

Acacia Pyncnanthus

***Kaurna name* – Mirna**
***Common name* – Golden Wattle**

The Golden Wattle is the Floral Emblem of Australia, with National Wattle day on September 1. Golden Wattles are medium-sized trees about 4-8 m high with a short dark brown trunk, 12-20 cm in diameter. The bark is usually smooth but sometimes scaly or roughened at the base.

They are very showy, and fast growing and grow well in full sun to part shade on most well drained soils. They are legumes and have nitrogen fixing root nodules. They regenerate easily after fire that normally kills the adult plant but the intense heat stimulates germination of seeds in the soil. They are short lived (15 to 20years) and occur naturally in South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. They form part of the understorey of open forests or woodlands



Flowers

The trees flower from August to October. The flower-clusters form large fluffy balls with up to 80 tiny flowers clustered together. They are distinctive, brilliant yellow and have a sweet smell. The fruits are pods of 5 to 14 cm long. They are rather flat and may be straight or slightly curved. The pods turn dark brown as they ripen and split along one side to disperse the 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 Golden wattle, the phyllodes are 6 to 20 cm long, leathery, shiny and bright dark green. They range from 0.5 to 3.5 cm wide and are shaped like a lance or sickle. A gland at the base of the leaf-stem provides food for nectar-eating birds



Uses

Indigenous people produced a sweet, toffee-like substance by soaking the gum in water and honey. The tannin in the bark was prized as an antiseptic. The wood is hard and ideal for making boomerangs, spears and shields. Green seeds can be cooked like peas. Ripe seed can be baked then ground with a mortar and pestle into low-glycaemic flour.



The flowers of the Golden Wattle are used for making perfume and the bark is harvested for tannin and was used by the early settlers for tanning hides.

Interesting Facts

The name comes from Greek *akakia*, a sharp point or thorn Calli Greek for dense & anthus means flower