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ASGAP BRACHYCHITON & ALLIED GENERA STUDY GROUP
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Mea culpa : No real excuse for a latish newsletter this time, except for a shortage of newsworthy happenings.

Weather & plant behaviour : This year summer (2001) was relatively mild, with a warm autumn & (so far) a cold winter. My oldest grafted *Brachychiton spectabilis* (planted out) had totally defoliated by the fifth of May, as did some recently grafted plants in a warm bushhouse. But the majority of the recently grafted *B. spectabilis* plants (in the same bushhouse) are still in full leaf in late June. The *B. grandiflora* hybrid shed its leaves by mid-May, as did all plants of *B. megaphyllum*, & some of those of *B. viscidulus*. Hybrids of *B. spectabilis* x *bidwillii*, & of *acerifolius* x *bidwillii*, kept their leaves until frosted in late June. Plants of *B. grandiflora*, *B. garrawae*, *B. bidwillii* & *B. viscidulus* kept in a sheltered spot under evergreen trees still have their leaves, but the leaves look a bit battered.

Membership list : The following list gives the names of all current members, & the addresses of non-group members. Asgap member societies have all decided that only members of an APS or SGAP society can belong to ASGAP study groups, but useful providers of information (e.g., botanists, field naturalists) can be associates. I suspect all non-members are likely to fall into this category, in the case of this newsletter.

[1] Groups. Wildflower Soc. of W.A.

ASGAP

A.P.S. of NSW (& Editors, 'Aust. Plants' & 'Native Plants'), SA, Canberra, Victoria, Tasmania, Foothills (P.O.Box 65, Boronia 3155), Keilor Plains (P.O.Box 115, Niddrie 3042), Maroondah (P.O. Box 33, Ringwood 3134), & Blue Mountains (care of Charles Ferrugia, 12 Grandview Avenue, Seven Hills 2147).

SGAP QLD.

Grovely TAFE (The Librarian, 72 Fitzsimmons Street, Grovely 4054).
The Library, Aust. National Botanic Gardens (G.P.O. Box 1777, Canberra 2601).
Royal Botanic Gardens,

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Donna Flynn, 215 Mclean Road, M.S. 612, Kingaroy 4610.

Financial Matters : Income for 2001-2002 year

Subscriptions : arrears & current \$ 115
in advance * 60

* Donations : Rozen (10), Guhl (50) 60

		TOTAL	\$ 235
Expenses		Photocopying	30
		Copy Paper	36
		Postage	85
		TOTAL EXPENSES	\$151
Funds on hand :	year 2000-2001	\$ 17-45	
	year 2001-2002	101-45	

Subscriptions : Subs for 2002-2003 are now due. I have placed a tick in the 1-line table below to show what my records indicate for each person. You are paid up to

2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999—2000	1998-1999	>2002-2003
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Flowering & pollination : All plants that had flowered in previous years began to flower during September 2001. *B. spectabilis* pollen was used on *B. bidwillii* (Large Red & Large Pink), & *B. bidwillii* Large Pink pollen on *B. bidwillii* 'Maroochydore' form' & *B. incarnatus* 'Rosal;ind'. *B. vinicolor* 'Clarabelle' pollen was used on *B. spectabilis*, *B. bidwillii* (Leichhardt & Maroochydore forms), & *B. discolor*. *B. viscidulus* pollen was used on *B. bidwillii* Large Red. Attempted crosses involving a few *viscidulus* & *megaphyllus* female flowers came to nothing.

All my *Clarabelle* & *acerifolius* flowers were male for the second year in succession. The 'North Coastal' & 'Maroochydore' forms of *B. bidwillii* stopped flowering in early December, 'Clarabelle' & *B. spectabilis* in late December, & 'Large Pink' & 'Large Red' late in January.

I have been coding individual plants within clones, so that I can keep track of what pollen on which plant produced pod such-&-such. One peculiarity showed up on plant K10p1, which is a 'Large Red'. It produced 5 pods, all with the pod end of each petiole rose-pink for 8 mm, & the other end of the petiole bright green (for 10 mm). The pink colour lasted until the pod was fully dry. The pollen parent is probably 'Clarabelle', although *B. spectabilis* was also used on this plant to a lesser extent. Petioles on other plants of the same clone were the usual green ripening to brown.

The *B. garrawayae* & *B. sp.* Exmoor Station plants did not flower; what I thought were flower buds on the latter (n/1 No. 19) were red new leaves about to appear.

The putative hybrid between *B. acerifolius* & *B. rupestris* still looks as if those parents are likely, & the original plant (at Stan Walkley's) flowered in early summer with upwards-pointing inflorescences of tangerine coloured flowers, about 30 in a 15 cm span. The tree was about 5 m tall, & very bushy. All branches carried only leaves of one type, adult or juvenile, with the adult leaves simple & entire (like a mango or an eucalyptus), but the 2 types of branch were evenly scattered over the whole tree. Juvenile branches carried no flowers, & every adult branch carried several inflorescences. Almost all flowers were male. Another peculiarity was that the first 8 cm or so of each branch was about 4 times thicker than the remainder of the branch. I have seen this, to a lesser extent, on bottle trees.

Other oddities : Some plants of *B. viscidulus* & *B. megaphyllus* put out no leaves this year, but still have firm caudexes. Have kept all, to see if they revive this coming spring. Perhaps frost damaged all their dormant shoots. One *B. viscidulus* waited until February 18th before it put leaves out; & they are still on, although starting to look a bit tacky.

A *B. acerifolius* tree belonging to Ian Waldron had perhaps 70% of its leaves, most of which were still juvenile in shape, of typical size. The rest were 300% or so larger. The fairly average 'large' leaf I have photocopied in part on to an A4 page measured, for the leaf blade, 28cm long x 33 cm wide. The petiole was 26.3 cm long. The tree was 7 m tall, & in a position where it was very rarely watered; Ian, like me, has a light soil & has received very little rain in the last 2 years. Last summer we noted this tree was bearing unusually long inflorescences, & I measured those in easy reach, which measured an average of 57 cm in length. I grafted up a few plants, on to juvenile *acerifolius*, & will be interested to see how they perform in a different environment. The juvenile *B. acerifolius* that I mentioned in a couple of earlier newsletters as flowering well at the ages of 2 & 3 years, has not flowered in the following 2 summers. It still has only juvenile leaves.

Pests : You see very few seedlings in cultivation of *B. sp.* Ormeau, & since it is easy to grow & has such striking juvenile foliage, I wondered why. Now I may know. A friend of a friend has 6 adult trees, & until last summer lost all his just-forming pods to the depredations of the longicorn beetle. This native pest is the one which ringbarks shoots (usually smaller than twice the diameter of a biro), & lays eggs on what is soon dead wood. It is quite prevalent in parts of greater Brisbane, & seems to prefer wattles & *Melaleuca fulgens*.

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Taxonomic threats : Cas Liber from NSW reports taxonomic moves by some botanist or other to expand the family Malvaceae to include several other families, including Sterculiaceae (us). The Malvaceae include the Australian genera *Abelmoschus*, *Abutilon*, *Alyogyne*, *Gossypium*, *Hibiscus*, *Howittia*, *Lagunaria*, *Lavatera*, *Macrostelia*, *Pavonia* & *Thespesia*, among others. To my eye, they form a much more uniform group than the genera in the Sterculiaceae. I must find time to track down the detailed proposal one of these days..

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(LIFE-SIZE)

