



## African acacias

Most trees are a welcome addition to the landscape - providing shade and shelter, fodder for livestock, delicious fruit and nuts for human consumption, food and habitat for wildlife and beautiful flowers.

However, some trees pose a major threat to agriculture and the environment. African acacias are particularly threatening to the Western Australian ecosystem.



Karoo thorn (*Vachellia karroo*)

Karoo thorn (*Vachellia karroo*, formerly *Acacia karroo*) is one of these species. It has been found in Western Australia and other parts of Australia in the past. Being native across a wide part of Africa, it is perfectly adapted to the WA environment including most of southern WA.

It has flowers and leaves similar to Australian wattle

species and can reach to a height of 12 metres. Its most distinctive feature is large white thorns, which can grow up to 10cm long in V-shaped pairs. With its large menacing thorns, karroo thorn can form dense, impenetrable thickets. One large tree can produce up to 19,000 seeds per year and the seeds can last in the soil for up to seven years!

Karoo thorn is a target of the Boosting Biosecurity Defences Agricultural weed surveillance project funded by Royalties for Regions. For further information see: our website: [agric.wa.gov.au](http://agric.wa.gov.au) and search for 'weed surveillance'.

Giraffe thorn (*Acacia erioloba*) is another African acacia that has been found in WA in the past. It also has distinctive large white thorns in V-shaped pairs, as well as felty ear-shaped seed pods. If found in WA, karroo thorn and giraffe thorn must be reported and eradicated.



Giraffe thorn (*Acacia erioloba*)

### Look-a-likes

No Australian wattles have large thorns like these (see above). Native acacias like *Acacia pulchella* (Prickly moses) are prickly shrubs with much smaller leaves and thorns.

*Vachellia farnesiana*, which is not a declared plant, can be found scattered through the State's wheatbelt, North West and the Kimberly. *Vachellia nilotica*, which is declared, has previously been found in a remote part of the Kimberley and is well established in Queensland. As these species can have larger thorns, it is best to report them and provide photos of the plant, flowers and seed pods.

### How you can help

Photograph any wattle-like trees or shrubs with large white thorns and report using the free MyWeedWatcher App or online: [agric.wa.gov.au](http://agric.wa.gov.au) and search for 'MyWeedWatcher'. Alternatively email photographs and location information to: [info@agric.wa.gov.au](mailto:info@agric.wa.gov.au) or call 1800 084 881. Don't order seeds from the internet until you have checked they are permitted species (phone Quarantine WA on 9334 1800).

### Reporting unfamiliar pests

The department's Pest and Disease Information Service (PaDIS) screens enquiries for new weeds, pests and plant diseases, which could negatively impact the success of WA's local horticulture and agricultural industries and the ability to grow home produce. Please contact DAFWA if you have concerns about an unfamiliar weeds, pests or plant diseases.

Pest and Disease Information Service (PaDIS). [info@agric.wa.gov.au](mailto:info@agric.wa.gov.au). 1800 084 881  
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