

Acacia acinacea

Common name – Gold Dust Wattle

Acacia acinacea are fast growing hardy, small to medium shrubs, up to 2 to 3 metres high and 2 metres wide. They are straggly, often spindly and rather loosely-branched shrubs with short thin stems that divide into long slender branches.



They naturally grow in dry or moist well drained gravels, sandy soils but adapts well to clay. They like full sun to dappled shade and are frost tolerant. A good pioneer plant and, being legumes, fix nitrogen from the air. They regenerate easily after fire, which normally kills the adult plant, but the intense heat stimulates germination of seeds in the soil.

They are short lived (15 years) and occur naturally in South Australia forming part of the understorey of open forests or woodlands.

Flowers

A spectacular wattle when in full flower in spring. The branches are weighed down with the masses of bright yellow pom-pom like flowers. Flowers are borne on individual stalks, and grow singularly or in pairs from the phyllode axils along the length of branches, giving the appearance of being covered in gold dust.



Seed pods (fruit) are 3–4.5 mm wide and irregularly twisted or spirally coiled. They turn from green to brown as they mature and release their seeds.

Leaves

Seedlings have small feathery compound leaves that give way to modified petioles (the little stalks joining the leaf to the stem) as the plant matures. The petioles are wide and flat and are called phyllodes. These perform the functions of the leaves. They are one of the key characteristics for identifying the different types of wattle. In the Gold Dust Wattle the leaf-like phyllodes are small and long (5-14 mm). They are flat and vary in shape from rectangular to oval and are covered with small hairs. There are small glands on the upper phyllode margins.



Uses

As with most wattles, the flexible young saplings were woven together and then coated with a mixture of mud and dung and used by early settlers as a building material (wattle and daub).

Interesting Facts

The name comes from Greek *akakia*, a sharp point or thorn; *acinaces* Latin a short Persian sword (shape of phyllodes)