

WATTLE

Acacias of Australia

Acacia myrtifolia (Sm.) Willd.



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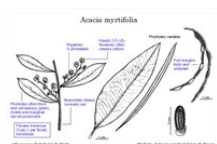
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Acacia myrtifolia occurrence map.
Occurrence map generated via Atlas of Living Australia (<https://www.ala.org.au>).

Common Name

Myrtle Wattle, Red Stem Wattle (Red-stemmed Wattle), South Australian Silver Wattle

Family

Fabaceae

Distribution

Widespread and common in temperate southern Australia, occurring in all States (except N.T.).

Description

Glabrous bushy **shrub**, usually 0.5–3 m high. New shoots often red. **Branchlets** angled, prominently ribbed, normally red. **Stipules** early **caducous**. Phyllodes **erect**, **±oblique**, commonly narrowly **elliptic** to **oblanceolate**, sometimes **linear** to **linear-elliptic**, normally 2–13 cm long, usually 4–30 mm wide, **acute** or **obtuse-mucronate**, sometimes coarsely **pungent**, usually thick and **coriaceous**, smooth, green; **midrib** and marginal nerves prominent; **lateral** nerves absent or obscure; **gland** prominent, mostly 0.5–2 cm above **pulvinus**. Inflorescences 3–20-headed racemes; racemes **axes** 1–6 (–12) cm long; peduncles (2–) 3–12 mm long, stout; heads **±globular**, 2–5-flowered, sometimes to 8-flowered, usually creamy yellow. Flowers 4-**merous**, large; sepals united into a **truncate** to sinuously lobed **calyx**; **ovary** **tomentulose**. Pods **erect**, **linear**, **curved**, to 9 cm long, 3–5 mm wide, **crustaceous** to subwoody; marginal **nerve** thick, **undulate**. Seeds **longitudinal**, **narrowly oblong**, 3.5–4.5 mm long, shiny, brown or greyish brown; **aril** terminal.

Habitat

Grows in sand or sand over laterite or granite, in forest, woodland, scrub or heath, often in coastal or near-coastal areas.

Specimens

W.A.: near Spencer's house [Strawberry Hill Farm, Albany], *L.Preiss 920* (G, LD, MO, NY, P, STR). S.A.: Manning Reserve near MaLaren Flat, *D.J.E.Whibley 1331* (AD). Qld: Kroombit Tops, c. 65 km SSW of Gladstone, *W.J.F.McDonald 1014* (BRI). N.S.W.: Belmont North, *T.Tame 2039* (PERTH). Vic.: Dandenongs, Menzies Ck area, *J.H.Ross 2791* (AD *n.v.*, BRI *n.v.*, CANB *n.v.*, HO *n.v.*, MEL *n.v.*, PERTH). Tas.: Clarks Is., Furneaux Group, *J.S.Whinray 1692* (MEL).

Notes

Acacia myrtifolia together with eight close relatives from W.A., namely *A. celsitriifolia*, *A. clydonophora*, *A. disticha*, *A. durabilis*, *A. heterochroa*, *A. nervosa*, *A. obovata*, and *A. pygmaea* comprise the '*A. myrtifolia* group' (fide B.R.Maslin, *Nuytsia* 10: 85–86 (1995)). *Acacia gilbertii* (leaves bipinnate) should probably also be added to this group, fide P.Guinet *et al.*, *Bot. J. Linn. Soc.* 80: 53–68 (1980). *Acacia urophylla* and *A. scalpelliformis* are not far removed from the '*A. myrtifolia* group' even though they have more than one nerve per phyllode; see J.Vassal, *Bull. Soc. Hist. Nat., Toulouse* 108: 1–127 (1972).

As discussed by B.R.Maslin, *Nuytsia* 10: 99 (1995), it is likely that the type locality, and probably also the other collecting details given in the protologue of *A. acutifolia*, are erroneous. This name is referable to the long phyllode variant of *A. myrtifolia* from W of Albany.

In W.A. this is a somewhat variable species and is here broadly circumscribed because detailed analyses of variation patterns are needed to ascertain appropriate ranks for the variants noted below. Specimens from forest regions at the western end of the range (roughly W of Albany, and some specimens from Kangaroo Is., S.A.) have long, linear to very narrowly elliptic phyllodes with l:w mostly < 10 (elsewhere l:w is > 10). This variant has been described as *A. marginata*, *A. myrtifolia* var. *angustifolia* and *A. acutifolia* (see below). A specimen with especially large phyllodes (to 13 × 3.5 cm) collected from Cape Riche (i.e. *K.Newbey 4466*, PERTH) presumably corresponds to the entity described as *A. myrtifolia* var. *major*. The most inland specimens in W.A. have bright lemon yellow heads (e.g. Bending Reserve, c. 18 km due ENE of Bending Siding, *B.R.Maslin 5765*, CANB, K, MEL, NY, PERTH) but elsewhere in W.A. the heads are creamy yellow; in eastern Australia the flower-heads are also sometimes bright lemon yellow. A prostrate variant of *A. myrtifolia* is recorded for the Sydney region by T.D.Auld & D.A.Morrison, *Austral. J. Bot.* 40: 1–11 (1992).

This fast growing and attractive ornamental was one of the earliest Australian plants in cultivation in Europe.

FOA Reference

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

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Minor edits by J.Rogers

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



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Department of the Environment and Energy



Department of
Biodiversity, Conservation
and Attractions
Western Australian Herbarium



Australian
Biological
Resources
Study



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