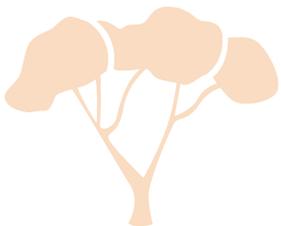




SIGNIFICANT FLORA FACT SHEET

This rare and nationally vulnerable species of wattle is endemic to SA and only known from a small area in the northern Flinders Ranges.



SPIDERY WATTLE, BALCANOONA WATTLE

Acacia araneosa

IDENTIFICATION

Spidery Wattle is a small, erect, wispy tree or shrub to eight metres high but usually much smaller. Plants in the wild have quite sparse foliage of thin phyllodes ('leaves') up to 50cm long and generally only one or two millimetres in diameter. Main stems and trunk are reddish with smooth bark, only becoming grey and somewhat furrowed at the base of older specimens.

Flower heads are small, yellow, globular and produced from the axils of the leaves in groups of up to nine individual heads. Flowers are produced following significant rainfall.

Seed pods are generally long (up to 15cm) but narrow (4-6mm) and with some constriction between the seeds.

They are produced abundantly if soil moisture conditions are favourable. Seed is usually viable and when grown in cultivation it grows rapidly. However, as with many wattles, Spidery Wattle lives for only about 10-20 years or so under such conditions.

DISTRIBUTION

Spidery Wattle has been found over about eight square kilometres from Nudlamutana Well through to the Arkaroola boundary in the Vulkathunha Gammon Ranges National Park. This is generally called the 'Mt Warren Hastings' population. The five square kilometre 'Station Backtrack' population is found nearby on Arkaroola pastoral lease south-east of Arkaroola village.

Spidery Wattle grows principally or exclusively on calcareous soils overlying dolomites on hill slopes.

These soils are highly alkaline and often contain gypseous 'kopi' deposits. Associated plant communities are Curly Mallee (*Eucalyptus gillii*) and Spinifex (*Triodia irritans*) but Spidery Wattles are sometimes the only tree or shrub in localised patches.

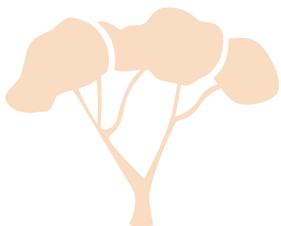




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THREATS

Spidery Wattle is listed as endangered under South Australia's *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* and nationally under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* due to its very restricted distribution and continuing impacts of grazing.

Even where grazing was excluded within experimental enclosures over more than 10 years, plant numbers have continued to decline.

In addition to grazing, a review of current knowledge and research effort on this species by consultant Lorraine Edmunds also lists as potential threats:

- » A local catastrophic event (such as a hailstorm, wildfire etc)
- » Habitat degradation
- » Cyclic psyllid infestations
- » Mistletoe infestation
- » Inadequate replenishment of soil seed bank – Little Corellas (*Cacatua sanguinea*) may be a factor
- » Climate change – particularly if accompanied by an increase in prolonged droughts.

Another peculiar feature of the plant is a tendency for cultivated seedlings to 'revert' to a form similar to the Silver Wattle even when seed is collected from wild stands and grown as a horticultural specimen.

This makes any attempt to conserve the species in an arboretum or garden somewhat problematic.

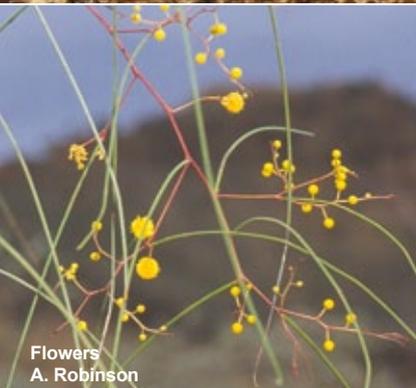
Maintenance and observation of the existing monitoring sites and enclosures should enable a clearer definition of the main threatening processes and management needs of this unique species.

DON'T CONFUSE IT WITH...

Spidery Wattle is closely related to the much more widespread Silver Wattle (*Acacia rivalis*). This species occurs in the same general locality, and throughout the northern Flinders Ranges, but has broader linear phyllodes and is typically an erect, much-branched, bushy shrub of 2-4m in diameter.



Spidery Wattle, Arkaroola
 P. Barron



Flowers
 A. Robinson



Flowers and pods
 R. Davies



Enclosure
 R. Davies