

**ANPSA BRACHYCHITON & ALLIED GENERA STUDY GROUP**

ISSN 0816-178x

Newsletter No. 36. June 2010.

Leader : Kerry Rathie, Lot 5, Salston Road, Greenbank 4124.

'phone : (07) 3200 0268

Email ; krathie6 @ bigpond . com (with spaces so it stays in black.

For easy photocopying.)

**Weather this year :** My part of S-E Qld had a mild winter for 2009, with no frosts, & the last week of August with days in the 30's. Spring was cool, with September all in the 20's apart from one week of low 30's from the 18<sup>th</sup>. The giant dust storm peaking here on the 23<sup>rd</sup> covered virtually all eastern & central Australia, with the red iron-rich dust fertilising the adjacent Pacific. How much increased phytoplankton growth ensued I don't know. I hope CSIRO or some relevant body took measurements, as iron fertilisation is one of the cheaper means of lowering CO<sub>2</sub>, & 'natural' experiments are the cheapest kind, & avoid controversy. October & November continued cool, with temperatures in the 20's & low 30's. In mid Nov., Adelaide was over 40. Summer here was also cooler than usual, with December in the higher 30's till the 13<sup>th</sup>, then the low 30's until Jan. 17<sup>th</sup>, when it was mid to high 30's, followed by February all in the 20's.

In the south, Jan. 11 was the last of 5 days over 40 at Adelaide, & the next day Melbourne train tracks were buckling again, & a record Melbourne minimum of 30.6 degrees was set at 9 a.m. WA also sizzled. Here, March to June continued cool but mild, in the 20's, with no frosts to date (the 27<sup>th</sup>), & none predicted for the next few days. Usually, we have 10 or so days of 40 or over in summer or late spring, & a few frosts in late June & July.

**Espaliered brachys for a Qld park :** An artist from the Sunshine Coast, Nicole Voevodin-Cash, talked the State Gov't into letting her re-vamp a park at Kangaroo Point, inner South Brisbane, at their expense, as a 'Centenary of Qld' project. She contacted first David Hockings, then me, as she wanted the centre-piece to be an avenue of pleached brachys on either side of a path that bisects the park, on a slant. There may be a pleached avenue in Brisbane, but if so I am unaware of it. Europe is fairly full of them, & there is a nice one at Carrick Hall in the Adelaide foothills ; ornamental pears if I remember rightly. Goes with all the bronze outdoor statues & the fact that the Barr-Smiths disassembled the large 2-storey (or was it 3 ?) house in England, labelled everything, & re-erected it in sunny Adelaide. In those days they owned Elders, among other things, & hence could afford to move manor-houses & buy up big in Henry Moore statues & large paintings by artists famous then & now. I particularly remember a large & gorgeous flower painting by Hans Heysen's daughter, Nancy. I got Brent Vieritz to do the initial grafting for her, using the same Robin Hood clone for all 40 or so pots, allowing a few spares for accidents, as his nursery is near her home. He then taught Nicole, who rapidly became a competent grafter. After a short vertical section the brachys were grafted into various shapes---diamonds, squares, circles., rectangles & so on, some with the same pattern repeated at 180 degrees to the initial one. Sheets of polystyrene & plastic-covered wire held branches in place until the grafts took. In a while the 60 cm pots will be planted out in their rows, & the grafts between plants will be started. Brent tells me the project will be on Brisbane TV in the near future.

**Plant flowering behaviour :** Some did not flower at all, probably due to the recurring cool days ----- *grandiflorus* & its hybrids, *muellerianus* & its hybrids, *viscidulus*, Jerilderie Red (may be a bit young), Butts Red (1 of 2 large trees), sp. Ormeau (1 large tree), & sp. Exmoor Station.

All the above have flowered at least once in the past, at my place. Every large plant of Clarabelle, Griffith Pink & Belladonna has flowered every year except 2 years ago, & they all flowered this year, but very briefly in the case of Griffith Pink & Belladonna. Flame trees & *discolor* are variable from year to year. My flame trees, & those around Brisbane in general, flowered well this year. As did my only big tree of *discolor*. My plants of *collinus*, *rupestris*, *compactus*, *albidus*, *chillagoensis*, *diversifolius* & *australis* are too small to have flowered as yet. Plants which flowered well included *B. garrawayae* (I only have one plant) from Cape York, for 2 months from late August, 2 of the 8 clones of 'Jasper Belle' (*spectabilis* x *bidwillii* 'Beau Belle'), all or almost all of the 45 clones of 'Robin Hood' (*acerifolius* 'Waldron Giant' x *bidwillii* 'Red Baron'), & *B. x excellens* 'Rosalind' (*discolor* x *bidwillii*, 1 large tree), 1 month from mid-November, at least a month shorter than usual.

One clone of Jasper Belle has not flowered for 4 years, & 6 others only flowered briefly. These other clones performed better at Merv Hodge's place, which is warmer than mine, but were still far inferior to his best clone. My best clone, renamed 'Jasper Lode' last year, ceased flowering on January 20<sup>th</sup> 2009, re-commenced on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March 2009, & flowered until 23-1-2010. It re-commenced flowering on the third of June, & as for last year, the winter flowers were individually small but borne in large clusters. There were hordes of little ones, one third the size of the spring-summer ones. The cool weather slowed the development of each flower so that they took weeks to progress from buds to senescence, instead of the usual five days or so. The flower size was normal by late September of 2009, & peak flowering was from then until early January.

No other *Brachychiton* was even in bud at my place during autumn & winter of 2009.

The first Robin Hoods began to flower in late July 2009, were at peak flowering in October & November, & had finished by late January 2010. Small plants of Will Scarlet in 30 cm pots flowered as well as my trees of the same cross. Similar sized plants of Friar Tuck, in the same size of pot, failed to flower in most cases. An unnamed F2 of Robin Hood flowered vigorously from early October to late December, & set lots of seed..

The straight *bidwillii*s gave a mixed flowering picture during last spring-summer. Several shrubs of Red Baron flowered very well at Merv's, starting to flower in mid-August, being at peak flowering from October to December but giving a good display through late January 2010, with an occasional flower thru to early December. My own plants flowered only briefly, & they gave a poor performance the previous year also. At both properties, *bidwillii* 'Beau Belle' flowered briefly & poorly, quite unlike its usual performance. *B. bidwillii* 'Cormy' flowered well from mid-August to mid-May, & Gail's Star from mid-September for 3 months. All other forms of *bidwillii* flowered for only about 2 weeks at my place. 'Newbie' flowered well at Merv's, from late August for 3 months, plus a trickle of flowers for 2 more months. A nameless *bidwillii* was in bud on June 27<sup>th</sup>.

*B. spectabilis* flowered well during November, & moderately through December. Clarabelle flowered quite well through November & December, with a trickle of flowers till late January. One of my two big trees of Butt's Red flowered for the first time, after 20 years, & was covered in flowers through November. It is clearly of similar ancestry to 'Clarabelle', as leaves & flowers look identical, despite Butt's Red taking so long to flower. The tree which flowered 2 years ago had no flowers in 2010. Both were grafts from the same tree, which was itself very slow to flower as a seedling..

A tangerine *megaphyllus* flowered well through November, with its last flowers on 27-12-2009.

The drought last year carried off all my plants of *Thomasia*, *Guichenotia* & *Lysiosepalum*. None of my plants of *Lasiopetalum*, *Keraudrenia* or *Seringia* flowered this year. The more distant Malvaceae relatives *Hibiscus*, *Alyogyne* & *Abutilon* flowered normally if watered.

**Seed Set :** Jasper Lode had quite a few female flowers in spring, & 5 pods were set to either its own pollen, or to *garrawayae*. In earlier years only a couple of female flowers, or none, were produced. A little later 10 or so pods were set, some to Clarabelle & some to *spectabilis*, but all of this group were aborted as flowering began to slow down. Whether they would have carried on, if pollinated earlier in the season, I know not. The seeds looked perfect from the first 5 pods, but fewer than expected seedlings have resulted. Each pod was sown separately, & 3 pods yielded no seedlings, & one gave one only. Maybe some more will germinate in spring. I grow them in pots on top of a table that rodents cannot climb or jump onto, as mice & rats are very fond of brachy seeds, & can smell them in newly sown pots. I am not entirely sure which male parent produced which pod, but leaf shapes should reveal all a little later. I pollinated quite a few female flowers of *garrawayae* to itself, but no pods looked like setting. Clarabelle flowers pollinated to *spectabilis* led to pods which aborted at about 1/3 of normal size. I have yet to see a pod on my own Belladonna or Jerilderie Red plants, though both can set seed. Copious seed was set by Red Baron & some its seedlings, by Gail's Star & Newbie & Cormy, & by *megaphyllus*. 'Will Scarlet' set lots of seed on Merv's big plant, but the pods fell off before maturity on my plants in 30 cm pots. Robin Hood large plants seeded well. The first batch of *megaphyllus* seeds that I sowed germinated well but then damped off.

**Yearly summary :** A newish SGAP requirement.

Horticultural details have been recorded on many new promising hybrids, & unusual flowering durations noted on many *Brachychiton* species & hybrids. Cultivars in demand include Beau Belle, Jasper Belle, Belladonna, Clarabelle, Jasper Lode, Tangerine Belle & Red Baron,

*B. spectabilis* & the Robin Hood clones. A Toowoomba nursery has started to multiply Griffith Pink because it is so cold-tolerant. Grafted Robin Hood plants are being grafted together for a pleached avenue for a Brisbane park.

A list is given of new hybrid seedlings raised , plus observations on 'new' hybrids.

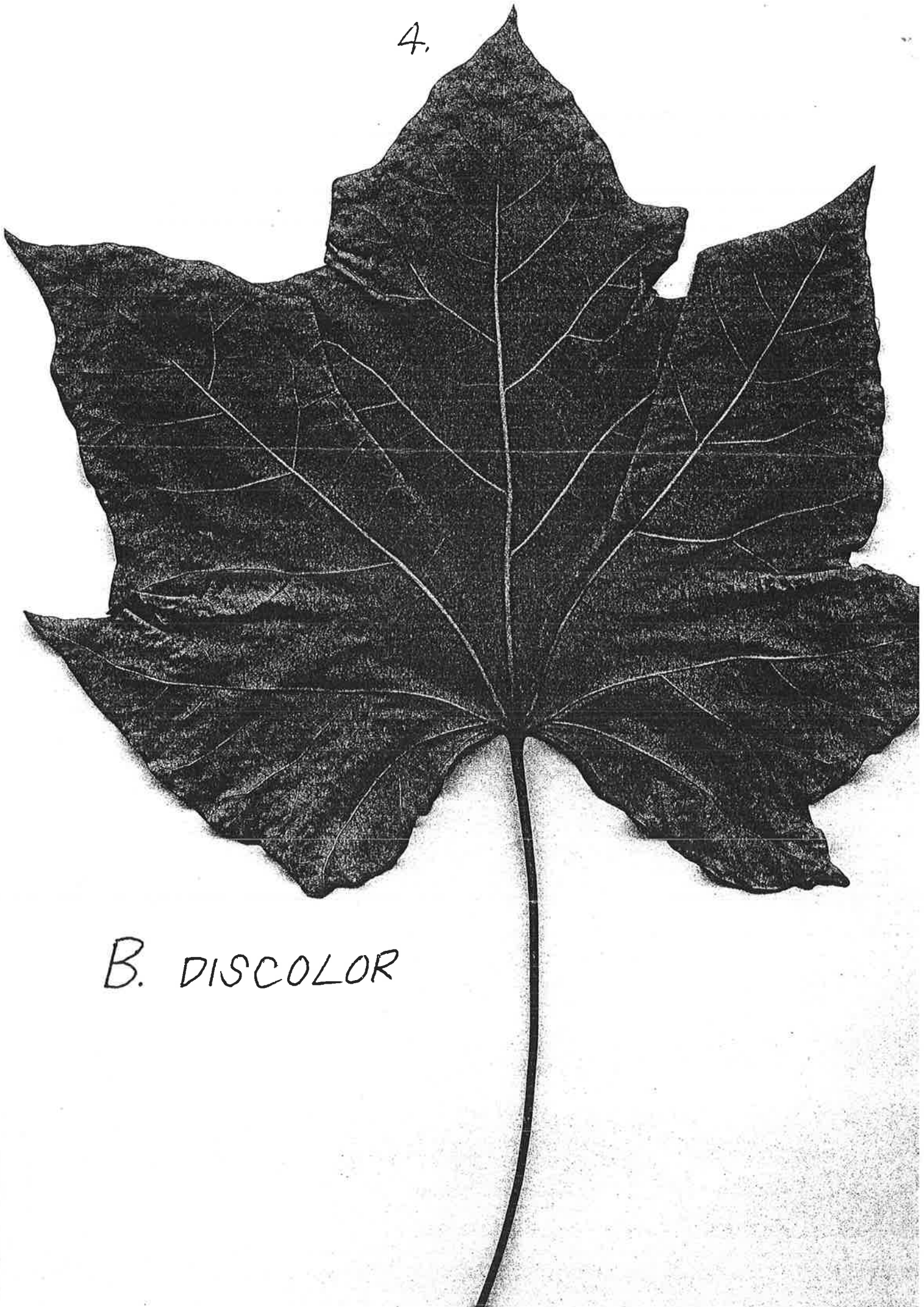
**B. velutinosus material :** I got some cuttings of *B. velutinosus* from Kris Kupsch, & some grafts have recently taken. I have photocopied the underside of a medium sized leaf on page 4 of the previous newsletter, as the large leaves would not have fitted. This tree species of N. Qld. & PNG has leaves as discolourous as *discolor*, & the leaf veins etc show out better from underneath. Some clones have quite large flowers. On page 4 of this newsletter I have copied the underside of a leaf of *B. discolor* for comparison.

**New members :** Welcome & best wishes to new member Grant Allen, from northern Victoria, mentioned in newsletter no. 35. m

Best wishes to all for the new financial year, & may it rain when you want it.  
Kerry.

---

4.



*B. DISCOLOR*