

## GOLDEN WATTLE: AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL FLORAL EMBLEM

Golden Wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*) has been promoted by many Australians as a suitable national floral emblem since the 1880s. However, there are nearly 1,000 wattle species in Australia ..... more than two for every day of the year! And, believe it or not, you can find a wattle tree in flower in Australia at any time of the year. Wattles, the *Acacia* species, belong to the family *Mimosaceae*.

In the 1880's, Wattle's bright, abundant and golden blossom easily fascinated patriots and nationalists alike. In the countdown to Federation in 1901, the Australian Natives Association eagerly chose Wattle as their emblem. Early Australians knew the English rose, the Scottish thistle and the Canadian maple. But for the growing, egalitarian, generous and prosperous Australia of the 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, Wattle symbolises our Nation best of all. However, it was not until 1988 that Golden Wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*) was formally declared Australia's National Floral Emblem.

The first 'national' Wattle Day was celebrated in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide on 1st September 1910. Wider acceptance of a national Wattle day was achieved at a major Australian Wattle Day League Conference in Melbourne in January 1913 but it was not until 1992 that Australia's National Wattle Day was declared as the First Day of Spring (1st September) in every State and Territory. In April 1984, wattle's green and gold were proclaimed as Australia's National Colours.

On 20 September 1910, the Australian Prime Minister Andrew Fisher, announced that the Australian coat of arms would be redrawn and that Wattle would be included in the design, symbolising unity as wattles grow and flower throughout Australia and throughout the year. The new arms were gazetted in 1912 and they have remained unchanged to the present day.

GO TO OUR WATTLE GAMES. WE HAVE:  
FILL IN THE ANSWERS;  
TRUE OR FALSE and  
THE WATTLE WORD GAME.

