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Rare Tangle Wattle, *Acacia volubilis*

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Some of you may have noticed a miniscule article buried deep in the pages of *The West Australian*, in late June, which mentioned the rediscovery of a rare wattle. The full story on this find will hopefully appear in *Landscape* in the not too distant future, but it is probably worth a mention in this august publication as well.

The *Acacia volubilis* (Tangle Wattle) was first collected in 1877, from a vague locality somewhere east of York. Searches over the next 100-odd years failed to find this species, and as a result it was placed on C.A.L.M.'s Priority Flora List as *Presumed Extinct*. However, in June 1996, while surveying for the equally rare *Daviesia cunderdin*, Terena Lally and myself re-located a small population of Tangle Wattle on a highly degraded road verge near Cunderdin in the central wheatbelt. We were unaware of the significance of our find (one wattle looks much the same as another !) until W.A. Herbarium volunteer Stan Webster identified the specimens, and Acacia expert Bruce Maslin confirmed Stan's identification. This material represents the first collection of Tangle Wattle in nearly 120 years, and means that yet another species can be removed from the presumed extinct species list.

Why Tangle Wattle remained undiscovered for so long in a relatively well-botanised area close to Perth is unclear, but the unusually early winter flowering time may be a contributing factor. Unless it is flowering, Tangle Wattle tends to blend into the surrounding vegetation, being a small 'leafless' shrub usually less than 50 cm tall.

Subsequent brief surveys in the area where the first population was discovered have revealed a few more scattered populations, all on equally precarious unreserved roadsides. More thorough surveys are planned for the next season and the Threatened Flora Seed Centre, at the Herbarium, aim to collect seed from known populations this spring.

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