

The Archibald Archive – Genus Guides

BLOOMERIA, BRODIAEA, DICHELOSTEMMA, TRITELEIA

The Brodiaeas as a whole are now generally placed in the family Alliaceae, a split from Liliaceae, but they have been included in Amaryllidaceae. Their close relatives in South America include the genera *Leucocoryne* and *Ipheion*. Members of the latter genus are still sometimes to be found in lists under *Triteleia*. All of these have been included in the genus *Brodiaea* but it is currently accepted that the North American species are best split into the four genera heading this page. In spite of their many good qualities, they have not yet become a fashionable group of plants. We suspect it is because they lack the aura of difficulty surrounding *Calochortus* or American *Fritillaria* species. There are extremely local and possibly difficult species but many are simply good garden-plants, including some of the most colourful and growable of western American bulbs. Considering that many grow with *Calochortus*, it is surprising that most give so little trouble in cultivation. These are all summer-dormant corms with a similar growth-cycle to the *Mariposas*, flowering late in the season, in early summer, after they have made their main leaf-growth, but many will thrive in a well-drained, sunny site outside in the UK. In a bulb-frame, they can be splendid.

While we certainly do not list seeds from a fully comprehensive range of the species, we do maintain a representative selection. Californian enthusiasts like Wayne Roderick, Stan Farwig and Vic Girard were a great help to us in the past. In the 1990's Jim & Georgie Robinett were active in making some fine selections in the wild, some of which we continue to list. Seeds are best sown from summer to early winter. Most of the easier species flower in three or four years from sowing.

Nomenclature: The accounts in 'The Jepson Manual' (1993) and 'Flora of the Pacific Northwest' (1973) by C.L. Hitchcock and A. Cronquist are the basis for our names and those used in most horticultural literature. The account in 'A California Flora' (1959) by P.A. Munz and D.D. Keck (which we much prefer to 'Jepson' as a usable flora) merges most of these genera under *Brodiaea*. The account in 'Bulbs of North America' (2001) amalgamates current nomenclature and is by far the best modern reference for names for gardeners.

Further information: The chapter on 'The Brodiaea Alliance' by Parker Sanderson and Jane McGary in 'Bulbs of North America' (2001), edited by Jane McGary, gives the best overview of all these genera including some Mexican species.

http://www.amazon.com/Bulbs-North-America-Jane-McGary/dp/088192511X#reader_088192511X

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[These plants are now considered to be in the family Asparagaceae - Ed.]