D'harawal DREAMING STORIES

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Illustrated by Lorraine Robertson

Wattun'goori The Story of the Hairy Men How the Banksias Came to Be



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Foreword

Throughout the past two hundred years, society has come to regard the Koori Dreaming stories as something akin to the fairy stories they were told as children.

However, for thousands upon thousands of years, the stories in this book were used as a teaching tool to impart to the youngest members of the clans the laws which governed the cultural behaviour of clan members. The successive attempts to destroy the Koori culture and assimilate The People into the Euro-centric population were unsuccessful, and the Dreaming Stories were able to continue in their disguise as charming legends where animals became the heroes and the heroines.

Historians and anthropologists have studied the Koori culture since they first arrived on this continent, and have come to the conclusion that the D'harawal culture is dead. Of, course, this has been done without reference to the descendants of that culture, and without even asking the proper questions. The D'harawal culture is not dead, it is a strong, living, vital culture of the Sydney and South Coast regions that just had to go underground for a while to be able to survive. Now that the right questions have been asked, we have the key to unlock a vast wealth of knowledge of this part of the country in which we live.

It is difficult to explain to a society based on commerce fuelled by the profit motive, that D'harawal culture is not based on the ownership of tangible things like land and dwellings and possessions, but it does have a very strong sense of ownership of information. That information, particularly in story form, was not traded, but could be given, and given freely, but its ownership was respected, those stories were not told or passed on by those to whom they had been given, but the knowledge in them was used by the receiver whilst ever they walked in the Land of the D'harawals, This Land.

It is hoped that our present society is now mature enough to be able to accept the Koori Dreaming stories as they were, as they are, and as they were always destined to be; tools to teach the Children of The People about living with Earth, the Mother, in peace and harmony.

Each story contains several layers of knowledge, the first of which are the secrets. Which can only be passed on or discussed with persons of the same level of knowledge or higher than the story teller. These secrets are never told within a legend, but are remembered separately from the legend itself. These are very important components of any legend, and it is the knowledge of the secrets which determines the level of the person's worthiness to ownership of that story.

The next layer of knowledge within the stories was the law, or laws, to be obeyed. The laws of the stories were told and often repeated after the telling of each story, after which the laws were discussed and their application in life demonstrated in a variety of ways.

The third layer of knowledge contained in each story was the lessons which could be learned from the story and the lessons were taught to all members of the group as well as visitors. These lessons introduced Peoples to the means to live in harmony with each other, and the land and its resources.

In this series of D'harawal Law Legends, there are many lessons to be learned. The D'harawals believed that children learned better and more quickly when they were encouraged to work through a problem, rather than be told the answer. By sharing the stories of our ancestors with you, it is hoped that not only will you recognise and learn the lessons and laws of the Peoples of This Land, but you will also come to understand and respect the culture of The People and our feelings and relationship with the land.

The stories do not in themselves act as an instruction manual - rather they point the way and encourage The People to think, to learn and to live. It is hoped that by sharing our stories, you too may be able to think, to learn and to live in This Land.

With understanding and respect for each other we can learn to more easily share This Land and live together in peace and harmony.

Frances Bodkin

Wattun'goori The Story of the Hairy Men How the Banksias Came to Be

A very long time ago there lived in This Land two very different kinds of Peoples. There were the Keepers of This Land, the D'harawa'goori. And there were the Wattun'goori. The D'harawa'goori are the People we know today as the D'harawals, the people who lived here when white man first came to This Land. The Wattun'goori were hairy men, and, although they were all Goori, there were two different kinds. The Dooligah were the giant hairy men, almost as big as trees, and the Kuritjah were little hairy men, about the same size as a milk carton, today.

Now, everybody lived together peacefully for a very long time. Sometimes, as they walked by, the D'harawals would wave to the Wattun'goori, and the women would chatter and exchange gifts And, on special occasions, they would all celebrate together with a big Bunya.

Of course, at these times, the poor little Kuritjah would have to be very careful to keep out of the way of the big dancing feet of the clumsy Dooligah.

But, there came a time when a terrible drought passed over This Land. The rivers and waterholes all dried up, many of the animals died, as did many of the plants and trees.

Because there was no water in the rivers or the creeks, nearly all the fish died. The little Kuritjah were fine, because they were so small, they could eat the nectar from the flowers and the honey in the hollow branches of the trees. As everybody knows, during drought time there are always plenty of flowers which produce nectar, but they do not produce fruit or seed.

The D'harawals, instead of eating seeds and fruit, ate the roots and tubers of the plants, because everybody should know that during drought time, when the plants die down, they always store food in their roots and tubers ready to help the plant grow when it rains again.

But the poor Dooligahs became very, very hungry.

Because they were so large, they could not find enough food to fill their bellies, and they quickly became too weak to catch any poor kangaroo that did not have the sense to hide or to move away to a place where there was no drought.

Then, one day, some Dooligahs were resting on the ground near their cave when a mob of D'harawals came by.

The grownups were walking along, chattering away, and busily prodding the ground looking for juicy roots.

But some of the children of the clan, instead of paying attention to their parents' instructions, were straggling along behind, making lots of noise, chasing each other, or running off into the bushes to hide from their friends, and even breaking off branches of the trees and shrubs, throwing them to the ground.

Now, everybody should know, that at all times you should be as quiet as possible whilst walking through our bushland. The trees and bushes, the insects and the animals, even The Land will tell you secrets if only you listen. And, of course, most importantly, everyone should know that you must never break off the branches of the trees and bushes and throw them on the ground because it can make bushfires very much worse, particularly during times of drought.

One of the Dooligahs watched the children playing, and as he watched his stomach began to rumble, and his mouth began to water. He made a sign of silence to his companions, and soundlessly crept down to where some children were hiding from their friends.

The Dooligah grabbed the children, burying their faces in his long hair so that their screams could not be heard, and ran to his cave where he promptly ate the fattest one, and imprisoned the other so he could eat it all up later.

His companions decided that they, too, would join the feast, and followed the D'harawals until some more children straggled behind, grabbed them, and after eating one each, hid the others away in the cave to fatten them up.

When they finally got to the camp, D'harawals became very alarmed when they found that some of their children were missing, and although they searched high and low, they could not find them. The only clue they could find, was the hair of a Wattun'goori hanging from a tree branch.

The D'harawals approached the Kuritjahs and asked them if they had seen their children. Of course, the Kuritjahs had not seen the children, but when they were shown the solitary hair, they began to suspect that it may have been their brothers, the Dooligahs who were responsible.

The little Kuritjahs went to the Dooligah camp and asked one of the Dooligahs if they had seen the Dharawal children. The sleepy Dooligah just opened one eye, patted his belly, and rolled over and went back to sleep again.

And the little Kuritjahs knew then what had happened to some of the D'harawal children.

Now, the little Kuritjahs knew where the Dooligah cave was, and crept into the dark, scary place. There they found the children, too frightened too move, huddled together in the darkest part of the cave, trapped behind a huge rock so they could not escape.

The little Kuritjahs rescued them, providing light for them to see their way over the big rock, and warning them to be silent. They got the children safely out of the cave and took them back home to their camp.

The D'harawal clan were overjoyed at having at least some of their children back, and thanked the little Kuritjahs, giving them gifts of many flowers and honey.

Pretty soon, though, the children began to forget the lessons they had learned, and once again began to straggle behind the clan as they searched for food.

Or they would run off into the bushes, hiding from their parents, trying to scare them. Or they would break off the branches of the trees and shrubs and throw them on the ground.

And the Dooligahs were waiting for them, drooling with anticipation of a nice, juicy meal.

Then, one day, as they passed by the D'harawal camp, the Kuritjahs saw the D'harawals putting on their war paint, painting their faces and their bodies, sharpening their spears and their killing sticks, and decorating their shields.

The Kuritjahs knew that this could only result in war, and when there was war, many innocent people would be killed, and it was usually the smallest people who got hurt first.

Now, in those days, all Kurrajong trees were hollow, and even during the most severe drought, the Kurrajong always bore plenty of seed high in its branches, and the roots always contained plenty of water.

And, most importantly, of course, in the hollow branches of the Kurrajong, the native bees built their nests and stored their honey.

The Kuritjahs met with the Dooligahs and told them of the wonderful Kurrajong tree which provided both food and shelter. The Dooligahs followed the little Kuritjahs to the Kurrajongs, where they greedily ate their fill, and drank the water from the roots and fell asleep deep in the hollow of the trunks.

While the Dooligahs slept the little Kuritjahs sealed up the trunks of the trees, leaving only a narrow crack for the Dooligahs to breathe.

Their brothers were now safe, they could have all the food and water they would need, and war would be averted. But the Kuritjahs were still worried. What would happen if a strong wind came and blew the trees down. And the Dooligahs would be free.

Or if lightning struck the trees and split them apart. And the Dooligahs would be free.

Or maybe, some day, some foolish man would come along and cut the trees down. The Dooligahs would be free.

And they would not be very happy.

So the little Kuritjahs climbed a nearby tree, and there they are today, sitting along the branches, watching over the Kurrajong trees, making sure that the Dooligah trapped inside does not escape.

Some of you may have seen them, sitting along the branches of the bushes or trees, sometimes their eyes are closed as they pretend to be asleep. But sometimes, you will see them with their eyes, open, then you must beware, for it means that the Dooligahs are awake and trying to escape.

Today you call the little hairy men by the name of Banksia. But the D'harawals know their real name - Kuritjah.

Now this story doesn't have an ending......yet

The Dooligahs are still waiting for an opportunity to escape. And the Kuritjahs are still watching them.

But, just in case the Kuritjahs fall asleep, or some foolish man comes along and decides to cut the trees down, or a big wind comes along and blows the tree over, or maybe lightning might strike the tree and blow it apart, it is always a good idea to behave yourself in the bush, and to always do what your parents say.

Just in case.....

The Law of the Story of the Wattun'goori;

We must share what we have with those who have need.

Had The People shared their food, or even the knowledge of how to find the food, the Dooligahs would not have been so hungry that they took the children and ate them.

The Lessons of the Story.

- ? In times of scarcity, good friends can become enemies.
- ? In drought times, the flowers do not produce fruit or seed.
- ? In drought times, when the plants die down, they store food underground in their roots and tubers.
- ? Don't wander off the path when in the bush.
- ? Don't make lots of noise when walking through the bush
- ? Don't break branches off the trees and shrubs, or pick the flowers.
- ? The Kurrajong Tree has food in its branches and water in its roots.

And don't forget, if you see a tree with a crack in it, and some little Kuritjahs sitting in branches nearby, you had better behave, just in case there is a Dooligah inside.

Some Aboriginal Words from the story.

Wattun'goori; the hairy people.

Dooligahs; the BIG hairy people.

Kuritjah; The little hairy people, also the D'harawal name for the Banksia.

Kurrajong; The D'harawal name for the Brachychiton, or Bottle Tree.

Can you think of any other Aboriginal words that you know?

Do you think you could paint a picture from the story?Banksia

Some information about Wattun'goori, the Banksia:

There are 173 Banksia species, and all but one occur naturally only in Australia. Banksias were named after Sir Joseph Banks (1743-1820), who, in 1770, was the first European to collect specimens of these plants.

In recent years the genus Dryandra has been incorporated into the genus Banksia and a number of Banksia cultivars have also been developed.

Where do they Occur?: South western Australia contains the greatest diversity of banksias, with 60 species recorded. They are also an important part of the flora of Australia's eastern coast. Few banksias are found in the arid regions of Australia or in the rainforests of the eastern coast.

There are no species which are common to eastern and western Australia except Tropical Banksia, Banksia dentata, which occurs across northern Australia, in Papua New Guinea, Irian Jaya and the Aru Islands.

Banksia Flowers and Fruits: The flower heads are made up of hundreds (sometimes thousands) of tiny individual flowers grouped together in pairs. The colour of the flower heads usually ranges from yellow to red. Many species flower over autumn and winter.

The fruits of banksias (called follicles) are hard and woody and are often grouped together to resemble cones (which they are not true cones are produced only by conifers).

The fruits protect the seeds from foraging animals and from fire. In many species the fruits will not open until they have been burnt or completely dried out.

Growing Banksias from Seed: Banksias are easily propagated from seed. A common way to release seed is to place the 'cone' in an oven at 120°140° C for about an hour. The follicles then open and the seeds can be removed with tweezers. Two black winged seeds are usually found in each follicle, together with a structure called a separator.

Insects sometimes lay their eggs in the flower buds and the larvae may eat the seed as it develops. A small hole in the woody fruit is usually a sign that this has happened and that the seed will not germinate.

Seeds should be sown in a very freely draining seed-raising mix which should not be allowed to dry out. As Banksia seedlings are prone to fungal attack, it is better to sterilise the seed-raising mix before planting. If this is not practical, very clean ingredients should be used.

Seedlings should be transplanted into small pots as soon as the first true leaves appear. A potting mix made from equal parts of river sand, loam and leaf mould (or peat moss) is generally suitable.

Rare and Threatened Banksias: Despite being such a popular Australian plant, several banksias are listed as rare or threatened.

Banksias for the Garden: Banksias usually grow best in well drained soils in a sunny position. Most respond to light pruning, and those which form a woody rootstock (lignotuber) can be heavily pruned. Only low phosphorus fertilisers should be used.

Species native to Western Australia are prone to root-rot fungus and generally do not grow well in parts of Australia which experience high humidity and rainfall in the summer.

Banksias range from low-growing shrubs to trees up to 25 m tall. Some species, for example Banksia ericifolia and Banksia menziesii, are known for their spectacular flower heads. The flower heads produce large volumes of nectar and attract many birds and small mammals to feed on them. Banksias are excellent plants to encourage native animals to the garden.

Commonly Grown Banksias: The following Banksias grow well in most of the temperate areas of Australia and have been successful at the Australian National Botanic Gardens in Canberra. Most of these species are available commercially. The local branch of the Society for Growing Australian Plants may be able to assist in locating seed or cuttings of less commonly cultivated species.

Banksia 'Giant Candles': This cultivar grows as a medium to small shrub to 5 m high. It is probably a hybrid between Banksia ericifolia and Banksia spinulosa var. collina. The deep orange flower heads open over autumn and winter and can grow to 40 cm long. Plants prefer a well-drained site in full sun and are frost tolerant. Banksia 'Giant Candles' must be propagated from cuttings.

Banksia aemula - Wallum Banksia: This plant is similar to the better known Banksia serrata. It rarely exceeds 3 m high, is more bushy in habit and is more tolerant of poorly drained soils. It was introduced into cultivation in England in 1788 and was among the first banksias to be grown there.

Distribution: Coastal

Niche: On deep, moist, sandy soils

Description: An evergreen tree which grows to a height of 7m.

Stem; Multiple, short, erect, branching from base, with rough, grey, furrowed bark.

coarsely serrate margins.

Flowers; Greenish yellow, cylindrical, silky, to 12cm long, and 2cm across, appearing late summer and

Leaves; Glossy green above, with paler undersurface, oblanceolate, to 16cm long, and 2cm wide, with

autumn.

Fruit; Grey cones, containing winged seeds.

Uses: Medicinal Food source.

Associations with other plants: Heaths, Swamps - Monotoca elliptica, Xanthorrhoea resinifera, Corymbia gummifera, Allocasuarina distyla, Lambertia formosa, Eucalyptus sclerophylla, Eucalyptus parramattensis, Leptospermum trinervium, Conospermum taxifolium, Ricinocarpus pinifolius.

Comments:

Resprouts from lignotubers and epicormic shoots after fire. Fire also triggers release of seed.

Banksia ericifolia var. ericifolia - Heath Banksia, Lantern Banksia: This adaptable Banksia forms an excellent screen plant and is able to tolerate frost and salt spray. Plants may grow to 5 m tall, but are frequently smaller in cool climates and exposed sites. The flower heads open in autumn and winter and are orange-red. Plants do not grow well in alkaline soil.

Distribution: Coast and Blue Mountains

Niche: On sandy, well-drained soils over sandstone.

Description: An evergreen tree which grows to a height of 2.5m

Stem; erect and branching, with grey, scaly bark.

Leaves; Bright green, with silvery undersurface, linear, to 2cm long, notched at apex.

Flowers; Orange-red, cylindrical spikes, to 15cm long, appearing winter to spring.

Fruit; Long, narrow, grey cones, containing winged seeds.

Uses: Illumination, Medicinal Food source.

Associations with other organisms: Pollinators - Native bees. Foodplant of - Bush Rat – *Rattus fuscipes*, Eastern Spinebill – *Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris*, Noisy Miner – *Manorina melancocephala*, New Holland Honeyeater – *Phylidonyris novae hollandiae*, Brush Wattlebird – *Acanthorchaera chrysoptera*, Yellow Faced Honeyeater – *Lichenostomus chrysops*, White Eared Honeyeater – *Lichenostomus leucotis*, White Cheeked Honeyeater – *Phylidonyris nigra*.

Associations with other plants: Heath, Woodland; Allocasuarina nana, Eucalyptus haemastoma, Eucalyptus racemosa, Angophora hispida, Monotoca elliptica, Acacia suaveolens, Eriostemon australasius, Kunzea ambigua.

Comments: Killed by fire, but seed released after fire.

Banksia integrifolia var. integrifolia - Coast Banksia, Honeysuckle Banksia Beefwood: This hardy Banksia grows very well in coastal areas and can tolerate salt spray. Plants may grow to 25 m, but are often smaller. The dark green leaves have a silvery underside, which adds to the beauty of the foliage. The pale yellow flowers open from late summer to winter. Plants are frost tolerant.

Distribution: Coastal Cumberland Plains

Niche: On deep, sandy soils

Description: An evergreen tree which grows to a height of 20m

Stem; Erect, twisted and gnarled with widely spreading branches and light grey, rough bark.

Leaves; dark green, with silvery undersurface, linear, obovate or wedge-shaped, to 15cm long, to 1.5cm wide, with serrete margins, appearing summer to autumn

with serrate margins, appearing summer to autumn.

Flowers; Pale yellow, cylindrical spikes, terminal, to 15cm long.

Fruit; Silvery grey cones.

Uses: Illumination, Food source, The plant was used for the making of ornaments and toys. Medicinal

Associations with other organisms: Young plants provide food for wombats

Pollinators: Native bees, Grey Headed Flying Fox, Common Blossom Bat

Associations with other plants: Coastal Scrub, Forest: *Angophora costata, Corymbia gummifera, Eucalyptus botryoides, Monotoca elliptica, Leptospermum laevigatum*.

Comments: Killed by fire

Banksia marginata - Honeysuckle Banksia, Silver Banksia: Silver Banksia is a very variable species which may grow from 1 to 12 m, depending on the origin of the plant. Plants are hardy and will grow in a variety of soils and climates. Most forms are frost tolerant. The leaves have a silvery underside. The flower heads range from greenish yellow to bright yellow and open from late summer to winter. This is the only banksia which occurs naturally in the Canberra region.

Distribution: Coast to Ranges

Niche: On sandy, well-drained soils over sandstone.

Description: An evergreen tree which grows to a height of 10m

Stem; erect, twisted, branching.

Leaves; Green, with silvery undersurface, linear to obovate, to 10cm long, and 1cm wide, leathery, margins

sometimes serrate.

Flowers; Greenish yellow, cylindrical heads, to 10cm long and 5cm wide, appearing summer to autumn Fruit; Greyish cones.

Uses: Food source, Medicinal, Illumination, The plant was used for the making of ornaments and toys.

Associations with other organisms: Pollinated by native bees.

Associations with other plants: Heath: Banksia ericifolia, Banksia serrata, Lambertia formosa, Persoonia lanceolata, Angophora hispida; Woodland. Open Forest: Eucalyptus sieberi, Eucalyptus oreades, Eucalyptus piperita, Eucalyptus haemastoma, Corymbia gummifera, Eucalyptus stricta, Eucalyptus mannifera.

Comments: Non lignotuberous forms killed by fire.

Banksia serrata - Old Man Banksia, Saw Banksia: The rugged bark, serrated leaves and large flowers of this banksia give it a distinctive appearance of great value in landscaping. Plants may grow from 2 to 12 m. It is adaptable to most soils, but requires good drainage, and is frost tolerant. The flower heads are greenish yellow and open form.

Distribution: Upper Blue Mountains

Niche: On sandy well-drained soils over sandstone

Description: An evergreen tree which grows to a height of 20m

Stem; Erect, sturdy, gnarled and branching, with grey, furrowed bark.

Leaves; Glossy green, with paler undersurface, obovate to elliptic, to 16cm long, and 4cm wide, leathery, with

coarsely serrate margins. Flowers; Yellowish green,

Fruit; Grey cones, hairy, containing winged seeds

Uses: Mythological values, Food source, Toys and ornaments, Medicinal

Associations with other plants: Open forest, Woodland; Corymbia eximia, Corymbia gummifera, Eucalyptus sieberi, Eucalyptus agglomerata, Eucalyptus piperita.

Comments: Resprouts form epicormic shoots, or from the lignotuber after fire.

Banksia spinulosa var. collina: The dense habit of this banksia makes it a useful screen plant. It will grow in most soils, except those which are badly drained. The flowers are basically bright yellow but the styles range

from yellow to deep red and change the overall colour of the flower head. They open in autumn and winter. Plants generally grow to about 2 m.

Hair Pin Banksia, Hill Banksia

Distribution: Coast and Ranges

Niche: in hilly places, on moist but well-drained soils, over limestone.

Description: An evergreen shrub which grows to a height of 4m

Stem; Multiple, erect, branching

Leaves; Green, with paler undersurface, narrowly linear, to 10cm long, with inrolled margins

Flowers; Bright, golden yellow, to 20cm long and 8cm wide, with purplish black styles and appearing winter.

Fruit; narrow, hairy cones.

Uses: Mythological values, Medicinal, Food source Cooking.

Food for: Sugar Glider – *Petasaurus breviceps*; Eastern Pygmy Possum – *Ceratetus nana*; Brown Antechinus – *Antechinus stuartii*; Eastern Spinebill – *Acanthrorhynchus tenuirostris*; Noisy Miner – *Manorina melanocephala*

Pollinators: Native bees

Associations with other plants: Forest, Woodland, Eucalyptus haemastoma, Eucalyptus sieberi, Eucalyptus punctata, Eucalyptus piperita, Eucalyptus sclerophylla, Angophora bakeri, Corymbia gummifera, Eucalyptus parramattensis, Melaleuca decora OR Angophora hispida, Petrophile sessilis, Hakea sericea.

Comments: Stems killed by fire, but resprouts from lignotuber.

Some information about the Kurrajong trees:

Brachychiton populneus, commonly called Kurrajong, is a native to eastern Australia with much value in cultivation. Plants are tolerant of dry conditions, easy to propagate and have many interesting features.

Naturally distributed from north-eastern Victoria to Townsville and from the coast through to the semi-arid inland, B. populneus inhabits various well-drained soil types, often occurring amongst rocky outcrops of granite or limestone and also thriving on deeper soils in some areas.

Flowers are bell-shaped and whitish in colour with the inner flower tube streaked purple-brown. Cultivated hybrids involving B. populneus display pink or red flowers. Seeds are borne within woody, boat-shaped fruit 1-7 cm long and are surrounded by fine hairs that can cause skin and eye irritation.

Juvenile plants, which display attractive lobed leaves and swollen taproots, make good pot-plants tolerant of dry and pot-bound conditions that respond well to pruning.

Trees are typically stout with glossy-green foliage and are widely used as street trees in Australia and overseas. Native populations on agricultural land are often retained to provide dense shade and drought fodder. Leaves lopped from branches are nutritious and desirable to stock, however consumption of the fruit may cause illness. The deep rooting trees have minimal impacts on cropping and also support honey production.

Ground-up seeds can be brewed into a coffee substitute or added to bread. The swollen, carrot-like taproot is a nutritious and agreeable vegetable and the gum exudate is also edible. Kurrajong fibre taken from the stem has been used in twine and netting manufacture.

Propagation is from seed or cutting. Seeds are readily germinated and immersion in warm-hot water then soaking for 12 hours enhances success. Care must be taken to avoid the irritating hairs surrounding the seeds. Cuttings from plants with desirable characteristics may be grafted onto seedling rootstock. Plants to 2 m respond well to transplantation if the swollen taproot is conserved and the branches trimmed to reduce water loss.

While sapling growth is often very slow, great improvements are possible through soil cultivation, watering and care. Plants have numerous pests and diseases but show resilience to defoliation. Internal infections are best avoided by application of anti-fungal treatments to open wounds. It should also be noted that kurrajongs may cause nuisance from their large woody fruit, deep roots that clog drains and potential for escape into native vegetation (e.g. near Perth). Other Brachychiton species in cultivation include B. acerifolius (Flame Tree), B. discolor (Lacebark), B. rupestris (Bottle Tree) and B. gregorii (Desert Kurrajong).

https://www.anbg.gov.au/gnp/interns-2002/brachychiton-populneus.html