

ANPSA BRACHYCHITON & ALLIED GENERA STUDY GROUP

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Financial matters : Subs run from June to June, & remain at \$ 5 within Australia, & \$ 10 overseas. A tick in the relevant spot below shows where you are financial up to, according to my records.

2007-08

2008-09

2009-10

2010-11

2011-12

Personal change of location : By late 2011 I expect to be living on a large urban block in Toowoomba, but vastly smaller than my present 11 acres. This move is dictated by my elder son & his 3 children, aged between 10 & 4, being irrevocably wedded to Toowoomba, where he is in charge of Anaesthetics at the big base hospital while his wife is a busy GP. They both have medical teaching duties also at the local Uni, & Annabel wants to be close to the grandchildren, & their parents would love us to be in comfortable baby-sitting distance. And I suppose it makes sense to be close to my closest medico relatives, as Annabel & I are not getting any younger. My younger son looks like being a permanent expatriate in S-E Asia. So I am busy relocating most of my brachyichitons to my brother's new 10-acre property at Kurwongbah, on the north side of Brisbane. Luckily you can move brachys of almost any size at any time. Some of the ones I am actively breeding with I will have at Toowoomba, & as pollen stores in a refrigerator for 6 months I will do backup crosses at Kurwongbah as well.

Weather & flowering times : As everyone would know, 2010-2011 weather has been exceptional, particularly in Qld. June, July & August were all cool with only 2 frosts, in early & mid-July, & lots of rain. May 2010 had turned cool earlier than usual, & been wet, following a March in which Charleville, Roma & St. George flooded (as they did in February, & would again several times in 2011). The summer of 2010 was unusually cool, with only 2 days over 30 degrees. The Barcoo River in western Qld began flooding in early March, & I watched the daily reports of flooded rivers with morbid fascination, as I was brought up near Blackall, & remembered the occasional big flood which lasted a week or so. This time the river flooded until October the 31st, & then restarted on 20-11-2010, which lasted until 16-1-2011, followed by another bout from 3-2-2011 until 9-4-2011. Over 13 months with a two 3-week breaks. September, October & November were all cool & wet, when not more so. The 18th of September gave the lowest Sept. minima ever recorded for N-W & central-W Qld., & the coldest Sept. day in NSW for 16 years. Qld. had the wettest Sept. ever, with the previous record being in 1906. Brisbane's nearly empty big Wivenhoe dam filled in a few days.

October was cool again, with snow in Christchurch & southern NSW. November was cool also, & S-E Qld. registered its wettest ever spring, & the first ever with no day at or over 30 degrees. December managed a couple of 31 degree days here, while in the UK it was the coldest ever, -33 in Poland, snow on the Victorian & NSW snowfields, UK airports closed by snow for a week, & severe snow in the US, including the first in 100 years in Georgia & S. Carolina. On the 10th, 33 NSW towns were flooded, as were Rockhampton & Emerald (a record high), & my choko vine died of oxygen starvation, although it was on a slope in 2 m of sand & no water ever lay anywhere near it. My peaches ditto, but citrus OK, to my surprise. Similar results all through adjacent suburbs.

In January it really began to rain, & I'm sure you all saw the TV shots of the 'inland tsunami' at Toowoomba & down the Lockyer Valley, on the 10th. The torrents from the coastal side of the range

came so fast that they ignored the meanders of existing creeks & ran in straight lines, which is one reason why some unexpected areas were severely flooded. My neighbours' contacts in the police tell us some 60 cars, some with occupants, are buried under deep rock (& mud) slides at the base of the range. Rockhampton & many small central Qld towns flooded again, & St. George. On the 6th the ABC reported an area of Qld larger than all of NSW was under water (equivalent to France plus Germany). Five days later Rockhampton nearly reached its recent high, & towns like Dalby, St. George, & Warwick were cut off & partially flooded, plus the N coast of NSW. Gympie CBD went under. A day later parts of the Brisbane CBD & 1/3 of Ipswich were severely flooded. River levels at Goondiwindi were a record, but the levee banks held. Floodwater reached N-W Victoria & Naracoorte in SA. By the 17th, there was a record flood at Horsham, & floods affecting much of Victoria. The next day the cool weather ended, & normal summer temperatures returned, but only in the low 30's. The usual spells in the 40's were absent this summer.

In February, 30 US states had severe snow, & on the 3rd. force 5 cyclone Yasi trashed Tully & Mission Beach, damaged Ingham & Townsville, & associated rain caused flooding in Swan Hill & western Victoria (don't ask me to explain !). On the 6th an 8-day heatwave ended in Sydney, with the 5th being the hottest night ever, by over 1 degree ; 30 degrees, & 41.5 during the day. Western Sydney was far hotter, & the high temperatures were blamed on humidity sent south from Yasi. Bad bushfires in WA. Here, March & April were cool, below 30 degrees, & May more so, mainly low 20's. Both Qld & Australia had the coldest autumn since the 1940's. Mudgee had a -8 on 19-5-2011. June was cold, with several frosts to date (22-6-2011). The 9th was the coldest June maximum for Brisbane since 1916. Heavy coastal rain flooded northern NSW from the Qld border to Newcastle, being worst around Taree. The 21st was the coldest day around the NSW Southern Highlands for 30 years.

2009-2010, May to May, was supposed to be an El Nino year, with most SOI values negative, but rainfall here was normal or better. 2010-2011 saw SOI values of 18 or more from late July 2010 to early May of 2011, some over 30, & they are still positive, although small, in mid-June. The La Nina officially ended in May, & we are now in limbo.

The cool spring & incessant rain, separately or more likely together, greatly affected the flowering of most brachychitons at my place & in S-E Qld generally. Here, most *acerifolius* flowered very briefly or not at all. For the first year ever, no Robin Hood, *roseus* or *excellens* flowered, & of the large *discolor* hybrids, only one Clarabelle, & that for less than one month. Other non-flowerers included all my tropical species except those mentioned later, & *discolor*, my *muellerianus* x *bidwillii* hybrids, *spectabilis*, Garrad's 'Robin Hood' x Jerilderie Red, Griffith Pink & Butt's Red. Even the normally reliable *bidwillii* variants flowered briefly (Maroochydore ; potted Little Ripper & Newbie & 1 large pot of Beau Belle. All of these flowered only in November, 2 months later than usual) or more often not at all. My 15 or so large Beau Belle & Red Baron plants that have been in the ground for years showed not a bud. Ditto White Star.

At Merv's, a little nearer the coast & always a couple of degrees warmer than here, his Red Barons started to flower in late May 2010, were at their peak in November, & flowered quite well until winter. His sole plant of Cormy also started to flower in late May, peaked in early September, & terminated in October. His Newbie was similar. His *spectabilis* flowered quite well (last year was better) over November, less well in December, then stopped. His 'Will Scarlet', a particularly dark red Robin Hood, started to flower in early September, peaked in late November, & had a few flowers until Christmas, instead of its usual 6 months or more. His Jasper Belles flowered better than mine, starting in September, peaking in October-November & ceasing in mid-December. Mine ceased a month earlier. However, my Jasper Lode, of similar parentage, started to flower on 3-6-2010, was at its peak by early

September, stayed there till late February, & ceased on 17-4-2011. It re-commenced for 2011-2012 on 11-6-2011, with the much smaller & redder flowers it always produces in cold weather. Hot weather flowers can have an orangy shade to their basic dark pink.

My *garrowwayae* from the top of Cape York had buds on in early July, was at its peak in early September & ceased flowering on 8-12-2010. My *albidus*, a grafted plant from a flowering tree, had its first flowers on 19-10-2010, was at its peak in mid-November, & ceased in mid-December. All the flowers were female, rose-pink, with a red 5-rayed style, & averaging 4.2 cm wide x 3 cm long. My tangerine *megaphyllus* flowered quite well, from early November to early February. My white one from Brent flowered even better for a similar period.

At my brother's frost-free property the climbing *Dombeya*, a close brachy relative, flowered well in Sept.-October, with striking large cerise flowers. My plant did not flower.

The plant Merv & I christened Dark Knight, which flowered superbly at his place last year (for its first flowering) we assumed was a *bidwillii* at the time, as it turned up in a clump of Beau Belle seedlings under Merv's original Beau Belle. It had few leaves on at the time. The original plant has not flowered this year, although a grafted plant at my place flowered briefly in a small pot starting in late November. The leaves on this & a couple of other grafts now look clearly *excellens*-type, rather than *bidwillii*. Merv has not had a flowering-age *discolor* around for many years, but perhaps 'Rosalind' pollen on a Red Baron would explain it. A large Red Baron was not far away. As no *excellens* plants flowered this year at my property or Merv's, this would fit in with Dark Knight also not flowering.

The image below is of Dark Knight.

Best wishes to all, Kerry.

Dark Knight

