

Wattles: Australian acacias

THE GOLDEN WATTLE (ACACIA PYCNANTHA) IS AUSTRALIA'S FLORAL EMBLEM. FEATURED ON THE COAT OF ARMS AND ORDER OF AUSTRALIA INSIGNIA.

Acacia is a genus of at least 1380 species of vascular plants found in several countries and well-represented in Australia, where they are commonly called wattles. Almost 1000 species have been recognised here to date. As nitrogen-fixing plants, acacias can be good pioneers, with some quick growing species readily established on poor or degraded soils. They occur in a wide variety of shapes, sizes and locations. Some species are rare; others have serious weed potential, especially as introduced plants.

LEARN MORE
CSIRO Wattle
CD-Rom ABRS Identification Series
www.anbg.gov.au/acacia
www.worldwidewattle.com/infogallery/descriptions.php



1 *Acacia purpureopetala*
No common name

Small shrub with ground-spreading branches. Long, narrow, oblong, hairy leaves. New growth has purple tinge. Small, round, mauve-pink flowers.



Herberton district in Einasleigh Uplands of far north Queensland.

SOME ESSENTIALS
Grows on rocky slopes in *Eucalyptus* woodland. Colonies found at or near disused mine sites. Flowers sporadically most of the year, mostly in June and July. Vulnerable (EPBC); Vulnerable Qld.

DID YOU KNOW?
Only Australian acacia with consistently mauve-pink flowers.

LEND A HAND
Write to Tablelands Regional Council and Department of Main Roads encouraging care during roadworks and other potentially harmful activities in the area.



2 **Waddywood**
Acacia peuce

Up to 18m high with short horizontal branches, pendulous branchlets and glabrous (hairless) leaves. Resembles wispy sheoak. Pale yellow, inconspicuous flowers. Large (5x20cm), flat, paper-like seed pods.



Three populations on the fringe of the Simpson Desert. Two locations 300km apart in Queensland: Boulia (Heritage-listed site) and Birdsville. One location in south-east Northern Territory near South Australian border in Mac Clarke Conservation Reserve.

SOME ESSENTIALS
Grows on rocky sandstone slopes and ledges at the tops of sheer cliffs. Also known as waddi or waddy. Vulnerable (EPBC); Endangered in NT; Vulnerable in Qld.

DID YOU KNOW?
Slow-growing tree, estimated to live 500 years or longer. Its hard wood has been used for fence posts and for Aboriginal clubs.

LEND A HAND
Volunteer for Parks and Wildlife Service – Natural Resources Environment and the Arts. Email: volunteer.nreta@nt.gov.au.



3 **Brigalow**
Acacia harpophylla

Grows up to 25m high. Dark grey or black furrowed bark. Long, curved, silver, grey-green or grey phyllodes. Round yellow flowers.



Central and coastal QLD south of Richmond and Townsville, across western plains through to northern NSW. It has undergone severe clearing for agriculture and grazing.

SOME ESSENTIALS
Brigalow ecosystems can include belah, gidgee, lancewood or bendee and provide habitat for threatened species such as the bridled nailtail wallaby and northern hairy-nosed wombat as well as several birds and reptiles. Endangered (EPBC); not listed in Qld.

DID YOU KNOW?
Brigalow timber is violet-scented. Nationally, brigalow (dominant and co-dominant) has declined to approximately 10 percent of its former area, primarily due to clearing for agriculture.

LEND A HAND
Protect any brigalow on your property and consider a conservation agreement. Get involved with an organisation that helps protect brigalow or any of its dependent threatened species, i.e., www.aace.org.au



4 **Spiral-fruited wattle**
Acacia cochlocarpa subsp. *cochlocarpa*

Glabrous, sprawling shrub, usually less than 1m high and up to 3m wide. Golden-yellow flowers.



Restricted to only a few populations near Watheroo and Goomalling in Western Australia.

SOME ESSENTIALS
Grows in clayey sand with laterite. Commonly associated with *Allocasuarina campestris*, *Hakea scoparia* and numerous other acacias. Grows in disturbed, open areas. Flowers June to July. Endangered (EPBC); Critically Endangered (WA)

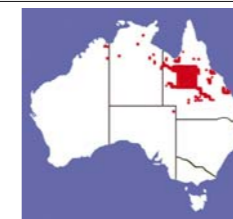
DID YOU KNOW?
This species has corkscrew-shaped seed pods.

LEND A HAND
Recently discovered population near Goomalling significantly extends the range from the original Watheroo location and suggests survey for new populations will be the most important activity in conserving this subspecies. Continued monitoring of natural and reintroduced populations will help ensure long-term wild survival of this subspecies.



5 **Prickly acacia**
Acacia nilotica

Umbrella shaped tree; fern-like leaves; 1-5cm thorns; long, flat pods; ball-shaped, 1cm, yellow flowers. Can grow to 10m; most stop at 4-5m.



Throughout QLD but also NSW and NT borders. Has invaded millions of hectares of threatened Mitchell grass plains.

SOME ESSENTIALS
Transforms entire habitats, causes soil degradation, robs water from stock and pasture, restricts access to feed by stock and is a problem during mustering. A declared Weed of National Significance.

DID YOU KNOW?
Possibly imported from Pakistan for camel feed; once planted for shade; spreads along bore drains.

LEND A HAND
Eradicate any on your property. Report any other infestations to your state environmental department or local council.



6 **Purple-wood acacia**
Acacia carneorum

Dark green, prickly, straggly, spreading shrub or small tree to 5m high and up to several metres in diameter. Grows in clusters or colonies. Golden-yellow, round flowers grow on hairy stalks. Heartwood is a striking deep purple.



Grows on sand ridges, sandy flats or in alluvium along watercourses in far south-east of Central Australia within the Western and Lower Murray Darling (NSW) and South Australian Arid Lands Natural Resource Management Regions.

SOME ESSENTIALS
Also called dead finish or needle wattle. Vulnerable (EPBC); Vulnerable (NSW, SA). Threats include soil and tree disturbance by stock, and browsing by kangaroos, goats and rabbits.

DID YOU KNOW?
Rarely sets seed. Regenerates by suckering every one or two years, but rabbits browse on new suckers and inhibit regrowth. Benefits from a fire interval greater than 10 years.

LEND A HAND
Discourage woodturners from using this timber. Protect from rabbits which ringbark and destabilise plants.