PLANT FACT SHEET

Acacia kempeana F. Muell.

GENUS *Acacia* **FAMILY** Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES Witchetty bush, Kemp's Wattle

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Gum, Honeydew, Grub, Leaves

The seed are eaten. The tree harbours a large tasty grub which is eaten. Grubs can be 11.5 g weight. The grubs can be eaten raw or lightly roasted. They are good protein. The Red Lerp scale produces a honey dew which is eaten. It also has edible gum.

DESCRIPTION

An evergreen spreading shrub. It grows to 3-4 m high and 2-3 m across. The stem is smooth, slender and bends easily. It is upright and with many branches. The bark is grey and becomes rough. The leaves (phyllodes) are stiff and broad. They are grey green. They are 5-10 cm long and 0.5-1.5 cm across. They have a blunt end and are slightly curved. There are 3 clear veins running along the leaf. The young growth is sticky. The flowers are golden rods. They are 2-4 cm long. They occur singly. The pods are 3-6 cm long and 1-1.5 cm across. They are flat, brown and sticky. There are 7-11 seeds per pod and they are 3-4 mm long. They are dark brown when ripe.

HABITAT

It is widespread in central Australia. It requires well drained soil. It can grow in part or full sunlight. It can withstand some drought and frost and grows in semi arid areas. It is often in limestone areas. Hot fires can kill it but it can re-shoot after cool fires in winter. It can grow in arid places.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It is grown from seed. The seed needs treatment to break the hard seed coat. Normally this is by putting the seeds in very hot water and letting the water cool down overnight then planting the seeds immediately.

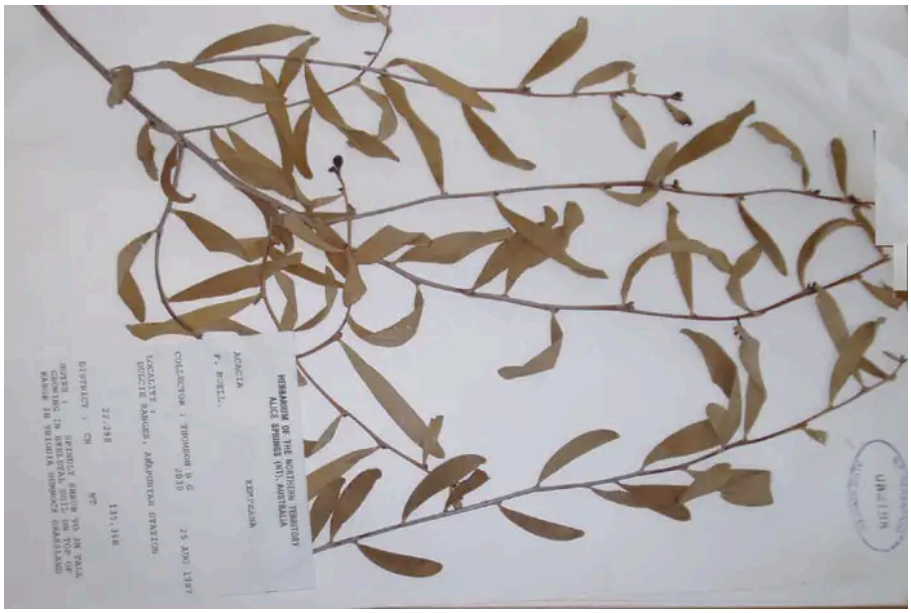
Harvesting and Seed Production

Plants flower and seed well only after reasonable rains. The trees look more green at these times.

NOTES

There are about 1,350 Acacia species. Over 1,000 occur in Australia. Also as Mimosaceae.

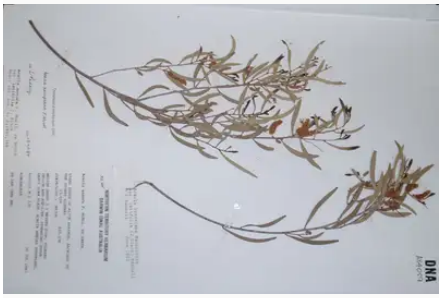
PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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