

Barangaroo Central 'Allee' planting

The hybrid species proposed for the 'allee' planting at Barangaroo Central is *Gleditsia triacanthos* var. *inermis* 'Shademaster'. This decision was made by the appointed Landscape Architects as they were the only deciduous species following much consideration that met all the specified Design and Horticultural criteria.

As the appointed Horticultural Consultant for the Barangaroo Headland Park not Barangaroo Central I was asked to provide an opinion with regard to the chosen species. Having thoughtfully considered the Landscape Architects specified Design and Horticultural criteria I supported their choice.

'Shademaster' is one of several cultivars of Honeylocust grown in Australia for planting in landscape settings. A medium height tree 'Shademaster' has proven to be one of the best. It forms a central leader more readily than other of *Gleditsia triacanthos* *cultivars*.

Shademaster produces deep green, finely dissected foliage in mid-spring. The foliage holds without damage until late autumn, and turns a rich yellow before dropping. The trees for Barangaroo have been budded by the grower on to a rootstock of *Gleditsia triacanthos*.

Some trees incorrectly sold as Shademaster in Australia fruit heavily, but the true 'Shademaster' selected for Barangaroo Central should only occasionally fruit, if at all. Seed pods are sporadic, some years trees will produce the pods and some years the trees will not. No reasoning given, simply that is what they do.

Where the species is growing in rural grazing situations pods eaten by stock can result in dispersal in their dung. This can be a problem in the warmer sub-tropical and tropical areas of Australia especially in Queensland where the species is listed as a weed.

The decision was taken two years to secure advanced planting stock for growing on and training the young trees by pruning to achieve uniformity in structure and form for the 'Allee' planting.

The original grower states that they have not had any issue with the seed germinating on the ground under the trees, and doubts that they would in an urban landscape paved setting or an area surrounded by lightly compacted decomposed granite. I fully support this opinion.

If the roots become injured especially if planted in soft landscape areas the tree may have a tendency to sucker. Suckering should be minimised when the tree is surrounded by paving or compacted decomposed granite. Should suckers become a problem this can be managed along with the removal of seed pods should they develop?

Suckering is known to be a problem on moist, fertile (alluvial) soil associated with floodplains and the banks of fresh watercourses. This is not the situation at Barangaroo.

The grower of these advanced trees is most likely the largest wholesale production nursery in Sydney and has indicated that they have not received any notification to date that the species *Gleditsia triacanthos* var. *inermis* 'Shademaster' a deciduous tree grown for planting in public and other landscape spaces should not be sold for landscape plantings.

Finally it should be noted that the Sydney City Council *Street Tree Master Plan* lists *Gleditsia triacanthos* var. *inermis* 'Sunburst' as a deciduous tree suitable for planting in public spaces.

Stuart Pittendrigh FAILA MAIH M.Arb Aust
Consultant Horticulturist