



photo: J. Overeem- www.flickr.com

Acacia decora

Natural Populations

Acacia decora is found in Qld, NSW and Vic [5]. It grows in dry sclerophyll forests and open situations in woodlands (including Mallee, Callitris and Box woodlands), scrubs and grasslands [5, 8]. It occurs on a range of soil types including heavy clays, sandy soils, sandy loams, and on rocky or stony hillsides, ridges, undulating country and red soil plains [4, 5].

In areas where extensive clearing has occurred, *A. decora* may only remain in remnant vegetation [5]. In this situation, care should be taken to ensure good quality. Seed is collected by taking from a number of interbreeding parent plants.

When collecting seed or sourcing tubestock, it is important to note that

A. decora is very variable, particularly in phyllode shape [5], and attention should be paid to sourcing the local variant. Several identified forms intergrade [5, 6]:

- Plants with \pm linear phyllodes, commonly 1–2 mm wide, occur in the Hunter River area [4, 5]. These are multi-stemmed shrubs confined to shaley clay [6].
- A localised variant in the Griffith area of NSW is sometimes recognised as *A. caleyi* A.Cunn. ex Benth. This form is distinguished by \pm spreading, often curved or crisped hairs on its branches and raceme axes [5, 6].
- A low spreading habit variant with narrow phyllodes (to 3 mm wide) has been identified from the Inglewood district, Qld [3, 6].
- A putative hybrid with *A. vestita* was recorded [6].

Acacia decora is a small to large shrub usually less than 2 m in height, but may reach 5 m [4]. The flowers are distributed in large clusters, at the end of the stems as well as in the axils between the phyllodes, hence it's common name **Showy Wattle** or **Western Silver Wattle** [4]. Other common names are **Graceful Wattle** or **Golden Wattle** [2].

Population map:

www.ala.org.au/explore/species-maps/

A. decora is distinguished from Box-leaf Wattle (*A. buxifolia*) by different habitat and flower structure [7]. *Acacia caleyi* is possibly not specifically distinct from *A. decora* and *A. decora* is also occasionally confused with *A. brachybotrya* [5].



Flowering and Seeds

Flowers are usually found from April–October [5], but occasionally in early autumn [2].

Seeds can be collected from early December to mid-January but the plants need to be monitored closely because the seeds are released immediately on ripening, or within 1-2 days of maturity [7]. This species will store well [1].

Propagation is relatively easy by normal seed raising methods following pre-treatment by soaking in boiling water [1, 4] or by scarification [4, 7, 8]. *A. decora* can also be propagated from cuttings and can be regenerated from seed, particularly after fire [7]. It can also produce suckers [7].

Cultivation and Uses

A hardy species, tolerant of a wide range of conditions including frost and drought [7], *A. decora* prefers well-drained light to heavy soils in light shade to full sun [4, 7]. It is not tolerant of poor drainage [7]. *A. decora* is a worthwhile addition to gardens in many areas of Australia [4].

A. decora has many uses, including as excellent low level cover for stock in windbreaks, for recharge plantings, and as good habitat and valuable understorey in woodlots [1, 7]. As *Acacias* are legumes, they fix nitrogen and improve soil fertility [7], and *A. decora* is also a good pollen source for native insects and birds.

To source seeds or plants:

www.grassywoodlands.org.au

References

[1] Carr, D. (1997). *Plants in Your Pants: a pocket guide for the identification and use of the common plants of the northwest slopes*. Greening Australia NSW, Armidale.

[2] Cunningham, G.M., Mulham, W.E., Milthorpe, P.L. and Leigh, J.H. (1981). *Plants of Western New South Wales*. D. West: NSW Government Printing Office.

[3] Pedley, L. (1980). *Austrobaileya* 1: 296.

Internet links

[4] Australian Society for Growing Australian Plants Fact Sheet: <http://asgap.org.au/a-dec.html>

[5] PlantNET National Herbarium of New South Wales: <http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/NSWfl.pl?page=nswfl&lvl=s&p&name=Acacia~decora>

[6] World Wide Wattle: <http://www.worldwidewattle.com/speciesgallery/decora.php>

[7] Charles Sturt University's Virtual Herbarium: <http://www.csu.edu.au/faculty/science/herbarium/sws/species/acacia-decora.html>

[8] Australian National Botanic Gardens & Australian National Herbarium, Harden Species List: <http://www.anbg.gov.au/greening-grainbelt/harden-species-list.xls>