Acacia melanoxylon

System: Terrestrial

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<td>Plantae</td>
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<td>Magnoliopsida</td>
<td>Fabales</td>
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Common name

Tasmanian blackwood (English), Australiese swarthout (Afrikaans), blackwood (English), Australian blackwood (English), blackwood acacia (English), aroma salvaje (Spanish), algarrobo (Spanish), acacia de madera negra (Spanish), acàcia-preta (Portuguese, Brazil)

Synonym

Racosperma melanoxylon, (R.Br.) C.Martius

Similar species

Acacia mangium, Acacia cyclops

Summary

Acacia melanoxylon is native in eastern Australia. This tree grows fast and tall, up to 45m height. It has a wide ecological tolerance, occurring over an extensive range of soils and climatic conditions, but develops better in colder climates. Control of its invasion of natural vegetation, commercial timber plantations and farmland incurs considerable costs, but its timber value and nursing of natural forest succession provides a positive contribution.

view this species on IUCN Red List

Species Description

Unarmed, evergreen tree 8-15 (sometimes up to 45) metres high; trunk straight, crown dense and pyramidal to cylindrical, sometimes with heavy spreading branches. Leaves: Bipinnate (feathery) leaves on seedlings and coppice shoots turn into phyllodes. Phyllodes are 7-10cm long, greyish turning dark dull-green, straight to slightly curved, with 3-7 prominent longitudinal veins and fine net-veins between; often bipinnate on young plants and coppice shoots. Flowers: Pale yellow, globular flower heads. Fruits: Reddish-brown pods, narrower than leaves, slightly constricted, twisted; flat roundish shiny black seeds 2-3mm long, seeds almost encircled by pinkish-red seed stalks (aril)" (Henderson, 1995. In PIER, 2002). It has a shallow root system with dense, surface feeder roots.

Notes

This fast growing perennial tree is a successional species. It lives for 15 – 50 years, regularly producing large numbers of well-dispersed seeds. Seed viability is sufficiently long to bridge the time between successive seedling stages. It is intolerant of shade. (Hopkins et al 1977)
Uses
Timber for high quality furniture and wood turning products, shelterbelts in agricultural land, and ornamental tree in landscaping and home gardens. (Geldenhuys, pers.comm. 2003)

Habitat Description
Native to rainforests in Australia, from the Atherton Tableland (17°176S) in Queensland above 500m above sea level to central Tasmania (43°176S) between sea level and 1000m above sea level (Farell and Ashton, 1978; Jennings, 2002). In these areas, it occurs as an understorey tree in wet eucalypt forests, as a pioneer to co-dominant trees in riverine rainforest and as a dominant tree in blackwood/teatree swamps in northwest Tasmania. It is best adapted to cooler, moist sites. In South Africa it invades forest edges or gaps, wooded kloofs, grassland and watercourses (Henderson, 1995, in PIER, 2002), but shows no invasive tendencies in New Zealand. It tolerates drought, poor drainage, any soil, salt air, gusty, steady or cold winds if grown in open, fog, smog, temperature extremes, sun or shade (FUF).

Reproduction
Seed dispersal: The pink-red aril attracts birds for dispersal of the seed. Once birds in host-countries become adapted to feeding on the pink-red aril around the seed, the seed is dispersed widely, as in South Africa. It is possible that in host countries where the species has not become invasive, birds and/or other frugivores were not forced by food shortages (as result of drought or other natural phenomena) to switch to this food source. Soil-stored seed banks develop that can remain viable for many years. Seeds germinate easily when placed in hot (boiling water) overnight, or when soil-stored seeds are heated by the sun (in disturbed or exposed sites), or after fire (Hill, 1982). Acacia melanoxylon reproduces prolifically after fire.

Vegetative regrowth: Coppice shoots develop from cut and damaged stems, and from damaged roots. (Geldenhuys, pers.comm. 2003)

General Impacts
Replaces native non-tree vegetation, such as grassland and shrubland, and transforms such habitats. It invades the understorey of relatively open pine and eucalypt plantations (Geldenhuys, 1986 & 1996). Tree stands facilitate the establishment of natural evergreen forest species and the development of regrowth forest (Geldenhuys, 1996). Windfalls obstruct water flow along invaded streams and rivers. Root suckering, it may require root barriers when planted for landscaping in built-up areas (FUF).
Management Info
Preventative measures: In general, blackwood is either recognised as an invader species in some areas, or it does not invade in other areas (although its potential to invade is recognised), or its invasion status is not yet recognised. South Africa provides information on the management of areas where blackwood invasion has become a problem (Geldenhuys, 1986 & 1996; Seydack, 2002; Vermeulen & Seydack, 2000). In areas where blackwood is not yet an invasion problem or where the species is in an early stage of invasion, the following options could be followed:

- Be careful with the introduction of Acacia melanoxylon into natural areas or area where the species is not present because of the potential of the species to become invasive.
- Production of viable seed should be monitored.
- Seedling recruitment should be monitored in natural ecosystems and along drainage lines. Plants in natural ecosystems should be removed before they flower and produce seed. (Geldenhuys, pers.comm. 2003)

A Risk Assessment of Acacia melanoxylon for Hawai‘i and other Pacific islands was prepared by Dr. Curtis Daehler (UH Botany) with funding from the Kaulunani Urban Forestry Program and US Forest Service. The alien plant screening system is derived from Pheloung et al. (1999) with minor modifications for use in Pacific islands (Daehler et al. 2004). The result is a score of 12 and a recommendation of: "Likely to cause significant ecological or economic harm in Hawai‘i and on other Pacific Islands as determined by a high WRA core, which is based on published sources describing species biology and behaviour in Hawai‘i and/or other parts of the world."

Pathway
Nursery trade, Specific seed collections. (Geldenhuys, pers.comm. 2003) Nursery trade, Landscaping, Tree seed distributors. (Geldenhuys, pers.comm. 2003)

Principal source: Dr Coert J. Geldenhuys, Forestwood cc, P O Box 228, La Montagne, Pretoria 0184, South Africa. Pacific Islands Ecosystems at Risk, (PIER, 2002)

Compiler: IUCN/SSC Invasive Species Specialist Group (ISSG)


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FULL ACCOUNT FOR: Acacia melanoxylon

BIBLIOGRAPHY
34 references found for Acacia melanoxylon

Management information

Summary: A study on the use of a screening system to assess proposed plant introductions to Hawaii or other Pacific Islands and to identify high-risk species used in horticulture and forestry which would greatly reduce future pest-plant problems and allow entry of most nonpests.

Dr Coert J. Geldenhuys, pers.comm. 6 January 2003.

Summary: Personal communication with Dr Coert J. Geldenhuys. Forestwood cc, P O Box 228, La Montagne, Pretoria 0184, South Africa. Tel/Fax +27 12 803-3277.

European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization (EPPO), 2006. Guidelines for the management of invasive alien plants or potentially invasive alien plants which are intended for import or have been intentionally imported. EPPO Bulletin 36 (3), 417-418.


PIER (Pacific Island Ecosystems at Risk), 2002. Acacia melanoxylon.

Summary: Ecology, synonyms, common names, distributions (Pacific as well as global), management and impact information.


Swaziland s Alien Plants Database., Undated. Acacia melanoxylon

Summary: A database of Swaziland s alien plant species.


Summary: This database compiles information on alien species from British Overseas Territories.

Available from: http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-3660 [Accessed 10 November 2009].


General information


**Summary:** Nodulation and root sucker formation in *Acacia melanoxylon*.


**Summary:** Deal with Management from a timber production point of view.


**Summary:** The species list sheet for the Mexican information system on invasive species currently provides information related to Scientific names, family, group and common names, as well as habitat, status of invasion in Mexico, pathways of introduction and links to other specialised websites. Some of the higher risk species already have a direct link to the alert page. It is important to notice that these lists are constantly being updated, please refer to the main page (http://www.conabio.gob.mx/invasoras/index.php/Portada), under the section Novedades for information on updates.


**Spanish:**

La lista de especies del Sistema de informaci?n sobre especies invasoras de m?xico cuenta actualmente con informaci?n acerca de nombre cient?fico, familia, grupo y nombre com?n, as? como h?bitat, estado de la invasi?n en M?xico, rutas de introducci?n y listas de otras especies especializadas. Algunas de las especies de mayor riesgo ya tienen una lista directa a la p?gina de alertas. Es importante resaltar que estas listas se encuentran en constante proceso de actualizaci?n por favor consulte la portada (http://www.conabio.gob.mx/invasoras/index.php/Portada), en la secci?n novedades, para conocer los cambios.


**Summary:** Provenance research to help with timber quality in future.


**Summary:** Ecology and harvesting of Blackwood in the natural forest (its native environment).


**Summary:** Deal with Management from a timber production point of view.

Haugensak, K. and Smyth, A. Uni of Calif, at Berkeley, for Channel Islands National Park. 11-99.

**Summary:** Fact sheet of general information on *Acacia melanoxylon*. Available from: http://usgserv1.ugs.nau.edu/swepic/factsheets/Acacia_melanoxylon.pdf [Accessed 3 October 2002]


**Summary:** Taxonomic information and some global distribution.


Summary: Cet ouvrage liste 1412 taxons (espèces, sous espèces et variétés) introduits en Nouvelle-Calédonie. L’auteur précise dans la majorité des cas si l’espèce est cultivée ou naturalisée.


Summary: This bulletin is about the management of Blackwood in New Zealand, for timber production. It does not deal with the invasion problem. It does contain a very long list of references, not confined to the BW production, but also invasions.


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Summary: Deal with Management from a timber production point of view.


Summary: An abstract covering all general information associated with Blackwood acacia. (Information provided by C.J. Geldenhuys).


USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Plant Profile.

Summary: Taxonomic information and some distribution throughout America.