



Our Wattle helps again and supports drought relief

Wattle, our national floral emblem, is helping to raise funds for drought-affected farmers. On National Wattle Day, Saturday 1 September, many Australians will continue a century-old tradition of selling sprigs of wattle to help fellow Australians.

How appropriate! As a great survivor in this dry continent, wattle is helping us get through this latest drought. For example, in some parts of the country sheep are being kept alive by mulga trees (wattles from the *Acacia aneura* group), that farmers lop or push over so that stock can reach the leaves above browse height.

This year as wattle blossoms gold across our land we are particularly united in helping those on the land. Wattle has evolved and thrived in our land for more than 30 million years – we know that through scientific analyses of wattle pollen in soil samples. A survivor of all those years in our land, wattle teaches us the importance of resilience and adaption – learnings that farmers know well, and all Australians can heed.

An authentic Australian, wattle in all its varieties, is a much-loved symbol of Australia. It has welcomed us all, Aboriginal, colonial and modern-day immigrants. Since the First World War, more than a century ago, Australians have used Wattle Days to raise funds to help each other: for ambulances for the Western Front, for wounded soldiers, to hospital wings, women and children's charities, tuberculosis sanatoriums and more recently people living with mental illness, disability and acquired brain injury (Open Minds) and rural fire brigades (WDA). See <http://www.wattleday.asn.au/about-wattle-day/community-links>

Today's drought relief is just the latest effort that brings us together to help each other.

Wattle springs from the land and unites all Australians. This year marks 30 years since Golden Wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*) was formally proclaimed as our national floral emblem. It is a great time to celebrate Australia, when the wattle paints our national colours around us. National Wattle Day is an obvious alternative to Australia Day. It is clearly a day that unites all of us to care for the land we all call 'home'.

A list of organisations helping with drought assistance is on the Wattle Day website www.wattleday.asn.au and go to Events <http://www.wattleday.asn.au/about-wattle-day/2018-wattle-day-events-around-australia>

Celebrating Australia and the Australian Spirit

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