

WATTLE

Acacias of Australia

Acacia kempeana F.Muell.



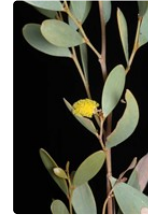
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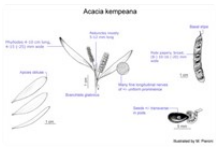
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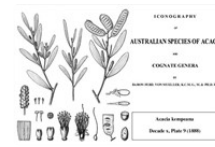
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Acacia kempeana occurrence map.
Occurrence map generated via Atlas of Living Australia (<https://www.ala.org.au>).

Common Name

Witchetty Bush, Wanderrie Wattle

Family

Fabaceae

Distribution

Occurs in all mainland States except Vic. and N.S.W.

Description

Spreading **shrub** or **tree** to 5 m high, commonly **multi-stemmed**. Bark furrowed, usually grey or brown. **Branchlets terete** except at apices, grey or brownish, slightly **scuffy**, **glabrous**. Phyllodes **oblong-elliptic** to **oblong-oblancoate** or narrowly **elliptic**, flat, **straight** or slightly **incurved**, 4–10 cm long, 4–15 (–25) mm wide, l:w = 3–13 (–17), with **obtuse** and often **mucronulate** apices, **coriaceous**, grey- or blue-green, **glabrous**, **resinous** when young, very finely multistriate with the parallel nerves very close together (rarely a few **anastomosing**) and of \pm uniform prominence; **gland** \pm basal. Peduncles 5–12 (–15) mm long, **glabrous**. Spikes 1 or 2 per upper **axil**, 1–2.5 cm long, **dense**, bright golden. Flowers 5-**merous**; **calyx** **cupular**, dissected to 1/3, hairy mostly at base; **corolla** 1.3–2 mm long, 2–2.5 times as long as **calyx**. Pods **oblong** to **narrowly oblong**, flat, 2–7 cm long, (0.8–) 1–1.6 (–2) cm wide, **chartaceous**, finely transversely **reticulate**, **glabrous**; **stipitate**. Seeds transverse to slightly **oblique**.

Phenology

Flowers Mar.–Aug., probably flowers whenever temperature and soil moisture are high. Fruiting mainly Aug.–Nov.

Habitat

Widely distributed in arid areas, where it occurs usually on stony hillsides or in coarse textured alluvial soils; often abundant in mulga woodlands on red sandy loam plains.

Specimens

W.A.: Beringarra Stn HS, *J.S.Beard* 6626 (NSW, PERTH). N.T.: Mt Gillen, Alice Springs, *M.J.Barritt* 373 (CANB, DNA, K, MEL, NSW). S.A.: 104 km N of Oodnadatta, *P.L.Milthorpe* 3061 (NSW). Qld: c. 155 km NW of Windorah, May 1973, [*D.E.]Boyland* (BRI), *vide* L.Pedley, *Austrobaileya* 1: 154 (1978).

Notes

Aborigines obtained witchetty grubs from the roots, as well as the bush providing edible gum and seed (A.Urban, *Wildflowers & Pl. Centr. Australia* 84, 1990). Details on fire tolerance and Aboriginal use of *A. kempeana* are given by P.Latz, *Bushfires & Bushtucker* 102 (1995). Arid zone pastoralists regard this species as a 'last resort' fodder; it has good palatability but low nutritive value and over-grazing will often cause death of plants.

Acacia kempeana as currently defined is very variable (especially in W.A.) and in need of critical revision. It is closely allied to *A. sibirica* and *A. duriuscula*; also related to *A. aprepta*. It is especially close to *A. sibirica* which is normally, but perhaps only arbitrarily, distinguished by its narrower pods (mostly 3–5 mm wide) with \pm longitudinal seeds, and narrower, more elongate phyllodes (mostly 1–5 mm wide with l:w = 8–60). However, not all specimens can be confidently placed using these attributes. Further study of these two variable species is needed, not only to elucidate their complex patterns of variation, but also to clarify their taxonomic boundary. Phyllodes of *A. kempeana* sometimes superficially resemble those of *A. petricola*, but the two species are not especially closely related.

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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Edited by B.R.Maslin

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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