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Clucas

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[54] BRACHYCOME PLANT NAMED
'BILLABONG MOONLIGHT'

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[57] ABSTRACT

A new and distinct cultivar of *Brachycome multifida* named 'Billabong Moonlight', characterized by its somewhat rounded and spreading plant habit; fast production time; freely branching plant habit; numerous inflorescences with white ray florets; and moderately strong peduncles that hold inflorescences above the foliage.

1 Drawing Sheet

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The present invention relates to a new and distinct cultivar of *Brachycome* plant, botanically known as *Brachycome multifida* and referred to by the cultivar name Billabong Moonlight.

The new cultivar was discovered by the inventor in a group of seedling progeny from a cross of unidentified selections of *Brachycome multifida* in an outdoor area in Wandin North, Victoria, Australia.

Asexual reproduction of the new cultivar by terminal cuttings taken in a controlled environment in Wandin North, Victoria, Australia, has shown that the unique features of this new *Brachycome* are stable and are reproduced true to type in successive generations.

The new cultivar has not been observed under all possible environmental conditions. The phenotype may vary somewhat with variations in environment such as temperature, daylength and light intensity, without, however, any variance in genotype.

The following characteristics have been repeatedly observed and are determined to be basic characteristics of 'Billabong Moonlight' and distinguish 'Billabong Moonlight' as a new and distinct cultivar:

1. Somewhat rounded and spreading plant habit.
2. Fast production time.
3. Freely branching plant habit.
4. Numerous inflorescences with white ray florets.
5. Moderately strong peduncles that hold inflorescences above the foliage.

The new *Brachycome* can be compared to the nonpatented *Brachycome multifida* cultivars White and Billabong Fern-leaf White. Compared to plants of the cultivar White, plants of the new *Brachycome* are more compact and more floriferous. Compared to plants of the cultivar Billabong Fern-leaf White, plants of the new *Brachycome* have darker green leaves, shorter peduncles, larger inflorescences, and a more spreading growth habit.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PHOTOGRAPH

The accompanying colored photograph illustrates the overall appearance of the new cultivar, showing the colors as true as it is reasonably possible to obtain in colored reproductions of this type. The photograph comprises a top perspective view of a single potted plant of 'Billabong Moonlight'. Floret and foliage colors in the photographs may appear different from the actual colors due to light reflectance.

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DETAILED BOTANICAL DESCRIPTION

The following observations, measurements, values, and comparisons describe plants grown in Wandin North, Victoria, Australia, under outdoor conditions with day temperatures ranging from 15 to 40° C., night temperatures ranging from 8 to 25° C., and light levels ranging from 5,000 to 9,000 footcandles. Color references are made to The Royal Horticultural Society Colour Chart except where general terms of ordinary dictionary significance are used.

Classification:

Botanical.—*Brachycome multifida* cultivar Billabong Moonlight.

Commercial.—*Brachycome*.

Parentage:

Male or pollen parent.—Unidentified selection of *Brachycome multifida*.

Female or seed parent.—Unidentified selection of *Brachycome multifida*.

Propagation:

Type.—By cuttings.

Time to initiate and develop roots.—Summer: 10 to 20 days at temperatures of 25° C. Winter: 15 to 30 days at temperatures of 20° C.

Rooting habit.—Fine, fibrous and freely branching.

Plant Description:

General appearance.—Somewhat rounded and spreading, herbaceous plant with deeply pinnatifid foliage and moderately strong peduncles. Appropriate for hanging baskets and 10.5 to 15-cm containers. To produce a 15-cm finished flowering plant from rooted cuttings, 8 to 12 weeks are required depending on temperature and light level.

Plant height.—20 to 40 cm from soil level to top of inflorescences.

Plant diameter or spread.—60 to 100 cm.

Branching.—Freely branching, removing the terminal apex (pinching) will increase the number of lateral branches formed.

Growth rate/vigor.—Moderate.

Stem description.—Lateral branch length: 1.5 to 7.5 cm. Lateral branch diameter: About 1 mm. Internode length: 0.3 to 1.6 cm. Texture: Glabrous. Color: 138B.

Foliage descriptions.—Arrangement: Alternate, single. Quantity: 5 to 12 per lateral branch. Shape: Deeply

pinnatifid. Apex: Acute, occasionally blunt. Base: Sessile. Length: 1.3 to 3.5 cm. Width: 0.3 to 2 cm. Texture: Smooth, glabrous, thin. Color: Young leaves, upper surface: 138B. Young leaves, lower surface: 138B. Fully expanded leaves, upper surface: 137B. Fully expanded leaves, lower surface: 138B. Venation: Same as leaf surfaces.

Flowering description:

Inflorescence.—Single daisy-type composite inflorescence form. Florets arranged acropetally on a capitulum. Inflorescences last on the plant for 2 to 3 weeks and 5 to 7 days as a fresh cut flower. Inflorescences semi-persistent.

Natural flowering season.—Natural flowering season is spring to fall. Plants flower continuously during this period.

Quantity of inflorescences per lateral branch.—One to four.

Quantity of buds per lateral branch.—One to five.

Inflorescence diameter.—1.4 to 2.5 cm.

Inflorescence depth (height).—8 to 10 mm.

Inflorescence aspect.—Flat.

Fragrance.—Negligible.

Ray florets.—Quantity: 16 to 22 florets per inflorescence arranged in one to two rows. Shape: Oblong to linear. Apex: Two to three-dentate. Base: Attenuate. Margin: Entire. Aspect: Flat to slightly ascending. Length: 0.5 to 1.1 cm. Width: About 15 mm. Texture: Smooth, glabrous, thin. Color: When opening, upper surface: 150D. When opening, lower surface: 69D. Mature, upper surface: 155D. Mature, lower surface: 155D.

Disc florets.—Shape: Tubular with five lobes. Diameter of disc: 5 to 6 mm. Disc floret length: About 3 mm. Disc floret width: About 1 mm. Color: Immature: 145B. Mature: 145C. Number of disc florets per inflorescence: Numerous.

Peduncle.—Length: 5.8 to 8.2 cm. Strength: Moderately strong, inflorescences ascending with inflorescences held above the foliage. Texture: Smooth, glabrous. Color: 138B.

Flower bud.—Rate of opening: 4 to 7 days. Shape: Depressed spherical. Length: About 3 mm. Diameter: About 3 mm. Color: 138B.

Involucral bracts.—Arrangement: Imbricate. Quantity: 12 to 18 per inflorescence. Shape: Oblong, concave. Apex: Blunt, ciliate. Margin: Entire and ciliate. Texture: Slightly pubescent. Color: 137B.

Androecium.—Only present on disc florets. Stamen number: Five per disc floret. Anther shape: Oblong to linear. Anther color: 150D. Amount of pollen: Low. Pollen color: 150D.

Gynoecium.—Pistil number: One per floret. Stigma shape: Bilobate. Style length: About 2 mm. Style color: 11A. Stigma color: 11A.

Disease resistance: May be susceptible to Botrytis in poorly ventilated areas.

Seed production: Seed production has been observed.

It is claimed:

1. A new and distinct cultivar of *Brachycome multifida* named 'Billabong Moonlight', as illustrated and described.

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U.S. Patent

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