

Threatened species of the Northern Territory

Birds nest wattle

Acacia pickardii

Conservation status

Australia: Vulnerable

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

Northern Territory: Near Threatened

Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976

Description

Acacia pickardii is a shrub or small tree 3-5 m high. The stipules are spinose and the inflorescence globular. It is distinguishable from other species of the *A. victoriae* group by its sharp cylindrical foliage (phyllodes)¹. Galls, produced by thrips, are common on the leaves of this species. These can be confused as fruit by inexperienced observers.

Flowering: August-November.

Fruiting is very rare and the species reproduces mainly by root suckering.



Caption: *Acacia pickardii* (whole plant and habitat)

Credit: C. Spencer

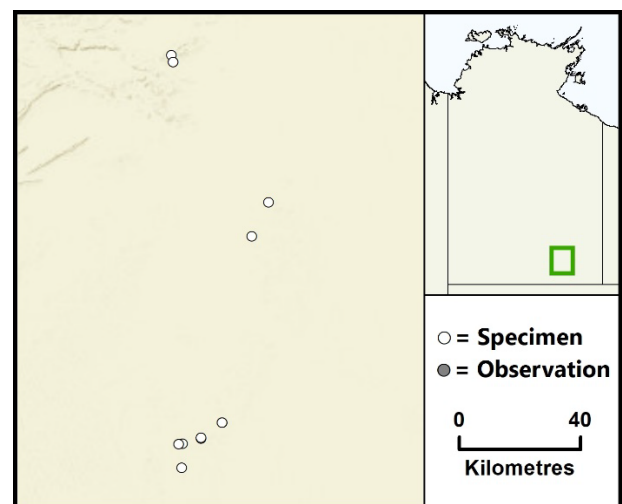


Credit: C. Spencer

Distribution

In the Northern Territory (NT), *Acacia pickardii* is known from two small, and one larger, populations on the edge of the Simpson Desert². One of these is just outside, the Mac Clark (*Acacia peuce*) reserve. In South Australia, the species is known from three places; two in the vicinity of Mt Gason and the third north of Lake Etamunbanie (Pandie Pandie Pastoral Lease)³. The western and northern limits of this species' known range are within the NT.

NT conservation reserves where reported: None



Caption: Known locations of the Birds Nest Wattle in the NT (nrmmaps.nt.gov.au)

Ecology and life-history

Acacia pickardii typically grows on gibber-covered sandplains and stony rises and low hills, including mesas and tablelands, and adjacent flats¹. The species usually forms a shrubland or low open-woodland with an understorey of sparse chenopod subshrubs or tussock grasses.

Threatening processes

There are no clear threatening processes operating on this species in the NT. Climate change may pose a threat if hotter summers and changed rainfall increases adult mortality rates.

Conservation objectives and management

The national recovery plan for threatened arid zone Acacias⁴ has expired and a Conservation advice document is in preparation for this species.

Targeted surveys have increased the known extent of this species and the NT populations have been mapped⁵. An established monitoring programme is tracking the health of the population and the threat levels. Indigenous ecological knowledge has been documented and Indigenous people have expressed a strong desire to be involved in the conservation of this species.

References

- ¹ Maslin, B.R. 2001. *Acacia pickardii*. In: Flora of Australia Volume 11A, Mimosaceae, Acacia part 1. (eds A.E. Orchard and A.J.G. Wilson), p. 383. (ABRS/CSIRO Publishing, Melbourne.)
- ² White, M., Albrecht, D., Duguid, A., Latz, P., and Hamilton, M. 2000. Plant species and sites of botanical significance in the southern bioregions of the Northern Territory. Volume 1: significant vascular plants. A report to the Australian Heritage Commission. (Arid Lands Environment Centre, Alice Springs.)
- ³ Davies, R.P.J. 1995. *Threatened Plant Species Management in the Arid Pastoral Zone of South Australia*. (Pastoral Management Branch, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Adelaide.)
- ⁴ Nano, C., Harris, M., and Pavey, C. R. 2006. *Recovery plan for threatened Acacias and Ricinocarpos gloria-medii in central*

Australia, 2006-2011. (NT Department of Natural Resources Environment and the Arts, Alice Springs.)

⁵ Nano C., Nano T., Gibson J. and Pavey C. 2008. Recovery action implementation for threatened arid acacias: distribution, monitoring and Indigenous ecological knowledge of *A. peuce*, *A. undoolyana*, *A. pickardii* and *A. latzii*.