



Acacia paradoxa



Acacia paradoxa is an erect or spreading shrub or tree 1–4 m high [9, 10] with thorns between small dark green phyllodes [14]. Common names include Kangaroo Thorn, Hedge Wattle, Prickly Wattle [8], Prickly Mosses, Acacia Hedge [3], Wild Irishman [4].

Population map:

www.ala.org.au/explore/species-maps/

Natural Populations

A. paradoxa is found in all mainland states and territories apart from NT. It usually grows in woodlands or open forests [8] on a wide variety of soils, but preferring stony, clay hills in woodlands and shrub lands [1]. Commonly planted or naturalised, it is proclaimed a noxious plant in parts of Victoria [6, 8, 13] and parts of inland NSW [13]. It is introduced to Tasmania [4]. The species is very polymorphic so it is possible that infraspecific taxa should be recognised but detailed morphological studies are needed to reveal the complex variation patterns [8]. Putative hybrids are recorded between *A. paradoxa* and a number of other species [8].

Flowering and Seeds

A. paradoxa usually flowers in spring [3, 12] but can also have flowers in late winter [4, 6]. Collect seed in early summer when the seed pods are drying out and have changed from green to brown. Gloves are recommended as protection from spines [1, 11]. Monitor closely as seeds are released immediately or within 1-2 days of maturity [4]. There are approximately 75,000 seeds per kg [1]. The seed stores well.

Cultivation and Uses

To germinate, the seeds need hot water treatment [1, 7] and soaking for several hours before sowing [4], or scarification [7, 14]. It also grows rapidly from cuttings [14].

A. paradoxa is generally adaptable in cultivation and responds to sunny, reasonably well-drained positions in most soils [7]. It is a very hardy species [1, 7], drought-tolerant [12], resistant to salt spray [7] and frost hardy (will tolerate frosts to -7°C), although frost-tender when young [1, 4]. It is an excellent hedge or screen species [1, 7] and suitable for areas of low maintenance such as road edges [7]. This is a useful species for direct-seeding [6].

A. paradoxa provides valuable habitat for small birds and other wildlife [1, 12] and provides dense low shelter in windbreaks [1]. It is suspected of poisoning stock on several occasions but the spiny nature of the plant would preclude much grazing [3]. It tends to sucker in areas of higher rainfall, forming dense thickets [2, 3]. Birds and ants

help to disperse seeds [6].

A. paradoxa is especially suitable for planting to control water erosion in areas such as river-banks and eroded paddocks [5].



To source seeds or plants:
www.grassywoodlands.org.au



References

- [1] Carr, D. (1997). *Plants in Your Pants: a pocket guide for the identification and use of the common plants of the northwest slopes*. Greening Australia NSW, Armidale.
- [2] Walker, K., Burrows, G., and McMahon, L. (2001). *Bidgee Bush, An identification guide to common native plants species of the South Western Slopes of New South Wales*. Greening Australia, South West Slopes.
- [3] Cunningham, G.M., Mulham, W.E., Milthorpe, P.L. and Leigh, J.H. (1981). *Plants of Western New South Wales*. D. West: NSW Government Printing Office.
- [4] Stelling, F. (ed.) (1998). *South West Slopes Revegetation Guide*. Murray Catchment Management Committee Albury, NSW.
- [5] O'Neil, V. (1990). *Grow What Where*. Victoria: Penguin Books Australia Ltd.
- [6] Bonney, N. (2003). *What Seed Is That? A field guide to the identification, collection and germination of native seed in South Australia*. Tantanoola, SA: Neville Bonney.
- [15] Harden, G. (ed.) (1990-1993). *Flora of New South Wales. Volume 2*, p.366. NSW University Press, Kensington.

Internet links

- [7] Australian National Botanical Gardens website: <http://www.anbg.gov.au/acacia/species/A-paradoxa.html>
- [8] World Wide Wattle: <http://www.worldwidewattle.com/speciesgallery/paradoxa.php>
- [9] PlantNET National Herbarium of New South Wales – species description & distribution: <http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/NSWfl.pl?page=nswfl&lvl=sp&name=Acacia~paradoxa>
- [10] FloraBase Western Australian Herbarium: <http://florabase.calm.wa.gov.au/browse/profile/3482>
- [11] Seed Germination Data Sheet (1996), Greening Australia, Victoria: <http://www.florabank.org.au/files/documents/seedgerminationanddo/20070801-16.pdf>
- [12] Victorian Flora: <http://www.victorianflora.wmcn.org.au/plantDetail.php?plantno=5.00000>
- [13] Australian Society for Growing Australian Plants, Australian Weed Species: <http://asgap.org.au/weeds3.html>
- [14] Australian National Botanic Gardens & Australian National Herbarium, Harden Species List: <http://www.anbg.gov.au/greening-grainbelt/harden-species-list.xls>