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Acacia debate settled in time for *Wattle Day*

Australia's floral emblem is finally safe following a 10-year battle over the naming rights of acacia — our beloved wattle which is today being celebrated with a national day.

The long-standing debate over whether Australia or Africa got to keep the name acacia was finally resolved at the International Botanical Congress held recently in Melbourne.

“Acacia taxonomy has generated much controversy in the scientific and wider community over the past decade”, Dr Judy West, President of the congress and Executive Director of the Australian National Botanic Gardens said.

“A difficult decision was required as to whether the name acacia should be used for either a large group of species found in Australia or for a smaller group found mainly in Africa. Australia gets to keep the name acacia thanks to the sheer number of acacia species in Australia as well as its economic importance.”

Acacia is an important genus in both Africa and Australia. In Africa it includes iconic and characteristic savannah species such as the many flat-topped thorn trees, while much of Australia is dominated by acacias or wattles, including the Australian floral emblem, the golden wattle, *Acacia pycnantha*.

“We all know and love the Australian wattle; it's an intrinsic part of our culture — from the wattle babies made famous by children's author May Gibbs to our national emblem. I'm happy to be able to share the results of the acacia debate this *Wattle Day*,” Dr West said.

National Wattle Day is a celebration of our natural environment. On 1 September each year, *Wattle Day* highlights the golden blooms that herald the start of spring.

Celebrate spring today with a *Wattle Day Walk* at the Australian National Botanic Gardens.

Media contact: Julie Akmacic (02) 6250 9405