

ASGAP BRACHYCHITON & ALLIED GENERA STUDY GROUP

ISSN 0816-178x

Newsletter No. 26. Late June 2005.

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Membership Matters : Welcome to new member Matthew Oxford, City of Playford, Warooka Drive, Smithfield, S.A.5114, & corresponding member Jonathan Beck, lot 360 Stevenson Street, Redwood 4350. Redwood is on the last climb up the range into Toowoomba, & Jonathan has a nursery specialising in grafted standard grevilleas.

Brachys Difficult to Graft : In the past, *B. grandiflorus* & the handsome weeping deep-inland form of *B. populneus* that I call 'Pendula' have both proved hard to graft. However, my initial plants of both were grafts. In March '05 grafts done at Merv's on the one day led to 18 successes out of 18 for Beau Belle, 12 out of 13 for *B. acuminatus*, 0 out of 11 for Pendula, & 0 out of 7 for *grandiflorus*. Most of the Pendula scions were on to non-weeping *populneus*. The *grandiflorus* material came from a grafted plant I sold to the army's arboretum at Canungra Land Warfare Centre many years ago. Unlike mine here, it has grown reasonably well, & unlike mine has flowered quite well. Never even a bud on mine. The Canungra site is warmer, & richer soil, but probably no wetter. Most *Brachychiton* species give 90% success rates if good plant material is used. Even a month in the 'frig has little effect on success rate.

New Species (for me) at Greenbank & at Merv's : SGAP members Laylee Purchase & husband Steve, & study group members Denis Cox & Jan Glazebrook, explored parts of the N.T. & the Kimberleys last winter. Material sent back & grafted was identified by Gordon Guymmer in late '04, as *B. incanus*, with grey maple-shaped leaves, & *B. viscidulus* & *B. fitzgeraldianus*. Gordon, now director of the Queensland Herbarium, did his Ph.D. on *Brachychiton* systematics, & retains an interest in them. One of my grafted plants of *B. sp* Exmoor Station was in flower when Gordon visited, & he confirmed that it was entirely new to the herbarium. I shall get some better pictures of the species this spring, as I have several plants in the ground, & Canungra have quite a large one, obtained from me.

Gordon & I visited Canungra in early Jan. '05, to see Don Lynch (a S.G. member) before he retired as Land Manager a week or so later, & to see over the brachys. Gordon identified several trees that Don & I thought might be atypical *B. populneus* as actually *B. xturgidulus*, the natural hybrid between *B. populneus* & *B. rupestris*.

Recently Jonathan Beck gave me material of a mystery *Brachychiton* which Gordon identified as *B. tridentatus* from W.A., & another which looks like a vinicolor like Clarabelle & 'Kholo'. The name of the latter given to Jonathan could easily be a corruption of Kholo, & his image of the flower would fit that. The *tridentatus* I could have easily identified from the leaf, as it has a different shape to most brachys, & a silvery underside, but was not looking as far afield as WA. It has not flowered at Toowoomba. All the recent grafts of both plants look as if they have taken.

Several people have kindly sent me photos by email of Melbourne trees of *B. xroseus* which seem a deeper pink than the 2 clones we have here, & I will try & get material for grafting sent up in spring.

Members Letters : David Long from Rockhampton reported on his 2004 flowering season. He had *acerifolius* x *bidwillii*, *acerifolius* x *australis* & various forms of *bidwillii* flower normally. One *B. xexcellens* x *spectabilis* (my apricot Jasper Gorge form) flowered for the first time, with pale orange-coloured flowers. He has a number of grafted seedlings of *B. spectabilis* from the Victoria River site. 'Most have dark red coloured flowers. The exceptions are one mainly green with pinkish white induplicate areas outside & pinkish white inside, & a couple of others with the colour intensifying towards red as the flowers age. His *B. excellens* x [*acerifolius* x *bidwillii*] flowered well this year at its second flowering, with pink flowers & pods khaki in colour (similar to *bidwillii*) but relatively smooth (similar to *acerifolius*) outside.

Ultimate Size of bidwillii Clones : Some of these trees are now over a decade old, grafted & ungrafted, growing side by side at various sites. I have watched them at my place & at Merv's, in particular. For 6-8 years, Large Red, grafted or ungrafted, stays around 1 metre, but the ungrafted 10-year-old at Merv's is

now about 1.75 m. Beau Belle grafted onto *B. acerifolius* has stayed below 2.5 m at my place for 6 years or so, but some are now over 3 m, & one 5 years older at Merv's is now 5.5 m tall x 6 m wide, with a substantial trunk diameter. Much of this growth has been in the past 4 years. Will it now slow down? The ungrafted original Beau Belle, a year or more older than the tree mentioned above, is 3.5 m x 3.5 m. A nearby grafted Large Red is 3 m x 2.5 m, but most of its growth has been in the last 2 years. None of my 6 grafted ones, about 9 years old, are over 1.5 m, but some are in large pots, & the two in the ground are the largest. My 9-year-old grafted White Star is in the ground, & still under 2 m, but has made quite a bit of growth in the past year. All the grafted plants mentioned in this paragraph are on to *B. acerifolius*, a rootstock capable of supporting a large tree. I have recently planted out plants of *B. roseus* 'Bella Donna', side by side, & grafted onto *B. acerifolius* & *bidwillii* respectively, to see if *bidwillii* has a dwarfing effect as a rootstock. Too early yet to tell.

New Commersonia Species : Several 'new' *Commersonia* species are about to be described as the Sterculiaceae section of the Flora of Australia comes closer to fruition. In 2004 *Telopea* 10:581-587, Stephen A.J. Bell & Lachlan M. Copeland describe *Commersonia rosea*, a small endangered shrub from the upper Hunter Valley of N.S.W., with a total known population of about 200 plants. It appears short-lived, & regenerates from seed after bushfires. I am growing another small shrub about which I know little, *Commersonia* sp. Zamia Range, obtained from Yuruga Nursery. It seems tough, is upright, under 1 m, with small pink flowers. There are a couple of shrubby *Commersonias* from central-western Qld. with striking pink flowers, which I don't think are described yet.

Best wishes to all for the new financial year, & may it rain heavily in all the parched dam catchments. Kerry.