

ASGAP BRACHYCHITON & ALLIED GENERA STUDY GROUP

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Membership matters : Subs are due as at 1-7-'99, still \$5 within Australia & \$10 overseas. It is best if overseas members send notes (US\$ or A\$), or cheques for more than 1 year. Don't send money orders, as bank charges eat up 80% of the value on \$10. If there is an x between the asterisks on the next line, my records have you as in arrears for '98-'99. *****

Weather & plant behaviour : By mid-February most of my long-flowering *Brachychiton bidwillii* plants had ceased flowering, but most have made little growth since. Worn out, no doubt. In mid to late April, Brisbane twice broke the April record for the coldest day on record. Here it was 4 & 3 degrees C respectively, & the ungrafted *B. spectabilis* promptly defoliated, but not the 2 grafted ones. I only have ungrafted *B. viscidulus* left, & they kept the few leaves they had on. With their late start this year, making no leaves before mid-January, they have made very little growth & I'll try & push them along by keeping them on an electrically-heated (insulated copper wires in sand) pad until spring. Ditto with the *B. spectabilis*.

New plants : Nothing to report from me, but members Jan Glazebrook & Denis Cox have a red-flowering *Brachychiton* sp., as yet unidentified, sent back from north Qld. by a friend. Merv Hodge has seedlings up from the *B. spectabilis* X *bidwillii* ("Big Red") cross made in November. Jan & Denis, & myself, had some minute cutting-grown plants sent up from a nursery (Wildtech) in Victoria, including the allied-genera plants *Thomasia foliosa*, *T. purpurea*, *T. rhynchocarpa* & *T. solanacea*. I have grown the first two of these before, & got good results for a time, especially with *T. foliosa*, which lasted several years & flowered well.

Allied genera : *Lysiosepalum involucratum* doing well, as always. White & pink-flowering forms of *Lasiopetalum behrii* brought from Adelaide in the spring of 1997 have grown & flowered well, as has a *L. baueri*. Two *Thomasia sarotes* have also flourished, as has a *T. pygmaea* (I keep expecting the *pygmaea* to drop dead). All the above are in raised beds of sandy loam. A large *Thomasia purpurea* dropped dead suddenly, & had not flowered the previous ('98) spring. Two other small-flowered *Lasiopetalums* have grown well, but I'm not sure of their identity. Maybe someone from the south who attends the forthcoming (July '99) ASGAP Conference in Brisbane can tell me. The study group will be putting on a display of both posters & live plants.

Members letters : Well, would you believe 2 members? David Long from Rockhampton also had a climatically unusual year, with 1 in 100+ year heavy rain through late winter. Winter-spring is usually very dry in Rocky. *B. spectabilis* seedlings defoliated, but grafted plants mostly kept their leaves, but ceased growth. An exception grew actively until mid-July. David's lowest temperatures last winter were

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around 2 degrees C. *B. megaphyllus* seedlings became deciduous at the first cold snap. Grafted plants from mature trees went dormant but kept about half their leaves.

His Port Curtis form of *B. bidwillii* flowered normally. A "Herbert" form actively grew & flowered at the same time. A Leichhardt form flowered with its leaves on. The large-tree *B.* hybrids which were shedding leaves when the rain started produced leaves instead of flowers, & those starting to produce flower buds dropped most & then grew leaves.

David feels hybrids are likely in the Raglan & Mt. Larcome area south of Rockhampton, as *B. bidwillii* grows among *B. australe* & *B. rupestris*.

Alan Rozen from Double Bay, Sydney, has 2 *Brachychitons* from the Kimberleys, about 100 km west of Kununnurra, growing well, & is hoping for flowers in the coming spring.

Finances : Well at least we are solvent. \$52-60 in the Suncorp account, after expenses on postage, paper, envelopes & \$100 on laminated posters for displays.

Thanks to Alan Rozen for \$5 donation for this year & next year.