



Expanding Tree Diversity in Hawai'i's Landscapes: Shoestring Acacia, *Acacia stenopylla*

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The shoestring acacia is native to eastern Australia, growing along river channels. It can grow to more than 30 ft in height by 15–25 feet wide, with open, pendulous branches. Shape is variable, from upright to spreading with age. Withstands heat and drought well once established. Its roots nurture nitrogen-fixing bacteria while its flowers are attractive to pollinator insects. Used in Phoenix, Arizona; San Diego; and San Francisco as a street tree and in the landscape. It has a beautiful wood grain and close-grained, hard heartwood of high quality.

Recommended Use in Landscape

- Street tree
- Character tree in gardens and residential landscapes: silhouette, light shade



Long, skinny phyllodes give shoestring acacia its common name.



Tightly pruned tree in San Diego

- Narrow spaces if managed to narrow upright form while young
- Parking lots

Distribution

- Inland eastern Australia near rivers
- Areas of 10–25 inches rainfall
- Cool desert climates to intense heat

Propagation Techniques

- Seed (scarify for best germination), though seedlings variable in shape and form
- Root suckers
- Cuttings, with some difficulty

Cultural Requirements and Tolerances

- Full sun
- Adapts to a variety of well-drained soil types.
- Low moisture requirements once established
- Requires staking and training from time of planting to establish a good scaffold branch system.
- Tolerant to drought, heat, salinity, alkalinity, and periodic short-term flooding

Flower and Fruit Characteristics

- Cream-yellow puffball flowers appear in the winter months
- Fruits are pods, up to 8 inches long and constricted between the seeds

Leaf Characteristics

- Long, drooping phyllodes (broadened petioles) to 16 inches long and up to ¼ inch wide, gray-green in color.
- Young leaves are typically pinnately compound and green.

Advantages for Use in Landscapes

- Relatively fast growing
- Graceful and attractive, with fine texture
- Smooth trunk when young; no thorns
- HWRA score of -1
- Tolerant of adverse conditions
- Suitable for xeric landscape designs

Disadvantages for Use in Landscapes

- Moderate amounts of phyllode and fruit-pod litter
- May be somewhat invasive (seed) at higher elevations and under moist conditions
- Pruning required to develop structurally sound scaffold branches and to raise the crown.



Seed pods are constricted between seeds.



This tree has been pruned up for use in a median strip.