

Plant Cuttings – October 2023

Scientists rush to save Australia's loneliest tree — the 'ice age gum' — from the brink of extinction – ABC, 1 Oct 2023

An Australian tree that had its heyday in the last ice age is now teetering on the brink of extinction — but ecologists say it could still have a future in Australian gardens, thanks to a rescue plan reminiscent of the hugely popular Wollemi pine.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-10-01/act-conservation-on-the-brink-of-extinction-mongarlowe-mallee/102914872>

Indigenous plants and knowledge thrive in Port Pirie high school's Urumbula Garden – ABC, 4 Oct 2023

For millennia, native plants like the "kangaroo apple" and "fish poison" were staples in the daily lives of First Nations people. But cultural dispossession caused by the arrival of Europeans meant that, for many Aboriginal people, that ancient knowledge was lost.

Now, thanks to a high school garden in South Australia's Mid North, young descendants of those traditional owners are rediscovering those ties.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-10-04/urumbula-garden-first-nations-native-plants/102907514>

It's not just Victoria's iconic mountain ash trees at risk – it's every species in their community – The Conversation, Oct 6 2023

When we think of extinction, we think of individual species. But nature doesn't operate like that. Entire communities and even whole ecosystems are now so compromised they could be lost entirely. Australia now has about 100 ecological communities at risk.

One of those is the iconic Mountain Ash (*Eucalyptus regnans*) community in Victoria's Central Highlands. Many of us know and love these regal trees, the tallest flowering plant in the world. But decades of logging, repeated wildfires, and fragmentation of these forests means they and the species which rely on them like Leadbeater's possum and gliders now face existential threats.

<https://theconversation.com/its-not-just-victorias-iconic-mountain-ash-trees-at-risk-its-every-species-in-their-community-214582>

Feral deer are eating rare plants in Australia's alps – Cosmos Magazine, Sep 27 2023

An analysis of introduced sambar deer faeces has revealed that the invasive species is feeding on rare native plants in Australia's Alpine National Park.

The research is published in the CSIRO's Wildlife Research.

A team, led by James Cook University PhD candidate Matthew J Quin, collected 90 sambar deer faecal pellets in a 3-month period. The timespan coincided with the flowering time for many plant species.

<https://cosmosmagazine.com/australia/sambar-deer-alps-rare-plants/>

Australia doing 'very poorly' at protecting unique plants, researchers warn – The Guardian, 10 Oct 2023

More than half of Australia's unique plants have not been assessed to determine whether they are at risk of extinction, scientists warn.

Conservation experts have gathered in London to provide a snapshot of plant health and what countries are doing to safeguard hundreds of thousands of species.

It warns an estimated 45% of the world's known flowering plants could be at risk of extinction as climate change and other threats mount.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/oct/10/australia-doing-very-poorly-at-protecting-unique-plants-researchers-warn>

New national recovery plan to save world's only wild macadamia trees from extinction – ABC 23 Oct 2023

A new national recovery plan has been adopted to help save the world's only wild macadamia plants from extinction.

The origin of the global \$1.58 billion macadamia nut industry, Australia's wild population has been decimated by clearing, with three species listed as vulnerable and a fourth critically endangered.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2023-10-23/wild-macadamia-threatened-species-conservation-recovery-plan/102990256>

Morrisby's gum tree migration project aiming to save endangered Tasmanian species of eucalypt – ABC 23 Oct 2023

The Tasmanian tiger was driven to extinction, as was the Tasmanian emu and a myriad of plants — but it is hoped a bold move will save another iconic Tasmanian species, the Morrisby's gum.

The gum was named after John Robert Morrisby, on whose property in Tasmania the tree grew naturally.

"The Morrisby gum, or eucalyptus morrisbyi, is one of the rarest eucalypts in Australia and a few years back, one of the main populations of that species suffered this catastrophic decline," plant sciences lecturer Dr Bec Jones, from the University of Tasmania, said.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-10-21/morrisby-gums-assisted-migration-project-tasmania/103002572>

Invasive weed Amazon frogbit that chokes waterways is being sold as \$5 aquarium plant – ABC 21 Oct 2023

Biosecurity experts are warning an aggressive, invasive weed available for sale online for as little as \$5 as an ornamental aquarium plant is spreading and causing concern for the state's waterways.

Amazon frogbit can be purchased online from producers within Australia and is promoted as an aquarium feature plant, despite being listed as prohibited matter in New South Wales.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-10-21/amazon-frogbit-invasive-weed-choking-waterways/102952870>

\$268 million federal fire ant funding announcement welcomed – Invasive Species Council media release 22 Oct 2023

The Invasive Species Council have welcomed the announcement today of \$268 million in funding for fire ant eradication by federal Treasurer Jim Chalmers and Agriculture Minister Murray Watt.

Reece Pianta, Conservation Officer at the Invasive Species Council, said:

“This \$268 million funding announcement by the Albanese Government today is a really significant moment in the battle to stop one of the worst super pests invading the whole of Australia.

<https://invasives.org.au/media-releases/268-million-federal-fire-ant-funding-announcement-welcomed/>

State of the world’s orchids revealed in new report – CSIRO media release 10 Oct 2023

Up to 45 per cent of all known flowering plant species across the globe could be under threat of extinction with the plant family Orchidaceae (orchids) among the most threatened, according to a new report.

Kew’s State of the World’s Plants and Fungi (SOTWPF) 2023 report, published today, tackles the nature emergency by laying out the current condition of the world’s plants and fungi.

Australia’s national science agency, CSIRO, contributed to the report with CSIRO orchid researcher, Dr Katharina Nargar, a senior author of the report’s chapter on orchids.

“Plants and fungi sustain life on Earth and provide valuable ecosystem services, food, medicine, clothing, and raw materials. But the natural world is threatened by the dual crises of climate change and biodiversity loss,” Dr Nargar said.

<https://www.csiro.au/en/news/all/news/2023/october/state-of-the-worlds-orchids-revealed-in-new-report>

Detection dogs sniff out silent killer to save native plants – NSW Government media release 03 Oct 2023

Two scent-detection dogs have been trained to sniff out a soil-borne disease that damages native plants and threatens the health and resilience of national parks, nurseries and public gardens.

With funding from the NSW Government’s Saving our Species program, expert trainers have been teaching Alice, a springer spaniel, and Echo, a Brittany spaniel, to identify a pathogen named *Phytophthora cinnamomi*.

It can cause disease in thousands of native plant species, permanently damaging ecosystems and destroying habitat for native wildlife including the southern brown bandicoot and smoky mouse.

<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/news/detection-dogs-sniff-out-silent-killer-to-save-native-plants>

State of the world's plants and fungi report: 3 in 4 undescribed plant species already threatened with extinction – Phys.org 09 Oct 2023

RBG Kew's fifth State of the World's report, published today, lays out the current condition of the world's plants and fungi globally. Based on the work of 200 international researchers and covering the content of more than 25 cutting-edge scientific papers in its 11 chapters, the new report examines global drivers and patterns of biodiversity as well as critical knowledge gaps and how to address them.

<https://phys.org/news/2023-10-state-world-fungi-undescribed-species.html>

Big conservation in small spaces – Ockham's Razor podcast (ABC Radio) 29 Oct 2023

As cities grow, nature becomes more and more fragmented. So how can we protect native species without big areas to conserve? Brendan Wintle says we need look into smaller places, like your own backyard or the bushland down the street.

<https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/ockhamsrazor/big-conservation-small-spaces/103019030>

Conservation or intervention – deepening fault lines and Australia's native forests – Blueprint for Living (ABC Radio) 28 Oct 2023

The question of what should follow in the wake of the decision to end native forest logging in Victoria has exposed deep divisions over how best to manage Australian forests. Some argue for conservation, a return to something called wilderness; others that land management requires human intervention, amply demonstrated by tens of thousands of years of partnership between Country and Indigenous people.

<https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/blueprintforliving/blueprint-conservation-intervention-native-forests/103019592>

VIDEO: Feral horses threaten 13 native species with extinction – ABC News 13 Oct 2023

A senate committee has recommended major changes to the management of feral horses in the Australian alps including more federal government involvement.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-10-13/feral-horses-in-the-australian-alps-being-brought-under-control/102975930>

VIDEO: NSW government adopts aerial shooting to reduce feral horse numbers in Kosciuszko – ABC News 27 Oct 2023

Friday's decision by the NSW government means aerial culling will be added to the 2021 Kosciuszko National Park wild horse management plan, which requires numbers to be reduced to 3,000 by June 2027.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-10-27/nsw-government-adopts-aerial-shooting-to-reduce/103033914>

Aerial shooting of feral horses approved by NSW government – SMH 27 Oct 2023

Wiradjuri man and Alpine river guide Richard Swain spent his childhood watching the Alpine high country return to its pristine condition after decades of grazing had ruined it. But for the

past 20 years, feral horse populations have boomed, allowing them to trample waterways and destroy the habitat of native animals.

On Friday, that long battle that many, including Swain, have fought may have ended. The NSW government approved the aerial shooting of feral horses in Kosciuszko National Park in a bid to control the rapidly ballooning population.

<https://www.smh.com.au/environment/conservation/aerial-shooting-of-feral-horses-approved-by-nsw-government-20231026-p5efa3.html>

Events and Opportunities

International Conservation Translocation Conference – Fremantle WA, 13 - 15 November 2023

The conference theme is “Learning from the past, adapting to the future”. Registration is now open.

Highly experienced specialists from around the world will engage in conversations to reflect on their projects and hard-won lessons to identify key aspects associated with effective wildlife conservation translocation programs.

<https://conservationtranslocations.com/>

Territory Natural Resource Management Conference 2023 – Darwin NT, 21-23 November 2023

The NT's leading conference on natural resource management expertise, on-ground activities and community engagement. It is an important event that celebrates, recognises and strengthens capacity-building, collaboration and innovation for natural resource management across the Northern Territory.

<https://www.tnrmconference.org.au/>

2023/2024 State and Territory Landcare Award

Nominations for the 2023/2024 State and Territory Landcare Awards are now open!

Now in its 32nd year, the State and Territory Landcare Awards stand as a prestigious biennial national Landcare Awards program. The objective is to honour individuals, groups and organisations that are making outstanding contributions to caring for the environment in their local communities for the benefit of all Australians today, and for generations to come.

Nominations for the Landcare Awards open on Wednesday 18 October, 2023 and will close at 11.59pm AEDT on Friday 1 March, 2024

<https://landcareaustralia.org.au/landcare-awards-2023/>