

## The Wonders of Wattles

Another gem from Frances Bodkin, an Indigenous Education Officer at Mt Annan Botanic Gardens.

One native plant that is incredibly important to the D'harawal people is *Acacia decurrens*. It is one of the 'three sisters', 3 plants that are identical but for their different green eye colour (leaf colour). The other two are *A. parramattensis* and *A. parvipinnula*.

Just about every part of *Acacia decurrens* can be used:

- **Flowers:** Edible. When ground up with water and egg, they make terrific pancakes.
- **Gum:** Eat raw for lots of protein/nutrients. Combine with carbohydrates (easily found in nectar, honey etc) to sustain you for weeks if you are lost. Mixed with hot water and fruit such as lillypilly and allowed to set, it makes an energy chew for children.
- **White root tips:** Found at the dripline. Cook in paperbark like potatoes - don't take all from one tree.
- **Bark:** Soak in water overnight. Good cure for skin rashes.
- **Leaves:** Bruise and put in water hole to make kangaroos sleepy and easy to catch.
- **Wood ash:** Burn the dead tree and keep the ash for painting. Mixed with fresh gum it lasts thousands of years. (Eg. Rock Art)

Lesley Waite.