

# WATTLE

## Acacias of Australia

### *Acacia cowleana* Tate



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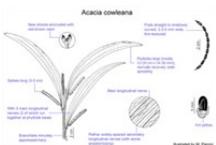
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Acacia cowleana occurrence map.  
Occurrence map generated via Atlas of Living Australia (<https://www.ala.org.au>).

### Common Name

Halls Creek Wattle

### Family

Fabaceae

### Distribution

*Acacia cowleana* has a discontinuous distribution in the northern arid zone between latitudes 20°–25°S. Its main area of occurrence extends from the W.A.–N.T. border to central Qld and S into central-northern N.S.W. in the Enngonia–New Angledool area. In W.A. it occurs mainly in the Pilbara region.

### Description

Openly branched and sometimes rather spindly **shrub** 1.5–3 (–4) m tall, sometimes a **tree** to 8 m. **Branchlets** prominently angled at extremities but soon **terete**, minutely **sericeous**, rarely **glabrous**. New shoots at initiation encrusted with dark brown resin that obscures the underlying **appressed indumentum**, rarely **glabrous**. Phyllodes shallowly to moderately **falcate**, rarely **dimidiate**, (7–) 12–20 (–22) cm long, 14–36 mm wide, **coriaceous**, wide-spreading, minutely **sericeous**, silvery green or grey-green to **sub-glaucous**, rarely **glabrous**; **longitudinal** nerves numerous and  $\pm$ widely spaced, 2 or 3 per mm, with 3 more evident than the rest and the lowermost 2 running together at base of **phyllode**; minor nerves with few anastomoses; apical point knob-like or  $\pm$ **oblong**; **gland** absent from apex of **phyllode**. Inflorescences 1 or 2 per **axil**, **simple** or **vestigial binate** racemes with **axes** to 2 mm long; peduncles (1–) 3–10 mm long, **sericeous**, rarely **glabrous**; spikes 3–5 cm long, bright golden, flowers subdensely arranged; bracteoles **spathulate**, 0.7 mm long. Flowers 5-**merous**; sepals united; petals **glabrous**. Pods **linear**, **straight** to shallowly **curved**, 3.5–5 mm wide, **chartaceous** to **coriaceous**, very sparsely minutely hairy or **glabrous**. Seeds **longitudinal**,  $\pm$ **oblong**, 3.5–5 mm long, glossy, dark brown to black; **aril** yellow.

### Phenology

Flowers late May–Aug.

### Habitat

Grows mainly along the banks of seasonal creeks.

### Specimens

W.A.: Fortescue, Marra Mamba, Hamersley Ra., *J.V.Blackley 319* (PERTH). N.T.: Old Tennant Creek telegraph stn, c. 13 km N of Tennant Creek township, *B.R.Maslin 7461*, *M.McDonald & G.Leach* (PERTH, DNA). Qld: Gilruth Plains (N Brandy) c. 50 km ESE of Cunnamulla, *M.G.Brooker B220,221* (NSW). N.S.W.: 'Beulah', Enngonia, 27 Sept. 1983, *G.Cunningham s.n.* (NSW).

## Notes

Closely related to and previously confused with the tetraploid species *A. elachantha*, see M.W.McDonald & B.R.Maslin, *Austral. Syst. Bot.* 10: 303–320 (1997) for discussion. For example, in L.Pedley, *Austrobaileya* 1: 95–96, 98–99 (1978), the *A. cowleana* description represents *A. elachantha* while the *A. oligophleba* description represents typical *A. cowleana*. These two species sometimes putatively hybridize in the Mitchell district, Qld. Hybrids between *A. cowleana* and *A. holosericea* have been collected from Coorajah Ck, Budgerygah Stn, Qld, *vide* M.W.McDonald & B.R.Maslin, *loc. cit.* *Acacia cowleana* also putatively hybridizes with *A. hammondii* near Musselbrook, Qld. The distinguishing characteristics of *A. cowleana* and its closest allies, *A. colei*, *A. elachantha*, *A. leptocarpa*, *A. longispicata* and *A. thomsonii*, are given by M.W.McDonald & B.R.Maslin, *Austral. Syst. Bot.* 10: 306, 307 & 311 (1997). Also related to *A. holosericea* and its allies. An apparently rare glabrous variant of *A. cowleana* occurs in the Laglan–Jericho region, Qld.

*Acacia cowleana* has the ability to regenerate from basal coppice, however, it more commonly regenerates from seed (especially following disturbance). It is a fast growing, short-lived species often used in seed-mixes for mine site rehabilitation. It has been rarely cultivated compared to its close relative *A. elachantha*. The information given under *A. cowleana* in J.C.Doran & J.W.Turnbull (eds), *Austral. Trees & Shrubs: species for land rehabilitation and Australian Trees & Shrubs: Species for Land Rehabilitation & Farm Planting in the Tropics* 134–135 (1997) and P.Latz, *Bushfires & Bushtucker* 94 (1995) is mainly attributable to *A. elachantha*.

## FOA Reference

Data derived from *Flora of Australia* Volumes 11A (2001), 11B (2001) and 12 (1998), products of ABRS, ©Commonwealth of Australia

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Edited by B.R.Maslin

This identification key and fact sheets are available as a mobile application:



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URL: <https://keys.lucidcentral.org/keys/v3/wattle>

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