

# Acacia auriculiformis: Earleaf Acacia<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

Quickly reaching a height of 40 feet and a spread of 25 feet, earleaf acacia becomes a loose, rounded, evergreen, open shade tree. It is often planted for its abundance of small, beautiful, bright yellow flowers and fast growth. The flattened, curved branchlets, which look like leaves, are joined by twisted, brown, ear-shaped seed pods. Growing 6 to 8 feet per year, earleaf acacia quickly grows into a medium-sized shade tree. This makes it a popular tree. However, it has brittle wood and weak branch crotches, and the tree can be badly damaged during wind storms. Prune branches so there is a wide angle of attachment to help them from splitting from the tree. Also, be sure to keep the major branches pruned back so they stay less than half the diameter of the trunk. These techniques might increase the longevity of existing trees.

## **General Information**

Scientific name: Acacia auriculiformis

Pronunciation: uh-KAY-shuh ah-rick-yoo-lih-FOR-miss

Common name(s): earleaf acacia

**Family:** Fabaceae

**USDA hardiness zones:** 10A through 11 (Figure 2) **Origin:** native to northern Australia, Papua New Guinea,

and Indonesia

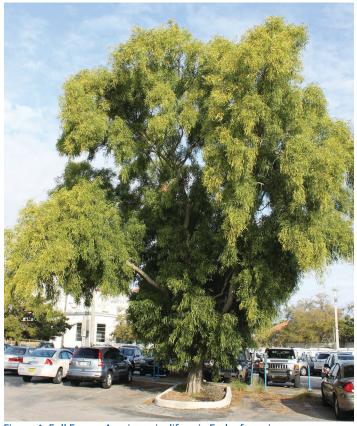


Figure 1. Full Form - Acacia auriculiformis: Earleaf acacia Credits: Gitta Hasing UF/IFAS

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**UF/IFAS Invasive Assessment Status:** caution, may be recommended but manage to prevent escape (Central, South); not considered a problem species at this time, may be recommended (North)

Uses: not recommended for planting



Figure 2. Range

# **Description**

Height: 35 to 40 feet **Spread:** 25 to 35 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular

Crown shape: round Crown density: moderate

**Growth rate:** fast **Texture:** medium

## **Foliage**

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: simple Leaf margin: entire

**Leaf shape:** linear and sickle-shaped **Leaf venation:** 3-7 parallel veins

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen, broadleaf evergreen

Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches Leaf color: dark to medium green Fall color: no color change Fall characteristic: not showy

## **Flower**

Flower color: bright yellow

Flower characteristics: showy; emerges in cluster on 2-3"

long, axillary spikes **Flowering:** spring to fall



Figure 3. Leaf - *Acacia auriculiformis*: earleaf acacia Credits: Gitta Hasing UF/IFAS



Figure 4. Flower - *Acacia auriculiformis*: earleaf acacia Credits: Gitta Hasing UF/IFAS

#### Fruit

Fruit shape: irregular; curved, twisted, compressed, and

spiraling pod

Fruit length: 2 to 4 inches Fruit covering: dry or hard

Fruit color: turns from green to brown when mature

**Fruit characteristics:** does not attract wildlife; showy; fruit/leaves a litter problem



Figure 5. Fruit, Young - Acacia auriculiformis: earleaf acacia Credits: Gitta Hasing UF/IFAS



Figure 6. Fruit, Young - *Acacia auriculiformis*: earleaf acacia Credits: Gitta Hasing UF/IFAS

### **Trunk and Branches**

**Trunk/branches:** branches droop; not showy; typically one trunk; no thorns

**Bark:** greenish white and smooth, becoming greenish

brown and vertically fissured with age

**Pruning requirement:** needed for strong structure

Breakage: susceptible to breakage Current year twig color: green Current year twig thickness: thin Wood specific gravity: unknown



Figure 7. Fruit, Young - *Acacia auriculiformis*: earleaf acacia Credits: Gitta Hasing UF/IFAS

### **Culture**

Light requirement: full sun

Soil tolerances: clay; sand; loam; alkaline; acidic; well-

drained to occasionally wet **Drought tolerance:** high

Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

#### Other

Roots: not a problem
Winter interest: no
Outstanding tree: no

Ozone sensitivity: unknown

**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** resistant **Pest resistance:** free of serious pests and diseases

# **Use and Management**

Seeds also germinate in the landscape and it has escaped cultivation in south Florida where it is becoming a mildly invasive weed in some areas. However, it is not as invasive as Australian pine or Brazilian pepper and probably will not become so. Despite this, many people consider this to be an undesirable tree.

Earleaf acacia grows in full sun on almost any soil including alkaline and is moderately salt-tolerant. It will withstand periods of water inundation but is also very tolerant of drought.

#### **Pests and Diseases**

No pests or diseases are of major concern. Occasionally anthracnose infects leaves.

## Reference

Koeser, A.K., Friedman, M.H., Hasing, G., Finley, H., Schelb, J. 2017. Trees: South Florida and the Keys. University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences.