

# ANPSA BRACHYCHITON & ALLIED GENERA STUDY GROUP

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**Flowering patterns for 2016-2017** : Compared to all previous years since I have had a number of species & hybrids available to study, almost all of both groups were slow to flower. A partial exception was flame trees, *B. acerifolius*, which is a species that in S-E Qld has some members that choose to flower at almost any time, including here in Toowoomba, where they are very common both as garden plants & as street trees. They all flower for about the same period of 6 weeks or so, regardless of when they commence.

I thought *B. albidus* was just fully deciduous until I looked more closely, & found it dead. Perhaps its heavy flowering & pod-setting during the previous spring & summer had drained its reserves below an acceptable margin. I had sold all my other pure *albidus* plants last summer, so will have to beg for some cuttings.

In late October 2016 some *bidwillii* plants began flowering, including Cania Gorge, Cormy & Red Baron (& some of its progeny), & the *bidwillii* by *carneus* (or *allochrous*) hybrid 'BV1', & *excellens* 'Rosalind'. In November they were joined by *excellens* 'Dark Knight', Will Scarlet, Coen Pink, *muellerianus*, *bidwillii* 'Robin' & 'Jasper Belle'. At Brent Vieritz's place on the coast, a range of F2 Robin Hoods & of *megaphyllus* x *excellens* plants had their first flowering. (Some shown later). As usual, several clones of Jasper Belle flowered excellently on my late brother's property near Petrie (semi-coastal), as did Rosalind, Dark Knight, BV1, Cania Gorge & *muellerianus* at Toowoomba.

In December, there were a few flowers on the 'red' form of *garrawayae* & on *grandiflorus* & Argyle Pearl & Mt White (probably a *carneus*), but flowering had ended for Rosalind, Dark Knight & Cania Gorge. In January, BV1 slowed to a trickle, & by the tenth of February only *grandiflorus* & Mt White still had flowers, & a week later those had also finished. At the warmer site of Peter Bevan's nursery at Lowood, Coen Pink & Big Pink kept flowering longer, & also earlier, than with me, & his plants were grafts from mine.

On May 5<sup>th</sup> I harvested all my brachy seeds, bar 1 unripe pod on Robin.

**Red Peduncles** : These were only observed on Robin this season, on a naturally pollinated pod, probably sired by Dark Knight.

**A few assorted images** : The shot below is of a *B. sp.* Ormeau about 8 years old, taken in early summer at my late brother's property at Lake Kurwongbah.

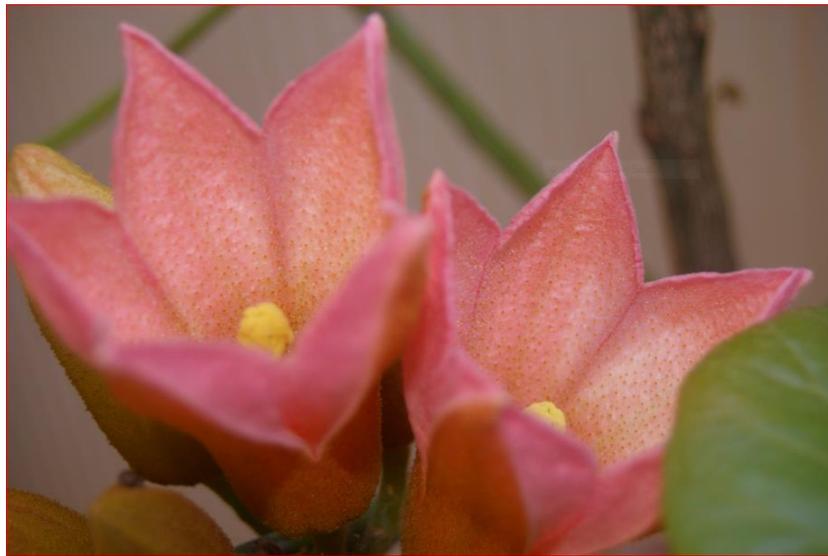


The next photo is of 2 koalas up a lushly foliated flame tree just outside the guest wing of Louise's (my sister-in-law's) house. My wife & I could clearly see the larger koala standing & sitting on a medium-sized branch while pulling groups of leaves down & eating them heartily. The smaller one is about 2 koala-heights above the other, & to the left of the photo. After a few minutes Annabel (my wife) went off to get my camera while I kept watching. When she returned we tried to get clear shots, but the dense leaves made it difficult, & that camera was not set up for bird photography. So after half an hour we left them to it, & during all that time the larger koala was munching steadily. It was more difficult to observe what I presume was its cub. There were plenty of new leaves on the numerous gum trees on the property at that time, where at least 7 other koalas were observed by keen NZ visitors a day earlier. Good rain had occurred a couple of weeks earlier. On numerous visits over the years, I had seen koalas up numerous non-eucalypts, but never before had they been feeding. Later that day both animals had departed.



**A few Flower images from last spring & summer :** The first image, taken in December 2016, is of *B. grandiflorus* male flowers, & the second shows flowers on a *grandiflorus* on the right, with the characteristic dark brown hairy bracts & large shiny leaves. The flowers are 8 cm in diameter at the top of the corolla. The smaller plant to the left, in flower, is a Mt White, & the bare trunk between them belongs to a Cania Gorge. As you can see, it is possible to crowd brachys & still grow them successfully, at least for quite a few years. With a little magnification, it is easy to see the hair structures in the *grandiflorus* flowers, using either a magnifying lens or putting the image into an editing program such as Picasa or Photo Gallery.

The third image, of pastel pink flowers, is of Mt White, & shows the flower colour on the first day that they open. On subsequent days, they turn a darker pink, as in the flowers in the second & fourth images, & fall after c 6 days.





**Climate etc.** : My comments about the relative health of the Great Barrier Reef in newsletter no. 44 have been partly overtaken by events in the past year, as the severe El Nino has done quite a lot of damage, coming so soon after the previous El Nino warming, & the hot water extending into new areas. But the causes of El Nino events are still unknown, & unlikely to be closely linked to 'Global Warming' & its now-numerous synonyms. And the rate of publication of peer-reviewed scientific papers casting severe doubt on the 'warming' hypothesis has increased largely in the past year, & no, Trump wrote none of them.

Several papers shed light on the resilience of several species of coral against heat & various pollutants, & at least one Australian university is selecting corals & their symbionts for increased heat tolerance, with encouraging results. Several fish & algal species have also shown more heat tolerance than expected by the doom-sayers. On land, increased CO2 levels have increased plant growth & crop yields on all continents except Antarctica. And the prediction accuracy of the climate modellers has not increased noticeably, even when trying to predict the past.

**Welcome to new (& returning) members** : A warm welcome to Mike Perabo, whom I have neglected getting information to due to complications arising from 2 heart attacks during 2017. After numerous scans, MRI & whatnot, & having a pacemaker fitted recently, I am now partly bionic but fully mobile again for the first time in 6 months, & all my plumbing is guaranteed to work (until it doesn't). And welcome to returning member Dan Ossedryver, who is doing some landscaping with brachys around Sydney's northern beaches, & to a few new faces among the Study Group contact people at the various APS groups around Australia.

**Wishing you all a happy & successful new financial year.**

**Kerry.**