

# *Acacia podalyriifolia*

Queensland silver wattle

Fabaceae

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## OVERVIEW

*Acacia podalyriifolia* (Queensland silver wattle) is a silver leaved large shrub to small tree native to Queensland Australia. *A. podalyriifolia* is commonly cultivated in gardens and as a street tree in other parts of Australia and elsewhere in the world. In Victoria, Australia, this species has become locally invasive, spreading from initial plantings to nearby dry sclerophyll forest and woodland (Carr et al. 1992, Blood et al. 1998). The seeds are believed to be dispersed by birds and ants and reach peak germination after fires (Swarbrick and Skarratt 1994). *A. podalyriifolia* is considered a threat in one or more vegetation types in Australia (Carr et al. 1992). In Hawai'i, *A. podalyriifolia* was recently discovered being cultivated on Maui and is known from gardens in two locations, Waipoli Rd. and Ha'iku. With a history of weediness elsewhere and limited distribution on Maui, this species is a good candidate for eradication and control. Further island wide surveys are needed to locate any other sites where *Acacia podalyriifolia* occurs. Surveys on other Hawaiian Islands are also needed.

## TAXONOMY

**Family:** Fabaceae (Pea family) (Wagner et al. 1999).

**Latin name:** *Acacia podalyriifolia* A. Cunningham ex G. Don (PLANTS 2003).

**Synonyms:** *Racosperma podalyriifolium* (A. Cunn. ex G. Don) Pedley (GRIN 2003).

**Common names:** Queensland silver wattle, Mount Morgan wattle, pearl wattle, pearl acacia (Swarbrick and Skarratt 1994, Blood et al. 1998, GRIN 2003, PLANTS 2003).

**Taxonomic notes:** The genus *Acacia* is made up of about 1,200 species that are widespread but with a large number in Australia (Wagner et al. 1999).

**Nomenclature:** The genus name is derived from *akakia*, the Greek name for *Acacia arabica* (Lam.) Willd., which is derived from *akis*, a Greek word meaning sharp point, in reference to the thorns of the plant (Wagner et al. 1999).

**Related species in Hawai'i:** Numerous *Acacia* species are known from Hawai'i, including native species such as *A. koa* and *A. koaia*, and naturalized non-native species such as *A. farnesiana*, *A. confusa*, *A. mearnsii*, and *A. melanoxylon*. Several non-native *Acacia* species have recently been found on Maui that are also potentially invasive including *A. auriculiformis*, *A. retinodes*, and *A. podalyriifolia*.

## DESCRIPTION

"Tall, glaucous, pubescent shrub; phyllodes ovate or oblong, to 1 1/2 in. long; fl. heads in long racemes; fr. to 3 in. long (Bailey and Bailey 1976).

"A tall shrub or small tree which reaches about 5 m in height by a similar spread. With phyllodes silvery grey, oval, and 20-30 mm long. Flowers occur in ball shaped clusters in the axils of the phyllodes and a golden yellow color." (ASGAP 2001).

## **BIOLOGY & ECOLOGY**

**Cultivation:** *Acacia podalyriifolia* is widely available in nurseries in Australia and is often cultivated for ornament and as a street tree (Blood et al. 1998). It is also cultivated in other warm regions of the world, including California (PLANTS 2003).

**Invasiveness:** *Acacia podalyriifolia* can become naturalized where planted (Simmons 1987). It is a pest in dry scrub and woodland of Victoria, Australia, where it is planted as an ornamental garden plant and street tree (Carr et al. 1992, Blood et al. 1998). It is considered a threat to one or more vegetation types there (Carr et al. 1992). This relatively quick growing tree flowers by the second year (ASGAP 2001). It is well suited to a wide variety of climates, particularly dry areas, and tolerates mild frost (ASGAP 2001).

**Pollination:** Not known.

**Propagation:** *A. podalyriifolia* is propagated from seeds which may have a prolonged dormancy. Germination of seeds peaks after fires (Swarbrick and Skarratt 1994).

**Dispersal:** In Australia, seeds are thought to be dispersed by birds and ants (Carr et al. 1992).

**Pests and diseases:** *A. podalyriifolia* is susceptible to sooty mold and borer attack and is considered to be relatively short lived (10-15 years) (Simmons 1981).

## **DISTRIBUTION**

**Native range:** Queensland silver wattle (*Acacia podalyriifolia*) is native to Queensland, Australia (Carr et al. 1992).

**Global distribution:** *Acacia podalyriifolia* is naturalized in many warm areas of the world where it is planted (Simmons 1981).

**State of Hawai'i distribution:** *Acacia podalyriifolia* is sparingly cultivated on Maui. It is likely present on other Hawaiian Islands.

**Island of Maui distribution:** *Acacia podalyriifolia* is known from a few cultivated trees in two gardens, one in Kula and the other in Ha'iku. In Kula, a few trees can be readily seen along Waipoli Rd. and appear to have been planted with other *Acacia* species (*Acacia retinodes*) in a garden/residential yard setting. The area is relatively arid with a cool climate and is located at approximately 3,200 ft (975 m) elevation. The Ha'iku tree is a single tree in cultivation that was grown from a cutting from the Kula trees. This is a warm, moist, lowland residential area, at approximately 1,400 ft (427 m) elevation.

There are likely other sites on Maui where *A. podalyriifolia* is located. Island wide surveys are still needed.

### **CONTROL METHODS**

**Physical control:** Girdle, pull seedlings (Swarbrick and Skarratt 1994).

**Chemical control:** Cut stump or basal bark methods using a suitable herbicide (Swarbrick and Skarratt 1994).

**Biological control:** None known.

**Cultural control:** This species could be discontinued in plantings in Hawai'i.

**Noxious weed acts:** None known.

### **MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS**

*Acacia podalyriifolia* is widely planted in the Pacific and elsewhere as an ornamental, as a forestry tree, and for other purposes. It has become invasive in areas where it is planted. In Hawai'i, it is sparingly cultivated on Maui. Island wide surveys on Maui should be done to find new locations. Other Hawaiian Islands may also want to survey for this species. Control of this tree now may help to avoid its eventual invasion.

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