

## Fat-leaf Wattle *Acacia pinguifolia*

Endangered

### Description

Fat-leaf Wattle is a dense 1-2 m high and 2-3 m wide spreading shrub with:

- thin bark, pale grey at the base of stems
- light green to blue-grey green and fleshy phyllodes (leaf-like structures) 1-3.5 cm long, 2-3 mm wide
- typically 'wattle-like' flowers with round, dark yellow flower heads arranged in ones or twos on short stalks that extend out from the stem
- seed pods that are curved and twisted, dark brown, 5-7 cm long and 0.5 cm wide.



Flowers and phyllodes of Fat-leaf Wattle

### Ecology

Fat-leaf Wattle flowers between July and October, with seeds produced between November and January. The intensity and frequency of fire is thought to be important in the life cycle of Fat-leaf Wattle.

### Distribution

Fat-leaf Wattle is only found in South Australia, with two geographically separate populations - southern Eyre Peninsula and near Finniss on Fleurieu Peninsula.

On Eyre Peninsula there are three main populations:

- northern Koppio Hills
- southern Koppio Hills
- west of Cummins between Coultla and Kappinnie.

The majority of plants within these populations are found along roadsides and in rail reserves.

### Habitat

Fat-leaf Wattle is an understorey shrub that grows primarily in mottled-yellow duplex soils. On Eyre Peninsula the species is found in the following vegetation communities:

- Eyre Peninsula Blue Gum *Eucalyptus petiolaris*, Sugar Gum *Eucalyptus cladocalyx* low open forest
- Ridge-fruited Mallee *Eucalyptus incrassata*, Broombush *Melaleuca uncinata* open scrub.

Throughout the Koppio area, Fat-leaf Wattle grows in heavy soils in low-lying areas and often grows with *Acacia imbricata*. The population west of Cummins grows in much drier soils, predominately in mallee vegetation with a heath understorey.



Fat-leaf Wattle growing in an open woodland habitat with a shrub understorey



Distribution of Fat-leaf Wattle in South Australia

## Conservation rating

Fat-leaf Wattle is listed nationally as Endangered because it is found only in a small area and its habitat is predicted to decrease in quality.

Vulnerable	<b>Endangered</b>	Critically Endangered	Extinct
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## Threats

Species that are threatened often live in less than ideal situations, where various processes affect their ability to survive and reproduce.

Threats to Fat-leaf Wattle include its small area of occupancy and its need for certain types of disturbance, including fire and ground surface disturbance. Wattles often grow right on the edge of country roads, making them highly susceptible to clearance. Best practice roadside maintenance has seen the Lower Eyre Peninsula District Council install Significant Roadside Vegetation markers to ensure protection of Fat-leaf Wattle. Competition from weeds, particularly Bridal Creeper and Perennial Veldt Grass, also threatens the species. Fat-leaf Wattle may also be threatened by *Phytophthora*, an infectious soil and waterborne fungi that causes plant dieback.

Serious threats to Fat-leaf Wattle include:



Restricted distribution



Disease



Competition with weeds



Small population size



Rabbit grazing



Stock grazing



Changed fire patterns



Road and rail maintenance

## Recovery

Fat-leaf Wattle is included in a recovery plan for threatened plants, which outlines strategies to prevent the species from becoming extinct.

The recovery goal is to down list Fat-leaf Wattle from Endangered to Vulnerable. Recovery objectives include:

- obtaining baseline information and determining critical and potential habitat
- reducing the risk of catastrophic events impacting on populations

- improving community and stakeholder awareness and involvement in Fat-leaf Wattle recovery
- improving habitat quality, for example, by fencing remnant Fat-leaf Wattle populations or establishing wind breaks and widening roadside vegetation to provide Fat-leaf Wattle habitat
- monitoring Fat-leaf Wattle populations/habitat and evaluating the success of recovery actions.



Fat-leaf Wattle in flower

## How you can help

Everyone can be involved in helping to save threatened species. Please be aware of native plants and help preserve them by:

- preventing damage caused by grazing animals
- controlling weeds to reduce competition
- preventing removal of native plants by land clearance and illegal collection
- taking photos instead of picking native flowers
- joining your local Landcare, Friends of Parks, or similar group and looking after a threatened plant population
- reporting any new sightings of Fat-leaf Wattle to the Threatened Flora Officer, so they can be added to the statewide database and used in future management of the species.

## Further reading

Freebairn, A & Pobke, K 2006, *Draft Recovery Plan for 25 Plant Taxa on Eyre Peninsula*, Department for Environment and Heritage, Port Lincoln.

Whibley, DJE & Symon, DJ 1992, *Acacias of South Australia Revised 2nd Edition*, Government Printer, South Australia.

## Further information

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