarked on another field trip, some member must definitely give another talk.

Looking at the land around Ulupna Island left me a little apprehensive about us finding any daisies. Nearly all land in this area has been used for agriculture for over a century. Fortunately Ulupna Island being an exception, left us hope of finding the plants that had long since disappeared from other parts of this region. Once again my old theory of 'get out of the car and off the beaten track' proved right.

Saturday morning we crossed the bridge onto Ulupna Island and parked the cars under a copse of *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* and started out on our search for daisies. The most predominant plant as we walked along was "Patersons Curse". I was afraid that all our beloved daisies would have been choked out of existence. Patersons Curse is really starting to take over in some areas on the island, a terrible shame, as this vigorous growing plant poses a real threat to our native species.



B. rigidula

B. multifida

We had come to see Brachyscome muelleroides and Brachyscome readeri and see them we did. B. muelleroides was much smaller than I had imagined, but it was a delight to see small white flower heads and grass-like leaves colonizing areas of open space where the ground cover was low and sparse. B. readeri larger in size was easier to find and I didn't have to worry too much about treading on some unsuspecting tiny plant. Brachyscome basaltica var. gracilis was also flowering and numerous plants were to be found. The yellow Brachyscome heterodonta var. chrysoGLOSSa was spotted and much admired, now considered by us to be the find of the week-end.

Helipterum jessenii was a delight to see, the acute yellow bracts in contrast with the yellow flat rounded button-like heads of a Leptorhynchos sp. These two species had certainly formed a good growing partnership, in one area they grew so thick no other plant had a chance of survival.

Helipterum corymbiflorum was found, an erect white annual to 30 cm. high. I was intrigued with the soft grey green of the Nardoo, especially the plants with raindrops glistening on their leaves, the silent tears of the bushland.

I left the Island extremely worried about the 'Patersons Curse', their purple heads an ever present threat to our native daisies. I felt they were like the "Trifids", plants that could virtually walk, encroaching on our native plants environment, capable of destroying this delightful area, one of the last footholds of native plants in the district.

On Sunday morning with grey skies once again overhead, we headed for the Bearii section in the Barmah Forest. Although there was some debate as to whether we found it or not, I know I had a delightful time in the area we walked to. Many species of the Asteraceae family were in flower. Large patches of Helipterum corymbiflorum immediately caught our attention, doing better here than on Ulupna Island where only small groups of plants were growing.

Sweet little Vittadinia triloba was well represented in various shades of white, mauve and pink, also Helichrysum apiculatum, a large deep blue Calotis hispidula Gnaphalium sp., Cotula australis, Leptorhynchos squamatus, Ptilotus sp., Helipterum australe, Brachyscome basaltica var. gracilis, muelleroides, Craspedia glauca, a strange little plant we called "woolly heads", also a tiny pale mauve daisy that grew on long stems caused us to enthuse and rack our brains for its botanical name. We left the Barmah with hope for the future, only the odd plant of Patersons Curse was found here and we willingly uprooted those we found.

Far too quickly our week-end had come to a close. Individual members broke up camp, waved farewell and headed back to Melbourne, wondering what damage, if any, had been done to our gardens, because of the torrential rain storms that Melbourne had experienced but happily we had missed.

I wish to thank the Study Group members from Caulfield, Waverley & Springvale for their great company and sharing of their botanical knowledge over the week-end. I trust we all had an enjoyable week-end, I know my family and I did.

Incidentally, aren't Study Group excursions a great way of bring district groups together.

Till next time - JOY

FOOTNOTE:

You may not believe it but Joy's neighbour was visiting the Barmah Forest that week-end with his young son. Not knowing anything about native plants but knowing Joy's love of same, he dug up a lovely specimen of "Patersons Curse" and presented it to her with great delight on her return. I won't mention what Joy told him to do with it.

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For those members who went walkabout into another section of Bearii and saw clumps of a tiny white daisy will be pleased to know that it has been identified as Brachyscome ciliaris var. subintegrifolia.

Maureen

PLANT FOR THE MONTH OF OCTOBER - JOY GREIG

BRACHYSCOME ANGUSTIFOLIA - A. Cunn. ex D.C.

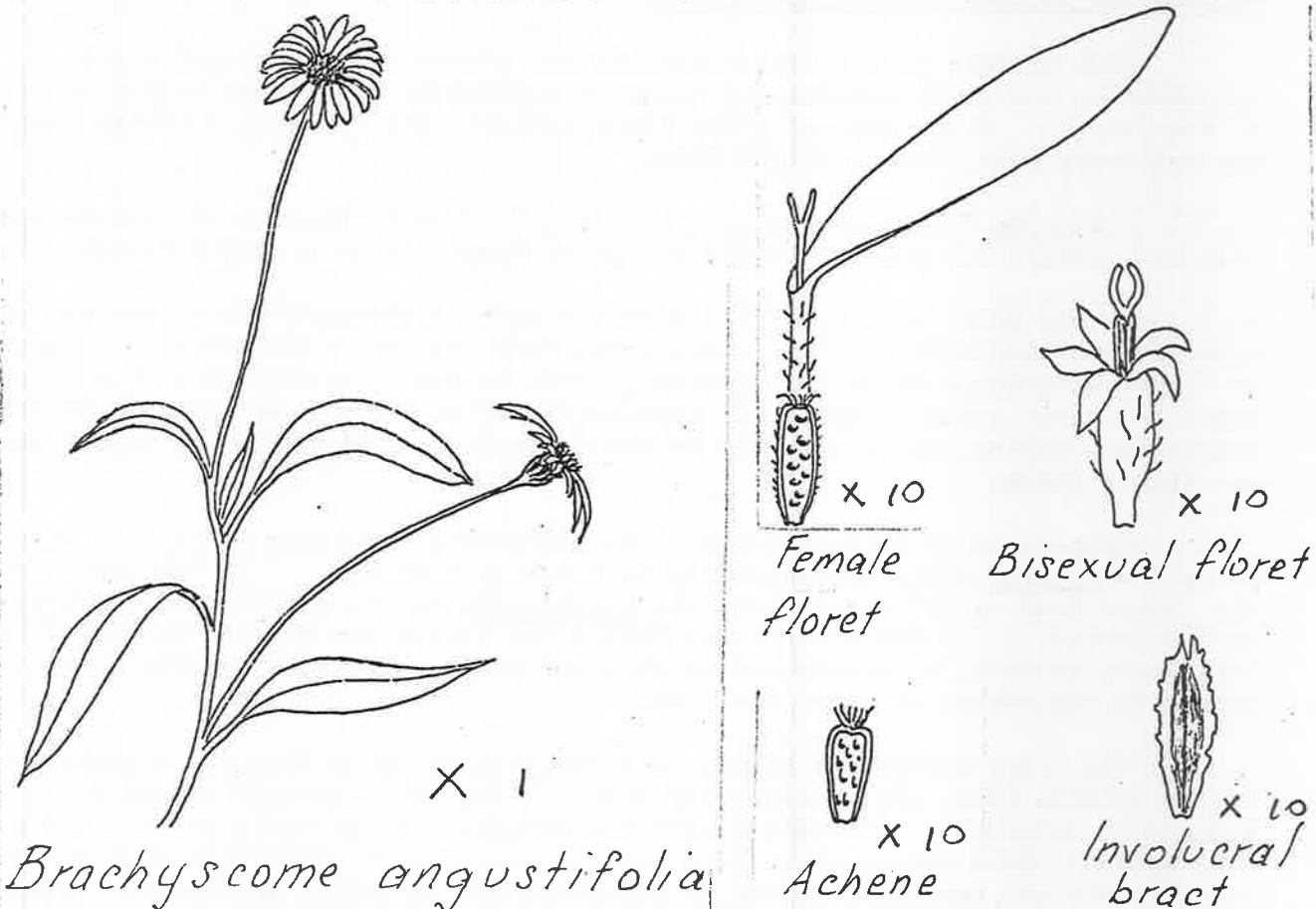
This charming little perennial is easy to grow in most garden situations provided that the soil remains moist. I have grown it as a rockery plant and as a small ground cover amongst other plants, but I have been most successful growing it in a hanging basket using a soil mix containing about 50% neat moss.

My original plant was placed in a fairly open part of the garden in clayey soil which tends to dry out in summer. Although it has not done well, it survives after about 4 years and has begun to produce new plantlets since the rains have come. Subsequent plantings in semi-shaded spots which do not dry out have been more vigorous and a dense lush clump has resulted. It can be grown as a bog plant. Occasional light feeding with blood and bone/potash (5/1) has been found beneficial.

It propagates easily from cuttings and being stoloniferous will also propagate readily by division. I have not found mature seed on any of my plants, but this apparently is to be expected since they were all propagated vegetatively from the one original and Brachyscomes are not self compatible. (Helen M. Stace Aust. J. Botany 1981 29 425-40).

Dainty lilac flowers 1.5 cm. diam. with yellow centres are abundant above the soft light green leaves. They are produced from September through to May, the plant being at its best in about March - April.

The species is widespread from sea level to 1000 m in Tasmania and common in montane habitats on the mainland in Vict., N.S.W. & S.A., often in swampy areas.

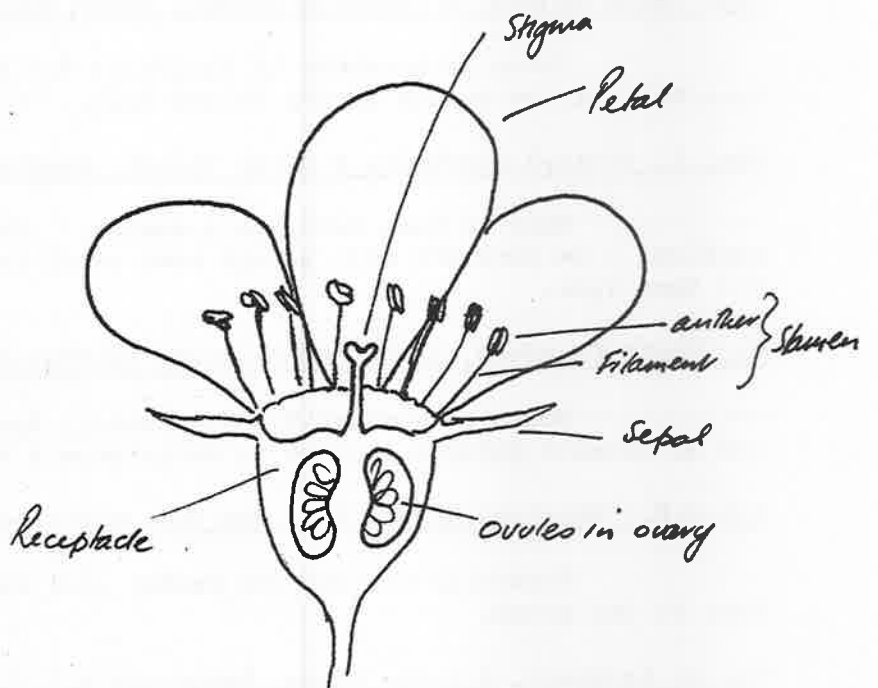
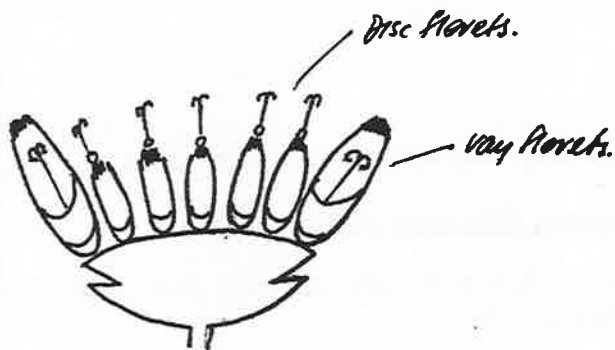
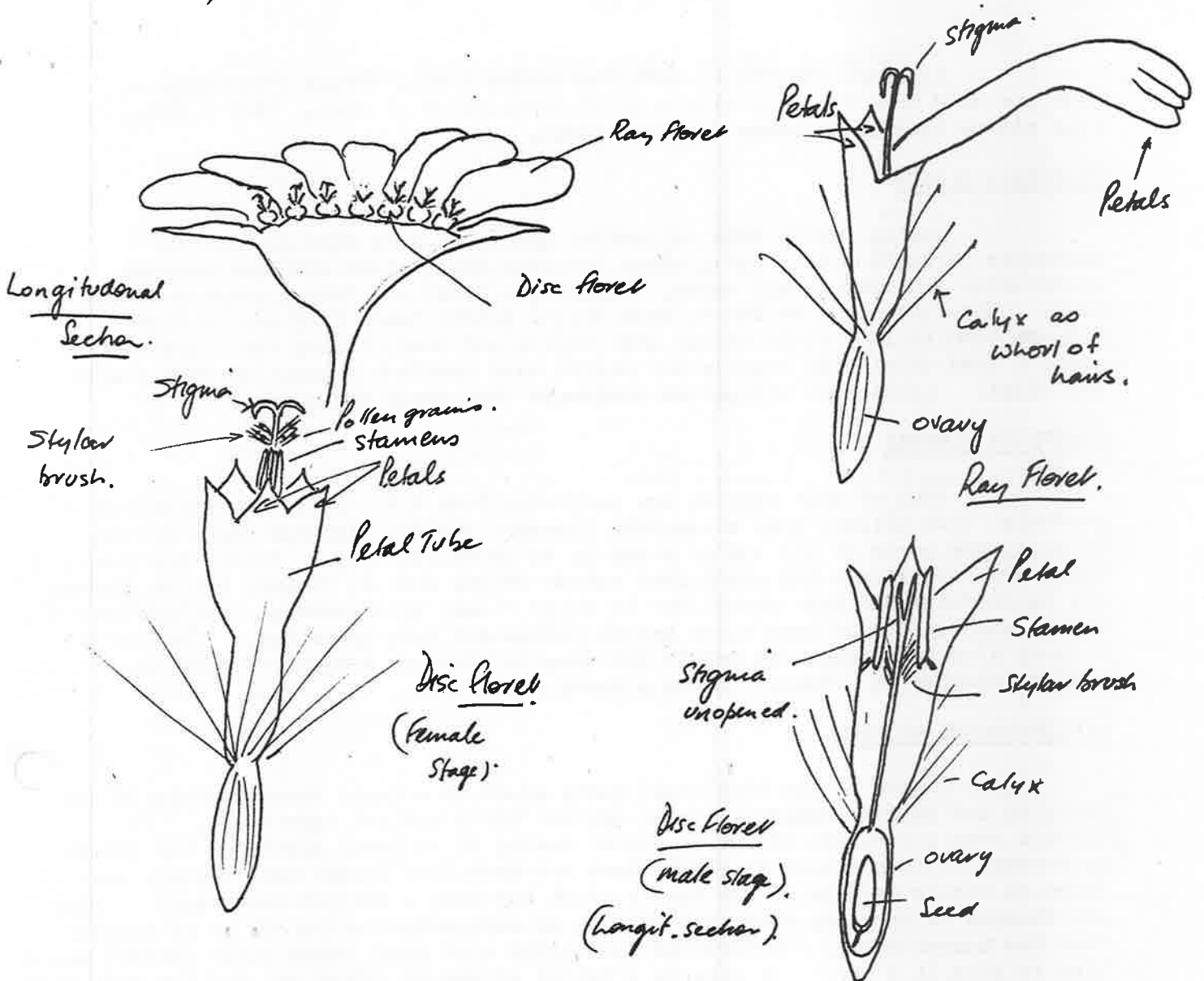


Brachyscome angustifolia

A botanical description given by G.L. Davis (1948) is:-

Ascending stoloniferous perennial to 35 cm., glabrous or glandular hairy, freely branching.

Leaves - cauline (arising from the stem) up to 5.3 cm long, 9 mm broad, narrow lanceolate to elliptical, entire or irregularly pinnatifid, with prominent mid vein. Lower leaves often sessile, upper ones usually more or less petiolate.



Typical Flower + parts.

