

Botanical name

Acacia obtecta Maiden & Blakely, J. Roy. Soc. W. Australia 13: 20, pl. 5, figs 1-6 (1928)

The botanical name is derived from the Latin *obtectus* (covered over, protected) and refers to the branches being "covered by a smooth, greyish-white substance" (Maiden and Blakely 1928: 20). This is not a powdery bloom such as occurs in *A. murrayana*.

Common name

None know.

Characteristic features

Bark smooth and pale grey from the base of the stems to the tips of the branchlets. *Phyllodes* dull green, normally 3-nerved per face, narrowed to curved and acuminate to caudate tips. *Heads* globular, mostly 2-4 per axil, on short peduncles. *Pods* large and moniliform. *Seeds* large, mottled; *funicle* not expanded into an aril.

Description

Habit. Bushy, multi-stemmed, rounded or obconic *shrubs* 1.5-4 m tall and 2-4 m wide.

Bark. Pale grey and smooth from base of stems to tips of branchlets.

Branchlets. Glabrous.

Phyllodes. Linear to linear-oblongate, (6-)7-11 cm long, (3-)4-6(-9) mm wide, not rigid, spreading to erect, straight to shallowly incurved, dull, green, glabrous; with normally 3 (rarely 2), widely spaced longitudinal *nerves* on each face, intervening minor anastomosing nerves absent or few and obscure; *apices* curved and acuminate to caudate, not pungent.

Heads. Mostly 2-4 within axil of phyllodes, 9 mm in diameter when fresh, globular, bright mid-golden, 20-36-flowered, *peduncles* 3-5 mm long, obscured by the anthers at anthesis when short (heads can then appear +/- sessile), glabrous.

Flowers. 5-merous; *sepals* free.

Pods. Moniliform, large, 8-14 cm long, 7-9 mm wide, pendulous, chartaceous, glabrous, yellow-green and conspicuous on the plants when young, maturing dark brown to blackish.

Seeds. Longitudinal in the pods, 6-7.5 mm long, 4.5-5.5 mm wide, dull, mottled dark and light brown; *funicle* not expanded into an aril.

Taxonomy

Related species. *Acacia obtecta* is seemingly related to *A. speckii* (which occurs between Yalgoo and Meekatharra), a species that is most readily distinguished by its terete phyllodes.

Distribution

Occurs in Western Australia where it is mainly confined to the Paynes Find-Wubin-Kununoppin area where it is often locally abundant; the type specimen, however, was collected from Lake Barlee (about 150 km east of Paynes Find).

Acacia obtecta is not especially common in the Kalannie region where it has a scattered distribution and occurs in localized populations, often along degraded roadverges.

Habitat

Grows in hard, red brown loam or clay on flats. May tolerate slightly saline conditions.

Recorded from the following Kalannie region Land Management Units. Colluvial Flat-Earth; Red Brown Earth; Colluvial Flat-Solodic.

Conservation status

Not considered rare or endangered.

Flowering

Herbarium records show that all flowering collections of *A. obtecta* (including those from the Kalannie region) have been made in September. However, it is likely that future studies will reveal this species as having a longer flowering period, probably commencing in August.

Fruiting

Over its geographic range *A. obtecta* produces pods with mature seeds from November to January.

Plants from the Kalannie region were with mature pods in December 1993.

There are about 8 000 seeds per kilogram. *Note:* This figure is derived from a single sample counted by Angela Waters (Kalannie Tree Supplies) and would most probably have included both viable and non-viable seeds.

Biological features

No information available.

Propagation

Informal germination tests by Angela Waters (Kalannie Tree Supplies) show that this species is easy to germinate, even without pre-treatment. Nevertheless, best results were obtained from soaking the seed overnight in just-boiled water prior to sowing, or by boiling the seed for 5 minute prior to soaking.

Revegetation

Acacia obtecta could be a useful inclusion in seed mixes for soil stabilisation of slightly to moderately saline sites. It is a hardy species and is sometimes the sole survivor along highly degraded roadverges in some areas.

Utilisation

Salinity control. See under Revegetation above.

Soil stabilisation. See under Revegetation above.

Reference

Maiden, J.H. and Blakely, W. (1928). Description of fifty new species and six varieties of western and northern Australian acacias, and notes on four other species. *Journal of the Royal Society of Western Australia* 13: 1-36 pl. 1-22.