

Sustainable Harvesting

Wattle Seed (*Acacia* spp.)



There are many different types of wattles in the Kimberley.

This guideline relates to the harvesting of noomoorrgoodoord (Bardi) numornagugud (Nyul Nyul) lirriringgin (Yawuru) and lirringkin (Karajarri and Nyangumarta), also known as soap wattle, *Acacia colei*. The guidelines can also apply to the collection of other wattles.

Height:	Shrubs up to 5m tall.
Leaves:	Bluish-green or silvery and feel almost silky.
Immature seedpods:	Green. When wetted and rubbed together they form a soapy froth.
Flowers:	Golden-yellow flower spikes occur from May to September.
Seed collection:	The coiled seedpods form in clusters and turn reddish-brown when mature, from August to November. The best time to collect is when the seedpods start to dry out, before seeds start to fall.
Seeds:	Shiny black, with bright yellow arils.

Legalities: The native flora of Western Australia is protected under the Biodiversity Conservation Act (2016). A licence is required to collect seeds and other plant material on Crown Land. If collecting from native title determined areas, you will also need a letter of approval from the traditional owner group's Registered Native Title Body Corporate (RNTBC).

For more information on licencing go to: www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/plants-and-animals/licences-and-authorities

You must receive permission from the RNTBC, land owner or land manager to collect seeds before you start collecting. Commercial picking is not permitted within conservation reserves (See map).



Collecting equipment:

Secateurs, pruners, extension pruners, plastic rakes, calico, hessian and paper bags, tags or labels for bags, pens and pencils, collection data sheets, licences, field guides, hand lenses, drop sheets, plastic bins, buckets, gloves, and a camera.

How to collect:

Only collect seeds when they are mature and ripe. This will vary from year to year and between sites, depending on rainfall and other factors, so several trips may be needed to monitor seed ripeness.

Use tarps or sheets beneath the trees while collecting to catch the ripe seed falling from open pods.



For tall trees:

Cut off smaller branches with large quantities of seed using extension pruners. You can lay the branches on a tarp in the sun for the afternoon or a day to help the seed drop. Make sure to stake the tarp down so the tarp and the seed aren't blown around in the winds, and make sure no rain is coming. Minimise any cutting and do not use this method on the same trees each year.

For medium shrubs:

Spread the tarp or mat underneath the tree, and either shake the tree or hit the pods with a stick or rake.

For smaller bushes or those with sticky seedpods:

Strip by hand into large bucket or bags. Another method is to tie thin cotton bags over seedpods that are about to open to catch seed, then return to collect bags of fallen seeds. Spread the tarp or mat underneath the tree, and either shake the tree or hit the pods with a stick or rake.

Collecting tips



- To make seed cleaning easier, avoid collecting excess plant materials such as leaves and branches.
- Reduce insect damage and spread by inspecting bags and seeds after collection for noticeable insect damage.
- Keep good records so you know what the seed is, when it was collected, where it was from and who collected it.
- Allow seed to ripen in dry environments. Seed will dry easily in the sun with good airflow. These seeds are likely to become mouldy if kept in plastic, or humid conditions.

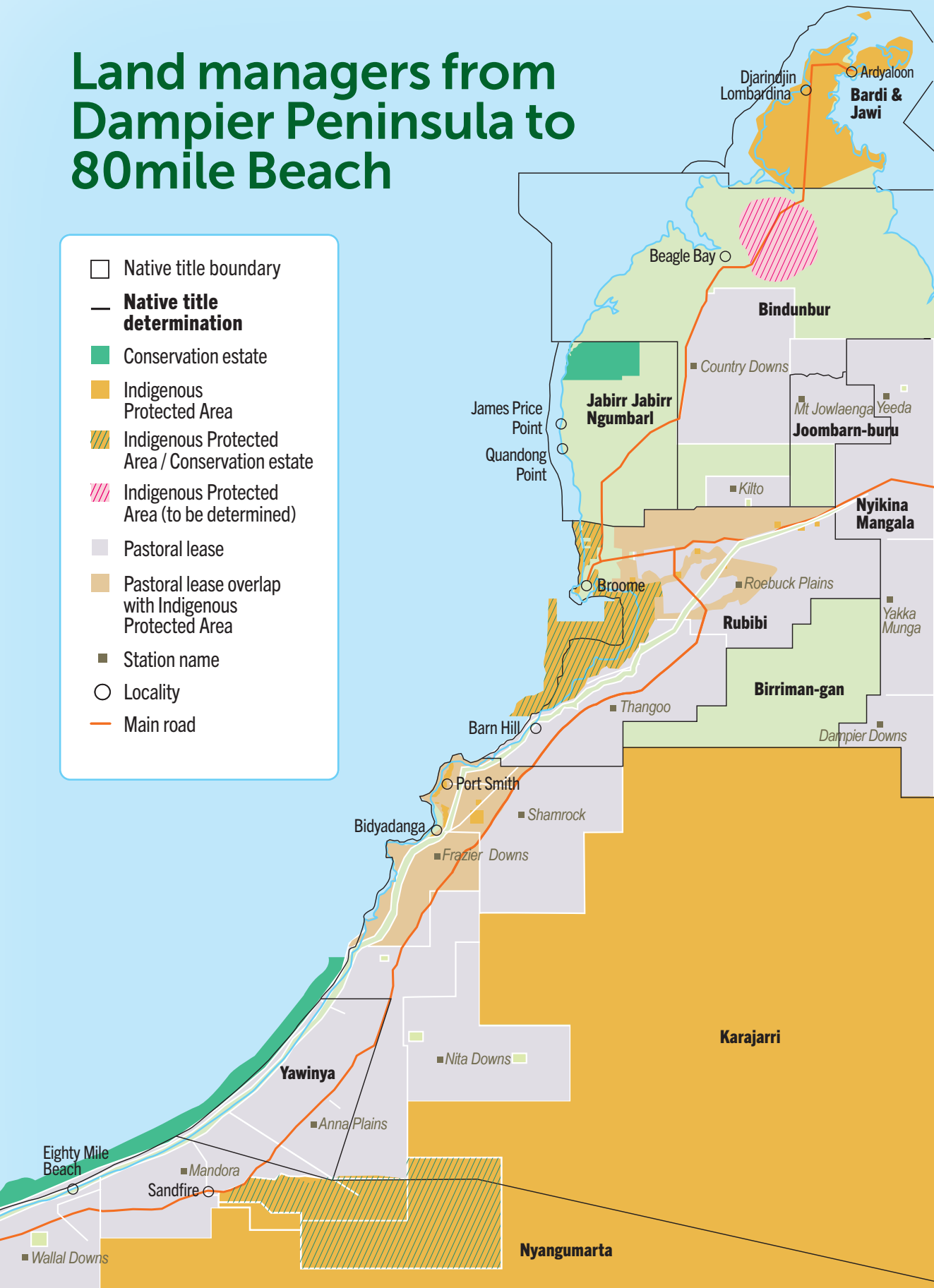


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Land managers from Dampier Peninsula to 80mile Beach



Sustainable Harvesting Principles



1

Collect only ripe (mature) seeds or fruit. Know when the seed is ripe it — it will be different for each species and area.

Collect seed from a large number of individual plants within the species (>20 for genetic diversity)

2



3

Harvest from healthy plants — do not take from plants that appear diseased or look sick

Maintain clean equipment to avoid contamination and prevent weed and disease spread

4



5

Avoid unnecessary damage to the plant while you harvest, only take what you need and look after the environment around the plants so they stay healthy

Keep records—include location, number of plants sampled. Were they flowering or seeding? Make field observations.

6



7

Collect no more than 50% of available seed from any individual plant