

# Australian Acacias Used For Landscaping in Arizona

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*Acacia aneura.*

There is an increasing interest in drought resistant plants among nurserymen and consumers. New plant introductions are being grown by some wholesale nurseries and made available to the public. Among these new introductions are plants from Australia, of which the *Acacia* species are popular. In addition to being drought-resistant, many are colorful and probably do not contribute to allergy problems. They produce a cloud of sticky pollen that is transmitted by insects attracted to their colorful flowers.

The Acacia blooms are a tightly packed cluster of many individual flowers giving an attractive puffball appearance, sometimes extending into a short spike. The majority of Australian Acacias have modified mid-ribs, termed phyllodes, which function as leaves. Aside from the phyllode and flower similarities, the Acacias are a very diverse group of plants. They range in use from groundcovers and small or large shrubs to small and medium-sized trees.

The following descriptive list is of Australian Acacias that grow in Arizona. Some are readily available. Others can be bought in small quantities but may become more common when more is known about them.

## **Acacia acuminata**

### RASPBERRY JAM WATTLE

This is a small tree that grows to thirty feet in height, with a spreading crown and pendulous branches. It is noted for its raspberry fragrance. This wattle prefers a warm, moist, sandy soil. Golden yellow flowers on one inch long spikes appear in February. The phyllodes are narrow and three to ten inches long.

## **Acacia aneura**

### MULGA

Mulga is a shrub or small tree that can grow to 20 feet in height with ascending branches and spreading crown. It grows on a wide range of soils. Yellow flowers on half-inch long spikes appear in March and April. The phyllodes are an inch and a half to three inches long and an eighth inch wide.

## **Acacia armata**

### HEDGE WATTLE, KANGAROO THORN

This shrub grows to ten feet tall and makes a good, quick hedge or barrier. The branches are sharply spined. Deep yellow flowers make a showy display from February to April. The phyllodes are under one inch long.

## **Acacia colletioides**

### WAIT-A-WHILE

This acacia is a compact, rounded shrub that spreads wider than its six to nine foot height. It requires a well-drained soil. Golden yellow flowers appear in spring and make a very showy display. The phyllodes



*Acacia ligulata.*

are very stiff, half an inch to one inch long, and needlelike.

### ***Acacia craspedocarpa***

*Acacia craspedocarpa* is a slow-growing shrub or small tree that grows from six to twelve feet tall. The phyllodes are oval or rounded and half an inch across.

### ***Acacia ligulata***

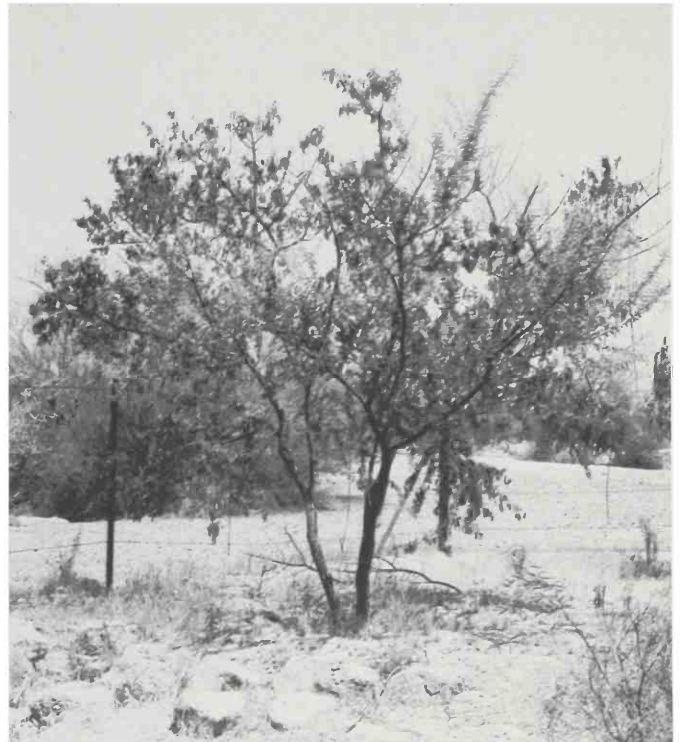
#### **SMALL COOBA**

This plant is a hardy, compact shrub that spreads to a width greater than its six to nine foot height. It grows well on a wide range of soils but is best in sandy types. It tolerates saline and alkaline soils. Bright yellow or orange-yellow flowers appear in winter to early spring. The phyllodes are two to three and a half inches long and a quarter inch wide.

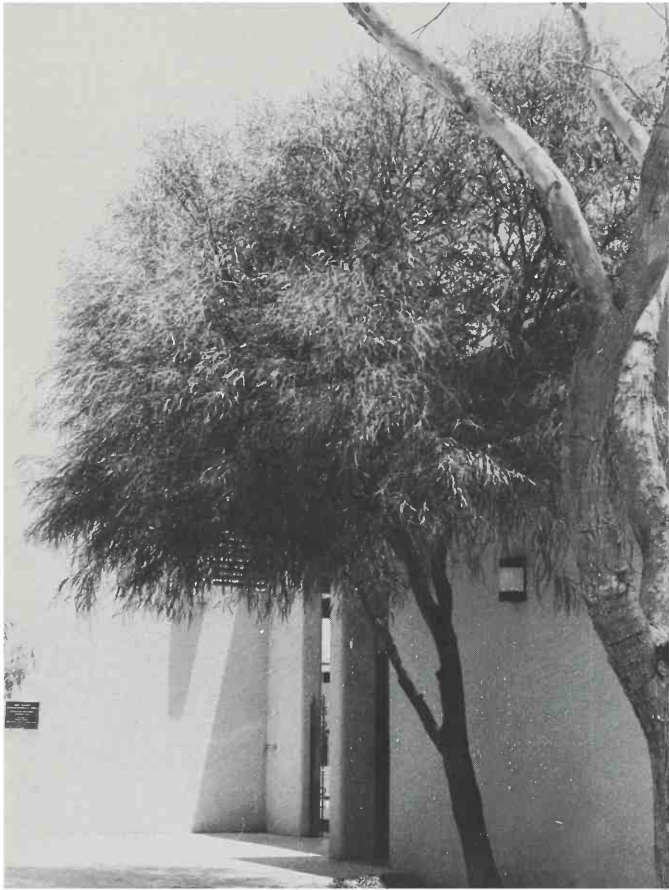
### ***Acacia montana***

#### **MALLEE WATTLE**

Mallee Wattle is a dense, low shrub that grows from six to nine feet tall. It can be used for large-scale ground-covers. Flowers are solitary or in pairs and appear in late winter. Phyllodes are narrow and an inch to an inch and a half long.



*Acacia victoriae.*



*Acacia saligna.*

**Acacia pendula**  
GOLDEN WATTLE

This large shrub or small tree grows from twelve to twenty-five feet tall. Outer branchlets become pendulous with age. Golden Wattle is frost tender when young. Deep yellow, fragrant flowers appear in spring. The phyllodes are three to six inches long and slightly curved.

**Acacia redolens**

*Acacia redolens* is a fast-growing groundcover or low shrub that can become up to four feet tall and eight to twelve feet wide. It prefers a well-drained soil. Small yellow flowers appear in spring. The dull bluish-green phyllodes are three inches long and half an inch wide.

**Acacia retinoides**  
WIRILDA

This species is a small compact tree that becomes from ten to twenty feet tall. It withstands flooding and is good either singly or mass planted. The flowers are not showy, but appear sporadically all year. The phyllodes are three to five inches long and a quarter inch wide.

**Acacia rigens**  
NEEDLE BUSH WATTLE

This compact, rounded shrub grows from eight to ten



*Acacia stenophylla.*

feet tall. It does well with dry conditions and a well-drained soil. Bright yellow flowers appear in winter and continue until spring. The phyllodes are sharp, needle-like, and from one to five inches long.

**Acacia salicina**  
WILLOW WATTLE, COOBA

Willow Wattle is a small- to medium-sized tree that becomes from ten to forty feet tall with pendulous branches. The creamy yellow flowers appear in winter. The phyllodes are two to five inches long and a quarter inch to a half inch wide.

**Acacia saligna**  
GOLDEN WREATH WATTLE

This small tree grows from ten to twenty-five feet tall with a bushy, spreading crown. It does well in almost any soil, from light to heavy. Golden yellow to almost orange flowers appear in spring. The six to ten inch long phyllodes are conspicuous on angular stems.

**Acacia sowdenii**  
WESTERN MYALL

Western Myall is a long-lived, frost- and drought-resistant small tree that grows from twelve to eighteen feet tall with drooping branches. It prefers a dry, well-drained soil. Yellow flowers appear irregularly, but are prolific when conditions are right. Silvery, needlelike phyllodes are three to four inches long.



*Acacia redolens.*

**Acacia spectabilis**

**MUDGE WATTLE**

This species is a shrub or small tree that grows to ten or fifteen feet tall. It is one of the most attractive wattles and is suited to garden or residential plantings. The yellow flowers are in racemes four to seven inches long. The bipinnate leaves are one to four inches long and wide.

**Acacia stenophylla**

**SHOE-STRING ACACIA, RIVER COOBA**

Shoe-string Acacia is a small tree that grows from ten to thirty feet tall with pendulous branchlets and phyllodes. It is attractive either singly or in groups. Cream colored flowers appear mainly in winter or sometimes in early summer. There is a bushier form that is more dense and makes a good screening or windbreak.

**Acacia trineura**

**THREE-VEIN WATTLE**

This wattle is a dense, rounded shrub that grows to eight feet tall. Dark yellow flowers in short racemes

appear in late winter. The phyllodes are two to three inches long, a quarter inch wide, and have three prominent veins.

**Acacia victoriae**

**BRAMBLE WATTLE**

This species grows into a much-branched twelve to fifteen foot shrub that makes a good hedge if mass planted. It performs best in warm, dry conditions. Pale yellow flowers in two to three inch racemes generally appear in spring. The phyllodes are an inch to an inch and a quarter long and an eighth to a quarter inch wide.

The Australian Acacias are generally colorful and quite variable. One can be found to fit almost any situation. Their use covers the whole range of landscape categories, except for the category of extremely large trees. The species listed are generally available through local nurseries that specialize in drought-resistant plants. As the demand for these *Acacia* species grows, so will the supply, until they are likely to become common plants carried by almost all nurseries in the desert southwest.