

WATTLE

Acacias of Australia

Acacia holosericea A.Cunn. ex G.Don



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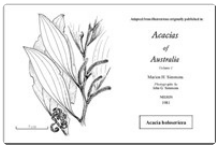
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Acacia holosericea occurrence map.
Occurrence map generated via Atlas of Living
Australia (<https://www.ala.org.au>).

Common Name

Candelabra Wattle, Soap Bush, Silver Wattle, Silver-leaved Wattle

Family

Fabaceae

Distribution

Widespread in northern Australia extending from near Derby, W.A., E across the N.T. to near Rockhampton in eastern Qld. Also scattered occurrences in arid regions at Hamersley Ra. Natl Park, W.A., through central N.T. and to SW of Blackall, Qld.

Description

Shrub or **tree** 3–9 m high. **Branchlets** acutely angled but normally \pm terete by 20–30 cm below apex, usually **sericeous**, sometimes **glabrous**. Young shoots silvery **sericeous**, sometimes **glabrous**. **Phyllodes** obliquely narrowly **elliptic**, 10–20 (–25) cm long, (1.5–) 2–5 (–6) cm wide, **straight** (not shallowly **recurved** at apices), silvery dull green or **sub-glaucous**, usually **sericeous**, with unequal base; **muco** 1–3 mm long; with normally 3 prominent **longitudinal** nerves, 2 of which are basally **confluent** and sometimes **contiguous** with the lower margin of the **phyllode**, the minor veins forming a somewhat open, longitudinally orientated **reticulum**; glands basal and at base of **muco** on at least some phyllodes. **Inflorescences** **rudimentary** racemes with **axes** to 0.5 mm long; peduncles 3–7 mm long, **sericeous**, sometimes **glabrous**; spikes normally 2–4 cm long, golden; bracteoles **linear-spathulate**, 1–1.5 mm long. **Flowers** 5-**merous**; sepals united; petals usually **sericeous**. **Pods** tightly and often somewhat irregularly **coiled**, 2.5–4 mm wide, thinly **crustaceous** to **coriaceous-crustaceous**, \pm **glabrous**, remaining as entangled clumps following **dehiscence**. **Seeds** **longitudinal**, **oblong-elliptic**, 3.5 mm long, shiny, dark brown; **aril** bright yellow.

Phenology

Flowers Apr.–Oct.

Habitat

Grows in sometimes gravelly sand or loam, commonly forming communities along watercourses.

Specimens

W.A.: Barker R., 2.5 km S of Mt Hart HS, *D.J.Edinger 455* (BRI, DNA, PERTH); Hancock Gorge, Hamersley Ra. Natl Park, *M.E.Trudgen 1370* (BRI, PERTH). N.T.: Mini Mini Ck, 22 km WSW of Murgarella Settlement, *J.H.Ross 3331* (MEL *n.v.* PERTH); Mt Ultim, Dulcie Ra., *B.G.Thomson 2182* (DNA). Qld: Budgerigar, SW of Yaraka, *C.F.Puttock AQ421303* (BRI).

Notes

Acacia holosericea is a fast-growing, short-lived species that has poor coppicing ability; the wood makes an excellent fuel but unlike its close relative *A. colei*, *A. holosericea* has limited potential for the production of human food. The phyllodes, bark and pods are used traditionally by N.T. Aborigines for pruritic skin conditions, headache and tropical infection, *fide* Aboriginal Communities of the Northern Territory (1993), *Traditional Aboriginal Medicines N. Territory Australia* 16–19 (Conservation Commission of the Northern Territory of Australia, Darwin) and as a bush soap, fish poison and for making spear shafts.

Branchlets, phyllodes and petals are sometimes glabrous but more commonly they are sericeous with appressed or subappressed hairs. There appears to be a continuous gradation from densely hairy to glabrous individuals; both *A. holosericea* var. *glabrata* and var. *multispirea* were based on \pm glabrous specimens, *fide* L.Pedley, *Austrobaileya* 1: 182 (1978). Only rarely are the branchlets pubescent with spreading hairs (e.g. Petford, Qld, *N.Hall H83/63*, PERTH). Further study is needed to assess the taxonomic significance of variation in indumentum within this species. Specimens with the widest phyllodes occur in the northern parts of Qld and the N.T. (e.g. Elco Is., *J.R.Maconochie 2147*, BRI, CANB, DNA, L) and may sometimes resemble *A. neurocarpa*, but they seem to be *A. holosericea* on account of their short, linear-spathulate bracteoles and their slender branchlets which, although apically angled, are soon terete. The phyllodes of *A. colei* often superficially resemble those of *A. holosericea*.

In the light of genetic studies by G.F.Moran *et al.* (1992), in A.House & C.Harwood (eds) *Australian Dry-Zone Acacias for Human Food* (CSIRO, Canberra), the taxonomic status of *A. holosericea* was reviewed by B.R.Maslin & L.A.J.Thomson, *Austral. Syst. Bot.* 5: 729–743 (1992). Consequently *A. holosericea* is now more narrowly defined, and *A. neurocarpa* and *A. colei* are now excluded from it (see the latter two species for further details). Some of the species related to these three include *A. cowleana*, *A. elachantha*, *A. grandifolia*, *A. mangium*, *A. nesophila*, *A. pellita* and *A. sericoflora*.

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:



Australian Government
Department of the Environment and Energy



Department of
Biodiversity, Conservation
and Attractions
Western Australian Herbarium



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

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