

# THE GOLDEN WATTLE BUD GALLING WASP

(*Trichilogaster sp.*)

A natural enemy of **GOLDEN  
WATTLE** (*Acacia pycnantha*)  
in South Africa

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## DESCRIPTION

The bud-galling wasp on golden wattle superficially resembles its counterpart on long-leaved wattle, however, in this species the females are more uniformly yellow-brown in colour and have dark brown eyes.

## LIFE CYCLE

The life cycle of the bud-galling wasp on golden wattle is very similar to that of the long-leaved wattle bud-galling wasp. Adult females live for only 3-4 days laying large numbers of eggs in the newly-developed flower buds, and occasionally in vegetative buds, of golden wattle. The eggs hatch in May and chemicals secreted by the young grubs induce bud galling. The grubs live and feed entirely within the galls, pupating when the galls are at their largest. Adults emerge and are active, laying eggs in early summer (November - December).

## FEEDING DAMAGE

Galls on golden wattle are usually symmetrically round and born on stalks, making them quite distinct in appearance when compared to those on long-leaved wattle which are more asymmetrical and are tightly attached to the stems of their host plant. The tiny lumps on the surface of the galls are the remains of the undeveloped flowers. Branches that are galled do not produce seeds.

## IMPACT ON GOLDEN WATTLE

The introduction of the bud-galling wasp onto golden wattle has been at the most opportune time. The weed still has a limited distribution and has only formed dense stands in a few localities. By preventing seed production, the wasps will arrest the spread of golden wattle and impede it from colonising areas where other acacia species have been removed by mechanical clearing methods and biological control. All indications are that this biocontrol project will be as spectacularly successful as the one against long-leaved wattle. The project also provides an excellent example of how biological control can be used to contain a weed before it has reached unmanageable proportions.



Adult female gall wasp



Clusters of galls



Golden wattle flowers



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**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE. PHONE: Weedbuster Toll-free Helpline: 0800 005 376**  
**WEBSITE: PPRI website is located via links from the Agricultural Research Council website: [www.arc.agric.za](http://www.arc.agric.za)**

