

Horticultural potential of *Acacia*

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SUMMARY

The wattle is an acknowledged plant icon of Australia, with Western Australia the hot spot for diversity: Western Australia has 500 of the 960 Australia species. With familiarity comes complacency, and possibly this genus has become a victim of this in the horticultural world. Its potential is vast, with the ability to influence all communities in the State. Strategic marketing of Western Australian species that have undergone horticultural development trials would ensure that the most attractive wattles would be utilised. Kings Park and Botanic Garden has devoted 0.7 hectare to the cultivation of c. 70 of the most decorative acacias. This is combined with public artwork to inspire and focus attention on the more attractive species. There are distinctive localised acacias in each major region of Western Australia which could be adopted by each community, giving them their own identity and sense of place. Cultivation with seed of local provenance will create ecologically sound initiatives and will help develop green corridors, linking natural remnant bushland throughout the region. Table 1 indicates the species considered suitable to create this effect.

HORTICULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACACIA

1. Ornamental species for home gardens

- ✓ Compact habit for small gardens and pot cultivation
- ✓ Unusual habit giving good architectural form for design purposes
- ✓ Dark green, soft foliage
- ✓ Grey, soft foliage
- ✓ Flowering regime, i.e. season, length of flowering, flowers complementing foliage
- ✓ Cut flowers and/or foliage
- ✓ Hardiness and ease of cultivation
- ✓ Suitability for a broad range of growing conditions
- ✓ Reliable performance under cultivation
- ✓ Attractive in a nursery container
- ✓ Potential for development to enhance the above features

2. Street scape potential (amenity horticulture)

- ✓ Creating a focused sense of place
- ✓ Reflect significant features of the local ecosystems
- ✓ Flowering to coincide with major events of the town, i.e. a flowering calendar
- ✓ Hardy and suitable for the site
- ✓ Longevity with minimal maintenance requirements
- ✓ Appropriate form/habit for situation

3. Road verge enhancement (sense of place)

- ✓ Creating a green approach to towns, especially to create a sense of place in denuded agricultural landscapes
- ✓ Mix local species to provide a long flowering display
- ✓ Reflecting biodiversity of the shire
- ✓ Conservation corridors
- ✓ Adapted species chosen to reflect soil type and produce a hardy, reliable performance
- ✓ Seed of local provenance to reflect biodiversity and their proven suitability for the region and soil type
- ✓ Formal recognition, e.g. Dalwallinu Shire Council adopting *Acacia anthochaera* as its floral emblem
- ✓ Strong, bold form for maximum impact, or mass planting to achieve similar effect

TABLE 1
Recommended species according to region in Western Australia

Region	Species	Flowering time	Size	Soil type
Kimberley				
	<i>A. coleii</i>	May-Sept	1.5-9 m	rocky, clay, loam, sandplains, stony ridges, drainage lines
	<i>A. delibrata</i>	Mar-Aug	2-8 m	rocky soils, sandstone, basalt or quartzite
	<i>A. dunnii</i>	Jan-Jun	1.5-6 m	rocky soils, either sandstone, basalt or quartzite
	<i>A. gardneri</i>	May-Aug	1.5-5 m	sandy soils and rocky sandstone soils
	<i>A. hippuroides</i>	Mar-Oct	0.3-1.6 m	sandy soils and rocky sandstone soils
	<i>A. kelleri</i>	Mar-Oct	1.5-7 m	sandstone, rocky hills, creek beds
	<i>A. lamprocarpa</i>	Apr-Jun	4-15 m	sandy soil
	<i>A. lycopodiifolia</i>	Jan-Sept	0.2-1 m	sandy and rocky soil
	<i>A. lysiphloia</i>	May-Sept	1-4 m	sand loam and clay, wet areas
Pilbara				
	<i>A. adoxa</i>	Apr-Oct	1 m	sand dunes, stony ridges
	<i>A. bivenosa</i>	Apr-Nov	0.5-3 m	adapts to many soils, particularly sandy soils
	<i>A. coriacea</i>	Mar-Aug	1-10 m	sandy soils, limestone and coastal
	<i>A. cyperophylla</i> var. <i>omearana</i>	Mar-Apr	4-10 m	alluvial stony soils
	<i>A. orthocarpa</i>	Mar-Jul	1-3 m	sandy soils
	<i>A. paraneura</i>	Jun-Sept	3-8 m	sandy, clay and rocky soils
	<i>A. pyrifolia</i>	Apr-Oct	0.5-4 m	rocky soils
	<i>A. spondylophylla</i>	May-Aug	<1 m	sandy, rocky soils
	<i>A. trachycarpa</i>	May-Oct	1-4 m	sandy, rocky soils
	<i>A. tumida</i>	Apr-Oct	2-9 m	variety of soils
	<i>A. validinervia</i>	Jul-Aug	1-4 m	variety of soils
Gascoyne/ Goldfields				
	<i>A. aneura</i> (many forms)	Feb-July	1-10 m	variety of soils
	<i>A. craspedocarpa</i>	Mar-Sept	1-4 m	clay/loam soils
	<i>A. cyperophylla</i> var. <i>cyperophylla</i>	Jul-Aug	3-10 m	sandy and rocky along creeks/rivers
	<i>A. demissa</i>	April-Aug	1-4 m	clay/loam soils
	<i>A. grasbyi</i>	May-Oct	2-4.5 m	variety of soils
	<i>A. hemiteles</i>	May-Oct	0.5-2 m	variety of soils
	<i>A. palustris</i>		2-4 m	alluvial soils
	<i>A. sibilans</i>		3-7 m	sand/loam
	<i>A. wanyu</i>	Mar-Jul	1.5-5 m	clay/loam, sand
Arid interior				
	<i>A. dictyophleba</i>	Mar-Sep	0.5-4 m	sand/stony
	<i>A. murrayana</i>	Aug-Nov	2-5 m	sand
	<i>A. papyrocarpa</i>	Aug-Nov	2-8 m	sandy/loam, calcareous soils
	<i>A. rhodophloia</i>	May/Oct	1-4 m	sand/gravel
Northern Wheatbelt				
	<i>A. ancistrophylla</i>	Aug-Oct	0.5-2.5 m	sand
	<i>A. anthochaera</i>	Aug-Dec	1-5 m	sand/loam
	<i>A. guinetii</i>	Jun-Sep	0.3-2 m	gravelly
	<i>A. multispicata</i>	Mar-Oct	0.2-2 m	sand
Central Wheatbelt				
	<i>A. acuminata</i>	Jul-Oct	1-7 m	variety of soils
	<i>A. anfractuosa</i>	Jul-Dec	1-4 m	sand
	<i>A. denticulosa</i>	Sep-Oct	1-4 m	sand/loam/granite
	<i>A. merinthophora</i>	May-Sep	1-4 m	sand
	<i>A. microbotrya</i>	Mar-Jul	1-7 m	variety of soils
	<i>A. rossei</i>	Aug-Jan	1-3 m	sand
Southern Wheatbelt				
	<i>A. glaucoptera</i>	Aug-Dec	0.4-1.2 m	gravel
	<i>A. lanuginophylla</i>	Jul-Oct	0.5-1.2 m	variety of soils
	<i>A. redolens</i>	Aug-Oct	0.5-3 m	variety of soils, often saline
South coast				
	<i>A. heterochroa</i>	Apr-Dec	0.3-2 m	gravelly
	<i>A. myrtifolia</i>	May-Jan	0.5-3 m	sand/gravel
	<i>A. rhamnophylla</i>	Aug-Sep	0.2-0.5 m	rocky sand/clay
	<i>A. subcaerulea</i>	Mar-Sep	1-3 m	sand
Forest				
	<i>A. browniana</i>	May-Nov	0.2-2 m	sand/gravel
	<i>A. drummondii</i>	Jun-Oct	0.3-1 m	sand/gravel
	<i>A. veronica</i>	Mar-Sep	1.5-10 m	sandy/loam