

WATTLE

Acacias of Australia

Acacia ulicifolia (Salisb.) Court



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

Common Name

Juniper Wattle, Prickly Moses

Family

Fabaceae

Distribution

Occurs in the Great Divide of eastern Australia from the Grampians, Vic., through N.S.W. and A.C.T. to the Blackdown Tablelands and Ravenshoe in Qld; also found in NE Tas.

Description

Erect often straggly **shrub** mostly 1–2 m high. **Branchlets** sparsely to moderately **hirsutellous** to **puberulous**, at least at extremities. **Stipules persistent**, frequently > 1 mm long. **Phyllodes** often **crowded**, **sessile**, **scattered**, sometimes some **subverticillate**, **patent**, **linear-triangular**, flat except \pm **quadrangular** when very narrow, 5–15 (–18) mm long but often < 10 mm, 0.5–1.5 mm wide, **pungent**, **rigid**, green, usually **glabrous**; **midrib** prominent on each face; **gland** obscure, 0.5–3 mm above base. **Inflorescences simple**, 1 per **axil**; **peduncles** 7–15 (–20) mm long, slender, 0.3–0.5 mm diam. when dry, mostly **glabrous**; basal bracts 3 and fused; heads **globular**, 20–35-flowered, creamy yellow; bracteoles **acuminate**, not or scarcely **exserted** beyond flowers in buds. Flowers **5-merous**; sepals free to 1/2-united; petals 1-nerved. Pods normally slightly constricted between seeds, 2–6 cm long, 4–6 mm wide, thinly **coriaceous**, dark brown to black, **glabrous** or subglabrous. Seeds **longitudinal**, **oblong** to **elliptic**, 3.5–5 mm long, normally **mottled**, **exarillate**; **funicle filiform**.

Phenology

Flowers Apr.–Oct.

Habitat

Usually grows in sand (often over sandstone), in heath or dry sclerophyll woodland or open forest.

Specimens

Qld: near Ravenshoe, *S.J.Dansie 203a* (BRI *n.v.*). N.S.W.: c. 1.6 km NE of Kariong, *R.Coveny 4876* (AD, B, BRI, CANB, G, K, L, LE, NSW, PERTH, U, US). A.C.T.: Kowen, *H.S.McKee 9570* (CANB). Vic.: c. 11 km due SSW of Mallacoota P.O., *A.C.Beaugehole 31167* (MEL, PERTH). Tas.: Freycinet Peninsula, 19 Sept. 1962, *D.W.Shoobridge* (CANB).

Notes

Acacia ulicifolia together with *A. asparagoides*, *A. neobrachycarpa*, *A. brownii*, *A. echinula*, *A. gunnii* and *A. saxicola* comprise the 'A. *ulicifolia* group'. *Acacia quadrilateralis* and *A. siculiformis* are not far removed from this group. The important characters of the 'A. *ulicifolia* group' include the following: phyllodes small, pungent, 4-nerved (1-nerved per face when flat) with the adaxial nerve bifurcating at the gland; basal peduncular bracts 3, commonly fused; flowers 5-merous; funicle filiform, non-arillate. *Acacia brownii* is sometimes treated as a variety of *A. ulicifolia*, e.g. L.Pedley, *Austrobaileya* 1: 239 (1980). However, adoption of this approach would necessitate a similar reduction in rank for *A. asparagoides*, *A. echinula*, *A. saxicola* and perhaps also *A. neobrachycarpa*. Such changes warrant more study than has been possible to date.

Three variants, sometimes sympatric with the typical variant, occur on the north and central coast of N.S.W.: (1) a maritime variant characterised by its compact growth habit, sometimes reaching only 0.5 m in height (e.g. Tiona Beach, 8 km S of Forster, *E.F.Constable 1288*, NSW), (2) a slender phyllode variant (e.g. c. 4.8 km W of Wingham, 1.6 km SW of Koollee Flat, *H.Salasoo 2783*, NSW) and (3) a hairy phyllode variant (e.g. 10 km N of Dural, on the main road to Wiseman's Ferry, *M.D.Tindale s.n.*, NSW167328, PERTH).

Phyllodes and flower-heads resemble *A. rupicola*.

In central eastern N.S.W. there is intergradation of *A. asparagoides*, *A. brownii*, *A. echinula* and *A. ulicifolia*, particularly *A. ulicifolia* – *A. brownii* and *A. ulicifolia* – *A. echinula* and they may form hybrids, *fide* T.Tame, *Acacias SE Australia* 96 (1992). *Acacia ulicifolia* may be confused with narrow phyllode forms of *A. gunnii*; these two species are sometimes sympatric and possible hybrids between them are reported by T.J.Entwistle *et al.*, in N.G.Walsh & T.J.Entwistle (eds), *Fl. Victoria* 3: 630 (1996).

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



Australian Government
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