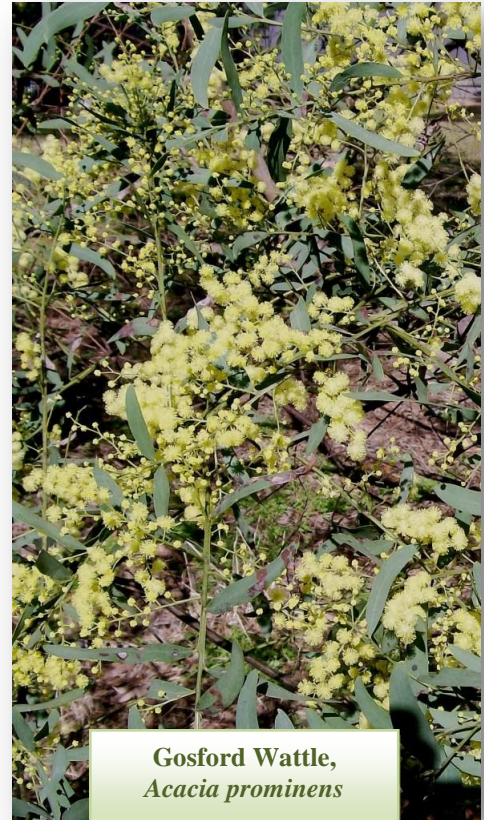


## Plant of the Week

# *Acacia prominens*

## Gosford Wattle

We often think of wattles as shrubs, but **Gosford Wattle**, *Acacia prominens*, is one of the exceptions, growing 10 – 18 metres high in wet sclerophyll forest and at the edges of rainforest, not only at Gosford as the name implies, but also in the Hunter Valley and to northern parts of Sydney<sup>1</sup>. In the Hurstville and Kogarah Local Government Areas, there is an isolated population listed by the Scientific Committee (Threatened Species Conservation Act) as an **Endangered Population**<sup>2</sup>. The specific epithet '*prominens*' refers to the conspicuous gland on the margin of each blue-grey phyllode.



Gosford Wattle,  
*Acacia prominens*

The Gosford Wattle has long been popular as a garden plant. However, it produces seed in abundance and, like so many other *Acacia* species, it has become an invasive weed, most notably in Victoria. *Acacia* seed has some unusual characteristics that enable *Acacia* plants to survive in sometimes hostile environments. It is well known that *Acacia* seed is difficult to germinate because each seed has a hard, impervious seed coat (testa). A simple way to break this dormancy is to treat the seed with boiling water which softens the seed coat, allowing oxygen and moisture to penetrate the seed. However, there is much variation in the degree of hardness of seed coats from any given batch of seed collected from any one individual *Acacia* plant. Thus seed coats break down at different rates, some sooner, some later. Depending on the hardness of the seed coat, seeds can survive in the ground for a very long time, providing a survival strategy whereby at least some seed will germinate when environmental conditions are most favourable. A flash flood might not provide adequate moisture for survival of newly germinated seedlings, but a second (or third, or fourth) crop germinating after good rains might survive and grow on to maturity. Fire can also crack seed coats and stimulate seed germination but drought following fire can be catastrophic and result in the complete loss of local populations<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Plantnet: <http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/NSWfl.pl?page=nswfl&lvl=sp&name=Acacia~prominens>

<sup>2</sup> NSW Scientific Committee:

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/determinations/AcaciaProminensSouthSydneyEndPopListing.htm>

<sup>3</sup> Phillip Kodela, Terry Tame, Barry Conn, Ken Hill, Linn Linn Lee, The Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust, Sydney: <http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/PlantNet/WattleWeb/ecology/recruit.ph>

Map: Modified from Plantnet: <http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/NSWfl.pl?page=nswfl&lvl=sp&name=Acacia~prominens>

Alison Downing & Kevin Downing  
Downing Herbarium,  
Department of Biological Sciences,  
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