

ANPSA BRACHYCHITON & ALLIED GENERA STUDY GROUP

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For easy photocopying.)

Pleached avenue of Robin Hood : Nicole's avenue of grafted 'Robin Hood' were duly planted in a Kangaroo Point park in May, & are above the cliffs so much used by abseilers, overlooking the Brisbane CBD. I hope their temporary screen of intertwined bamboo shields them from vandals in the several years it will take to turn 4 m saplings into trees. At the moment they are newly joined tail-to-tail, but not yet big enough to join together over the cement path. It is a great site if they survive, & a large outdoor café area nearby is very popular with city walkers around the cliff area.

White brachys : The white clone of what is almost certainly *B. megaphyllus*, collected about 4 years ago in the vicinity of Lake Argyll in the East Kimberleys (they remain a plural entity as far as I am concerned, despite revision to the singular by many authorities in recent decades) by Cornford & David Hockings, has flowered well in several gardens this year. Brent Vieritz has crossed it to Red Baron & other *bidwillii* clones. While house-minding my brother's house in April I saw a fulsome article in 'House & Garden' magazine praising the profuse white flowers of *B. acerifolius*. That'll be the day, although genetic engineering should give us lots of novel colours before long. White is easy, as you just have to knock out the ordinary pigment. It is done routinely in annuals like petunias, usually to give striped petals, but petunias sell in millions so the unit cost is minor.

Bottletree booklet : Attila Kapitany, author of 'Australian Succulents' & many booklets on exotic succulents, has a booklet on the true bottle trees approaching publication. It covers *B. rupestris*, *B. compactus*, *B. australis* & *B. sp. Ormeau*, & shows the considerable genetic variation in leaf shape & flower colour in at least the first 3 species. *B. sp. Ormeau* does vary in flower colour, from greeny-white to pale yellow depending on the tree. Attila also shows shots after the 2010 bushfires in Victoria, demonstrating how brachys survived intact while eucalypts burned down to piles of ash. He also has some nice images of the red new growth of *B. rupestris*, a feature also shown in Brisbane by its hybrid 'Tangerine Belle'.

Roll-up caterpillars : With the wet weather, the larvae of the moth that causes these unsightly packages of chewed leaves with the grubs inside has had a much longer season of activity than usual. You can crunch up the rolls on small plants, or cut them off, but they seem to only cause aesthetic damage to large plants. It was noticeable that the caterpillars preferred thin non-hairy leaves like flame tree or most Robin Hoods to the hairy leaves like *bidwillii*.

F2 Robin Hoods to Beachmere : I gave 60 or so F2 (Robin Hood x itself) Robin Hoods to my friend Brent Vieritz, who has planted them in the ground at his Beachmere (on the mainland facing Bribie Island) property, which is usually warm being very close to the sea, with a high water table. There should be some nice trees when they eventually flower. Some have leaves leaning towards Red Baron, & some towards *acerifolius* Waldron's Giant, the other primary parent. In any large F2 group there should be lots of variation displayed when the parents are as different as in this case.

Early flowering at Beachmere : Brent specializes in orchids & shrubs suitable as flowering potplants, & has succeeded in getting many small brachys to graft on to *acerifolius* & flower profusely within a year, including Red Baron (has not tried Beau Belle), Blondie & Little Ripper. One *acerifolius* rootstock, under a year old, flowered profusely on its Red Baron scion, but also had 2 small inflorescences from the flame tree at the same time. The flower-inducing hormone must have migrated downwards from the scion. Brent irrigates his pots 4 times a day, & gets growth beyond anyone who just grows plants in the ground & waters once a week or so. He can take a *rupestris* seedling 15 cm tall & in a year have a 1.8 m plant with some other brachy grafted on top of it. My young *rupestris* almost always just sit around for a year or two.

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Pod sets : This year was unusual in that Jasper Lode had several hundred female flowers, & I pollinated all of them with its own pollen, save for a few with *garrowayae*. No pods set. *B. garrowayae* had 50 or so female flowers, & I used its own pollen, & only got 1 pod with few seeds. I got no seed set on *megaphyllus* or *albidus*, where I used Jasper Lode pollen, which I know is viable.

Finances : These stand at \$ 140.30 before postage costs on the newsletters just going out. Two months back I purchased an Epson Perfection V330 photo scanner & am slowly digitizing my 35 mm slides. I will probably post the brachy & palm & cycad ones on the Qld SGAP website, as I have a small feud going with my previous site provider.

New Members : A warm welcome to onetime member Ian Evans, of Creative Landscapes, Eaglehawk, Vic. 3556, & to Joanne Divers, Corowa, NSW 2646. I lived close to Corowa for many years & remember fondly the stone fruit & the wineries. Getting decent apricots can be difficult in Brisbane. Of course, the mangoes & litchis compensate.

Yearly summary : A newish SGAP requirement.

Horticultural details have been recorded on some new promising hybrids, & unusual flowering durations noted on many *Brachychiton* species & hybrids, due to the incessant rain & unusual coolness of most of this past year. 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 have been put in place for a pleached avenue in a park above the cliffs at Kangaroo Point in the Brisbane CBD. Grafted plants of 'Tangerine Belle' & *Brachychiton* sp. Ormeau have gone to the City of Playford, just N of Adelaide, as street trees, to join earlier consignments of Beau Belle, Belladonna & others.

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

Kerry.