Horticultural potential of *Acacia*

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SUMMARY

The wattle is an acknowledged plant icon of Australia, with Western Australia the hot spot for diversity: Western Australia has 500 of the 960 Australia species. With familiarity comes complacency, and possibly this genus has become a victim of this in the horticultural world. Its potential is vast, with the ability to influence all communities in the State. Strategic marketing of Western Australian species that have undergone horticultural development trials would ensure that the most attractive wattles would be utilised. Kings Park and Botanic Garden has devoted 0.7 hectare to the cultivation of c. 70 of the most decorative acacias. This is combined with public artwork to inspire and focus attention on the more attractive species. There are distinctive localised acacias in each major region of Western Australia which could be adopted by each community, giving them their own identity and sense of place. Cultivation with seed of local provenance will create ecologically sound initiatives and will help develop green corridors, linking natural remnant bushland throughout the region. Table 1 indicates the species considered suitable to create this effect.

HORTICULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR *ACACIA*

1. Ornamental species for home gardens

- ✔ Compact habit for small gardens and pot cultivation
- ✔ Unusual habit giving good architectural form for design purposes
- ✔ Dark green, soft foliage
- ✔ Grey, soft foliage
- ✔ Flowering regime, i.e. season, length of flowering, flowers complementing foliage
- ✔ Cut flowers and / or foliage
- ✔ Hardiness and ease of cultivation
- ✔ Suitability for a broad range of growing conditions
- ✔ Reliable performance under cultivation
- ✔ Attractive in a nursery container
- ✔ Potential for development to enhance the above features

2. Street scape potential (amenity horticulture)

- ✔ Creating a focused sense of place
- ✔ Reflect significant features of the local ecosystems
- ✔ Flowering to coincide with major events of the town, i.e. a flowering calendar
- ✔ Hardy and suitable for the site
- ✔ Longevity with minimal maintenance requirements
- ✔ Appropriate form / habit for situation

3. Road verge enhancement (sense of place)

- ✔ Creating a green approach to towns, especially to create a sense of place in denuded agricultural landscapes
- ✔ Mix local species to provide a long flowering display
- ✔ Reflecting biodiversity of the shire
- ✔ Conservation corridors
- ✔ Adapted species chosen to reflect soil type and produce a hardy, reliable performance
- ✔ Seed of local provenance to reflect biodiversity and their proven suitability for the region and soil type
- ✔ Formal recognition, e.g. Dalwallinu Shire Council adopting ***Acacia anthochaera*** as its floral emblem
- ✔ Strong, bold form for maximum impact, or mass planting to achieve similar effect

TABLE 1
Recommended species according to region in Western Australia

Region	Species	Flowering time	Size	Soil type
Kimberley				
	A. colei	May-Sept	1.5-9 m	rocky, clay, loam, sandplains, stony ridges, drainage lines
	A. delibrata	Mar-Aug	2-8 m	rocky soils, sandstone, basalt or quartzite
	A. dunnii	Jan-Jun	1.5-6 m	rocky soils, either sandstone, basalt or quartzite
	A. gardneri	May-Aug	1.5-5 m	sandy soils and rocky sandstone soils
	A. hippuroides	Mar-Oct	0.3-1.6 m	sandy soils and rocky sandstone soils
	A. kelleri	Mar-Oct	1.5-7 m	sandstone, rocky hills, creek beds
	A. lamprocarpa	Apr-Jun	4-15 m	sandy soil
	A. lycopodiifolia	Jan-Sept	0.2-1 m	sandy and rocky soil
	A. lysiphloia	May-Sept	1-4 m	sand loam and clay, wet areas
Pilbara				
	A. adoxa	Apr-Oct	1 m	sand dunes, stony ridges
	A. bivenosa	Apr-Nov	0.5-3 m	adapts to many soils, particularly sandy soils
	A. coriacea	Mar-Aug	1-10 m	sandy soils, limestone and coastal
	A. cyperophylla var. *omearana*	Mar-Apr	4-10 m	alluvial stony soils
	A. orthocarpa	Mar-Jul	1-3 m	sandy soils
	A. paraneura	Jun-Sept	3-8 m	sandy, clay and rocky soils
	A. pyrifolia	Apr-Oct	0.5-4 m	rocky soils
	A. spondylophylla	May-Aug	<1 m	sandy, rocky soils
	A. trachycarpa	May-Oct	1-4 m	sandy, rocky soils
	A. tumida	Apr-Oct	2-9 m	variety of soils
	A. validinervia	Jul-Aug	1-4 m	variety of soils
Gascoyne/ Goldfields				
	A. aneura (many forms)	Feb-July	1-10 m	variety of soils
	A. craspedocarpa	Mar-Sept	1-4 m	clay/loam soils
	A. cyperophylla var. *cyperophylla*	Jul-Aug	3-10 m	sandy and rocky along creeks/rivers
	A. demissa	April-Aug	1-4 m	clay/loam soils
	A. grasbyi	May-Oct	2-4.5 m	variety of soils
	A. hemiteles	May-Oct	0.5-2 m	variety of soils
	A. palustris		2-4 m	alluvial soils
	A. sibilans		3-7 m	sand/loam
	A. wanyu	Mar-Jul	1.5-5 m	clay/loam, sand
Arid interior				
	A. dictyophleba	Mar-Sep	0.5-4 m	sand/stony
	A. murrayana	Aug-Nov	2-5 m	sand
	A. papyrocarpa	Aug-Nov	2-8 m	sandy/loam, calcareous soils
	A. rhodophloia	May/Oct	1-4 m	sand/gravel
Northern Wheatbelt				
	A. ancistrophylla	Aug-Oct	0.5-2.5 m	sand
	A. anthochaera	Aug-Dec	1-5 m	sand/loam
	A. guinetii	Jun-Sep	0.3-2 m	gravelly
	A. multispicata	Mar-Oct	0.2-2 m	sand
Central Wheatbelt				
	A. acuminata	Jul-Oct	1-7 m	variety of soils
	A. anfractuosa	Jul-Dec	1-4 m	sand
	A. denticulosa	Sep-Oct	1-4 m	sand/loam/granite
	A. merinthophora	May-Sep	1-4 m	sand
	A. microbotrya	Mar-Jul	1-7 m	variety of soils
	A. rossei	Aug-Jan	1-3 m	sand
Southern Wheatbelt				
	A. glaucoptera	Aug-Dec	0.4-1.2 m	gravel
	A. lanuginophylla	Jul-Oct	0.5-1.2 m	variety of soils
	A. redolens	Aug-Oct	0.5-3 m	variety of soils, often saline
South coast				
	A. heterochroa	Apr-Dec	0.3-2 m	gravelly
	A. myrtifolia	May-Jan	0.5-3 m	sand/gravel
	A. rhamphophylla	Aug-Sep	0.2-0.5 m	rocky sand/clay
	A. subcaerulea	Mar-Sep	1-3 m	sand
Forest				
	A. browniana	May-Nov	0.2-2 m	sand/gravel
	A. drummondii	Jun-Oct	0.3-1 m	sand/gravel
	A. veronica	Mar-Sep	1.5-10 m	sandy/loam