

August 2025

Plant of the month

Knife-leaf Wattle



Scientific Name: *Acacia cultriformis*
A.Cunn. ex G.Don

Family: Fabaceae

Genus: *Acacia* – from the Greek *akakis* – a sharp point, originally describing a spiny African species.

Species epithet: *cultriformis* – from the Latin *culter* – knife, referring to the knife-shaped phyllodes.



We couldn't wait for Wattle Day, 1 September, to feature this icon of Australia as our plant of the month.


Wattles or acacias are the largest genus of plants in Australia, with more than 1000 species. *Acacia* woodlands, including the Brigalow Belt and Mulga woodlands, are the second most common forest type after eucalypt forests in Australia.

Fossilised pollen dates back 25 million years and species from the genus are used by First Nations people for food, timber and medicine, by settlers, and more recently around the world for tanning and timber.

Acacia pycnantha is officially our national flower, our sporting teams' colours are inspired by wattles and the smell of wattle in the air evokes for many of us memories of and connection to this country.

Acacia cultriformis, like many wattle species, is adapted to arid conditions. What looks like knife-shaped leaves are actually flattened leaf stalks (petioles) that function like leaves but with less water loss.

Acacia flowers do not produce nectar. However, phyllode glands secrete a sugary substance that attracts ants, bees, butterflies and honeyeaters. This species is one of the most widely cultivated wattles for its attractive foliage and colourful flowers. A prostrate form is also available.



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Distribution
Central New South Wales and southern Queensland on the western slopes of the Great Dividing Range, from Wagga Wagga and Narrandera northwards, and west of Denman and Singleton to Stanthorpe and Inglewood. Naturalised in some areas, check if a local weed before planting.




Native Habitat
Grows in sand or clay loam in *Eucalyptus* communities.

Description
Woody shrub to 4m in height with phyllodes crowded on stems. The green to green-grey phyllodes are asymmetrical, with one leaf margin angled so the overall shape is triangular. Nectary located at the widest part of the phyllode.

Flowers
Racemes of rounded or globular, yellow to golden flower heads are prolific from August to November.

Fruit
Narrow, flattish, oblong pods 3 to 10cm long with raised segments over the hard, black seeds.

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