

WATTLE

Acacias of Australia

Acacia dictyophleba F.Muell.



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Image courtesy of Northern Territory Herbarium



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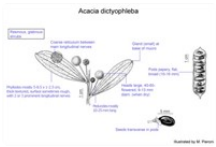
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Acacia dictyophleba occurrence map.
Occurrence map generated via Atlas of Living Australia (<https://www.ala.org.au>).

Common Name

Waxy Wattle, Sandhill Wattle, Feather-veined Wattle

Family

Fabaceae

Distribution

Widespread in the N and central arid zone where it extends from the Pilbara region in W.A. eastwards through southern N.T. and north-eastern S.A. to south-west Qld; particularly common in the Simpson Desert.

Description

Shrub 1–4 m high, **glabrous** and **resinous**. Branchlets often sparsely **tuberculate**. Phyllodes **oblanceolate**, (4–) 5–8.5 cm long, (9–) 10–25 (–28) mm wide, l:w = 3–7 (–11), **obtuse**, **mucronulate**, thickly **coriaceous**, smooth or asperulate by small tubercles on nerves, dark green but soon aging grey-green or an attractive blue-grey, with resin sometimes drying white (especially over nerves); prominent **longitudinal** nerves 2 or 3, with secondary nerves forming a coarse, open **reticulum**; basal **gland** prominent, elongate, 1–3 mm long, with an obscure smaller **gland** at base of the minute apical point. Inflorescences **simple**, 1–3 per **axil**; peduncles 10–25 (–50) mm long, **ebracteate** at base; heads **globular** or **obloid**, 9–13 mm diam. when dry, densely 40–60-flowered, golden. Flowers 5-**merous**; sepals united almost to their apices. Pods **stipitate**, **narrowly oblong**, flat, raised over seeds alternately on each side, to 9 cm long, 1–1.6 cm wide, firmly **chartaceous**, often \pm **verniceous**. Seeds transverse, c. 4 mm long, arillate.

Phenology

Flowers Mar.–Sept., main flush May–early July.

Habitat

Grows mainly in deep red or red-brown siliceous sand, on dunes or interdunal areas; sometimes found on shallow stony soils.

Specimens

W.A.: about 88 km NW of Wittenoom on the road to Roebourne, *B.R.Maslin* 5569 (BRI, NSW, PERTH). N.T.: 20 km NNW of Finke Settlement, *D.E.Albrecht* 5647 (BRI, DNA, PERTH). S.A.: edge of Simpson Desert, 8 miles [12.8 km] W of Purni Well, *D.E.Symon* 3277 (AD, K). Qld: Hammond Downs, near (E of) Windorah, *S.T.Blake* 12057 (BRI).

Notes

Acacia dictyophleba regenerates from seed after fire and also resprouts vigorously from the root stock; it is used extensively in mine site rehabilitation programs in the Pilbara, W.A. It is attractive shrub with horticultural potential on account of its large golden heads and often blue-grey foliage that is coated with a white bloom at certain times of the year. The Aboriginal use of *A. dictyophleba* in central Australia is discussed by P.Latz, *Bushfires & Bushtucker* 96 (1995) but it is probable that most of the information contained in this account refers to *A. melleodora*.

Acacia melleodora, *A. jensenii* and *A. sabulosa* may ultimately prove better placed as infraspecific taxa of *A. dictyophleba*. *Acacia jensenii* and *A. sabulosa* are most readily distinguished from both *A. dictyophleba* and *A. melleodora* by their generally more elongate and predominantly 1-nerved phyllodes. *Acacia melleodora* is

especially close to *A. dictyophleba* but is usually recognised by its smaller flowers and flower heads and by its generally smaller, less coarsely nerved phyllodes. There are, however, some specimens from W.A. that appear to be intermediate for these characters (*vide* B.R.Maslin, *J. Adelaide Bot. Gard.* 2: 307 (1980)).

Some plants from the northern Gibson Desert and the Little Sandy Desert, W.A., are unusual and may represent a distinct taxon. They are spindly, single-stemmed shrubs 3–6 m tall with 2-nerved, rather large phyllodes (mostly 4–6 × 1–1.5 cm), similar to those found on *A. dictyophleba*. However, the phyllodes are not thickly coriaceous or coarsely nerved like that species and, furthermore, their heads are only 6–8 mm diam. when dry (smaller than those of *A. dictyophleba*, but within the range of *A. melleodora*). Principally on account of their distinctive growth habit, these plants were included by B.R.Maslin, *Fl. Centr. Australia* 132 (1981) under *A. jensenii* (e.g. 4.8 km W of Well 23, Canning Stock Route, N of Lake Disappointment, *B.R.Maslin* 2275, CANB, PERTH), but their 2-nerved phyllodes distinguishes them from that species. These spindly plants are favoured by Aborigines for making spears.

FOA Reference

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

Author

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



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