



Australian Government
Department of the
Prime Minister and Cabinet

Golden Wattle

AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL FLORAL EMBLEM

Australia's national floral emblem is the golden wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*).

The golden wattle is one species of a larger group of wattles, also known as acacias, which grow naturally across much of Australia.

Wattles are able to cope with all types of weather conditions in Australia, including droughts, winds and bushfires. The resilience of the wattle represents the spirit of the Australian people and is a symbol of unity.

The golden wattle, as our national floral emblem, can be used as a symbol of remembrance and reflection. On national days of mourning, for example, Australians are invited to wear a sprig of wattle.

Wattles, including the golden wattle, have been used in the design of Australian stamps, bank notes and official awards.

A single wattle blossom is the emblem of the Order of Australia.



When in flower, the golden wattle is green and gold, which are Australia's national colours.

Figure 1 Golden wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*)

HISTORY

- The golden wattle was unofficially accepted as the national floral emblem to mark Federation in 1901.
- In 1912 wattle was included on the Commonwealth Coat of Arms, representing Australian flora.
- The golden wattle was proclaimed as Australia's national floral emblem on 1 September 1988.

NATIONAL WATTLE DAY

The first day of September is National Wattle Day. The day was formally recognised on 23 June 1992, however was celebrated as early as 1910. Australians can celebrate Wattle Day by planting wattles.



Figure 3 A young girl holds a plant seedling
Figure 4 Wattle Day badge 1918



ABOUT THE GOLDEN WATTLE

The golden wattle is an evergreen shrub or small tree. It grows in forests, woodland and in open scrubland in South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. The common name for acacias, wattle, is derived from an old building technique. The flexible twigs or small branches of the wattle were interwoven to form the framework of buildings.

DID YOU KNOW?

- There are more than 1000 species of wattle across Australia.
- Even if the parent wattle plant is destroyed in bushfires, the seeds have tough coats and are able to survive and grow after enough rain.
- While most Australian wattles only live 10–20 years, there are some species that live for over 200 years.
- Historically, wattles have many uses including treating burns and wounds, as well as being a valuable food source.



Figure 2 Stylised illustration of golden wattle

