

10. Accolades to Acacias

Discussion topics and information

Acacias (or Wattles) are the most widespread genus of Australian native plants. The *Acacia* genus is also indigenous to South Africa. Species within the *Acacia* genus are often best recognised by their leaf shape. Generally the *Acacia* genus is very robust and being of the LEGUMINOSAE family (legume), is able to improve soil nitrogen levels. It is used extensively in revegetation projects due to its ability to colonise areas of bare ground and recent disturbance. However this, resilience can also make them a formidable pest plant if they are introduced to areas outside their natural range.

The worksheet contained with this activity has more information on Acacias and is tailored as closely as possible to your specific area. The worksheet itself may serve as a teacher or student resource.

Lesson ideas

- Read through the worksheet with the students or read aloud to them and have them provide answers to the questions on the reverse side verbally, or as written answers.
- Have students research or write a photo essay on one of their local Acacias and include a detailed, labelled drawing of the leaf structure of their specific plants. Students may also provide details on the ecology of their plant, eg the sorts of animals which use it, how it may benefit/disadvantage other plants.

Recommended resources

Bonney Neville (2003), *What Seed is That?* Finsbury Press

Dashorst and Jessop (1990), *Plants of the Adelaide Plains and Hills*. Botanic Gardens of Adelaide and State Herbarium

DEH (2002), *Common Wildflowers of the Mount Lofty Ranges*. DEH

Nicolle Dean (1997), *The Eucalypts of South Australia*. Lane Print Group

Prescott Ann (1988), *It's Blue with Five Petals*. Lutheran Publishing House

<http://www.flora.sa.gov.au/factsheets.html>

Excellent fact sheets on SA's Acacia species. Navigate site to learn about the distribution of individual species.