WATTLE

Acacias of Australia

Acacia pycnantha Benth.
Common Name
Golden Wattle, Broad-leaved Wattle

Family
Fabaceae

Distribution
Widespread and often locally common in Vic., extending W to the Flinders Ranges, Yorke Peninsula, southern Eyre Peninsula and Kangaroo Island, S.A.; isolated occurrences in southern N.S.W. and also from the Broken Hill area; near Canberra in the A.C.T. Naturalised in south-western W.A. and eastern Tas.; regarded as a weed species in parts of South Africa.

Description
Shrub or tree usually 3–8 m high. Branchlets sometimes pruinose, glabrous. Phyllodes often pendulous, falcately recurved to oblong-oblanceolate, pulvinus 4–7 mm long, much-narrowed at base, 8–15 (~22.5) cm long, (4–) 10–35 (~52) mm wide, obtuse to acute, coriaceous, glabrous, with prominent midrib, penninerved; gland often slightly exserted, sometimes 2, with the lowermost 3–45 mm above pulvinus. Inflorescences racemose; raceme axes mostly 2–9 cm long, stout, glabrous; peduncles (2–) 3–6 mm long, stout, glabrous; heads showy, globular to obovoid, densely 40–80-flowered, bright golden, sometimes lemon yellow; bracteoles evident in buds; laminae subcircular, < 0.5 mm diam., dark brown to blackish, white-fimbriolate. Flowers 5-merous; sepals united. Pods linear, 5–13 cm long, 5–7 (~8) mm wide, firmly chartaceous to thinly coriaceous, glabrous. Seeds longitudinal, zyoblong, 5.5–6 mm long, somewhat shiny, black; aril clavate.

Habitat
Grows in sand or loam, in Eucalyptus forest or woodland, open scrub and heath.

Specimens
S.A.: Burra Ck gorge, 3 km W of Worlds End, B.R.Maslin 5993 (AD, PERTH); Alligator Creek, c. 45 km SE of Port Augusta, R.Hill 1027 (AD). N.S.W.: 8.7 km ENE of Bredbo on the Jerangle road, R.Coverly 5449 (MEL, NSW). A.C.T.: Mt Ainslie, Canberra, M.Gray 6437 (CANB, NSW). Vic.: between Benalla and Glenrowan, N.Hall H79/99 (MEL, NSW, PERTH).

Notes
*Acacia pycnantha* is the official floral emblem of Australia.


A somewhat variable species. It is normally a tall shrub or tree, but small, spindly forms which flower when 0.5–1 m high sometimes occur (e.g. some plants in the Bendigo ‘Whippstic’ forest, Vic.). Plants with pruinose branches are scattered throughout the range (e.g. the most northerly populations in S.A.). L.F.Costermans, *Native Trees & Shrubs SE Australia* 317 (1981), records two forms for Vic., namely, plants from open forests with dark green shiny phyllodes and golden flower-heads, and plants from mallee areas with paler, dull, narrow phyllodes and paler coloured flower-heads.

Putative natural hybrids between *A. pycnantha* and *A. williamsonii* occur in the Bendigo ‘Whippstic’, Vic. (e.g. B.R.Maslin 5852, MEL, PERTH). These hybrids superficially resemble *A. hakeoides*. Other putative hybrids of cultivated origin involving *A. podalyriifolia* are noted under *A. podalyriifolia*.

Sometimes confused with *A. obliquinervia*, *A. leiophylla* or *A. saligna*.

The bark is one of the richest sources of tannin in the world, although it is now rarely used commercially; the timber is tough and close-grained; the gum was eaten by Aborigines (see G.M.Cunningham et al., *Pl. W New South Wales* 370 (1981) for references).

The allied species *A. pedina* from the South Coast of N.S.W. has dimorphic phyllodes with the adult ones generally straighter than those of *A. pycnantha*, and heads with normally fewer flowers, see P.G.Kodela & T.M.Tame, *Telopea* 8: 308 (1999) for discussion.

FOA Reference

Author