

ACACIA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER



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Note: If you wish to view or download previous Study Group Newsletters, they are available on the Study Group website.

The address is:

<http://anpsa.org.au/acaciaSG>

From The Leader

Dear Members

It is now only a few months until the ANPSA Biennial Conference being held in Canberra from 15-20 November. This is a great opportunity to catch up with some other members of our Study Group, and of course to take part in the great program put together by the organisers. Information relating to the Conference and details regarding registration are available on the Conference website <http://anpsa.org.au/conference2015>. Our Study Group will have a display at the Conference. If any Study Group member who will be at the Conference could help with the display, either in setting it up, or just in helping to keep an eye on it during the Conference, please let me know.

I am sure that many of our members will be aware of the Wattle Day Association, and the great work that it does in promoting National Wattle Day each year on 1 September. In many ways, our Study Group and the Wattle Day Association have a lot of common interests, and in particular we are both committed to promoting knowledge and appreciation of wattle, our national floral emblem. For a number of years we have had an informal relationship with the Wattle Day Association, but recently we have established a slightly more formal link with the Association. We are now a member organization of the Wattle Day Association, and we now welcome them as an honorary member of our Group. On the Wattle Day Association website there is a link to the Acacia page on the ANPSA website, and likewise the ANPSA website links to their website. Hopefully, the more formal relationship that we have established means that we can mutually benefit even more through cross promotion of our activities. The Wattle Day Association website is <http://www.wattleday.asn.au/>.

If any Study Group member has information regarding Wattle Day events taking place this year, both myself and I am sure the Wattle Day Association would be keen to hear about them.

The Seed Bank remains an important area of our Study Group's activities, under the very capable management of Victoria Tanner. One issue that has arisen is that in the last couple of years we have had three instances where seed orders that have been posted have not arrived with the members who have requested the seeds. We have spoken to Australia Post about the missing deliveries, but as might be expected, they advise that there is little they can do to track the lost items. We are thinking that in future, we should perhaps register at least the larger orders that are dispatched. If nothing else, we will closely monitor the situation with seed order deliveries in future. Note that the Seed Bank relies heavily upon donations of seed from members – we very much welcome donations of seed.

As for all Study Groups, membership fees fall due on 1 July each year – so it is now that time of year. It would be greatly appreciated if you could attend to this payment. Details regarding membership fees and payment options are shown on page 10. Some members have paid some years in advance, and some have still not paid for the last twelve months – if you wish to check on what date you are currently paid up to, please let me know. And if you do not wish to renew your membership, could you please let me know so that I can amend our membership records. Our membership fees remain the same as last year.

Bill Aitchison

Welcome

A special welcome to the following new members to the Study Group.

Neil Duncan, West Essendon, Vic
Michael Kalman, Thornleigh, NSW

From Members and Readers

Chris Clarke (Thornbury, Vic) dislikes the exotic trees (eg Manchurian Pears) being planted as street trees in his local area (in suburban Melbourne) and would like to see more native plants used. He has a few Eucalypts and Banksias to recommend, but is keen to research what Acacias could be recommended. He notes that *Acacia implexa* was planted a lot – but its form is not regarded as suitable – it looks fine in groups but too big for under wires and often too straggly on its own.

He comments that *Acacia pendula* looks dense and hardy, and he personally likes *Acacia pycnantha*. But he suggests

one issue is the reputation of being short lived.

He is interested in any recommendations that Study Group members may have in relation to relatively compact dense Acacias that might be good street trees that are not too short lived. Any suggestions?

Judy Clark (Hastings, UK) visited Australia during March and April. She writes (18 April) about her *Acacia acinacea*.

When I left for Australia in March *Acacia acinacea* was almost in flower. The weather was cool (for the time of year) while I was away and when I got back it was in full bloom, a golden cascade that shines out against the hedge behind it. I have had the plant for years. I kept it in a pot because I thought it was tender. I've no idea why I thought this and last year I checked, OK to -7°C, so out it went. And rewarded me by flowering far better than it ever did in a pot.

Jan Sked (Lawnton, Qld) writes (8 June 2015) as follows:

“The wattles are starting to flower along our roadsides just now. I had a trip to Biloela and Thangool last weekend and it was lovely to see all the golds and yellows and creams along the way. In my garden the *Acacia penninervis* is in flower again and an acacia I bought from a nursery as *A. grandifolia* is full of buds. I do not think it is *A. grandifolia*, as I have planted one of these that I grew from seed and it is not quite the same. Maybe when it flowers and sets seed I will be able to ID it.

I have an *A. baeuerlenii* ready to plant out. I love this wattle from the sandstone country of the Helidon Hills and Mt. Mee Forest. Don't know how it will go in my garden, as I have fairly clay soil and have lost previous plantings of this species.”

Jan also advised that unfortunately she lost her 30 year old *A. bakeri* this year. It was a plant that she had grown from seed from a tree in an environmental reserve on One Mile Creek in her area. The Reserve was named the Jan Sked Reserve some years ago by the local Shire Council, and it has been one of Jan's favourite places for botanising for many many years.

Thanks to **Terry Fewtrell (President, Wattle Day Association)** for drawing our attention to an article on *Acacia purpureopetala* in the April 2015 issue of Fronds, which is the Newsletter of the Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens. The Newsletter can be accessed at their website, <http://www.friendsanbg.org.au/newsletter>.

Peter Goldup (Mt Evelyn, Vic) has written regarding a couple of selections that he has been developing. One is a dwarf *Acacia baileyana* – which Peter advises is hard to strike, so it will never be commercial. The other is a dwarf *A. floribunda*, which is small, compact and with a profuse flowering habit – and which does strike easily. Is anyone aware of any dwarf forms of *A. floribunda* being available commercially anywhere?



Acacia floribunda dwarf form Photo: P Goldup

Bob Lorensene (Mulgrave, Vic) is a talented wood turner. Two years ago, he prepared a special Wattle Day celebration with an exhibition of his wood craft at the Wheelers Hill Library. That exhibition featured about 30 different species of Acacia, showing the differences in colour and the grains of the wood.

This coming September, he has another exhibition, again to celebrate Wattle Day. This exhibition is a display relating to Mulga, with particular emphasis on various items crafted from mulga.

Bob has one request – is there anyone who would be able to source a piece of mulga wood that he could incorporate into the display to show off the natural timber. Preferably, he would like a piece say about 12 inches long and 2-3 inches in diameter.

This year's exhibition is to be held through the month of September at the Wheelers Hill Library, Ferntree Gully Road, Wheelers Hill, Vic.

Arthur Baker (Gatton, Qld) reports (18 April) as follows:

Just a quick note on some germination results...No luck

whatsoever with *A. costiniana*, *A. dallachiana*, *A. dunnii* and *A. validinervia*. Approximately 10% germination with sp. Hollands Rock seed purchased from Nindethana, 2 seedlings slow but healthy. All tried by normal hot water method.

John & Riitta Boevink (Port Sorell, Tas) write (18 April):

Thanks for Newsletter 128! We had been wondering about the details of abrasion and nicking Acacia seed. The Newsletter gave us the detail we wanted. We had saved the *A. pendula* seed we received last year, because hot water was said to be insufficient, but we lacked confidence in the abrasion and nicking department. So that bit was most helpful, but the rest of 128 was also easy to read and informative, even if down in Tasmania conditions for many desert acacias are not likely to be suitable.

It seems to me that the strong and nearly continuous sun of the desert areas is the main ingredient missing here. We are certainly finding that to be true for some eucalypts.

Some Notes from Yallaroo

by Warren and Gloria Sheather, Yarrowyck, NSW

Acacia amoena

Acacia amoena, the Boomerang Wattle, occurs in eastern NSW as well as the eastern highlands of Victoria. There are populations in and near the Oxley Wild Rivers National Park on the Northern Tablelands of NSW.



Acacia amoena Photo: W and G Sheather

The Boomerang Wattle reaches a height of 2m in our garden. The phyllodes are straight or sometimes curved, up to 7cm long and 12 mm wide. There are 2-4 prominent glands along the margin (see image on following page). These multiple glands are a distinctive feature and are used in the identification of the species.



Acacia amoena phyllode Photo: W and G Sheather

The flowers are held in globular clusters and are bright yellow. Spring is the flowering period. Pods are straight or sometimes curved with a smooth surface. Pruning is appreciated after flowering.

Acacia amoena is one of many colourful, medium-sized wattles that could be grown using a range of species as an informal hedge. Even spring flowering wattles do not flower at the same time so a hedge of this type would carry flowers for a number of months. Even when resting from their bounteous blooming there would be interesting contrasts in foliage colour and phyllode shapes. *Acacia amoena*, *A. boormanii* and *A. cultriformis* are three that would grow agreeably together.

Acacia acinacea

Acacia acinacea, the Gold Dust Wattle, is a small to medium shrub that is found in south-eastern South Australia, Victoria and southern NSW. Phyllodes are small, elliptic with an offset mucro (pointed end). There is a small gland near the centre of the phyllode margin. The flowers are in globular heads with 8-20 flowers in each head. Blooms are bright golden and carried in pairs at the base of each phyllode. Spring is flowering period. This is when this species lives up to its common name. At this time stems really appear to be dusted with gold. Pruning after flowering is beneficial. Pods are twisted and up to 50 millimetres long.



Acacia acinacea Photo: W and G Sheather

Acacia acinacea is colourful and very hardy. We have specimens that are over ten years old in our garden. The species name probably refers to the twisted pods.



Acacia acinacea twisted pods Photo: W and G Sheather

The original specimen was probably collected in 1838 near Mount William in what is now the Grampians National Park, Victoria.

Propagate from seed and cuttings.

Acacia dawsonii

Acacia dawsonii is known as the Poverty or Mitta Wattle and is a small, erect shrub with long, narrow phyllodes. In our garden plants reach a height of about one metre. Golden yellow, globular flower heads cover plants in spring. Each flower head is composed of four to eight individual flowers. Compared to other wattles this is a small number of individual flowers per head. Pods are linear, straight to curved, about 60 cm long and 5 mm wide. Unless you wish to collect the seeds, plants are best pruned after flowering to prevent plants becoming dishevelled. Plants appear to be long-lived. Our specimens are at least ten years old.

Acacia dawsonii could be cultivated as a component of low growing hedges or foreground plants in garden beds. Propagate from seed that should be treated with boiling water and probably cuttings.

Acacia dawsonii occurs in southern Queensland, along the slopes and tablelands of New South Wales and extending into north-eastern Victoria. It is found in large numbers along the Waterfall Way, east of Armidale NSW. Some decades ago there was a small roadside population 20 km from Armidale. Over the years, thanks mainly to roadworks moving and damaging the seed, the population has increased considerably particularly westerly towards Armidale.



Acacia dawsonii

Photo: W and G Sheather

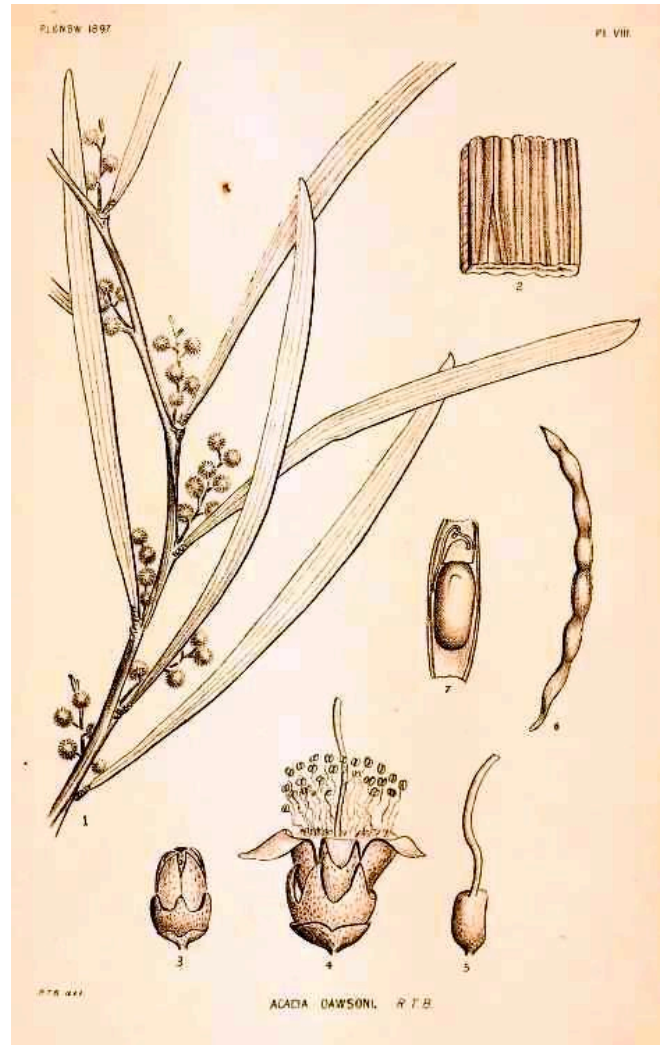
The Mitta Mitta area, in Victoria is also a stronghold of the species. In fact *Acacia dawsonii* is the floral emblem of the area, hence one of the common names. The other common name, Poverty Wattle, may refer to the small number of flowers in each head.

Acacia dawsonii is featured in the Flora and Flora brochure from Mitta plus a not so flattering mention of *Acacia dealbata*.

The floral emblem for Mitta is the **Mitta Mitta Wattle** (*Acacia dawsonii*) also known as the Poverty Wattle. This shrub which is attractive in flower can be found on the road edges, particular at Mogorra Gap and along the Omeo Highway. The pale-lemon balls flower in September and the plant seeds in early December. The plant is found along the tablelands to the north of Mitta as far as Moree, NSW. The Silver Wattle (*Acacia dealbata*) is the most prolific local wattle that grows weed-like in the bush and house gardens if not managed.

Collections in herbaria indicate the wide distribution of this wattle. The species is recorded from Stanthorpe in Queensland, Armidale, Inverell, Lithgow, Rylstone, Canberra, Tumut and Orbost, Victoria. Seeds have been collected from plants in the Garden of Stone National Park, near Lithgow, NSW for inclusion in the Millennium Seed Bank Project.

The type specimen was collected near Rylstone, NSW in 1895 by J. Dawson (hence the species name) and named by R.T. Baker. The plate is the illustration that accompanied the species description in the 1897 Proceedings of the Linnaean Society.



Wattles with Minni Ritchi Bark

by Bill Aitchison

This is a small group of wattles that have a singularly spectacular type of bark. The bark comes in varying shades of red and peels off the trunks and branches in narrow shavings which curl back on themselves from each end.

The “Minni Ritchi” species are usually small trees to about 4m tall, although some get larger eg *A. rhodoxylon* can get to 15m. Some (eg *A. grasbyi*) have horizontally spreading, open crowns which render them similar in form to the common African thorn acacias (although this is as far as the resemblance goes). Only occasionally are they low shrubs not exceeding 1m in height, as is the case in the rare Hamersley Range plants of *A. effusa*. The Pilbara is also home to the spectacular, and very rare *A. cyperophylla* var. *omearana*. These trees grow from 4-10m tall and are characterised by having pendulous branchlets with delicate drooping foliage. The salmon pink “Minni Ritchi” bark

clothes the branches except around the base of mature trunks where the old bark forms a grey stocking to about 1-2m above the ground.

There are about 27 “Minni Ritchi” species in Australia. These species include *Acacia chisholmii* (NT and Qld), *A. curranii* (Qld and NSW), *A. cyclocarpa* (WA), *A. cyperophylla* var. *cyperophylla* (NT, Qld, SA WA), *A. cyperophylla* var. *omearana* (WA), *A. delibrata* (WA), *A. desmondii* (NT), *A. doreta* (WA), *A. effusa* (WA), *A. ephedroides* (WA), *A. eriopoda* x *monticola* (WA), *A. fauntleroyi* (WA), *A. gracillima* (WA), *A. grasbyi* (WA, NT, SA), *A. helicophylla* (NT), *A. inophloia* (WA), *A. leeuweniana* (WA), *A. lysiphloia* (WA, NT, Qld), *A. monticola* (WA, NT, Qld), *A. monticola* x *trachycarpa* (WA), *A. oncinophylla* ssp. *oncinophylla* (WA), *A. oncinophylla* ssp. *patulifolia* (WA), *A. repanda* (WA), *A. rhodophloia* (WA, NT), *A. rhodoxylon* (Qld), *A. trachycarpa* (WA) and *A. sp.* Lake Mackay (WA, NT) (which is a form of *A. trachycarpa*).

Interestingly, with perhaps one exception, all of these Acacias lie within *Acacia* section *Juliflorae*. This is a group of Acacias characterised by having phyllodes with more than 1 longitudinal nerve, and flower heads in the form of cylindrical spikes.

The name Minni Ritchi is of Aboriginal origin. Dixon et al note that probably the word *miniriji* came from an Aboriginal language of the regions in which the plant is found, but it was not possible to ascertain which language. Various spellings are now applied to the term, including minni ritchi, minnerichi and minnaritchi.

Note that if you select Minni Ritchi on the web version of WATTLE2, *Acacia besleyi* will stay in the answers that have been coded, as it is sometimes misinterpreted as having Minni Ritchi bark – however, it doesn't really have true Minni Ritchi bark.

I am only aware of a few of the 27 species listed above being grown in gardens around Melbourne – a number of them come from arid inland areas, and from northern parts of Australia, and would struggle in our conditions. In addition, some are rare plants, and sourcing plants or suitable propagating material would be challenging, even if you thought you could grow them.

The species that I have seen in Melbourne gardens are *A. cyperophylla*, *A. fauntleroyi*, *A. grasbyi* and *A. inophloia*. Perhaps Study Group members could share their experiences with this group of wattles in other parts of Australia.

There is an interesting reference to Minni Ritchi wattles in the 1973 book *I Left My Hat in Andamooka*, by Clifford Austin. In this book, the author, whilst travelling near the old opal mining area of Opalton in central west Queensland, comments as follows:

The presence of the red-trunked minaritchi trees would have told the old prospectors to start digging here because there is a saying that “where the minaritchi grows, there you will find opal.”

Does anyone have any idea as to whether there is any scientific basis underlying this old saying?

References:

Dixon RMW, Moore B, Ramson WS and Thomas M. Australian Aboriginal Words in English OUP 2006
Austin C. I Left My Hat in Andamooka Wren Publishing 1973

My thanks to Bruce Maslin who kindly provided some of the above information.

Introduction of Australian Acacias to South America

Ian Campbell (Sydney) has recently been in Chile and Uruguay researching the literary cultural afterlife of the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda (1904-1973). Neruda was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1971. He was born and died in Chile but lived in Uruguay for part of his life.

One of the famous poems that Neruda wrote, *Ode to the Flowers of Datitla*, refers to acacias, eucalypts and pines in Atlántida, the sea-resort town he stayed in near Montevideo from the 1950s with his later third wife, Matilde Urrutia. Whilst there, Matilde established a herbarium of plants that she collected in the local area, and this is now preserved in a museum. In 2002, a book was published of items from the herbarium collection, and including accompanying poems written by Neruda (the book included one Australian eucalypt, but all other species included were plants endemic to Uruguay, Brazil or Argentina).

Neruda refers in his poem to ‘wiry pavilions of dark acacia’. Ian believes that this reference is probably not to a species introduced from Australia, but to *Acacia caven* (now *Vachellia caven*), which is native to Uruguay, Chile and other parts of South America. However, Ian notes that Australian acacias are in abundance in Uruguay (as well as eucalypts), and this has triggered an interest in when and how they were introduced.

Unlike Eucalypts, except for perhaps *Acacia melanoxylon*, the introduced *Acacia* species in Uruguay do not, in the main, seem to be plantation tree plantings. They (especially *Acacia dealbata*) have, however, been widely used as a dune/beach stabilizer for many beaches near Montevideo, the Uruguayan capital and further north east eg Punta del Este. In general, Australian Acacias are present in Uruguay and other Latin American countries, alongside the local

species of *Acacia*, in such large visual displays in the landscape that locals see them as “part of the landscape”. Like any introduced species they alter water tables etc and seeds can spread vigorously, although Ian does not believe that the same level of taxonomic concern or general administrative concern has arisen, about their spread, as has been the South African experience.

Ian advises that it is unclear just when Australian acacias were introduced, but suggests that it was probably in the 1890s by Antonio Lussich (1848-1928), whose home in Punta del Este in Uruguay is now an Arboretum. Ian did ask his Uruguayan interlocutors whether they thought the seeds came from Kew in England, rather than direct from Australia, but no-one seems to know anything about this. For example, the Director of the Lussich Arboretum was unaware. The probability is that the seed came from England, not Australia, as sea lanes from England to Montevideo were frequent and direct, or via Brazil first.

In the Lussich Arboretum, of the 143 total tree species listed, 24 are Australian native species, including 5 *Acacia* species and 4 Eucalypt species. The *Acacia* species are *A. dealbata*, *A. implexa*, *A. longifolia*, *A. melanoxylon* and *A. podalyriifolia*.

Further reading:

1. Ian reports on his research on the following blog : <http://antipodesjournal.blogspot.com.au>
2. the poem Ode to the Flowers of Datlita may be read at <http://wordswithoutborders.org/article/ode-to-the-flowers-of-datlita>

Footnote: Ian’s research is ongoing, and he would welcome any comments or input from *Acacia* Study Group members. For example, if any member has any information regarding the introduction of Australian *Acacias* to South America, that would be of great interest. Also, is anyone aware of situations in Australia where *Acacia dealbata* has been used for dune stabilization?

Max’s Interesting Wattles

Max McDowall (Bulleen, Vic) is always growing some interesting wattles in his garden, and I asked him recently about what interesting ones he currently has. He listed the following as species that he highly recommends:

A. fauntleroyi – This is one of the minni ritchi wattles, and one that Max regards very highly. His plant is now about 8 years old, and is about 5m high and 3.5m across. It started flowering this year in February and has flowered right through to the end of June.

A. camptoclada – This grows well for Max in semi shade, and scrambles among other shrubs, getting to about 2m x 1.2m.

A. viscifolia – This is a low growing spreading shrub, about 30-40cm high and 2m across. Max recalls seeing this growing on the banks of the Fitzgerald River where it crosses the main Albany Esperance highway in WA. Its phyllodes remind Max of *A. flexifolia*, being curved upwards near the base (interestingly, Max has had trouble getting *A. flexifolia* established in his garden). Max has successfully grown *A. viscifolia* from cuttings.

A. nitidula – This is a fairly upright plant, as high as the clothes line in Max’s garden. Max saw this growing at Mt Ragged in Cape Arid National Park in WA. His plant is about 6-8 years old, and Max propagated it from cuttings.

A. lanigera – Max finds that this is a good small plant, currently in flower in his garden (in early winter). If you are at Kinglake (near Melbourne) in early winter, you can see what a brilliant understory plant it is.

A. conferta – This has been in flower in Max’s garden since April.

A. bracteolata – Max was impressed with this small wattle when he saw it growing in WA. The plants there were about 60-70cm high, and about 2m across. Max has tried growing it in his own garden, and his plant got to about 30cm x 1m, but then died. But another person who has had more success with this wattle is **Mike Williams** (Montmorency, Vic). His plant is now about 10 years old, about 1m high and 3-4m across, and dome shaped in appearance. Mike comments that it has beautiful foliage and golden yellow flowers during spring. He suggests that it is a plant with huge landscape potential. Mike is growing it in full sun and in well drained clay loam soil. Mike is also growing *A. viscifolia*, and notes that while the flowers of *A. bracteolata* and *A. viscifolia* are somewhat similar in appearance, the variation in the colour of the foliage makes an interesting contrast (*A. viscifolia* being a lime green colour).

An *Acacia dealbata* question from Sweden

Astrid Fyhr (Sweden) advises (5 April) that it has been a wonderful time in her Australian conservatory – such a lot of flowers and a gift to be able to work with all these beautiful plants when it is all grey and boring outdoors.

But she has a question, and that is can anyone advise what is growing around the base of her *Acacia dealbata* (this tree was bought at Tor san Lorenzo Nursery in Italy in 1994). As far as Astrid remembers the growth has always been there, but it is growing larger every year. Does it belong to the plant or is it something else?



If you touch the growth it feels hard on the surface, but when you cut into it, it is clearly wood. It looks like it grows from the roots. Astrid advises that she has not thought much about it until now, but people have started asking about it as it looks so funny. It does not seem to harm the tree which grows well and flowers every year.

She has now noticed some similar growth on the roots of *Acacia retinodes* and *Hakea laurina*.

Astrid believes that the growth may be what they call “vril” in Sweden. One of the texts that she has referred to describes a vril as follows:

“A Vril is an outgrowth of the tree trunk that can occur in most species. There are different theories about why vril arise. One is that there are cell changes that cause them. Another is that they arise when small twigs do not manage to penetrate the bark and instead roll around it as a wood skein. Why change occurs is not known.

The fibers follow vrilens shape which means it has no end grain to crack. Therefore, vrilar provides an excellent material for bowls and cups.

The cell walls of vril are thicker than the usual upright grown wood which makes it very tough. The timber in a vril is blotchy and gives the wood a very special glow. Therefore, it is widely used in knife making, they provide both strong and decorative handles. Especially birch vril often used as Craft timber.”

Are there any Study Group members who can help Astrid in her understanding of what the growth is on her *Acacia dealbata*? Please let me know if you have any thoughts. I have some more images that Astrid has provided which I can forward to you if that would assist.

Is the “vril” referred to by Astrid the same as what we would refer to as a burl?

Pre-treatment of Acacia seeds

Some recent research has recently examined various pre-treatment methods for seeds of *Acacia papyrocarpa* and *A. oswaldii*, with the results being published in the Australian Journal of Botany. These are both species that come from arid and semiarid areas of Australia, with *A. oswaldii* being the more widely distributed.

A. papyrocarpa is a long-lived species (~250 years) that recruits from seed only following exceptional rainfall events, with seeds being dispersed by ants. *A. oswaldii* is considered long lived and relies on seeds for recruitment, which birds assist to disperse.

The research resulted in the following conclusions:

A. papyrocarpa - It was found that if no pretreatment was applied to these seeds, then germination was minimal. However, high rates of germination are achieved either by pretreatment via scarification (cutting a small hole through the seed coat), or by wet-heat treatment, with wet heat at 100°C for 5 minutes providing the best results.

A. oswaldii – The seeds of this species have a significantly thinner testa than those of *A. papyrocarpa*. As a result, a high proportion of these seeds will, from the time of collection, absorb water and germinate without the need for any pretreatment. The remaining, dormant seeds will lose this dormancy within a year, and will also germinate without any pretreatment. The researchers recommend that no pretreatment of *A. oswaldii* seeds is required before seed sowing because a proportion of seeds is not dormant at maturity, and the remaining seeds lose dormancy within a few months.

Reference:

Pound LM, Ainsley PJ, Facelli JM (2014) Dormancy-breaking and germination requirements for seeds of *Acacia papyrocarpa*, *Acacia oswaldii* and *Senna artemisioides* ssp. *x coriacea*, three Australian arid-zone Fabaceae species. Australian Journal of Botany 62, 546–557.

Acacia fimbriata dwarf Crimson Blush

I only recently came across this plant in one of our local nurseries, and was so impressed with it that I had to buy one. For quite a while I have liked the dwarf form of *A. fimbriata*, but Crimson Blush looks extra special. It is also a compact plant (stated to reach a height of 1.5m), but has bronze tipped foliage (as well as the lemon coloured soft ball flowers in late winter to early spring).

Acacia fimbriata dwarf is pretty hardy and easily grown in the garden, and Crimson Blush should also have these same features. It would be a useful hedging plant, and it also

should be a plant that appeals to people with a predominantly exotic garden.



Acacia fimbriata dwarf Crimson Blush Photo Bush Magik

Books

Plant Life of Southwestern Australia – Adaptations for Survival
By Philip Groom and Byron Lamont
Published by De Gruyter Open, Warsaw, Poland May 2015
268 pages, colour illustrations

This book is not specifically about Acacias, but Acacia is numerically the richest genus in south west Australia, with 438 taxa (as of October 2013).

The southwestern Australian flora is unique and recognised for its high species diversity and endemism. This part of Australia contains the world’s most nutrient-impooverished soils, has a prolonged summer period, the vegetation is extremely fire-prone and is subject to selective pressures from unique animals such as emus, marsupials and black cockatoos. These conditions have engendered an array of survival adaptations that have evolved under these harsh conditions.

This book focuses on the survival mechanisms, adaptations

and ecology of this unique flora. The book begins with an examination of how the flora has evolved into present-day forms. It then describes in detail the adaptive responses of the flora to the main environmental pressures influencing establishment, survival and reproduction: fire, summer drought, nutrient-impooverished soils, pollinators (two chapters) and seed dispersal agents. Specialised mechanisms to obtain essential nutrients are presented in three chapters – carnivorous plants, parasitic plants and specialised roots. An entire chapter is devoted to leaves, with unique insights into how leaves may assist in protecting flowers and fruits from herbivores and seed-eaters. The book provides a fascinating account of how the flora has evolved complex strategies to ensure species survival in one of the world's biodiversity 'hotspots'.

This book may be downloaded for free from <http://www.degruyter.com/view/product/430900>. Alternatively a hardcover copy may be ordered online.

Australian Rainforest Woods
Characteristics, Uses and Identification
By Morris Lake
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This book describes 141 of the most significant Australian rainforest trees and their wood. Not surprisingly, Acacias do not feature prominently in the species covered – in fact 2 of the 141 species are Acacias – being *Acacia celsa* and *A. melanoxylon*.

A description of each species is provided in the book as well as information on its distribution. The wood of each species is described together with its main characteristics and uses.

The author notes that *Acacia celsa* (brown salwood) has been used for framing, weatherboards, joinery and furniture, and has also been used for veneer and turning, fishing rods, archery bows, tool handles and light boat building. *Acacia melanoxylon* is noted as “one of the world’s best furniture timbers”, but “because of its early exploitation the availability of sound, large logs today is limited”.

Seed Bank

An up to date list of species held in our Seed Bank was included in Newsletter No. 126 (September 2014).

The procedure for requesting seed from the Seed Bank is as follows. Study Group members are entitled to lodge up to 3 orders per member per year, with 18 packets maximum in each order (negotiable). There is a charge of \$3 in relation to each order, to cover the cost of a padded post bag and postage. The \$3 may be paid in stamps or by direct credit to our Group’s bank account. Some members include an

additional payment with their annual subscriptions to cover the Seed Bank charge.

Requests for seed may be lodged in either of the following ways:

1. By email to our Study Group email address, acaciastudygroup@gmail.com (emails to this address go directly to both Victoria and Bill Aitchison). If you make a request by email, you will also need to make the necessary payment by one of the above methods. If you are paying by stamps, these should be mailed to Bill Aitchison, 13 Conos Court, Donvale, Vic 3111.
2. By mail (enclosing stamps if required). These requests should be posted to Bill Aitchison (address as in the previous paragraph). Bill will then advise Victoria of the request.

Although we do purchase some seed from commercial sources, we also rely upon donations of seed. If you are able to help with any seed donations they would be very welcome (we would ask you to post any donations to Bill Aitchison, who will forward them on to Victoria). It also helps enormously if you are able to clean, sort and label the seed correctly. Also, we would like to have provenance information for all seed in the seed bank – so if you donate

any seed, could you also provide any information you have in relation to provenance.

We would like to maintain some data on your results in propagating seed from the Seed Bank. We would therefore ask if you could provide a report on your results, recording information on species, number of seeds sown, number germinated and days after sowing.

Study Group Membership

Acacia Study Group membership for 2015/16 is as follows:

\$7 (newsletter sent by email)
\$10 (hardcopy of newsletter posted in Australia)
\$20 (hardcopy of newsletter posted overseas)

Subscriptions may be sent to:
Bill Aitchison, 13 Conos Court, Donvale, Victoria 3111

Subscriptions may also be paid directly to our Account at the Bendigo Bank. Account details are:
Account Name: ASGAP Acacia Study Group
BSB: 633-000
Account Number: 130786973

If you pay directly to the Bank Account, please advise us by email (acaciastudygroup@gmail.com).