

Botanical name.

Acacia affin. *multispicata*

The taxon described here has affinities to *A. multispicata* but the nature of the relationship needs yet to be assessed.

Common name

None known.

Characteristic features

Bark light grey and smooth from base of stems to the tips of branchlets. *Phyllodes* short, terete, smooth, shallowly incurved, 8-nerved (nerves clearly separated from one another); *apices* obtuse-mucronate. *Spikes* sessile, short, prolific and very showy. *Flowers* 4-merous. *Pods* moniliform to sub-moniliform, narrow.

Description

Habit. *Shrubs* 0.5-1 m tall and 1-2 m wide, either domed with crowns extending to the ground or obconic with crowns occupying about 40% of the total plant height, dividing at ground level into 4-6, slender, slightly crooked main stems.

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

Phyllodes. Terete, (15-)20-40 mm long, 0.8-1.5 mm wide, smooth, ascending to rather widely spreading, shallowly incurved, dull, green to sub-glaucous; *longitudinal nerves* 8, the nerves clearly separated from one another, yellow-green and evident at x10 magnification; abruptly contracted at the obtuse, innocuous *apex* and ending in a minute brown mucro; *pulvinus* orange.

Flowers. 4-merous; *sepals* about 1/2-united.

Spikes. Single within axil of phyllodes, +/- sessile (peduncles 0-1 mm long, glabrous), obloid to shortly cylindrical, 10-12 mm long and 6-7 mm wide at anthesis when fresh, bright golden, prolific, very showy, slightly fragrant, sub-densely flowered.

Pods. Moniliform to sub-moniliform, 2-5 cm long, 3-3.5 mm wide, glabrous, dark brown, finely longitudinally wrinkled when dry.

Seeds. Longitudinal in the pods, 2-2.5 mm long, about 1.5 mm wide, slightly shiny, black, minutely verruculose; *aril* conspicuous, terminal, presumably creamy white (but needs confirming).

Taxonomy

Related species. *Acacia* affin. *multispicata* and *A. multispicata* are very closely related and may ultimately prove to be subspecies of a single species; both taxa occur in the Kalannie region but they are not known to grow together. As noted in Cowan and Maslin (1995) *A. multispicata* is extremely variable with respect to phyllode size and, to a lesser extent, phyllode nervature. A better understanding of the nature of this variation are needed before any new entities are formally described within this species complex. Range-wide collections of *A. affin. multispicata* are also required.

Acacia multispicata is most readily distinguished from *A. affin. multispicata* by its phyllodes having more numerous and closely spaced nerves.

Distribution

This taxon is seemingly uncommon, or at least has a very restricted distribution, in the northern wheatbelt region of south-west Western Australia. It is known from the

Kalannie region (where it is locally abundant in the few places south-west of Kalannie township) and from near Manmanning.

Habitat

The Kalannie region populations occurred in yellow gravelly sand on the slopes and near the base of low rises.

Recorded from the following Kalannie region Land Management Unit. Shallow soil over laterite.

Conservation status

This taxon has been recommended for inclusion of the *Declared Rare and Priority List* of the Department of Conservation and Land Management as a Priority 1 taxon.

Priority 1 - Poorly Known Taxa. 'Taxa which are known from one or a few (generally <5) populations which are under threat, either due to small population size, or being on lands under immediate threat, e.g. road verges, urban areas, farmland, active mineral leases, etc., or the plants are under threat, e.g. from disease, grazing by feral animals, etc. May include taxa with threatened populations on protected lands. Such taxa are under consideration for declaration as 'rare flora', but are in urgent need for further survey.'

Flowering

Because of the paucity of collections it is difficult to accurately assess the flowering period of this species, however, current indications are that it flowers from August to September.

Plants in the Kalannie region had just passed their peak flowering in early September 1997.

Fruiting

Pods with mature seeds were collected from the Manmanning population in early January 1992.

Biological features

Diseases. Some Gall Rust infection occurs on oldest plants in the Kalannie region.

Propagation

No information available.

Revegetation

Like *A. multispicata* this taxon would probably be suitable for use in areas where soil stabilisation is required, particularly on sandy or gravelly soils.

Utilisation

Erosion control. The low-spreading habit and dense crowns renders this species suitable for soil stabilisation.

Biodiversity plantings. Suitable for inclusion in mixes for shallow lateritic soils to increase biodiversity representation of the lower shrub stratum.

Ornamental and horticulture. This low shrub would appear to have some horticulture potential on account of its prolific floral display.

Reference

Cowan, R.S. and Maslin, B.R. (1995). *Acacia* Miscellany 10. New taxa and notes on previously described taxa of *Acacia*, mostly section *Juliflorae* (Leguminosae: Mimosoideae), in Western Australia. *Nuytsia* 10(1): 15-62.