



*Acacia brunioides*

Australian Native Plants Society (Australia) Inc.

## ACACIA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER

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**Note: If you wish to view or download previous Study Group Newsletters, they are available on the Study Group website.**

**The address is:**

**<https://anpsa.org.au/acaciaSG>**

### From The Leader

Dear Members

The ANPSA 2024 Biennial Conference is being hosted by APS Victoria this coming spring, from 30<sup>th</sup> September to 4<sup>th</sup> October 2024. The theme of the Conference is Gardens for Life. The Conference is being held at a recently opened new Conference venue called The Round, in Nunawading, an eastern suburb of Melbourne. The Round is a state-of-the-art performing arts and function centre by the local Whitehorse City Council and should be a great location for the Conference. Coincidentally it is only a short distance from where Sue and I live in Donvale. It is also on the same site as where our local APS Maroondah Group held meetings for many years.

Hopefully a number of members of our Study Group will be able to attend the Conference. Further information regarding the Conference is available on the Conference website, <https://www.anpsa2024conference.com>.

I am currently trying to gather information on borer as they impact on wattles. I would love to receive any comments from Study Group members on your experiences – what have your observations been, which Acacia species have you noticed have been impacted, any information on which beetles etc have caused the problem, and even any photographs you may have.

Thank you to those members who have provided input to this newsletter. The newsletter relies upon these contributions, whether they be articles or photographs. I am happy to receive contributions at any time, please think about whether you have something you can contribute.

Bill Aitchison

# Welcome

A special welcome to the following new members and subscribers to our Study Group newsletter.

Prof. Dilson A. Bisognin (Brazil)  
Amber Gould (Stafford, Qld)  
Adj. Prof. Rod Griffin (Tasmania)  
Eva Koromilas (NSW)  
Tania Lamble (NSW)  
Barry Revill (Moorabbin, Vic)  
Ros Sambell (Witchcliffe, WA)  
Libby Simmons (Tasmania)

**Professor Bisognin** is a researcher at the Federal University of Santa Maria in Brazil. He is the lead author of a recently published paper that looked at propagation of *Acacia mearnsii* (see page 9). He has a particular interest in plant breeding and genetics, and would be interested in research collaborations in these areas. He can be contacted by email at [dilson.bisognin@ufsm.br](mailto:dilson.bisognin@ufsm.br).

**Amber Gould** is a researcher from the University of the Sunshine Coast undertaking study on several threatened species from the Darling Downs region in Queensland. Amber describes the study region as being a biodiversity hotspot, and one of the target species is the highly endemic *Acacia lauta* (Tara Wattle).

**Eva Koromilas** loves Acacias and has just moved to a house with a backyard so is excited to start growing some this year.

**Barry Revill** has rejoined the Study Group after an absence. However, he has still been busy and tells me that he wrote a book last year, *Diary of a Young Boy*, published by Ginninderra Press.

**Libby Simmons** advises that her mother in law was Marion Helen Simmons OAM. Many of our Study Group members will remember Marion who was involved with the Study Group for many years and was leader from 1978-1991, also author of a number of books on Australian Acacias. Libby notes that she enjoys growing Acacias, using various techniques to propagate from seed and cuttings. She had 100% strike rate with *A. suaveolens* last December, and half of the plants have been potted on at APST Northern groups Windsor Gardens. Libby is keen to learn more and has a lot of resources at hand, passed on by Marion and John.

## From Members and Readers

**Jennie Epstein (Little River, Vic)** advised (8/12/23) that she came across a Lightwood (*Acacia implexa*) at Woodlands Historic Park (which is a park in Melbourne's north, near Melbourne Airport). She was quite taken with its weeping habit, under the canopy of a partially defoliated Red Gum.



*Acacia implexa*

Photo Jennie Epstein

She wondered if cuttings would have the same form, or whether the weeping habit is to do with the red gum creating shade?

Jennie's query perhaps raises a number of questions, and comments from Study Group members would be welcome. Some questions might be:

(a) I have never thought of *Acacia implexa* as having a weeping habit – so how unusual is the tree that Jennie found? Most descriptions of *A. implexa* that I found do not refer to a weeping habit, although I did come across a brochure published by the Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club titled "Castlemaine Plants for Castlemaine Gardens". I don't know when it was published but I suspect maybe a few years ago.

One of the species listed in the brochure was *Acacia implexa*, which it described as follows:

"Corky-barked tree with very graceful, pendulous sickle-shaped foliage. Pale flowers in summer. Suits dry rocky sites."

Maybe there are forms of *Acacia implexa* growing near Castlemaine that do have pendulous (or weeping) foliage?

(b) *Acacia implexa* would normally be grown from seed – how easy would it be to propagate it from cuttings and would cutting grown plants have the same form?

(c) If it were propagated from seed from an (apparently) weeping form, would the seedling grown plants also display a weeping habit?

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About 45 years ago **John Luscombe (Menzies Creek, Vic)** observed *Acacia applanata* (Grass Leaved Wattle, Wattle Grass) in the Boyup Brook Shire in the lower south west of WA, growing in gravel loam. He was impressed with the plants he saw, and got some seed at that time.

John has propagated the plant, and notes that it grows as a small compact plant, ideal for rockeries etc in cultivation, with showy large golden yellow flowers. The photo below shows John's plant, now rising 3 years old.



*Acacia applanata*

Photo John Luscombe

John notes that, naturally, the species is a shy seeder, but it propagates itself by suckering from underground runners. His plant, to his amazement, produced new growth from underground runners after its second flowering last spring (see photo below).



*Acacia applanata*

Photo John Luscombe

John comments that another acacia that also propagates itself from underground runners is *Acacia varia*, which also grows in southern regions of WA and resembles a miniature form of *Acacia drummondii*. He notes that this species is very inconspicuous in the bush, rather spindly and you would only notice it when it is flowering.

John also recalls in the Boyup Brook area a similar acacia which has larger phyllodes and flowers with an upright habit and which grows on grey sand over white clay and is spectacular in flower.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Chris Larkin (Lysterfield, Vic)** holidayed in WA in July last year and has been identifying some of the photos of Acacias that she took. Three of these photos appear below.

The first image was taken in the Pilbara at Karijini and is *Acacia adoxa* var *adoxo*. Its grey whorled phyllodes are very distinctive.



*Acacia adoxa* var *adoxo*

The second image was taken in the Pinnacles and is *Acacia truncata*. Thanks to Bruce Maslin who confirmed this identification. Bruce commented as follows:

“Yes, that is *Acacia truncata*. That particular form of the species superficially looks a lot like what was formerly called *A. littorea* (now *A. trapezoidea*). However, you can tell it is *A. truncata* by the fine, persistent stipules at base of mature phyllodes.”



*Acacia truncata*

And for anyone who would like to help Chris in identifying another Acacia, the photo below shows a wattle that she found in the Pilbara at Karijini. Any comments welcome. I also have a photo from Chris of the whole plant which I can email to you if you would like.



Unidentified Wattle in the Pilbara

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**Liesbeth Uitjewaal de Vries (Netherlands)** also toured around south western WA last year in October. She came across a lovely small and compact wattle, with very hairy seed pods and pinnate leaves. The wattle was photographed en route from Harrismith to Pingaring. She believes that it may be *Acacia drewiana* ssp *minor*, but if any Study Group member might wish to agree or disagree, please let me know. Also any general comments on this species would be welcome.



*Acacia drewiana* ssp *minor* (maybe)

## The Challenges of being a plant breeder

**Peter Goldup (Mt Evelyn, Vic)** has been breeding plants for many years and has recently provided (10 December 2023) an update on his breeding program. He has

provided photos of some of his current projects. He has also provided some insight on some of the challenges involved in doing this work. For example:

- A lot of work can be invested in developing new varieties that never get released. For example, Peter has an *Acacia cognata* ‘Lemon Magik’ which was supposed to have been released, but never was, he had even done a label for it. The same fate occurred with a small *Westringia* and a compact *Correa glabra*.
- In talks with the tube producer about this, he revealed that the economic climate at the moment is affecting sales, as many Nurseries are sticking with the varieties they know they sell rather than try new varieties. So this is another factor affecting the development and sale of new varieties into the market.
- Peter notes that as he gets older, many of the people that he has worked with over the years and had strong relationships with have retired or moved on or sold out. This loss of contacts creates additional challenges.
- Developing new plants naturally takes time to assess their potential. For example, Peter has a small *Acacia floribunda* which has not as yet flowered for him – he thinks it may flower late this next winter. He thinks it would go well as a standard as it is miniature and very compact, but?
- His *Acacia cognata* ‘Bronze Cascade’ dwarf had provisional protection placed on it back in 2013 but was only granted full protection on 9 November 2023 – he thought “you are joking” when he went to the mailbox, but then remembered that it is the public “service” that he is dealing with.



*Acacia cognata* ‘Bronze Cascade’



*Acacia cognata* 'Lemon Magik'

Despite all these challenges, Peter comments that “Life goes on and other dedicated plant people pop up and continue to explore the plant world, which is great to see.”

Peter has provided the photographs of some of his current projects.



*Acacia floribunda x cognata* (flora bun)



*Acacia boormanii x pravissima* dwarf



*Acacia floribunda x cognata* mini compact



*Acacia howittii x leprosa dwarf*

## Wattle Seeds – Seeds of Gold

**Peter Cunningham** is a member of our Study Group and is a respected world authority on edible Australian wattle seeds. He is the Director of Wattle Seeds Australia ([www.wattleseeds.com.au](http://www.wattleseeds.com.au)), a private consultancy business that covers all aspects of commercial wattle seed production and use.

Peter has forwarded to me pdfs of four recent published papers and articles for which he has been author, co-author or has contributed. He has advised that he is happy for these to be forwarded to any interested member of the Acacia Study Group. If you would like a copy of any of these please email me ([acaciastudygroup@gmail.com](mailto:acaciastudygroup@gmail.com)).

The four papers and articles are as follows:

The Oct-Dec 2022 issue of Food Australia journal included an article titled **Wattle Seed: Australia's ancient superfood**. The article notes that indigenous peoples used more than 100 species for food. Wattle seeds are an environmentally sustainable and climate adapted perennial legume that have much to offer as a highly nutritious human food. They are an excellent source of plant protein, have a low GI, and are rich in protein, dietary fibre, potassium, calcium and iron. Due to the diversity in the nutritional, functional and sensory profiles of wattle seeds, they have great potential as a functional food ingredient.

The June 2021 issue of Einging magazine included an article by Peter, titled **Wattle Seed: Australia's Vast Untapped Golden Resource**.

In this article Peter outlines the important benefits of wattle trees and wattle seed, an ancient grain and a new environmentally sustainable food crop.

The Autumn 2023 edition of Sprout magazine included a feature article titled **Seeds of Gold**.

Peter was a co-author of an article published in the International Journal of Food Science and Technology (2023), titled **Domesticated Australian wattle seeds (*Acacia* species): nutritional values, techno-functional properties and toxicological assessments after roasting**.

This study evaluated the nutritional composition, anti-nutritional factors, djenkolic acid (DKA) contents and techno-functional properties of commercial raw, light, and medium roasted wattle seed flour from 10 domesticated Australian *Acacia* species.

## Wattle News from Maranoa Botanic Gardens

The following are some recent items of interest relating to wattles at Maranoa Botanic Gardens (MBG), which covers an area of 2.6 hectares in the eastern Melbourne suburb of Balwyn. The Gardens have an extensive collection of Acacias, holding over 200 different species.

The Acacia collection has recently increased with the addition of two new species not previously grown in the Gardens.



*Acacia alpina*

Photo Bill Aitchison

(1) *Acacia alpina* (Alpine Wattle) comes from alpine areas in NSW, ACT and Victoria. It is not widely cultivated. At MBG, they are currently growing their new plant in a pot (see photo on previous page – the *Acacia* is in the middle, flanked on the left by *Pultenaea pedunculata* and on the right by *Brachyscome tadgellii*).

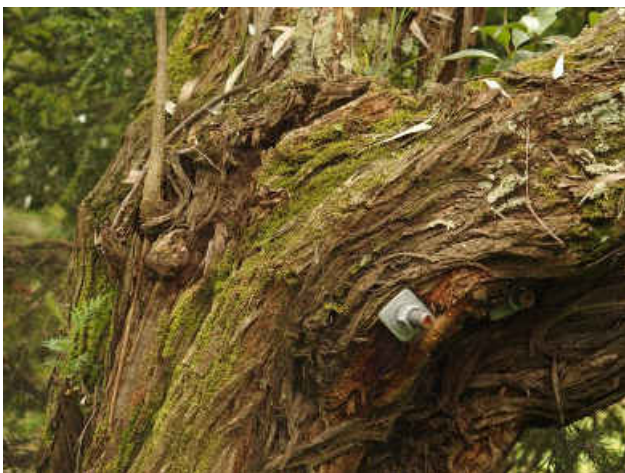
(2) *Acacia derwentiana* is endemic to Tasmania where it grows on or near river banks, and is mainly confined to the catchment of the River Derwent. MBG now have 4 specimens of *A. derwentiana*, thanks to Jonathan Esling and Jenny Jonkka from Silver Banksia Nursery in Tasmania (silverbanksia.com.au). Two of these plants are cutting grown plants and two are seedlings – it will be interesting to track any differences in the future performance of these plants at MBG. The following photo shows the 4 plants. As might be expected, the 2 seedlings still display their juvenile foliage, something which unsurprisingly is not present on the cutting grown plants.



*Acacia derwentiana*

Photo Bill Aitchison

We can also report on one of the older *Acacias* at MBG, *Acacia binervia*. In our Study Group Newsletter No. 149 (February 2021) we included a note on this plant. It is one of the iconic trees in the Gardens, prominently located near the eastern entrance, and now 30 years old.



*Acacia binervia*

Photo Bill Aitchison

Unfortunately, the main trunk of this tree recently split. The City of Boroondara, who are responsible for

management of the Gardens, decided that action should be taken to save the tree (rather than chopping it down). In this regard, the trunk was secured with a bolt and bracing. The accompanying photo shows the bolt - the work has been done in a very unobtrusive and not particularly conspicuous way.

It was suggested to me that in previous times, the Council's response may well have been to remove the tree, but it is pleasing to see a more progressive approach adopted now. Hopefully the tree still has a number of years of life remaining.

## News from the UK

I have recently had some communications with **Judy Clark** who lives in England, is a member of the *Acacia* Study Group and keen grower of *Acacias*.

Judy describes her situation as follows:

"I live in a small town on the south coast of England so my garden gets a lot less frost than many. In my experience with *acacias* (and from what others tell me) it's not frost per se that can be a problem but the weather that goes with it. Currently (January 2024) the weather is colder than I remember it being for some time but the days are sunny (around 3 to 5C) and frost burns off quickly without seeming to cause damage. Damage does seem to occur when frost sits around on very cold and cloudy days, or when low temperatures are accompanied by strong winds.

I protect my *acacias* with bell cloches when they are young if frost or very cold wind is predicted. I try and locate them where they will get (some) overhead protection from adjacent plants. Provided drainage is very good this seems to work.

In the UK people often assume that all wattles grow into big trees and so are not suitable for small gardens. They are surprised to encounter garden size species."

Judy has successfully tried some of the smaller wattles but commented that the current (January) cold spell would be an interesting test for *Acacia trigonophylla*.

Judy raised some queries regarding the identity of some of the *Acacias* she is growing. My thanks to Dr Dan Murphy from the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria for his input in identification of these *Acacias*.

Query No. 1 – The first query related to an *Acacia* that Judy had bought from a nursery in the UK as *Acacia boormanii*. Judy started having doubts about this because it started flowering in early August (their late summer/autumn) whereas she would have expected *A. boormanii* to flower in the UK the equivalent time to what it does in Australia (late winter/early spring). Some photos of the plant provided by Judy confirmed that it is clearly not *A. boormanii*. For example, *A. boormanii* has 5-10 flowers per head, much less than appears on Judy's

plant. Subject to the usual challenges in identifying things from photos, and with all the provisos and cautions in place, our conclusion was that this plant is *Acacia provincialis*. The colour of the flowers (pale) and the number of individual flowers per head look about right. It was noted that what we used to call *A. retinodes* is now mostly *A. provincialis*, and this would be expected to be the most common form of the plant in cultivation.



*Acacia provincialis*

Photo Judy Clark



*Acacia retinodes*

Photo Judy Clark

Query No. 2 – This followed on from the initial query regarding the *Acacia* (not) *boormanii*. Judy is also growing a plant that she has labelled as *Acacia retinodes*. It is a plant that she bought from a very reputable nursery in 2016 so it would now be 9 or 10 years old. It is now a sturdy tree, something in excess of 3m tall. Noting that

what is now *Acacia retinodes* is understood to be not particularly common in cultivation (certainly less so than *A. provincialis*), the question was whether Judy's plant is actually *A. retinodes*. Judy provided various photos of her plant (one of these appears above).

Dan Murphy had a look at Judy's photos, and responded to her as follows:

“Surprisingly, I think it may be “typical” *Acacia retinodes*. The flower heads look to have fewer flowers (around 20) than the other photos sent previously, and the phyllodes don't appear pruinose (or uncinata). I can't be certain but I would say if it is flowering at a different time of the year to the other species you have, and it appears overall to be “different”, it is quite possible you have both *Acacia retinodes* and *Acacia provincialis*.

With all the provisos of not having a specimen in hand, which makes a definitive identification almost impossible, I would also note that in cultivation many species can be somewhat different in morphology to their counterparts in nature. It can be enough to confuse us botanists. The other issue we sometimes come up against is that we have no idea if a seedling derived plant was from someone having a bit of an experiment with crossing species or accidentally doing so. I don't think these factors are at play with your plants though Judy, or at least I don't think it is likely.

All the best for 2024, and Judy I encourage your *Acacia* interest and growing them in the UK. I think there are quite a few species that may succeed there. Basically the factors limiting *Acacia* do not seem to be temperature itself but perhaps frost and when this occurs. This is for the colder adapted species, not the ones in the tropics!”

Judy has passed on her thanks to Dan for his help with identification, and notes that her *A. retinodes* and *A. provincialis* now both have the caveat “quite possibly” attached. She comments that species that she has seen in the wild in Victoria like *A. melanoxydon* and *A. dealbata* look pretty much like specimens in her garden. Next time she visits Australia, she may try to find *A. retinodes* and *A. provincialis* growing in the wild.

Note that a review of the *A. retinodes* *A. provincialis* complex was published in

[https://data.environment.sa.gov.au/Content/Publications/JABG21P095\\_OLeary.pdf](https://data.environment.sa.gov.au/Content/Publications/JABG21P095_OLeary.pdf)

Note: I have more of Judy's photos of her *A. provincialis* and *A. retinodes* that helped in their identification – if you are interested in seeing these additional photos let me know.



## Propagation of *Acacia mearnsii*

*Acacia mearnsii* is commonly grown in southern Brazil, being cultivated for the production of tannin, cellulose and energy. The plantations there are established mainly from seedlings, which brings with it some inherent problems – it results in forests with high genetic variability and reduced productive potential, and in addition a high degree of seed dormancy is recognised making germination difficult.

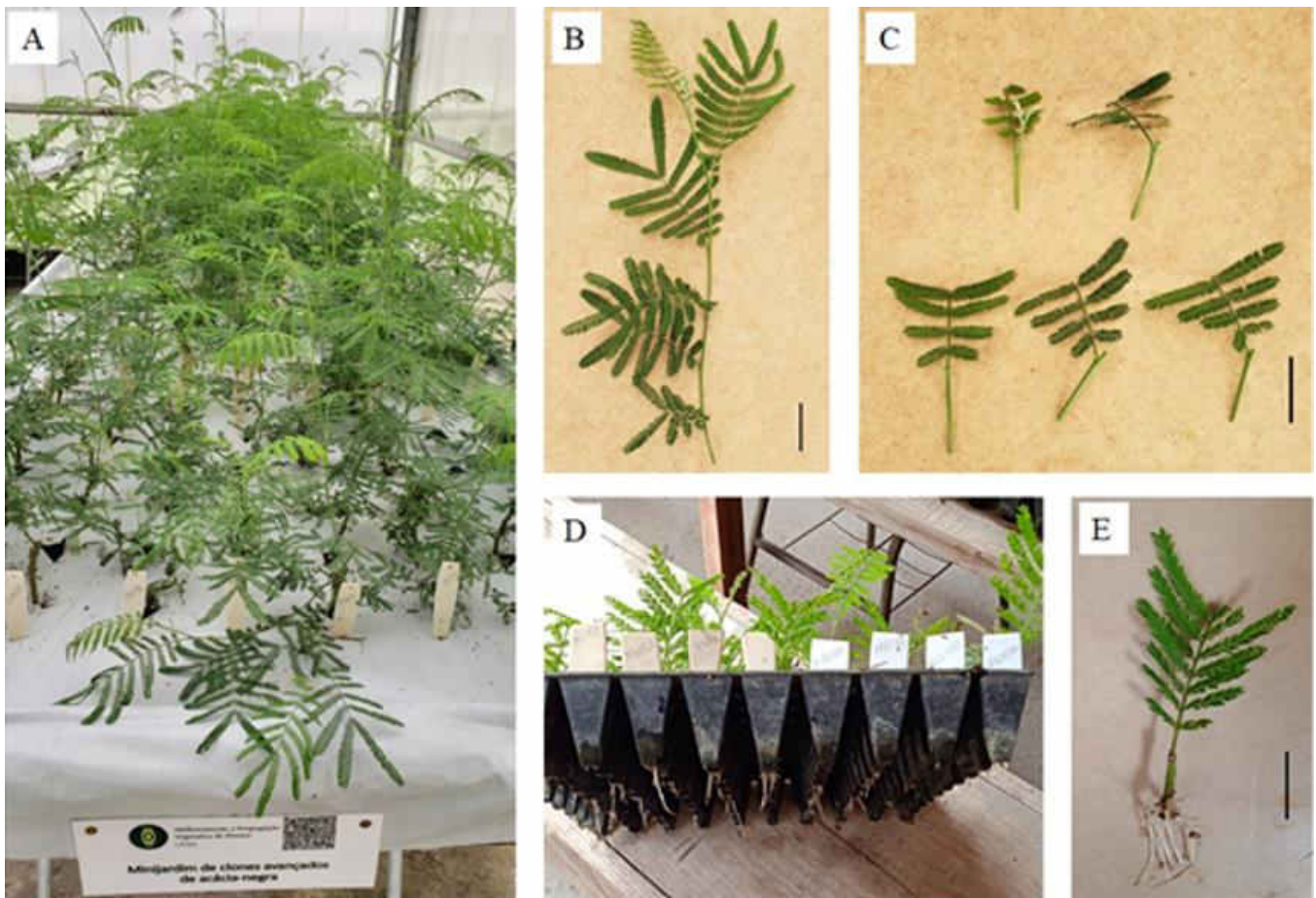
Some researchers in Brazil have looked to circumvent these problems by investigating vegetative propagation of

the species as an alternative to seed propagation, and they have recently published the results of this research.

The use of vegetative propagation means that the best genotypes can be selected and utilised in forest improvement programs, resulting in increased productivity and quality of new plantations.

### Reference:

Gazzana D. et al. Selection of *Acacia mearnsii* for mini-cutting propagation *Ciência Rural*, v.54, no. 6, 2024. Available from: <http://doi.org/10.1590/0103-8478cr20220081>



The above illustration from the published paper is reproduced with permission. It illustrates: Black wattle mini-stumps established in a mini-clonal garden (A), collected shoot (B), single-bud mini-cuttings (C), mini-cutting cultivated in 100-well polyethylene trays (D), and rooted mini-cutting (E). Bar = 3cm.

## Touring the Tanami Desert

In June 2023 Geoff and Jannie Lay (Mont Albert North, Vic) traversed the Tanami Desert from Alice Springs to Kununurra. Due to good rains they did not see bare desert sands, but lots of shrubs and trees, including many Acacias. Some of the Acacias they saw and photographed are shown below.

*Acacia kempeana* (MacDonnell Ranges, 17/6/23 11.18am) – Geoff's photo was taken in the MacDonnell Ranges just to the west of Alice Springs, but this species is widespread in arid areas, found in all mainland states except Vic and NSW. Geoff also came across it a few days later along the Tanami Road. It has the common name Witchetty Bush.



*Acacia kempeana*

*Acacia tenuissima* (MacDonnell Ranges, 17/6/23 11.29am) – This is widespread in arid Australia from the Pilbara through the Northern Territory and northern SA and central Qld. Geoff also saw it the following day in the Great Sandy Desert.



*Acacia tenuissima*

*Acacia pruinocarpa* (Great Sandy Desert, 17/6/23, 2.00pm) – This is a shrub or small tree 3-12m high, found in arid areas in WA, SA and NT. It is reported as flowering late October – early January so was not in flower when Geoff photographed it.



*Acacia pruinocarpa*

*Acacia sericophylla* (Great Sandy Desert, 17/6/23, 2.42pm) – A drought tolerant and long lived species, a tree 3-10m high, very widespread species across the northern central arid zone from WA, through NT and SA to Qld into NSW.



*Acacia sericophylla*

*Acacia spondylophylla* (Newhaven, 18/6/23, 10.31am) – Newhaven Wildlife Sanctuary was once a cattle station known as Newhaven Station, about 300-400 km north west of Alice Springs in the NT. It is now a protected area managed by Australian Wildlife Conservancy. It is home to many species of wildlife and also plant species – including Acacias.



*Acacia spondylophylla*

*Acacia bivenosa* (Newhaven, 18/6/23 9.22am) – This is normally a shrub up to 2.5m tall and 3m across. Widespread in the arid zone of WA, NT and western Queensland.



*Acacia bivenosa*

*Acacia monticola* (Newhaven, 18/6/23, 10.42am) – This is one of the wattles with Minni Ritchi bark. The species name means growing on mountains, a name that was given to it by the author of the species (Black, 1937), recognising that all the collections known to him at the time came from rocky tablelands and mountain ranges, and he presumed this to be the preferred habitat of the species. However, the species is not found exclusively in upland areas, and in fact is widely distributed in northern and north western Australia, through the NT to central western Queensland. Geoff and Jannie came across this species on a number of occasions during this trip – also seeing it a few days later at Wolfe Creek Meteorite Crater and China Wall.



*Acacia monticola*

*Acacia aptaneura* (Newhaven, 19/6/23 10.00am) – This is one of the mulgas and was previously called *Acacia aneura* var. *tenuis*. *Tenuis* means thin or slender presumably referring to the slender phyllodes (as evident in Geoff's photo).



*Acacia aptaneura*

*Acacia inaequilatera* (Newhaven, 19/6/23 11.53am) – This wattle is notable for its very attractive purple red flower buds. It is normally a shrub or small tree 2-4m high often with a single crooked trunk and dark grey to black bark. The species name means with unequal sides in reference to the extremely asymmetric phyllodes.



*Acacia inaequilatera*



*Acacia inaequilatera*

*Acacia maitlandii* (Newhaven, 19/6/23 12.31pm) – One of the characteristics of this species is the reddish brown branchlets – as evident in Geoff’s photo. Maybe not so evident from the photo are the very sharp pointed phyllodes. A very widespread wattle in arid areas, being found in WA, NT, Qld, SA and NSW.



*Acacia maitlandii*

*Acacia jensenii* (Newhaven 19/6/23, 3.14pm) – This is described as being a spindly and open shrub or tree 2-6m tall, with a scattered and infrequent distribution in the NW and central arid zone of WA, and in the Tanami Desert, NT.



*Acacia jensenii*

*Acacia adsurgens* (Near Tanami Road, 20/6/23 12.04pm) – A spreading shrub or small tree to 4m high, widespread in northern arid regions of WA, NT and Qld, also found in NE of SA.



*Acacia adsurgens*

*Acacia stenophylla* (Near Tanami Road, 20/6/23 2.17pm) – This is very widely distributed in inland arid areas in WA, NT, Qld, NSW, Vic and SA, usually growing in heavy soils along watercourses subject to periodic flooding.



*Acacia stenophylla*

*Acacia ancistrocarpa* (Tanami Road, 21/6/23 2.30pm) – This is widespread in tropical WA, NT and Qld.



*Acacia ancistrocarpa*

*Acacia elachantha* (Tanami Road, 21/6/23 2.37pm) – This is generally a spindly shrub 2-3m tall. It is closely allied to *Acacia cowleana*. Its name is derived from the Greek *elachys* (little, small, short, low) and *anthos* (flower) referring to the smaller flowers and shorter spikes which distinguish it from *A. cowleana*.



*Acacia elachantha*

*Acacia shirleyi* (Tanami Road, 21/6/23 2.53pm) – This is reported as flowering mostly from early March to late May in the NT, and this is consistent with Geoff's photo where it is the seed pods that are conspicuous.



*Acacia shirleyi*

*Acacia rhodophloia* (Rabbit Flat, 22/6/23 9.32am) - Rabbit Flat is located in the NT, on the Tanami Road, about 600km from Alice Springs. *A. rhodophloia* is one of the Minni Ritchi wattles although the bark is not evident in this photo showing quite low growing plants.



*Acacia rhodophloia*

*Acacia adoxa* var *adoxo* (Rabbit Flat, 22/6/23 9.48am) – This is widespread in northwestern and northern WA and in central western NT. A procumbent to spreading shrub to 0.7m high.



*Acacia adoxa* var *adoxo*

*Acacia cowleana* (Tanami Road North, 22/6/23 11.22am) – A shrub or tree to 8m high, crown densely foliaged. It has a discontinuous distribution in WA, NT, Qld and NSW.



*Acacia cowleana*

*Acacia drepanocarpa* ssp *latifolia* (Balgo, 22/6/23 4.05pm) – Balgo is a remote aboriginal community located in the south-east Kimberley. This species can get to 3m high but the plant photographed by Geoff was much lower growing.



*Acacia drepanocarpa* ssp *latifolia*

*Acacia maconochieana* (Lake Stretch, 23/6/23 11.14am) – Lake Stretch is a permanent waterhole on Sturt Creek. *A. maconochieana* is a tree to 12m high, grows mainly in loam and in clay depressions, some of which are periodically waterlogged.



*Acacia maconochieana* at Lake Stretch

*Acacia latifolia* (Wolfe Creek Meteorite Crater 23/6/23 1.02pm) – The Wolfe Creek Meteorite Crater is about 150km south of the town of Halls Creek in northern WA, and was formed by the impact of a meteorite a long time ago. *A. latifolia* occurs in tropical WA, NT and extreme north-western Qld.



*Acacia latifolia*

*Acacia stipuligera* (Wolfe Creek Meteorite Crater 23/6/23 1.05pm) – This has a very wide distribution across tropical Australia.



*Acacia stipuligera*

*Acacia hilliana* (Wolfe Creek Meteorite Crater 23/6/23 1.53pm) – This has the common name Hill's Tabletop Wattle being in reference to its low semi-prostrate flat topped habit. It is widespread and common in northern and central Australia – Geoff and Jannie also saw it on two occasions in the following days, along the Tanami Road.



*Acacia hilliana*

*Acacia holosericea* (Wolfe Creek Meteorite Crater 23/6/23 2.19pm) – This is very widespread in northern Australia extending from near Derby in WA to the Queensland coast.



*Acacia holosericea*

*Acacia ampliceps* (Wolfe Creek Meteorite Crater 23/6/23 2.29pm) – This is widespread in northwest and northern WA eastwards to north central Northern Territory. It has the common name Salt Wattle, and tolerates highly saline and alkaline soils (but is intolerant of acid soils).



*Acacia ampliceps*

*Acacia lysiphloia* (Wolfe Creek Meteorite Crater 23/6/23 3.00pm) – This is another of the Minni Ritchi wattles, it has a wide distribution across arid tropical Australia.



*Acacia lysiphloia*

*Acacia pellita* (China Wall 24/6/23 11.07am) – This is restricted to the northern NT and north-western Australia. Allied to *Acacia holosericea*.



*Acacia pellita*

*Acacia lycopodiifolia* (China Wall 24/6/23 11.20am) – China Wall is located just outside the town of Halls Creek, it is a natural white stone wall that looks like a miniature “Great Wall of China”.



*Acacia lycopodiifolia*

*Acacia neurocarpa* (Old Halls Creek Rd 24/6/23 11.49am) – Old Halls Creek Road is near Wyndham, WA. This species has phyllodes with 3 prominent veins

confluent with the margins as can be seen in Geoff’s photo. It is similar to *Acacia holosericea*.



*Acacia neurocarpa*

*Acacia auriculiformis* (Keep River National Park 26/6/23 9.37am) - Keep River National Park is in the NT, right on the border with WA. As well as the NT, this species is also found in Cape York Peninsula in Qld and is also native to New Guinea and the Kei Islands of Indonesia.



*Acacia auriculiformis*

*Acacia translucens* (Keep River National Park, 26/6/23 11.20am) – When Geoff first keyed out this wattle, he identified it as *A. stellaticeps*. to which it is related. But on further reviewing it he concluded that it is *A. translucens* – he notes the plant in his image does not have large buds and has more flowers per head than *A. stellaticeps*. His image does show some of the older flower heads turning red brown, and this is something he has observed with other photos of *A. translucens*.



*Acacia translucens*

In July 2023, Geoff and Jannie did another trip, this time along the Canning Stock Route. We plan to include in a future newsletter their Acacia photos from this trip.

## Brisbane's Floral Emblem

The following is extracted from the website of the Brisbane City Council:

“In 1930, not long after greater Brisbane became an entity on 1 October 1925, the Red Poinsettia (*Euphorbia pulcherimma*) was selected as the floral emblem for the city, by the people of Brisbane. Although indigenous to Mexico and Central America, the Red Poinsettia grows well in Brisbane.

Following community consultation in 2023, the native Brisbane Wattle (*Acacia fimbriata*) was selected as an additional floral emblem.

The Brisbane Wattle is a native species which flowers from mid-winter to early spring, with masses of yellow, perfumed, fluffy ball-shaped flowers that attract birds, butterflies and bees.”

Reference: <https://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/about-council/council-information-and-rates/council-history/symbols-used-by-council>

I am curious as to whether other state capitals have floral emblems?

## Books

### What The Trees See

By Dave Witty

Published by Monash University Publishing, 2023

This is the first book by Dave Witty, an Australian writer who was raised in the United Kingdom. His first memories upon moving to Australia are of the trees that he found. He notes that it was hard not to be enchanted by a continent where 80 per cent of the plant species are endemic. This book tells the story of his personal journey as he discovered the trees and natural world on his travels around Australia. It shows how Australia's trees can offer insights into our past and our future.

There are 17 chapters, each of which relates to a particular group of plants. Of special interest to a wattle enthusiast is the chapter titled When the Wattle Starts to Bloom. In the chapter Dave Witty recalls a number of his associations with wattles. An early experience with wattles was when he found some growing at Daylesford in Victoria. It was only later when he was passing through Cootamundra in NSW that he found the same plants at Migurra Reserve, and finally learned that they were *Acacia baileyana*.

In this chapter he also makes special reference to *Acacia dealbata* (Silver Wattle), this being the first tree to grow after the devastation of Hiroshima. The efforts of Archibald James Campbell that resulted in the celebration of the first Wattle Day in 1910 are recognised in this chapter. The author also refers to numerous other Acacia species that he has admired in his travels around Australia.

Extensive research has gone into the preparation of this and other chapters of the book, with many references being provided in a separate section of the book. I can recommend it as a book well worth reading.

### Kimberley Bush Medicine: Medicinal Plants of the Kimberley Region of Western Australia

By Madison King and John Horsfall  
Published by UWA Publishing 2023

This is a guide to medicinal plants that were regularly used by indigenous people of the Kimberley region, and covers over 250 plant species, including 26 Acacia species.

For each species information provided includes common and aboriginal names, field notes, medicinal uses and other uses (often including uses as a bush food), as well as photographic illustrations. An extensive list of references is provided for those readers wishing to gather further information in relation to the various medicinal and other uses.

A separate companion book has also been published, **Kimberley Bush Food**. In this book, information regarding Acacias is limited to just a few pages, including some general comments and a listing of 34 species used as a bush food.

## Seed Bank

Although we do purchase some seed from commercial sources, we also rely upon donations of seed. If you are able to help with any seed donations they would be very welcome (we would ask you to post any donations to Bill Aitchison, who will forward them on to our Seed Bank Curator, Victoria Tanner). It also helps enormously if you are able to clean, sort and label the seed correctly. Also, we would like to have provenance information for all seed in the seed bank – so if you donate any seed, could you also provide any information you have in relation to provenance.

The most recent seed list that was published in the newsletter was in Newsletter No. 147 (<https://anpsa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/acacia147.pdf>).

The procedure for requesting seed from the Seed Bank is as follows. Study Group members are entitled to lodge up



to 3 orders per member per year, with 10 packets maximum in each order (negotiable). There is a charge of \$4 in relation to each order, to cover the cost of a padded post bag and postage. The \$4 may be paid in stamps or by direct credit to our Group's bank account. Requests for seed may be lodged in either of the following ways:

1. By email to our Study Group email address, [acaciastudygroup@gmail.com](mailto:acaciastudygroup@gmail.com). If you make a request by email, you will also need to make the necessary payment by one of the above methods. If you are paying by stamps, these should be mailed to Bill Aitchison, 13 Conos Court, Donvale, Vic 3111
2. By mail (enclosing stamps if required). These requests should be posted to Bill Aitchison (address as in the previous paragraph). Bill will then advise Victoria of the request.

## Study Group Membership

**Acacia Study Group annual membership is as follows:**

**\$7 (newsletter sent by email)**

**\$10 (hardcopy of newsletter posted in Australia – existing members only)**

**Subscriptions may be sent to:**

**Bill Aitchison, 13 Conos Court, Donvale, Victoria 3111**

**Subscriptions may also be paid directly to our Account at the Bendigo Bank. Account details are:**

**Account Name: ASGAP Acacia Study Group**

**BSB: 633-000**

**Account Number: 130786973**

**If you pay directly to the Bank Account, please advise us by email ([acaciastudygroup@gmail.com](mailto:acaciastudygroup@gmail.com)).**