

WATTLE

Acacias of Australia

Acacia fragilis Maiden & Blakely



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See illustration.



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

Family

Fabaceae

Distribution

Common from near Carnamah SSE to the Cunderdin–Merredin area in south-western W.A. Outlying populations occur near Holt Rock (c. 170 km SE of Merredin), near Boondi (c. 190 km E of Merredin) and on Ponton Ck, 20.5 km E of Zanthus (c. 600 km E of Merredin). Additionally, a variant from near Grasspatch (N of Esperance) and the Ravensthorpe Ra. is noted below.

Description

Dense rounded shrub 0.5–2.5 m high. New shoots golden-sericeous. Branchlets terete, glabrous. Phyllodes reclined to erect, straight to shallowly curved, terete to subterete, 3.5–7 (–8) cm long, (0.5–) 1–1.3 mm diam., arcuate-acuminate to caudate-acuminate with a slender 1.5–7 mm long, puberulous or appressed-puberulous at first, ±glabrescent, rarely glabrous tip, glabrous (except usually tip), with 8 nerves but sometimes appearing more when dry because of longitudinal wrinkling; nerves raised, distant; gland to 0.5 mm long, not always evident, (2–) 7–14 mm above pulvinus; pulvinus 1.5–3 mm long, cylindrical. Inflorescences simple, 2 per axil; peduncles 4–5.5 (–8) mm long, ±appressed-puberulous or glabrous; heads globular, 4–4.5 mm diam., (12–) 23–31-flowered, golden. Flowers 5-merous; sepals free; petals usually free. Pods linear, raised on alternating sides over and slightly constricted between seeds, 5–7 cm long, 2–3 (–4.5) mm wide, thin-crustaceous, shiny, glabrous. Seeds longitudinal, elliptic, 2.5–3 mm long, dull, brown; aril subterminal.

Habitat

Grows in sand, gravelly or clayey sand and rocky or sandy loam in heath and on sandplains with mallee eucalypts and wattles.

Specimens

W.A.: Ravensthorpe Ra., *E.M.Bennett* 2340 (CANB, K, MEL, NY, PERTH); c. 3 km by road SE of Kondut on road to Cadoux, *L.Haegi* 1109 (NSW, PERTH); 6 km S of Tammin, *B.R.Maslin* 2319 (BRI, K, PERTH); 1.6 km from Wubin towards Mount Magnet, *B.R.Maslin* 3529 (CANB, MEL, NY, PERTH); Ponton Ck, 20.5 km E of Zanthus, *J.Taylor* 552 *et al.* (CANB, PERTH).

Notes

Acacia fragilis is a highly variable species distinguished somewhat arbitrarily from its closest relative, *A. uncinella*; see R.S.Cowan & B.R.Maslin, *Nuytsia* 10: 237–249 (1995), for discussion. All characters vary to some extent but, in general, *A. fragilis* is recognised by its longer phyllodes the apices of which terminate in a long to very long, gently curved, pubescent tip; the pubescence on the tip varies from appressed to spreading, is always present on juvenile phyllodes and usually persists on at least some of the mature ones. Union of the petals in *A. uncinella* which, in part, distinguishes it from *A. fragilis*, appears sporadically without any obvious pattern in *A. fragilis* as well. There is also some evidence of hybridisation between the two species in the area where their ranges overlap.

Acacia fragilis together with *A. assimilis*, *A. aulacophylla*, *A. consanguinea*, *A. ophiolithica* and *A. uncinella* constitutes the 'A. fragilis group'; see R.S.Cowan & B.R.Maslin, *Nuytsia* 10: 237–249 (1995), for further notes.

Specimens from the Ravensthorpe Ra. and near Grasspatch are attributed to *A. fragilis* largely on the basis of their phyllode length but they occur within the range of *A. uncinella* and share characters of both species. The single Zanthus collection has narrow phyllodes and long peduncles. Resolution of this complex is clearly still to be sought.

FOA Reference

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

Author

Minor edits by J.Reid

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



URL: <https://keys.lucidcentral.org/keys/v3/wattle>
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