Plant of the Month - August

by Allan Carr

Acacia concurrens

black wattle

Pronunciation: a-KAY-sha con-CUR-ens MIMOSACEAE

Derivation: ***Acacia***, from the Greek, *akakia* – to sharpen, (a reference to the prickly nature of the first species discovered); ***concurrens,*** from the Latin, *concurrere* – concurrent (referring to the phyllode veins coming together).

Phyllodes, buds, flowers

Fruits, seeds

The genus Acacia is the largest genus of flowering plants in Australia with around 955 species that occur throughout the continent in every type of terrestrial habitat.

"The common term 'wattle' was used in the expression 'wattle and daub' and referred to the combination of interwoven saplings and mud which was utilised by the early settlers in Australia to construct their shelters. The most generally used material was not a wattle but a Callicoma, an entirely different shrub with wattle-like flowers which was commonly called Black Wattle. The name wattle eventually became associated with the acacias." (From Simmonds, M. 1981, ***Acacias of Australia,*** Volume 1, Nelson)

Description: *A. concurrens* is a tall shrub to small tree to 8 m in the forest understory, common in regrowth of cleared areas from Pialba in south-east Qld to Swansea in north-east NSW. Bark is usually grey-black and fissured. New growth has a dust-like covering.

***Phyllodes** to 160 mm x 40 mm are alternate, the upper margin curved and the lower one almost straight, 3 or4 prominent longitudinal veins with the lower 2 joining near the base (top left of photo on the left above) and minor veins *anastomose. At the base there is one tiny volcano-like gland and the *pulvinus is usually 5 to 9 mm long

Flowers are perfumed, bright yellow and borne on rod-shaped inflorescences to 100 mm long from July to September. These appear in pairs in the upper leaf axils

Fruits are pods to 130 mm x 4 mm, curved or twisted and raised over and constricted between the seeds. These are black to 4 mm x 2 mm with a folded orange *funicle (centre of photo on the right above).

*phyllode = modified, flattened leaf stalk, looking and acting like a leaf

*anastomose = forming a net-like pattern

*pulvinus = a swelling at the base of the stalk of a leaf or phyllode

*funicle = a supporting attachment

Habit