

## Elephant Ear Wattle *Acacia dunnii*



### Description

*Acacia dunnii* is a spectacular wattle both in flower and foliage. It is a single-stemmed shrub or small tree that may reach a height of 4–7 m with a width of 2–4 m. A native of Australia's Top End it occurs mostly in the Kimberley region, where it is a very popular ornamental plant for the garden, but only recently has it been grown outdoors successfully in Kings Park. Its common name refers to the huge phyllodes (leaf-like structures) that are silvery-blue in colour with several prominent, longitudinal veins. They are 20–45 cm in length and 6–16 cm in width and hang vertically. The stems usually have a whitish bloom.

### Flowers

Flowers may appear sporadically throughout the year but particularly summer to autumn (February to May). The globular flower heads are a rich golden yellow and are borne in long racemes at the ends of the branches. Each head is about 2 cm across and carries dozens of individual flowers.

### Growing conditions

*Acacia dunnii* can be grown in southern areas, such as Perth, from seed that is sown in October. The germinated seedlings should be potted up over the summer growing season and kept in pots for the next 12 months. During winter keep pots in a warm, sunny, sheltered position out of winter rain. Ensure the soil remains only slightly moist. When the weather starts to warm up, around October, water plants well and transplant into large feature pots or the garden. Plants require full sun in a hot exposed position and prefer yellow sand with sub-surface irrigation providing generous summer watering. Rock mulch is beneficial to keep the soil as warm as possible during winter.

### Watering

Water well during the summer months—when the plant should be actively growing. Water sparingly during the cold months—probably May to November.

### Pruning

It should not be necessary to prune the plant.

### Fertiliser

Use a 3–6 month slow-release native-plant fertiliser at the time of planting and at the beginning of summer each year.

### Pests and diseases

There are none known at the moment.

### Miscellaneous

For many *Acacias*, in the early stages after establishment of the young plant, the true leaves are slowly replaced by phyllodes that then carry out all the functions of leaves but have fewer 'pores'. This adaptation enables such plants to reduce water loss.



### Further Information

Gardening Advisory Service, a free service provided by Kings Park Volunteer Master Gardeners.  
Phone: (08) 9480 3672 or Email: [garden.advice@bgpa.wa.gov.au](mailto:garden.advice@bgpa.wa.gov.au).

Pest and Diseases Information Service, Department of Agriculture and Food.  
Freecall 1800 084 881 Email: [info@agric.wa.gov.au](mailto:info@agric.wa.gov.au) or visit [www.agric.wa.gov.au](http://www.agric.wa.gov.au).