

Acacia Longifolia

Sidney Golden Wattle



General Information

Sidney Golden Wattle is an evergreen shrub or small tree, ranging in size from a prostrate shrub when growing in poor soils and in maritime exposure to a tree 7 metres or more tall. The open, spreading crown can range from 1 - 25 metres wide

Although it produces true leaves as a seedling, like most members of this section of the genus, the mature plant does not have true leaves but has leaf-like flattened stems called phyllodes.

The tree is a traditional food source of Australian Aborigines and is also used in the growing Australian Bush foods industry. It is a very ornamental plant and is often cultivated in gardens from the warm temperate zone to the tropics.

Known Hazards

The seed of many Acacia species, including this one, is edible and highly nutritious, and can be eaten safely as a fairly major part of the diet. Not all species are edible, however, and some can contain moderate levels of toxins. Especially when harvesting from the wild, especial care should be taken to ensure correct identification of any plants harvested for food. Especially in times of drought, many Acacia species can concentrate high levels of the toxin Hydrogen cyanide in their foliage, making them dangerous for herbivores to eat.

Edible Uses

Flowers - cooked

Rich in pollen, they are often used in fritters. The flowers have a violet-like fragrance

Seed - roasted

Rather small and fiddly to gather

The pods are rather variable in length, but can be up to 15cm long containing seeds up to 6mm long

Acacia seeds are highly nutritious and contain approx 26% protein, 26% available carbohydrate, 32% fibre and 9% fat[

The fat content is higher than most legumes with the aril providing the bulk of fatty acids present. These fatty acids are largely unsaturated which is a distinct health advantage although it presents storage problems as such fats readily oxidise, The mean total carbohydrate content of 55.8 + 13.7% is lower than that of lentils, but higher than that of soybeans while the mean fibre content of 32.3 + 14.3% is higher than that of other legumes such as lentils with a level of 11.7%. The energy content is high in all species tested, averaging 1480+270 kJ per 100g. Wattle seeds are low glycaemic index foods. The starch is digested and absorbed very slowly, producing a small, but sustained rise in blood glucose and so delaying the onset of exhaustion in prolonged exercise

Seedpods - roasted. The pods are up to 10cm long



Medicinal

The bark of all Acacia species contains greater or lesser quantities of tannins and are astringent. Astringents are often used medicinally - taken internally, for example. they are used in the treatment of diarrhoea and dysentery, and can also be helpful in cases of internal bleeding. Applied externally, often as a wash, they are used to treat wounds and other skin problems, haemorrhoids, perspiring feet, some eye problems, as a mouth wash etc
Many Acacia trees also yield greater or lesser quantities of a gum from the trunk and stems. This is sometimes taken internally in the treatment of diarrhoea and haemorrhoids

Agroforestry Uses:

The extensive root system of this plant helps to prevent soil erosion
. It is used on sandy soils and steep banks. The subspecies *Acacia longifolia* *sophorae* is useful for sand stabilisation on beaches, where it grows quickly, binding sand and fixing nitrogen with its roots, as well as providing shelter. This makes it a very useful plant to help re-establish native sand-dune plant communities
Trees are planted as a screen in Australia
This species is often grown as a rootstock for grafting lime-intolerant members of the genus

Other Uses

A yellow dye is obtained from the flowers
A green dye is obtained from the seed pods
The bark contains around 12 - 19% tannins
It can be used for waterproofing and preserving ropes and sails
. Bark harvested for its tannins should only be taken from mature stems, and only when the sap is rising at the beginning of the growing season - which is when the tannin content is highest and the bark is most easily removed from the wood. The white wood is light in weight, hard, tough and durable. It is used for tool handles etc

