

**Botanical name**

*Acacia scalena* Maslin (to be described in a forthcoming issue of Nuytsia)

The botanical name is derived from the Latin *scalenus* (unequal) and refers to the very asymmetric phyllodes (the upper margin being conspicuously rounded and the lower margin more or less straight).

**Common name**

None known.

**Characteristic features**

Prickly, much-branched, glabrous *shrubs*; *branches* somewhat spinose. *Phyllodes* very asymmetric, the upper margin conspicuously rounded and the lower margin +/- straight, glaucous to sub-glaucous, midrib situated near the lower margin, apex ending in a long, needle-like point. *Heads* globular. *Pods* undulate.

**Description**

**Habit.** Harsh, prickly, much-branched, often straggly, glabrous *shrubs* 0.5-1.5 m tall; *branches* dividing into short, straight, spreading to sub-erect, rigid, somewhat spinose branchlets which are commonly lightly pruinose.

**Bark.** Light grey.

**Phyllodes.** Very asymmetric, the upper margin conspicuously rounded and the lower margin more or less straight, 5-10 mm long, 3-10 mm wide, glaucous to sub-glaucous; with 1 *longitudinal nerve* on each face, situated near the lower margin; *apices* ending in long, straight, needle-like points 1.5-3 mm long.

**Heads.** Single within axil of the phyllodes (on rudimentary, 1-branched racemes), globular, 8 mm in diameter when fresh, golden, 18-22-flowered; *bracteoles* dark brown, obtuse and overtopping flowers when in bud; *peduncles* 4-8 mm long, basal bracts dark brown and variably persistent.

**Flowers.** 5-merous; *sepals* about 2/3 united.

**Pods.** Narrowly oblong, undulate, 3-4 cm long, 4-6 mm wide, firmly chartaceous to thinly coriaceous.

**Seeds.** Longitudinal in the pods, 2.5-3 mm long, 1.5-2 mm wide, light greyish brown mottled dark brown or black; *aril* waxy dull yellow (drying brownish yellow).

**Taxonomy**

**Related species.** *Acacia scalena* is a member of the "A. pravifolia group" (see Maslin in press for discussion). It is most closely related to *A. flabellifolia* (which does not occur in the Kalannie region) and is not likely to be confused with any other species from the area.

**Distribution**

Restricted in the northern wheatbelt region of Western Australia where it extends from Ballidu north to Latham; there is an outlying population near Beacon.

*Acacia scalena* is not common in the Kalannie region and is confined to an area near Wubin.

**Habitat**

Grows on often gravelly sand or loam.

**Recorded from the following Kalannie region Land Management Units.** Sand over Gravel; Pediment; Shallow Soil over Laterite; Spillway Sand.

### **Conservation status**

Treated as a Priority 3 taxon on the Department of Conservation and Land Management's *Declared Rare and Priority Flora List*.

**Priority 3 - Poorly Known Taxa.** 'Taxa which are known from several populations, at least some of which are not believed to be under immediate threat (i.e. not currently endangered). Such taxa are under consideration for declaration as 'rare flora', but are in need of further survey.'

### **Flowering**

Over its geographic range *A. scalena* flowers from May to September, however, the main flowering flush appears to be from June to August.

Plants in the Kalannie region were at peak flowering towards the end of June 1997.

### **Fruiting**

Over the geographic range of the species (including the Kalannie region) pods with mature seeds have been collected in mid-December, however, given the rather long flowering period, it is likely that further sampling will show pods occurring over a range of months.

Collecting pods by hand is often difficult on account of the prickly foliage (stout gloves are recommended); manually shaking or gently beating the plants and collecting the pods and seeds on a ground sheet is probably a more efficient way of collection.

### **Biological features**

No information available.

### **Propagation**

No information available.

### **Revegetation**

Of limited value for revegetation in the Kalannie region but would be suitable for inclusion in biodiversity plantings as part of the low shrub stratum for light-textured, gravelly soils; its moderate shade tolerance would facilitate its use for this purpose.

### **Utilisation**

**Biodiversity plantings.** See Revegetation above.

**Wildlife refugia.** Its intricately-branched crown and prickly foliage provides good wildlife protection (especially for small nesting birds).

### **Reference**

Maslin, B.R. (in press). *Acacia*. In *Flora of Australia* vol. 11 (CSIRO, Melbourne: Australia.)