

**In pandemic times Wattle urges us to do it for Australia**

On National Wattle Day (1 September) wear a sprig of flowering wattle as a symbol of resilience and optimism in these pandemic times. Golden Wattle, our national floral emblem is also a symbol of unity and reminds us that together we will see this through and prevail over the virus.

Wattles have seen many seasons in Australia, going back more than 30 million years. They have survived in all sorts of conditions and all manner of difficulties. They remind us that after the difficult times, whether a tough winter, a long drought or an ongoing, wearying pandemic, there is a pay-off - there is gold. Wattle gives us golden blossoms that reminds us of nature’s cycles and encourages us to invoke the resilience that our wattles have shown over millennia.

This year in particular, after the good winter rains, the spring flowering of wattles will be exceptional and everyone is noticing. From the outback to the bush and in our backyards the wattles, heavy with blossom, are going to be a spectacular sight. In these COVID times, city councils have rallied to lift our spirits by lighting up their landmarks in yellow and green for National Wattle Day. From Perth to Adelaide, Melbourne, Launceston, Hobart, Canberra, Brisbane and Townsville, Australia’s national colours of gold and green will be glowing around us both day and night on 1 September.

This grass-roots celebration of National Wattle Day on 1 September has gained momentum over the last few years with growing recognition of the importance of wattle in the lives of ordinary Australians. This is evident as libraries organise community events, kindergartens celebrate with wattle crafts, businesses showcase their wattle-themed wares; botanical gardens, arboreta and indigenous tours focus on wattle, and plant nurseries organise fun days.

The only shadow across all this golden celebration is the myth that wattle pollen causes hay fever and asthma. Yes, their flowers are bloomingly obvious, but the most likely allergy triggers are the invisible pollens of introduced grasses and trees that you can’t see. Ask your own allergy specialist or check out this authoritative website: <https://www.allergy.org.au/images/ASCIA_PCC_Pollen_allergy_2020.pdf>

For more about how you can celebrate National Wattle Day, check out the Wattle Day Association’s website: http://www.wattleday.asn.au/

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