

# FALSE ACACIA/BLACK LOCUST

*(Robinia pseudoacacia)*



Penny Hussey

*Weed: false acacia.*

A young plant from parental suckering



Jackie Miles/Max Campbell

*Weed: false acacia*



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*Weed: false acacia*

## *Why is false acacia a weed?*

- ♦ Can exclude all other vegetation due to its dense thickets formed by suckering
- ♦ Frost and drought resistant
- ♦ Fast-growing
- ♦ Poisonous bark, roots, wood, seeds and pods
- ♦ It is a known weed from a number of sites in the Molonglo catchment, particularly around older homesteads
- ♦ It is often found on better soils and along river flats

## *Description*

**Plant:** deciduous tree to 20m, rough and furrowed bark on trunk and larger branches

**Leaves:** thin, bright green with a paler/whitish underside, 15cm long, compound in structure (made up of two or more leaflets attached to the leaf stalk, similar to ferns/some wattles) with 10-20 leaflets in opposite pairs and a single terminal leaflet larger than the others

**Seeds:** black, hard-coated, in a flat, bean-like pod, 3-8cm long

**Flowers:** clusters of sweetly perfumed pure white pea flowers in spring

## *Dispersal via*

- ♦ Primarily reproduces by root suckers which enable one plant to become a large thicket of multiple plants
- ♦ Root fragments can be spread by machinery
- ♦ In water
- ♦ Large birds such as cockatoos carrying seed and dispersing them in their droppings

## *Status*

False acacia is not listed as a noxious weed in the NSW section of the Molonglo Catchment. However, it is an important species for control due to its invasive nature. In the ACT false acacia is a class 4 Pest Plant whose supply is prohibited and it is recommended that this plant is not purchased or grown anywhere in the Molonglo Catchment.

### Look-alikes

There are no similar natives. **Honey locust** (*Gleditsia triacanthos*) is a similar exotic tree however it differs in that it has long, three-pointed or branched thorns and longer seed pods (up to 30cm). Thornless varieties of this species are sold in nurseries. Honey locust seems less prone to suckering than false acacia, but can be spread by seed.

There are various other Robinia species available from nurseries, usually grafted onto false acacia rootstock. They have pink, cream or white flowers and similar leaves to false acacia. Most of these are also prone to suckering, and should only be planted in situations where the roots will not be disturbed (for example by foot traffic or cultivation nearby) and where suckering can be continuously controlled by mowing.

Eurobodalla Shire Council



Weed: Honey Locust

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### Control methods

For advice on what time of year to implement the following management options, see the Molonglo Catchment Weed Control Calendar. Seek advice on chemical application from your Council Weeds Officer or local 'bush friendly' nursery. Always use chemicals as directed on the label.

Don't plant false acacia or grafted Robinia as an ornamental or shade tree.

Root suckers can be suppressed by regular mowing or grazing, but will develop into trees if these restraints are removed. Therefore, avoid mowing or cutting roots unintentionally as this will promote growth.

Once a thicket exists it will be necessary to stem inject or cut and paint all stems. It is not likely to be possible to poison the suckers and have the parent tree remain, since herbicide applied to the suckers will get into the root system of the parent tree and cause it to look unhealthy, if not actually killing it.

Do not cut trees down without applying herbicide to the stump or extensive suckering will result.