

Botanical name

Acacia ancistrophylla var. *ancistrophylla*, C.R.P.Andrews, J. W. Austral. Nat. Hist. Soc. 1: 40 (1904)

The botanical name is derived from the Greek *agcistron* (fish-hook) and *phyllon* (leaf), and refers to the phyllode apices which are characteristically narrowed to short, curved to hooked points.

Common name

None known.

Characteristic features

Compact, domed or obconic, highly floriferous *shrubs*. *New shoots* normally tinged brownish. *Phyllodes* short, green, very obscurely multi-nerved on each face, the tips curved to hooked. *Heads* globular on short peduncles. *Pods* narrow, thinly textured, straight to shallowly curved.

Description

Habit. Compact *shrubs* 1.5-2.5 m tall and 2-4 m wide, dividing at ground level into a few, spreading main stems, either domed with rounded crowns extending to ground level or obconic and often with a "bonsai"-type appearance due to sub-contorted, spreading upper branches and crowns occupying about 20% of the total plant height.

Bark. Rough, grey.

New shoots. Bluish grey or grey-green to sub-glaucous and normally tinged brownish (due to microscopic resin hairs).

Branchlets. Glabrous except minutely appressed-hairy within axil of phyllodes.

Phyllodes. Oblanceolate to narrowly oblong-ob lanceolate, flat, 10-25(-40) mm long, 2-4 mm wide, glabrous except minutely appressed-hairy at extreme base (mainly on upper surface of pulvinus), green; *longitudinal nerves* numerous, very obscure and close together; *apices* curved to hooked and ending in acute, non-pungent tips.

Heads. Paired within axil of phyllodes, globular, 6-7 mm diameter when fresh, golden, prolific and very showy, 15-23-flowered; *peduncles* 2-4 mm long (can reach 6 mm outside the Kalannie region), glabrous or obscurely hairy (hairs embedded in resin).

Flowers. Mostly 5-merous; *sepals* free.

Pods. Linear to sub-moniliform, 2.5-4 cm long, 1.5-2.5 mm wide, thinly coriaceous to firmly chartaceous, straight to shallowly curved, sparsely to moderately hairy.

Seed. Longitudinal in the pods, 2.8-3.5 mm long, 1-2 mm wide, tan; *aril* creamy white.

Taxonomy

Varieties. As discussed by Cowan and Maslin (1995) *A. ancistrophylla* comprises three varieties, var. *ancistrophylla*, var. *lissophylla* and var. *perarcuata*. The characters separating these varieties are subtle and further work is needed to fully resolve their taxonomic status and of the various forms that are recognized within them. Only var. *ancistrophylla* occurs in the Kalannie region.

Related species. *Acacia ancistrophylla* is most closely related to *A. amyctica* which does not occur in the Kalannie region. Within the region var. *ancistrophylla* appears to have some affinities with *A. affin. ancistrophylla* which differs most obviously by its wider, minutely hairy phyllodes which are not curved or hooked at their apices and by its longer peduncles.

Variants. Cowan and Maslin (1995) refer to a number of informal variants within var. *ancistrophylla*, however, none of these occur within the Kalannie region. Plants from the Kalannie region show some variation in the length of their phyllodes (see accompanying illustration).

Distribution

South-west Western Australia where it is scattered from near Wubin south to Newdegate, then extending eastwards to near Salmon Gums and Cundeelee Mission (about 200 km east of Kalgoorlie).

Variety *ancistrophylla* is reasonably common in the Kalannie region and it fairly frequent in the places where it occurs, often forming dense, localized roadside populations.

Habitat

Over its geographic range this variety grows in woodland and mallee communities on flats, hillsides and ridges in loam, clay or sandy clay.

In the Kalannie region var. *ancistrophylla* appears to be site-specific, always occurring on Redwood country (*Eucalyptus transcontinentalis*), usually in stony soil or red brown earth, and seemingly always near a break of slope.

Recorded from the following Kalannie region Land Management Units. Red Brown Earth; Shallow Soil over Granite.

Conservation status

Not considered rare or endangered.

Flowering

Over its geographic range var. *ancistrophylla* flowers in August and September.

Plants in the Kalannie region had essentially finished flowering by early September 1997.

Fruiting

Over the geographic range of this variety pods with mature seeds have been collected from December to January.

Judging from observations of Kalannie region populations in early December 1996 it appears that var. *ancistrophylla* is variable with regard to seed-set: some plants had near-mature seeds while others were sterile. This variation may be related to the timing and/or intensity of rainfall events.

Biological features

Growth characteristics. A hardy, drought resistant variety.

Propagation

According to Simmons (1987) *A. ancistrophylla* can be grown from cutting or seeds.

Revegetation

Suitable for inclusion in biodiversity plantings as part of the low shrub stratum on clay soils in the Kalannie region. Variety *ancistrophylla* also has potential for erosion

control (see below) and its use for this purpose is enhanced because it tolerates heavy grazing.

Utilisation

Erosion control. Could have potential for soil stabilisation on clay soils on account of its low, dense spreading habit.

Wildlife refuge. The very dense crown provides good wildlife protection (especially for small nesting birds).

Biodiversity plantings. See Revegetation above.

Horticulture. On account of its compact growth form (sometimes assuming a "bonsai"-type appearance), attractive new shoots and prolific flowering (flowers first appearing in late winter, slightly earlier than many other Wattles in the region) this variety has horticultural potential for semi-arid areas.

References

- Cowan, R.S. and Maslin, B.R. (1995). *Acacia* Miscellany 15. Five groups of microneurous species of *Acacia*, mostly from Western Australia (Leguminosae: Mimosoideae: section Plurinerves). *Nuytsia* 10(2): 205-254.
- Simmons, M.H. (1987). *Growing Acacias* (Kangaroo Press.)