



Australian Native Plants Society (Australia) Inc.

# ACACIA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER

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Day. I hadn’t been aware of this, nor had I been aware that in Russia, Italy and some other countries, it is customary to present women with yellow mimosas (these being *Acacia dealbata*, which are in full bloom in these countries between late February and early March).

A report that I found from Italy notes that the custom of giving a sprig of these flowers originated in 1946, the idea being put forward by Teresa Mattei (first secretary of the republican parliament) and Rita Montagna (co-founder of the Communist Party in Turin), both among the most important members of the Union of Italian Women. This report suggested that in order to keep the flowers fresh, some water should be sprayed on the flowers and a few drops of lemon juice squeezed in the jar in which the branch was immersed.

Back to more local happenings here in Australia, the last few months seem to have been quite active in relation to Study Group matters. Victoria Tanner has been busy looking after our Seed Bank, both filling a lot of requests that we have had for seed, and in receiving a number of donations of seed. Victoria is currently putting together an order for seed from some commercial suppliers. Michael McCuaig has been busy planning our Study Group display at this year’s ANPSA Biennial Conference on the Sunshine Coast. We have also provided a number of photos from our Photo Library to APS South Australia for a DVD which they have been preparing (with permission from the individual photographers).

I am also very grateful to all those people who have made contributions to this newsletter – they are much appreciated. For our next (June) newsletter, I would need contributions by no later than 1<sup>st</sup> June, but I am happy to receive them at any time.

Bill Aitchison

## From The Leader

Dear Members

I am writing this message on Friday 8 March, and it has just come to my attention that this day is International Women’s

## Welcome

A special welcome to the following new member to the Study Group.

Geoff Carr, Fairfield, Vic  
Bernadette Cheesman, Wendouree, Vic  
Graeme and Jan Nicholls, Blackburn, Vic

## Vale – Elizabeth George and John Simmons

Sadly, two members of our Study Group have recently passed away.

**Elizabeth George** was better known for her expertise on *Verticordia*, and with Margaret Pieroni produced the book *Verticordia; the turner of hearts*. However, she also had an interest in Acacias, grew a number of species in her garden and had been a member of the Acacia Study Group since 1990. Sadly, Elizabeth passed away at the end of November. Her death is a great loss for all native plant people.

It was also sad to learn of the death in November of **John Simmons**, at the age of 88. John and Marion joined the Acacia Study Group in 1963. John will be known to many people across Australia through the books “Acacias of Australia” volumes 1 and 2, which were written by Marion with photography by John. I am sure that the thoughts of all members of the Acacia Study Group will be with Marion at this time of sad loss.

## Congratulations to Bruce Maslin

**Bruce Maslin** has recently been awarded the Nancy Burbidge Medal, which is the most prestigious award of the Australian Systematic Botany Society (ASBS). In awarding Bruce this honour, it was noted that he is the principal taxonomic expert in Australia’s largest genus *Acacia*, and has made an outstanding contribution to systematic botany in Australia and throughout the world. His work on *Acacia* has extended over a long and productive career of more than 40 years.

Bruce has been a wonderful supporter of our Study Group for many years, and I am sure that all of our members will join me in extending our congratulations to him on this recent honour.

The December 2012 Newsletter of the ASBS includes information regarding the award, and also Bruce’s acceptance speech – which provides a comprehensive

overview of his years of work involving *Acacia*. This Newsletter is available on the ASBS website (<http://www.anbg.gov.au/asbs/newsletter.html>).

## Desmond John Nelson OAM

In the recent Australia Day Honours, an award of the Order of Australia Medal was made to Mr Des Nelson, from Alice Springs.

Des Nelson was one of the earliest members of the Acacia Study Group, and in fact joined the Group in 1968. He was a regular contributor to the Newsletter, especially sharing his extensive knowledge of Northern Territory Acacias.



**Des Nelson OAM**

The OAM was granted to him for service to conservation and the environment, particularly in central Australia. The citation in relation to the award read as follows:

“Mr Nelson has contributed to the understanding of plants of central Australia, for over 56 years. He collected the first central Australian specimen for over 50 plant species, between 1952 and 2004. Mr Nelson has remained active in central Australian ecology and botany since his retirement.

He is a voluntary consultant for local and government groups, a regular guest speaker.  
Author/Co-Author of a number of papers and articles

dealing with botany, ecology and the history of the Northern Territory, plus a book on his activities with the CSIRO.

Senior Technical Officer in Botany and Ecology, Division of Land Resources Management, CSIRO (Alice Springs), 1973-1990.

Technical Officer in Botany and Ecology, Animal Industry Branch, Northern Territory Administration, 1956-1973; basis of the Alice Springs Herbarium .

Awards/recognition include:

Two new central Australian plants have been named after Mr Nelson: *Gossypium nelsonii*, a desert rose he discovered on Bond Springs Station; and *Acacia desmondii*, a wattle he found on Todd River Station.”

On behalf of the members of the Acacia Study Group, I wrote to Des congratulating him on this award. In response I received a letter of thanks from him, part of which I have reproduced below. Note that I also asked Des about *Acacia desmondii*, and he has referred to this in his letter.

“Many thanks for your kind congratulations and those of your fellow members of the Acacia Study Group on my being awarded the Order of Australia Medal. It was a great surprise, totally unexpected, but I must admit it is a thrill to be acknowledged by your country in such a way.

Enclosed is the text of a talk, in memory of botanist John Maconochie which I delivered to the local branch of the Australian Plants Society. It was published in the March 2012 Newsletter of the Australasian Systematic Botany Society. In it is a brief account of the discovery of *Acacia desmondii*.

Several specimens of *A. desmondii* are growing in the Alice Springs botanic garden, named after its founder as the Olive Pink Botanic Garden. It is referred to as the Des Nelson Wattle. Every now and then the Garden conducts a sale of juvenile plants among which, usually, are tubes or pots of *A. desmondii*. These are raised by the local N.T. Parks & Wildlife service.

In its native locality (the type comes from the base of a sandstone range 160km SE of Alice Springs), *Acacia desmondii* grows in quite rocky rubble situations, sometimes by small ephemeral, almost always dry, watercourses. In Olive Pink Garden, it grows happily and vigorously, along with several other Acacia species on hard sandy loam soil. The specimens in the garden are taller than those out in the bush.”

For those interested, the talk on John Maconochie is available on the ASBS website (<http://www.anbg.gov.au/asbs/newsletter.html>).

## From Members and Readers

**Peter and Wendy Cox** (Garfield, Vic) have written about the Acacias growing in their garden:

“We live in West Gippsland, about 75 km south-east of Melbourne, on a hill that is granite underneath us, and about 20cm of loam on the top. A road runs across the front of our 0.3 acre block and that road has been cut down about 2m below us, so our drainage is excellent. I will be adding another 3 or 4 species (small ones) this year, as well as planting out a lot of larger wattles in local parks.

In 2012 we had the following in flower - *aphylla*, *glaucoptera* (always draws comments) normal and small sizes, *cardiophylla* 'Gold Lace' (prostrate), *gunnii*, *willdenowiana* (what a beauty), *acinacea*, *drummondii*, *lasiocarpa*, *restiacea*, *guinettii* (another little charmer), *ulicifolia* var *brownii*, *aculeatissima*, *cognata* 'Fettucini', *pyncantha*. And – drum roll please - *denticulosa*. Not at all suited to this area, but that does not stop me trying, and I've succeeded at last. Even if it dies tomorrow, I've had two flowering seasons out of it.

*A. willdenowiana* (in spite of the name which is a mouthful) is a wonderful little plant that ought to be a feature in more gardens. Its foliage is notable, its flowers are good, and its size (about 50cm) makes it very useful for smaller gardens. I grow it in a container (along with *A. gunnii* - another little gem) and they both flower at the same time. *A. gunnii* with its small prickly foliage makes a lovely counterpart to the long blade-like foliage of *A. willdenowiana*.”

**Peter and Wendy** have also written about *Acacia pravissima* 'Tricolor':

“Is anyone growing this remarkable variant? If so, how do you grow it from cuttings? Any special tricks needed? It has defied all my attempts so far. Also, does it set seed? I have been carefully observing one plant for about 5 years but have yet to see any seed. The plant I have been watching grows in my daughter's property south of Drouin. It is about 4m high and the same wide. At the moment it is actually "bicolor" being only green and yellow. According to my daughter, the red comes with the new growth. It has flowered, and is about to flower again, but the flowers are small, insignificant and hidden in the foliage. "You have to look for them to see them" says my daughter Megan. I saw a flower spike with tiny buds on her plant, and I can believe the flowers will be tiny. If you have been keeping an eye on large specimens, you might need a long ladder (or a cherry-picker) to see the flowers.

I have one cutting putting out new growth, so I am hopeful it will survive. It must be cutting number 50 or 60! It is a small (2.5 cm) tip cutting of green-only leaves. I would love to plant two or three in the park across the road from our house.”



**Victoria Tanner** tells us that in January she spent a day in the Tinderry Mountains (south of Canberra) and saw *A. obliquinervia* (primary coloniser after fire), *A. dealbata* (both subspecies, she thinks, also a recoloniser) and the ROTA listed *A. costiniana*. None were in flower, however Victoria suggests the latter would be a very nice plant to have in cultivation as it has pretty leaves and is small.



**Acacia costiniana**

**Photo Victoria Tanner**

**Victoria** also draws our attention to the website of the Australian Native Food Industry Limited (<http://www.anfil.org.au>). This website has a section headed Flavour of the Month, and for November this featured Wattle Seed.

**Helen van Riet** (Wangaratta, Vic) asks a question in relation to growing Acacias from seed. Helen comments that she has only had a short foray into germinating wattles from seed, but hopes to do some more seed propagation in future. She notes that she has had success with some other peas such as Swainsonas germinating by planting the green seeds before they dry out – i.e. mature but still green. She hasn't done this with wattles, has asks if anyone has tried it with successful results?

**Doug White** (Longwood, Vic) recalls seeing and being impressed with *Acacia strongylophylla*, growing in rocky gorges between Papunya and Haasts Bluff in Central Australia (although not in flower). A search of past Study Group records reveals only two references to it. In 1968, Des Nelson referred to it as “a spindly erect shrub of about 6 feet, armed with thorns, but bearing beautiful large globular flowers”. He also noted that “it grows in sheltered places such as Standley Chasm and Palm Valley and is a worthy subject for propagation”. In 2005, reference was made to it being grown in a garden near Adelaide, and flowering in July. Apart from Central Australia, it is also found in the north west of SA (in areas of annual rainfall 15-20cm), and in WA. We don't currently have seed of this species in the Seed Bank, but if anyone can help that would be appreciated.

## Starting Early: Lifting the Profile of Acacias in Australia

by Matthew Alexandra (Bacchus Marsh, Vic)

In recent years schools in various parts of Australia have established vegetable gardens in which their students could have "hands-on" experience in growing their own food.

Using the "schools and vegetable gardens" experience as a model, perhaps schools could be encouraged to set up collections of a range of suitable species Acacias to be grown in school grounds. If there were not appropriate areas within school grounds to grow a collection of Acacias, then possibly the collection could be grown in nearby council owned land with the school having an arrangement to have some part in the establishment and maintenance of the plants. Don Journet, the Administrative Assistant of the Garden Plant Conservation Association of Australia suggests that for a genus the size of Acacia, the GPCAA would probably expect a collection to be of a sub-category eg prostrate species, species with edible seeds, dwarf Acacias etc. Don can be contacted at GPCAA by phone on 03 9650 5639 or [GPCAA@netspace.net.au](mailto:GPCAA@netspace.net.au).

An Acacia resource kit could be assembled to assist in teaching students about a diverse range of attributes of Acacias. Also having a range of Acacia species on the school grounds could be used in teaching the basics of Acacia taxonomy and botany and about some of the commercial uses of Acacias.

Let's try to encourage schools to set up Acacia collections.....I know my early interest in plants was at least partially fostered by going to a primary school which had native plants in the school grounds.

## Wattle – Part of Our Heritage

With Australia winning some cricket test matches over the recent summer, the wattle received some media publicity, as it features in the victory song that we are told is sung by the players after every victory. The victory song is Under The Southern Cross I Stand, with the official lyrics being as follows (although when it is sung by the players, the word “little” in the last line is apparently replaced by “bloody” or an expletive).

Under the Southern Cross I Stand  
A sprig of wattle in my hand,  
A native of my native land,  
Australia you little beauty.

We are told that the authorship of this song is credited to Rod Marsh, who was apparently inspired by Henry Lawson's 1887 poem, “Flag of the Southern Cross”.

**Pat Barry** (Brackenridge, Qld) writes (19 January 2013) as follows:

“I thought I would tell you of my trip last year to France and Belgium, one of the targets was the Australian WW1 War Memorial and Cemetery near the little town of Villers-Bretonneaux ... wrecked in the conflict.

There is a little museum and school, the Victoria school. Both supported by the Australian and Victorian Governments – I think. Australian flags outside and all well maintained. It says the school building was the gift of the children of State of Victoria – but I did see a mention of funds from the RSL Victoria.

There is a document area with books on Australian history, flora and fauna. There was a small shrine in the Museum with the Flag, Aussie Hat, Boots and Badges and a brass vase with fresh Wattle Blooms. Species unknown to me; I don't know if a tree or shrub locally. Our Guide's English not that good! This was summer, wonder what happens in freezing winter? Could these blooms be flown in from somewhere?

Anyway, it was great to see a wattle in a place of honour, so far away from its home base.

See also [www.museeaustralien.com](http://www.museeaustralien.com).”

\*\*\*\*\*

**Cathy Powers** (Balliang, Vic) has sent to me a copy of the project report distributed by the Commonwealth Department of Administrative Services at the ceremony proclaiming Wattle Day on 1 September 1988. If anyone is interested in this (eg maybe for a Wattle Day display), let me know.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Rodger Elliot** has sent to me a scan of a clipping from the Melbourne Age newspaper (2 September 1988), headed “Outrage as bad blood stains the wattle”. This article noted the opposition of one WA botanist to the selection of *Acacia pycnantha* as Australia's official floral emblem, it being suggested that *Acacia aneura* would have been a more appropriate choice. I can provide a copy of this to anyone interested.

## Notes on Two Acacias

by **Warren and Gloria Sheather, Yarrawyck, NSW**

### *Acacia stricta*

We read the *Acacia stricta* article in the last Newsletter and the question regarding the origin of the Hop Wattle common name. Perhaps the name refers to similarity between the phyllode shape and some *Dodonaea* (Hop Bush) foliage. Just a stab in the dark but of course the name could be applied to any number of Acacias with similar phyllodes.

This is another matter involving *Acacia stricta*. Some time ago we received a request from a South African university seeking permission to use the *Acacia stricta* image from our web site ([www.yallaroo.com.au](http://www.yallaroo.com.au)). They wished to use the image in a flyer warning people to be on the lookout for this species in the South African environment. *Acacia stricta* is another Australian plant that has gone feral overseas. We were happy for the image to be used in the flyer.



### *Acacia siculiformis*

The common name for this species is Dagger Wattle. There should be no confusion about the origin of this name. The sharp point crowning each narrow, flat phyllode plus their shape brings the common name to mind immediately. *Acacia siculiformis* is an erect, stiff shrub that reaches a height of two metres in our garden. Yellow, globular flower heads are sessile with one held in each phyllode axil.

The flowering period is spring and early summer. Pods are up to three centimetres long with no constriction between seeds.

*Acacia siculiformis* is found on the northern and southern tablelands of New South Wales extending into north-eastern Victoria and Tasmania. The Dagger Wattle grows near wetlands and watercourses. East of Armidale, northern NSW, the species is common along the Waterfall Way



where it grows alongside almost every creek.



**Acacia siculiformis** Photo W & G Sheather

*Acacia siculiformis* would be an ideal candidate for planting in moist areas. On the other hand our specimens are surviving and thriving in our dry, well drained garden.

Propagate from seed and possibly cuttings.

## Problems with *Acacia cognata* cultivars

Our Study Group has an email address (shown at the top of each Newsletter) on which we receive the occasional (but rather infrequent) general query relating to Acacias. Over the most recent period November through to January, we received three separate queries relating to problems with *Acacia cognata* cultivars. Two of these related to *A. cognata* 'Limelight', and the third was probably also 'Limelight'.

The following are extracts from the emails received:

“I have some *Acacia* 'Limelight' that seem to be going yellow, some more than others, losing leaves and generally looking unwell ... one is in the shade and the other out in full sun but show the same issue, the soil is not wet, in fact one is on a raised bed and till recently they have been very healthy.”

“My Acacias are really sad, from the ground up. See attached photo.”

In our ASG Newsletter No. 105 (June 2009), there was an article by Neil Marriott on the subject of Problems with the Cultivation of *Acacia cognata* cultivars. Two of the problems referred to by Neil in this article related to infestations of Acacia Scale, and problems with “sunburn” on very hot summer days (these problems particularly affecting 'Limelight'). In responding to our recent enquirers

I consulted with Neil and our response to each person was along the following lines.

The first suggestion was to check that the plants do not have Acacia scale – although it was suggested that this was not likely to be the problem, and even if it is, it is not likely to kill the plants.

The more likely problem is that many of the clones of *Acacia cognata*, particularly in dry summer climates, are not drought hardy, with plants showing various ways of succumbing as they dry out. Most often this is evidenced firstly by leaf loss combined with the appearance of sunburnt foliage and blackening stems. These eventually die, leading to eventual die-back of whole sections of the plant and eventually death of the whole plant. The worst culprits are the dwarf forms, especially 'Limelight' (both *Acacia* 'Fettucini' and *Acacia* 'Mini Cog' seem to be far hardier). As summer dries out the subsoil, the plants begin to decline as they cope with the low moisture levels. It was suggested that the only solution is to regularly give the plants a deep soaking before they have succumbed - once they are sick they may well not recover. Apart from watering, a good layer of mulch that traps moisture in but does not block it from entering makes a huge difference - washed river sand or pebbles do a better job than organic mulch, although this can be great if not too thick for providing nutrition and organic material to the soil.



Neil notes that with several of his *Acacia* 'Limelight' where he had problems, they are now recovering very well - a thorough soaking of the site for several hours (eg with a slow running hose), followed by a layer of mulch, and then regular watering every week or even more until recovered.

**Footnote:** Neil also commented on another species that he has found to be not drought hardy. He commented as follows:

“I put in a drift of *Acacia flagelliformis* in the front garden last winter and despite a beautiful flowering this spring, they have ALL died despite being hand watered at least

twice per week!! I have collected a bit of seed from them, but on the results so far I feel that it is NOT a species that will tolerate our dry summers!!”

## Weeding in the Grampians

by Joe Wilson, Donvale, Vic

I have just returned home from a one week stint in the Grampians - which is a great place to visit and enjoy the views, the scenery, the wildflowers, and the walks in general.

My purpose for the trip was to help Parks Victoria, through an organization called CVA (Conservation Volunteers Australia). Parks Victoria had been given a grant of \$25000 to help with the removal of *Acacia longifolia* (Sallow Wattle) from parts of the Grampians.

My stint of one week was a follow up to help after a cut and poison program had been done a fortnight before. Our worksite was on the Halls Gap Grampians Road about half way along the Bellfield Lake which is the water supply for the area. Our crew consisted of generally 5 to 7, along with the CVA coordinator. Our job was to remove this wattle by pulling out by hand if possible or cut with loppers or by hand saw and then poison with a dapper of glyphosate. This was a very difficult job even though the terrain was generally of a light sloping nature. One of our problems was the amount of fallen tree and vegetation.

Getting your eyes in on *Acacia longifolia* was not a problem, it often was how to get to it because of all the obstacles. Just when you got your eyes in up pops variations or hybrids. My guess with the fine leaf variants were that they had crossed somehow with *Acacia floribunda*. Then the main stem colour would change so that you could not just cut willy nilly, even when you had a large cluster of trees to cut. In among these would be *Acacia retinodes* which fortunately was generally in flower so by looking at the foliage you could differentiate. In this area alone there were seven *Acacia* species. Needless to say some of these were cut down in the process.

Over the week we progressed approximately 500 metres along both sides of the road, covering 30 to 50 metres on each side.

Did we feel satisfied we had done a good job? Yes. We were all concerned for the environment and the job was challenging, and we were hoping to make some reparation to the environment. But alas all it did for me was to wake me up to the great devastation this wattle and others such as *Acacia baileyana* are doing to the Grampians. All my walks and drives in the Grampians were spoilt because almost everywhere I went *Acacia longifolia* was going rampant. Driving from Wartook on the north western side of the Grampians along the Roses Gap Road all the way to the Western Highway was blighted with large stands of this wattle. Rodger Elliot asked me to look out for a hybrid with

*Acacia oxycedrus*. This I found near the bridge as you cross a small creek at the start of the Wonderland walk along the Grand Canyon.

*Acacia longifolia* is certainly a very adaptable wattle. But it will take a supreme long lasting effort to hold this plant back from destroying the Grampians.

## An Acacia List for the Sunshine Coast

by Michael McCuaig, Wurtulla, Qld

*Note: A number of Study Group members will be attending the ANPSA Biennial Conference to be held this coming August on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland. Michael McCuaig is preparing our Study Group display for the Conference and has prepared a Sunshine Coast list of Acacias (shown below). Note that Michael is also involved with some young people in propagating with them a number of species, in particular species included in Jan Sked's Wattle Blossom Fairies colouring list.*

Because we are growing a number of local acacias and trying to germinate / grow the species (28) that make up Jan Sked's Wattle Blossom Fairies colouring list, we needed a definitive, for us that is, list.

The attached list is, therefore, a working and numbering list FOR US and includes:

- A. local species, numbers 1-29,  
Species numbers 30-64 include the following:
- B. species from outside the Sunshine Coast which are grown locally,
- C. species from Jan Sked's Wattle Blossom Fairies, not covered above,
- D. other species of interest, for one reason or another, and
- F. since bipinnate adult foliated plants are minimally represented the section list of those plants from "Flora of S.E. Queensland" by T.D. Stanley and E. Ross. This reference covers a very much wider area of S.E. Queensland than the Sunshine Coast but shows some 12 more species of this type of plant, numbers 65-78.

Plants of the Wattle Blossom Fairies List are featured in their own column.

The main aim of this list, apart from the primary one of a numbering system for our plants, is to try to give interested members who may be coming to ANPSA an idea of "local" species. It is as comprehensive and correct as I can make it but I would more than welcome corrections, additions, complaints, disputes etc, with a view to making it better.

N.B.

- 1. The Sunshine Coast is taken to be the area encompassed by the Sunshine Coast Regional Council.

2. See Newsletter No 100, March 2008 for more information about the Wattle Blossom Fairies and many other species of local wattles.

The references for the column headings in the following Table are:

St & R “Flora of S.E. Queensland” T.D. Stanley & E. Ross.  
 M to M : “Mangroves to Mountains” Glenn Leiper et al.  
 T.T : “Acacias of Southeast Australia” Terry Tame  
 WBF of JS: Wattle Blossom Fairies of Jan Sked

The appropriate page numbers are shown in the various columns (nm means not mentioned).

Number	Species	Pge St & R	Pge M to M	Num T.T.	WBF of JS
1	attenuata	377	94	nm	
2	baeuerlenii	357	176	58	
3	baueri	347	113	129	
4	bakeri	359	351	43	
5	cincinnata	352	93	nm	
6	complanata	359	215	48	wbf3
7	concurrans	355	212	2	
8	disparrima ssp disparrima	nm	213	nm	wbf5
9	falcata	370	177	134	wbf6
10	fimbriata	375	213	175	
11	hispidula	367	177	125	
12	hubbardiana	366	107	nm	
13	implexa	361	175	45	wbf10
14	irrorata ssp irrorata	381 bipin	175	210	
15	juncifolia ssp juncifolia	367	216	120	wbf13
16	leiocalyx	354	212	3	
17	leucoclada ssp argentifolia	379 bipin	214	217	wbf15
18	longissima	352	177	13	
19	maidenii	351	176	10	
20	melanoxyton	360	177	46	wbf17
21	myrtifolia	367	447	154	wbf18
22	oshanesii	383 bipin	176	224	
23	penninervis	371	177	137	wbf21
24	podalyriifolia	372	214	180	wbf22
25	sophorae	356	14	6	wbf25
26	suaveolens	372	177	136	
27	ulicifolia	362	178	89	wbf28
28	viscidula	358	4733	52	
29	flavescens	355	175	nm	
30	quadrilateralis	363	217	97	
31	conferta	364	215	132	
32	brunioides	363	447	130	
33	amblygona	361	217	67	
34	buxifolia	372	215	186	wbf1
35	neriifolia	375	213	157	wbf19
36	leichhardtii	377	216	nm	wbf14
37	ixiophylla	358	215	65	wbf11
38	harpophylla	357	388	73	wbf8
39	floribunda	351	472	9	wbf7
40	bancroftiorum	369	nm	nm	
41	binervata	371	446	44	
42	brownei	362	113	90	
43	caroleae	349	nm	39	wbf2
44	decora	374	215	172	wbf4
45	dunnii	nm	nm	nm	

46	julifera	350	212	21	wbf12
47	salicina	368	176	144	wbf24
48	saligna	372	nm	136	
49	spectabilis	379 bipin	nm	201	wbf26
50	macradenia	370	nm	nm	wbf16
51	holosericea	nm	nm	nm	wbf9
52	pravissima	nm	nm	nm	
53	aulacocarpa				
54	falciformis	370	446/472	138	
55	leiophylla	nm	nm	nm	
56	victoriae	369	nm	194	
57	glaucoptera	nm	nm	nm	
58	cultriformis	373	nm	192	
59	triptera	347	nm	17	wbf27
60	pendula	357	nm	69	wbf20
61	pycnantha	nm	nm	135	wbf23
62	fasciculifera	nm	nm	nm	
63	perangusta	376	213	nm	
64	stricta	367	423	104	
65	latisejala	378 bipin	nm	195	
66	pruinosa	378 bipin	nm	197	
67	debilis	378 bipin	nm	196	
68	polybotrya	379 bipin	nm	202	
69	chinchillensis	379 bipin	nm	nm	
70	baileyana	380 bipin	nm	227	
71	muelleriana	380 bipin	nm	205	
72	filicifolia	380 bipin	nm	208	
73	decurrens	390 bipin	nm	207	
74	deanei	380 bipin	nm	216	
75	loroloba	381 bipin	175	nm	
76	glaucoocarpa	381 bipin	214	nm	
77	bidwillii	383 bipin	nm	nm	
78	farnesiana*	383 bipin	214	nm	

## Some Sunshine Coast Acacias

by Michael McCuaig, Wurtulla, Qld

While I have to agree that the sight of an Acacia plant in full bloom is a sight to admire, photograph and remember, I will put forward a case for some other most attractive features of some species of the genus, without resorting to flowers.

### 1) *Acacia cincinnata*.

My copy of “The Names of Plants” by David Gledhill, lists *cincinnatus* –a-um as “with crisped hair”, “curly haired”, while Don Perrin’s “Australian Plant Names” lists *cincinnata* as coming from *cincinare*, “to make round”. While the latter, when referred to the shape of the plants’ pods, appears to be totally apposite, there is something quite



appealing about the former. (What this says for the citizens of a large North American city in Ohio I'm not sure, as I am equally unsure of just where the curly hairs might be found on the plant!!!). The fruits, along with those of the plant below, just serve to yet again highlight the huge diversity and attractiveness within the Acacia genus. These pods remind me of a musical instrument and I would have named it *A. pianoaccordianae*. (Shades of Asterix the Gaul!!!)



*Acacia cincinnata*

Photo: Michael McCuaig

The pods are retained for quite some time and it is common, especially in my favourite little grove of *A. cincinnata*, to see old black / brown fruits along with vibrant green, rapidly growing new pods. The very early growth looks like a crescent and expands into the adult form. I chanced only once on the display in the photograph though I have returned a number of times. The plant has grown somewhat and the developing pods are now not as amenable as before. Oh, by the way, it does flower in long creamy white spikes and so has at least one more attractive feature, which I said I would not refer to. For the shape of the pods and the way the seeds hang from it, which raises all sorts of questions regarding seed distribution, this plant deserves to be among the favourite local species.

## 2) *Acacia disparrima* ssp. *disparrima*

Once upon a time in wonderful wide wattle land, there were 2 *Acacia aulacocarpa*s (or should that be *aulacocarpae*??). Whatever, there existed *Acacia aulacocarpa* and *Acacia aulacocarpa* var *frutescens*. Naturally a system such as this could not be allowed to exist, so in the course of time, you guessed it, things changed. By some mystical systematic, metaphorical metamorphosis, *Acacia aulacocarpa* became *Acacia disparrima* subspecies *disparrima*, while *Acacia aulacocarpa* var *frutescens* became *Acacia aulacocarpa*.

The fact that there is one subspecies of *Acacia disparrima* alluded to, I can see, has alerted you to question whether there is another. There is. In the far north of Queensland there is another *Acacia disparrima* subspecies *calidestris*, but it is not, alas, very often mentioned in polite circles down here in the deep south of the state!!!!



*Acacia disparrima* ssp. *disparrima*

Photo Michael McCuaig

Both of the local species are mentioned and pictured, side by side, in the reference that has rapidly and correctly achieved biblical status in S.E.Q. "Mangroves to Mountains". Apart from one being shrubby as its former name suggested, it is difficult for this inexperienced, plebeian to tell the difference between the two types.

But however you look at it, *Acacia disparrima* with its so characteristic fruits, stands out like a beacon when seen in a forest of trees, long after the flowers have finished. It so happens both *Acacia cincinnata* and *Acacia disparrima* are interlaced in a section of remnant forest not far from home. As one English author, who unfortunately was stuck on roses, should have put it; *Acacia aulacocarpa*, by any other name, will still appear as sweet, unique, enticing and beguiling as ever – even if it is difficult classify.

## Germinating Acacias

by Michael McCuaig, Wurtulla, Qld

I have recently commenced germinating a number of S.E.Q. species of Acacia, with a few other interesting examples thrown in. It has been a "fortunate mistake" of a venture! "Mistake" because the method I chose involved planting seeds in punnets and then transplanting to tubes. "Mistake" also because, not knowing the viability of the seed, I planted too many and not wanting to waste any seedling, I now have the time consuming task of potting them all on.

Really all I want is a few example specimens. "Fortunate", however, because in the transplanting process you get to see some things that direct sowing usually obscures.

The real surprise of, so far, 26 species, was *Acacia longifolia* ssp. *sophorae*. These were quite green and well advanced into forming intermediate leaves and phyllodes and I wondered why they should appear so healthy and grow, comparatively, so rapidly. The work of J.T. and Cathy Miller that you highlighted in the June 2011 issue of the Newsletter, explains that this species is one of the very

few that grows straight from pinnate to phyllode seedling 'leaves', so the rapid appearance of phyllodes is explained. Genetically? Rapid nutrient availability?

For me, the interesting thing that the exposed root system showed was the very well developed root nodules which I surmise should help to explain the deepened green colour of the seedlings. I had not noticed root nodules on any of the transplanted species up until this time. I am not saying that my ageing eyes did not miss the presence of the root swellings, but they were so glaringly obvious on *A. longifolia* ssp. *sophorae* that they just begged to be noticed. *Acacia falcata* was the only subsequent species to show nodules, even with a much more aware scrutiny of the new plants.



Seedlings of *A. longifolia* ssp. *sophorae* Photo: Michael McCuaig

I have not thought too much about this before, believing that the well known fact of legume nitrogen fixation was mainly something with which to harangue unfortunate year 8-9 science students of the Nitrogen Cycle, (but also very important for clovers – sub and white), so it set me to ask some questions.

Do the nodules all result from the same bacterial species? Are they more likely to infect some acacias more than others? Are they ubiquitous??? Does this have implications for fertilizer additions (like phosphate and some Proteaceae species?)

Living in Canberra a number of years ago it was fashionable to grow lawns of a mix of grass species and white clover. The theory was that the clover, a legume, would nodulate and the bacteria would convert atmospheric nitrogen to nitrate, thus assisting the grass species. If the clover became rampant, which it often did, conventional wisdom was to douse the lawn with a nitrogenous fertilizer (in those days usually ammonium nitrate), which we too often did, and this

should inhibit the clover's growth, which often it did!! It was alleged, however, at the same time, that fertilizer runoff would contribute to algal blooms in the Canberra lakes and as far away as Burrinjuck Dam, near Yass, and unfortunately it certainly did!

Does this same inhibition occur with fertilizers and Acacias? The seedlings shown here are merely 2 months old and already possess very well developed root nodules. (The white, out of focus, swellings shown on the roots in the photo. No, I don't use perlite in the growing mix.) Do other people experience this? How do you tackle it? I very often use Safsol and I was surprised to see that it claims to have very little nitrogen or phosphate, so this may overcome any possible problems. (What IS in that liquid concentrate, you may well ask?)

I germinated these plants with a lad from a local primary school. We each set up a punnet of the species so I still have a second group to pot on, this time carefully looking for the presence of nodules and perhaps their implications. (Excess seedlings will go to the school for planting in the schoolyard.)

The above is just one more fascinating facet of dealing with the Acacia genus. I hope your readers will have some of their own observations and practices that will help in the growing of healthy, productive Acacia plants.

## Photos of Wattle Places

In our previous Newsletter, we referred to Victoria Tanner's suggestion that we should have a "sort of competition" for photos of locations called "wattle" or that have "wattle" in the name. We haven't received many photos! Helen van Riet commented that "There's a "Wattle Hill" near Sorrell in Tasmania, and a "Wattle Grove" near Cygnet", but doesn't have any photos. So, in the absence of other contributions, I think I win this month's prize!



Wattle Café at Hurstbridge

Photo: Bill Aitchison



The photo above is of the Wattle Café at Hurstbridge, in Melbourne's outer east. This particular Café has a long and rich history, and was referred to in the following article that appeared in the Hurstbridge Advertiser on 5 August 1932:

“National Floral Emblem

The picturesqueness of the wattle at this time of the year reminds residents of 20 years ago of the first wattle train to Hurstbridge on August 31, 1912, which carried 980 passengers. At that time there was a fine forest not far from the station of green wattle on the property formerly owned by Dr. Alex Buttner, the trees then being about eight years old. The richness of the wattle has been described as being greater in those days than at present. Mr. Frank Taylor, who opened the first store at Hurstbridge in February 1911, and was secretary to the opening of the railway celebration in June 1912, took a great interest in the wattle, for several years he invited Boy Scouts and newsboys to his home to gather wattle for the Children's Hospital, and he personally attended to its free conveyance in the train to Melbourne. This lover of the wattle passed away in 1927. Mrs. Taylor, his widow, retains memories by calling her cafe the "Wattle" Cafe.”

Hurstbridge indeed has a long association with wattle, and these days holds an Annual Wattle Festival, this year's being held on Sunday 25 August – this year marks a celebration of 10 years of the festival.

Note: Hopefully, someone may send us a photo for our June Newsletter.

## Acacia - A Wonder Plant

Venture is the magazine of the Swinburne University of Technology, and a recent issue (Issue 3, 2012) included two references to research being undertaken involving Acacias. The first relates to research being carried out into the threat of dryland salinity to food production, native landscapes and river systems. It is noted that some Acacia species are known to be salt tolerant. Using genetic markers and working from four Acacia species known to be salt tolerant, the team undertaking the research has so far identified 30 other species with similar characteristics.

It was noted in the article that Acacias have a wide range of useful by-products, with the following quote taken from the article:

“The acacia could be described as a wonder plant – yielding the following by-products: High-value timber for furniture, charcoal for energy production or steelmaking, fodder for livestock, biodiesel, edible and nutritional seeds, pharmaceuticals.”

In a separate article in the magazine, reference is made to research being carried out at Swinburne in relation to the

potential for antibiotic drugs of a number of Australian aboriginal medicinal plants. This research has shown that some of these plants show potential for prevention and management of Type 2 diabetes. Two Acacias are included in this research, being *A. ligulata* (Sandhill Wattle) and *A. kempeana* (Wanderrie Wattle).

If you are interested in reading these articles, let me know.

## Books

### Wattles of the Burra Range

By Betsy R Jackes and Keith Townsend

This is a new book prepared by Betsy Jackes and Keith Townsend of SGAP Townsville. It provides a key to the wattle species of the Burra Range, between Pentland and Torrens Creek west of Townsville, and nearby areas. The book includes tips on identification and colour illustrations of either fresh specimens or, in a few cases, photos of herbarium specimens.

Betsy Jackes, who is a botanist and Associate Professor at James Cook University, has written the text, and Keith Townsend has provided the illustrations.

The book includes 57 species of Acacia and 4 species of Vachellia.

It sells for \$20, plus postage of \$3. Orders may be sent to SGAP Townsville Branch, PO Box 363, Aitkenvale, Qld 4814, or email Keith Townsend at [noeltownsend@bigpond.com](mailto:noeltownsend@bigpond.com).

### Bee Friendly – A Planting guide for European honeybees and Australian native pollinators

By Mark Leech

Published by Rural Industries Research & Development Corporation

330 pages, published 15 January 2013

Thanks to Matthew Alexandra for drawing this new publication to our attention. This book provides a planting guide for bee forage, and is intended to assist in increasing available bee food, both in the backyard and in the bush. The book contains information relating to 193 species (both native and exotic), being a selection of useful bee forage.

Five species of Acacia are included, being *A. victoriae*, *A. doratoxylon*, *A. baileyana*, *A. implexa* and *A. aneura*. For each species, the information provided includes a description, preferred growing conditions, uses and details regarding honey and pollen production.



The book can be purchased (\$60) from the RIRDC, or alternatively a pdf version can be downloaded (free) from their website ([www.rirc.gov.au](http://www.rirc.gov.au)).

## Seed Bank

Our thanks to the following members who have donated seed to our Seed Bank:

Doug White, Joanna McLachlan, Brendon Stahl, Peter Cox, Judy Barker, Alan Gibb, Victoria Tanner, Bill Aitchison and John Nevin

Species added to the Seed Bank since the list included in our December newsletter are the following:

*assimilis* ssp *atroviridis*, *brevifolia*, *browniana* var. *endlicheri*, *burbridgeae*, *dealbata* ssp *dealbata*, *hispidula*, *ingramii*, *leucoclada* ssp *leucoclada*, *macnuttiana*, *nana* ssp *nana*, *nova-anglica*, *phasmoides*, *pravissima* prostrate, *sporadica*, *torringtonensis* and *undoolyana*.

Note that our Seed Bank list previously included *assimilis* and *dealbata*, but these seeds had not been identified to subspecies level (unlike the new donations).

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 18 packets maximum in each order (negotiable). There is a charge of \$2.40 in relation to each order, to cover the cost of a padded post bag and postage. The \$2.40 may be paid in stamps (eg four 60 cent stamps) or by direct credit to our Group's bank account. Some members include an additional payment with their annual subscriptions to cover the Seed Bank charge.

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) (emails to this address go directly to both Victoria and Bill Aitchison). 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 membership is as follows:

\$7 (newsletter sent by email)  
\$10 (hardcopy of newsletter posted in Australia)  
\$20 (hardcopy of newsletter posted overseas)

Subscriptions (due 1 July each year) 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)).

## Stop Press Bendigo's Wattle Spectacular

This year (on the weekend of 31 August and 1 September), the Bendigo Native Plant Group are again holding their Australian Flower Show and Wattle Spectacular. As part of the weekend, the Group arrange tours to the local wattle areas – it is a great area for wattles. If there are any members of our Study Group who would be interested in visiting Bendigo at this time and getting together with other members, I am sure that we can arrange some tours around the local area, as well as the opportunity to attend the Show (and to buy some of the many species of Acacia for sale).

If you may be interested, perhaps you could let me know – if there is interest we can take things further from there (either email me at [acaciastudygroup@gmail.com](mailto:acaciastudygroup@gmail.com), or phone on (03) 98723583).

The photo below was taken last year on one of the wattle tours run as part of the Show. It shows a nice stand of Whirrakee Wattle (*Acacia williamsonii*) on Whipstick Road.



*Acacia williamsonii*

Photo Eric Wilkinson