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*Acacia melanoxylon*

[Synonyms : *Racosperma melanoxylon*]

**AUSTRALIAN BLACKWOOD** is an evergreen shrub or tree. Native to Australia (particularly southern Australia and Tasmania) it has tiny fluffy balls of creamy yellow flowers that have a penetrating scent.

It is also known as *Acácia Austrália* (Portuguese), *Acacia à bois noir* (French), *Akacia* (Swedish), *Akacie* (Danish), Black Sally, Blackwood, Blackwood acacia, Hickory, *Mimosa à bois noir* (French), Sally wattle, *Schwarzholz-Akazie* (German), *Stink-boontjie* (Afrikaans), and Tasmanian blackwood.

*Melanoxylon* is made up of Greek *melano-* (black) and *-xylon* (wood) components.

Australian Aborigines believed that the discomfort of aching joints could be eased by bathing in water to which the roasted bark had been added.

The bark and the twigs have been used as a fish poison.

In the past the fibrous inner bark provided material for string.

The reddish-brown wood (which is similar to teak, *Tectona grandis*) has been used for veneering and for making boomerangs, spears, clubs and shields, tool handles, piano and organ parts, and billiard tables, as well as for coachbuilding and boats. This hard wood has also been prized for on the one hand cabinetwork and on the other beer barrels, and has also been used for shingling.

In 1996 Australian blackwood featured on the \$2 Australian postage stamp.

Like other close relatives the plant has become invasive in South Africa.

Australian blackwood is believed to have been introduced to Britain in 1818.