

Back from the dead: the rediscovery of a presumed extinct Acacia

Acacia prismifolia was known from only two plant collections; the first collected in 1901 and the second in 1933, before being listed as being presumed extinct in the 1990's after extensive searches failed to find any trace of the species.



That was until earlier this year when consultant botanist, Libby Sandiford, was doing work in the Cranbrook area and came across an Acacia that she didn't recognise. Curious as to its identity she took a specimen to key it out. Using botanical keys such as WATTLE, Libby quickly came up with a name, *Acacia prismifolia*. Knowing that this species was presumed to be extinct Libby rechecked her identification but still came up with the same answer. Excited about her find, but wanting more certainty, Libby made the trip to Perth with her specimen so that the Western Australian Herbarium's Acacia specialist, Bruce Maslin, could examine it. Bruce confirmed the identification, and thus, over 80 years since it was last seen, it had been shown that *Acacia prismifolia* hadn't gone the way of the dodo and was in fact alive and apparently doing okay.



News of the exciting find was brought to the attention of staff at the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions' Threatened Flora Seed Centre who added the Acacia to their seed collection target list. The Acacia's location was visited in November and was found to have immature fruit on a number of plants. Seed capture bags were placed over fruit to catch mature seed when it was shed from the plant. A preliminary collection has now been made, with the remainder of the seed to be collected in the new year. This seed will be stored in the centre's seed vault to safeguard against future extinction of the species.

(Images by Andrew Crawford, Threatened Flora Seed Centre, DBCA)