

# *Acacia retinodes*

Water wattle

Fabaceae

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## OVERVIEW

*Acacia retinodes* (water wattle) is a small tree native to Australia that is commonly cultivated in warm regions of the world as an ornamental tree and for other various purposes. It is known to spread from initial plantings in at least California (CalFlora 2002). In Hawai'i, *A. retinodes* was recently discovered being cultivated on Maui and is known from a garden on Waipoli Rd. 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 retinodes* occurs. Surveys on other Hawaiian Islands are also needed.

## TAXONOMY

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

**Latin name:** *Acacia retinodes* Schldl. (CalFlora 2002).

**Synonyms:** None known.

**Common names:** Water wattle, swamp wattle, everblooming acacia (Wunderlin and Hansen 2000, CalFlora 2002).

**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. mangium*, and *A. podalyriifolia*.

## DESCRIPTION

"Shrub or small tree; phyllodes linear-lanceolate, to 5 in long, nearly straight, with gland near base; fl. heads 1/4 in. across, in branched racemes shorter than phyllodes; fr. narrow, to 8 in. long." (Bailey and Bailey 1976).

## BIOLOGY & ECOLOGY

**Cultivation:** *Acacia retinodes* is cultivated in warm regions of the world including California and Florida (PLANTS 2003).

**Invasiveness:** *Acacia retinodes* is spreading from plantings in California (CalFlora 2002).

**Pollination:** Not known.

**Propagation:** *A. retinodes* is propagated from seeds.

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

**Pests and diseases:** Not known.

## **DISTRIBUTION**

**Native range:** Water wattle (*Acacia retinodes*) is native from coastal South Australia, Tasmania (Flinders Island), and Victoria, Australia (GRIN 2003).

**Global distribution:** *A. retinodes* is naturalized in coastal counties of central and southern California between 0 and 2,952 ft (900 m) elevation (CalFlora 2002). In Florida, *A. retinodes* is known from central Florida and the Keys (Wunderlin and Hansen 2000).

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

**Island of Maui distribution:** *Acacia retinodes* is known from a few cultivated trees in a gardens in Kula. A few trees are sparingly naturalized in nearby scrub. The parent trees can be seen along Waipoli Rd. and appear to have been planted with other *Acacia* species (*Acacia podalyriifolia*) 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. There are likely other sites on Maui where *A. retinodes* 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 is suggested for other *Acacia* species (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 retinodes* is occasionally cultivated in warm regions of the world. It has become naturalized in areas where it is planted, including California. In Hawai'i, it is sparingly cultivated and naturalized 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 on Maui.

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