

Acacia paradoxa

Common name – Kangaroo Thorn

Acacia paradoxa are large straggly to dense shrubs or trees up to 2 to 4 metres tall and wide. They have ribbed branchlets that are often arched downward and full of long thorns. The bark has long, narrow cracks and is brownish grey. The roots have nitrogen-fixing nodules making them a versatile pioneer plant.

Kangaroo thorns generally occur in dense patches in woodland, open forest and open scrub vegetation. They are native to large parts of southern and eastern Australia.

They usually grow on a wide variety of soils, but prefer stony, clay hills in woodlands and shrub lands. They grow well in full sun or part shade and in rainfall of 300-1200 mm



Flowers

They have single, bright yellow ball-shaped flowerheads (5 -12mm in diameter). Each flowerhead has 30–50 flowers. These grow on slender stalks in the axil of the phyllodes. They usually flowers between August and November.

The fruits are brown pods, densely covered in white hairs. They are narrow, straight or curved and 2-6 cm x 3-5 mm long. The hard black seeds in the pod are oblong and about 6 mm long and 3mm wide.



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 kangaroo thorn, the phyllodes are crinkly and the new ones are covered in hairs. They are pointed, often curved and 30 ml long and 7ml wide. The bush is also full of long thorns that grow at the base of the phyllodes/leaves.



Interesting Facts

Kangaroo thorns regenerate from seeds after bush fires and other soil changes. Small birds, including wrens, use this plant as shelter and dwelling, while it is an important food source for moths, butterflies and other insects, birds also feed on its seeds. They were widely used as hedging plants.



