

## *Acacia cyclops*

### COASTAL or RED-EYED WATTLE

G. Don

**Flowering period:** September–May.

**Description:** Dense shrub to small tree, 0.8–4 m high, often forming dense thickets particularly in dune swales. Leaves 40–80 mm long, 6–12 mm wide with 3–5 prominent leaf veins. Pod is flattened and broad, 12 cm long and splits by twisting to release up to 15 dark brown to black seeds each encircled by a highly conspicuous bright red aril (food body) thought to be important in aiding seed dispersal probably by seed-eating birds. The pods often persist on the plant long after seeds have been released.

**Pollination:** Open pollinated by a wide variety of non-specific insect visitors.

**Distribution:** From Geraldton to east of Esperance in coastal dunes where the plant is often solitary in primary dunes or forms dense thickets in secondary or more stable dunes.

**Propagation:** Grows easily from seed collected in December. Scarify seed with hot water or abrade the seed with fine sandpaper (opposite end to the hilum) before sowing in a free-draining soil mix. Incorporation of weed- and disease-free soil into the sowing medium taken from around the base of a parent plant may assist in improving inoculation by beneficial *Rhizobium* bacteria.

**Uses in restoration:** A highly useful, keystone species in restoration programs along the coast. Although highly sensitive to wind burn in exposed sites the species grows rapidly and reliably, and can assist in ‘knitting’ restoration plantings as well as providing roosting sites for birds and adding soil nutrients through the nitrogen-fixing bacteria in the roots. The plant can rapidly dominate a restoration site so ensure planting densities match natural abundance.

**Notes:** Often easily confused with the cohabiting summer-scented wattle (*Acacia rostellifera*). An easy and reliable way of distinguishing the two species when not in flower is to fold a leaf between your finger and thumb – *A. rostellifera* will snap cleanly in two whereas *A. cyclops* will crease but not snap. *A. cyclops* may produce semi-succulent leaves in response to salt exposure that do snap – use leaves from the leeward side of the shrub.



Habit



R. Barrett  
Seed with aril



Flowers



Pods and seeds



Distribution