



# WATTLE WALKS 2022

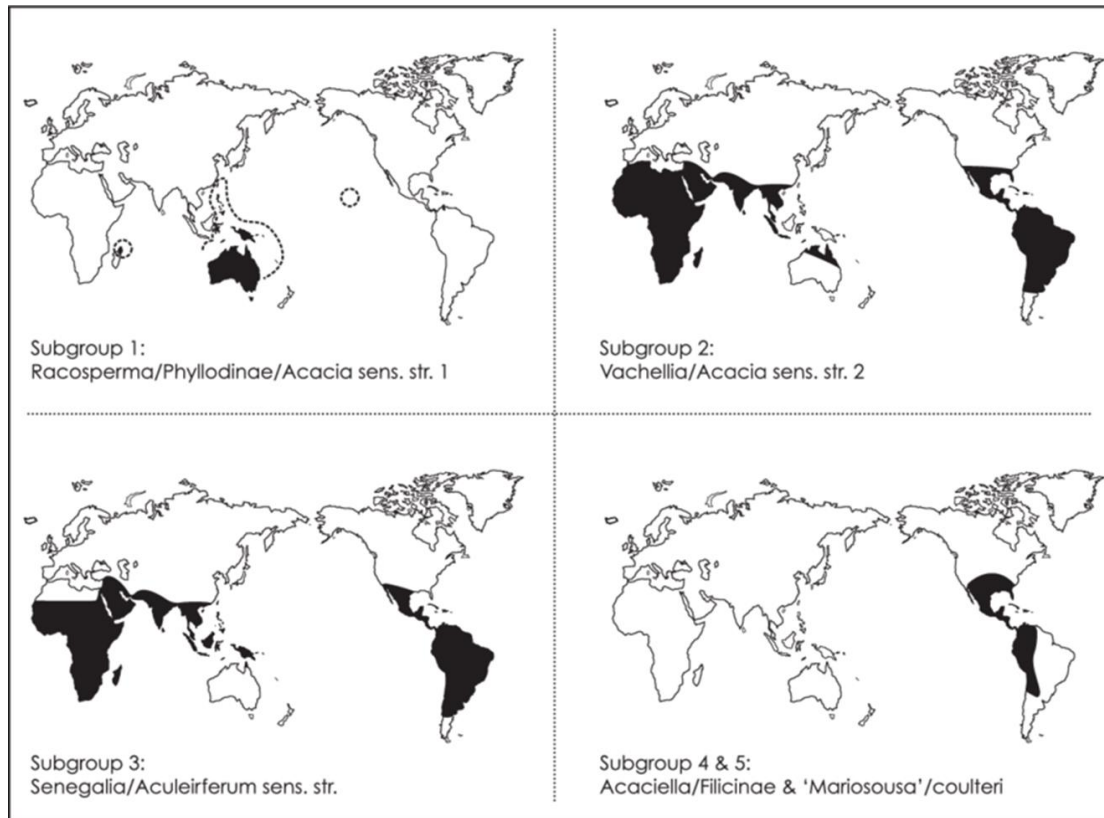
WHAT STORIES CAN WE TELL?

# Is acacia important culturally or symbolically?

- ▶ Coat of arms
- ▶ Order of Australia honours
- ▶ Floral emblem
- ▶ Sports colours



# Where do Wattles and their relatives grow?



# A tale of taxonomy

The original type species for Acacia, now *Vachellia nilotica*, native to Africa, the Middle East and the Indian subcontinent.  
Note the very large stipular spines



The new type species for Acacia, *Acacia penninervis*. Native to NSW, Qld and Vic.  
Not a sharp point in sight!

## But some wattles do have spines, don't they?

*Acacia alata* – you can see tiny stipular spines if you look hard enough!



# Why such a difference in foliage?



▶ Leaves



Phyllodes



Cladodes

# Transition to phyllode



# How are acacia named?

- ▶ Botanic characteristics - e.g. *A. pycnantha*  
(Greek, *pyksnos* = dense, *anthos* = flowers)
- ▶ Places - e.g. *A. bulgaensis* (Bulgoa Wattle)
- ▶ People - e.g. *A. maidenii* (Maiden's Wattle)
- ▶ Uses - e.g. Mulga (shield)
- ▶ Habitat - e.g. *A. sylvestris* - the forest habitat of the species



# “Touch Wood” Uses good and ?



► Plantations



Timber

Weed ?

# Acacia as host

A Quandong story here,  
but why did they choose  
*A. buxifolia* as host?



## Another good use!

*Acacia  
acuminata*  
Raspberry  
jam wattle  
- preferred  
host for WA  
sandalwood,  
*Santalum  
spicatum*



WA sandalwood,  
*Santalum spicatum*



# More about nitrogen fixation

- ▶ Most acacia can fix nitrogen
- ▶ Enhances their growth in low nutrient soils
- ▶ Benefits nearby plants
- ▶ Productivity of *Eucalyptus globulus* enhanced by planting with *A mearnsii*



**Figure 4.** Cartoon about the benefits of interplanting *Eucalyptus* and *Acacia* species (with acknowledgment to *The Canberra Times*)

# And another good use! Acacia crops in Niger

- ▶ Land rehabilitation
- ▶ Food - nutritious seeds
- ▶ Fuel wood
- ▶ Small construction timber
- ▶ Similar projects in Sahel region



# “Wattle”?

- ▶ *Callicoma serratifolia*
- ▶ Black Wattle, Callicoma, Butterwood, Silver Leaf, Silver-Leaf Butterwood, Wild Quince
- ▶ Wattle and daub
- ▶ Likeness in inflorescence



# Enjoy the stories during the walks

