

ACACIA SPECIES

Blackwood acacia (*Acacia melanoxylon*)

Green wattle acacia (*Acacia decurrens*)

Legume or Pea Family (Fabaceae)

DESCRIPTION

Blackwood acacia and green wattle acacia are both typically found in disturbed areas and roadsides. Both grow well in moist soils but can tolerate drought.

Blackwood acacia is an evergreen tree that reaches 20–40 feet in height. It has a single trunk with rough, gray bark, and forms a dense pyramidal canopy. Juvenile leaves are finely bipinnately compound, but adult leaves are simple. They are alternate, narrow, straight to sickle-shaped, smooth, and leathery. The leaves measure up to 4 inches long and become a dull, dark green.

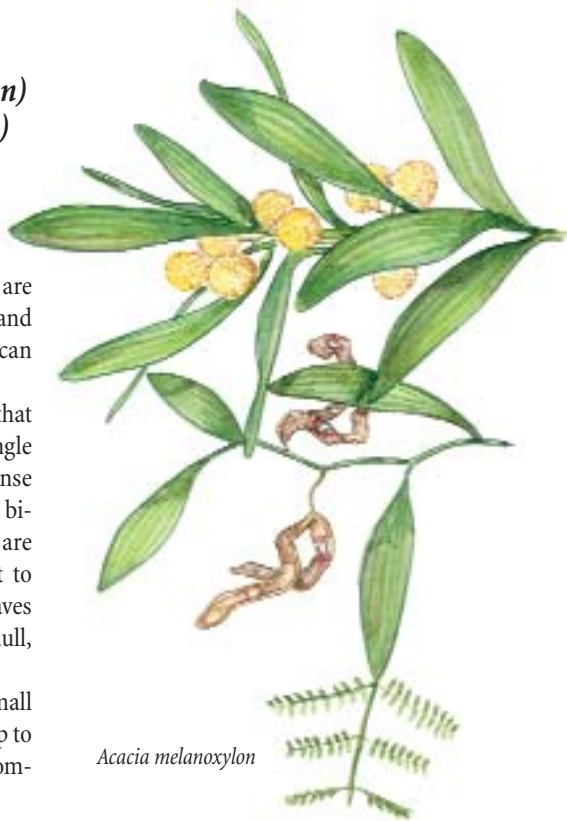
Green wattle acacia is a fast-growing small tree or tall shrub that forms dense thickets up to 45 feet tall. The leaves are bipinnately compound, flattened, and dark green.

IMPACT

Blackwood acacia reportedly has an allelopathic effect, altering soil chemistry and inhibiting germination of native plants. Like many leguminous plants, acacias are nitrogen-fixers, enabling them to establish in nutrient-poor soils. Acacias form dense, monotypic thickets and produce a thick accumulation of leaf litter.

REPRODUCTION

Blackwood acacia reproduces from seed as well as by root suckers and stump sprouting. The roots spread vigorously. Seed production generally begins between 2 and 4 years of age. Clusters of fragrant, pale yellow flowers resembling small pompons appear in January to February. Brown, twisted seed pods, up to 4 inches long, develop in late summer and drop in the fall. Each pod holds 6–10 seeds attached to the pod by pink or red



Acacia melanoxylon

funicles. The seeds themselves are oval, black, and shiny, about a quarter-inch long, and can remain viable for years in the ground. An individual plant can produce 100,000 seeds per year. Seed germination appears to be particularly high following fire.

KEY FACTORS

- u High seed production.
- u Seeds reported viable for 15–20 years.
- u Can sprout from roots and from cut stumps.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

- u Pull seedlings and small saplings by hand or with a Weed Wrench, preferably when the soil is moist.
- u Cut and treat with herbicide larger saplings and mature trees.

- u Cut to 1 foot and cover stump with black plastic or fabric shade cloth.
- u Cut to 1 foot and macerate stump.
- u Girdle or Frill.
- u Drill and inject with herbicide.

DISPOSAL

Remove seed pods from the site when feasible. The wood can be cut for firewood.

FOLLOW-UP

Return to the site to check for seedling growth and resprouts at least twice a year. Dig out or cut and treat the resprouts.

INTERESTING FACTS

The genus *Acacia* is one of the largest in the world, comprising around 1,000 species. Blackwood acacia is native to Tasmania, an island south of Australia, where marsupials eat the seedlings. Heights of 130 feet have been recorded, while the oldest tree is 230 years old. It produces lumber of commercial value if grown on suitable sites. In some parts of the world, green wattle acacia is used in cosmetics for skin conditioning, while the bark is used to tan leather. Many *Acacia* species can be highly allergenic.

Notes