

Plant Cuttings – January 2024

Suburban backyard home to more than 1,000 species – The University of Queensland, 8 December 2023

A challenge among three housemates to identify species around their inner-Brisbane home has resulted in an academic research paper, showcasing the rich biodiversity in urban landscapes.

UQ mathematician Dr Matt Holden, ecologist Dr Andrew Rogers and taxonomist Dr Russell Yong took a census of their Annerley share house and its backyard during the COVID-19 lockdowns in 2020, and discovered 1,150 unique species of animals, plants and fungi over a 12-month period.

<https://www.uq.edu.au/news/article/2023/11/suburban-backyard-home-more-1000-species>

Insect apocalypse: Call to restrict pesticide ‘more toxic than DDT’ - Sydney Morning Herald, 7 January 2024

Noticed fewer moths fluttering around outside lights in the evening or that butterflies seem less frequent visitors? Or that your car’s windscreen remains clearer of the haze of dead flies after a long journey than it used to? Part of the problem appears to point towards the use of a range of pesticides called neonicotinoids which Australian authorities are accused of being slow to regulate.

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/insect-apocalypse-call-to-restrict-pesticide-more-toxic-than-ddt-20230630-p5dknk.html>

Planning your Perth verge garden? Here’s why you should think twice – WA Today, 4 January 2024

There’s nothing wrong with ditching your half-dead grass and planting a verge garden. The council and the state government want you to. Some will even pay you to.

But West Australian garden guru and TV personality Trevor Cochrane urges you to think twice and dig once, as mistakes will be costly not only for your wallet, but for wildlife too.

<https://www.watoday.com.au/national/western-australia/planning-your-perth-verge-garden-here-s-why-you-should-think-twice-20231229-p5eu7t.html>

Ghost forests: Australia’s snow gums under threat from climate change – Sydney Morning Herald, 27 December 2023

From a distance, the white flush looks almost like a line of snow, freshly settled on the mountain slopes.

This is Mount Hotham, after all, one of Victoria’s most popular snowsports destinations, known best as a playground of powder snow and downhill ski runs, chair lifts and alpine lodges.

But the white haze that covers these slopes is not snow, it's dead trees. Dead snow gums, to be precise, *Eucalyptus pauciflora*.

<https://www.smh.com.au/environment/climate-change/ghost-forests-australia-s-snow-gums-under-threat-from-climate-change-20231215-p5erpk.html>

Marine heatwave off NSW coast could be devastating for sea species, aquaculture – ABC News, 22 December 2023

Scientists fear a marine heatwave on the New South Wales south coast this summer could have grave consequences for sea life and the aquaculture industry. Marine heatwaves are prolonged periods of extremely warm ocean temperatures, which in the past have contributed to the loss of kelp forest, abalone, and oysters. The current system is sitting offshore, and there are concerns if it swings onshore, history may repeat itself.

The CSIRO has predicted warming of the ocean by 1 to 2.5 degrees Celsius for the south-east Australian coast, already known as a global warming hotspot. Research fellow from the University of Tasmania Cayne Layton, who lives on the far south coast of NSW, likens the warming to a land-based hot spell.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-12-22/marine-heatwave-nsw-coast-devastating-impacts/103249756>

Logging operations to continue between NSW and Queensland after judge rejects environmentalists' court bid – ABC News, 10 January 2024

Environmentalists have lost a legal challenge to a forestry agreement between the NSW and Commonwealth governments, meaning logging operations can continue within a vast coastal area between Sydney and the Queensland border.

The North East Regional Forestry Agreement was originally signed in 2000 and renewed in 2018. The North East Forest Alliance (NEFA) asked the Federal Court to declare that the renewed agreement did not meet the definition of such agreements under relevant laws.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-01-10/nsw-forestry-court-decision-logging-nefa/103300986>

VIDEO: South Australians help rehabilitate seagrass meadows – ABC News, 4 January 2024

People power is helping restore seagrass meadows up and down the South Australian coastline. After decades of neglect, a volunteer army is spending the festive season combing beaches and getting out on water, trying to restore this vital ecosystem.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-01-04/south-australians-help-rehabilitate-meadows-along/103284836>

Native violet recorded in Tasmania for the first time after bushwalker makes chance discovery – ABC News, 22 January 2024

Juliette Gaynor-Brown was out walking in Tasmania's Ben Lomond National Park when she came across a small purple flower on the side of the track. She took a photo and uploaded it to citizen scientist platform iNaturalist, where it caught the attention of experts.

It turned out the dwarf violet had never been recorded in Tasmania and was an endangered species found only in a handful of places in eastern Victoria and south-eastern New South Wales.

Serendipitously, two of Australia's violet experts happened to be in Tasmania at the same time over the Christmas holidays, and went to the site of the discovery to take samples and confirm the species.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-01-22/violet-species-found-in-tasmania-for-first-time/103350044>

Woolworths' \$67 million expansion knocked back after rare flowers found on site – Yahoo News, 12 January 2024

Woolworths' \$67 million warehouse expansion plans have been knocked back after a critically endangered orchid was found flourishing at the site. The project was signed off as “clearly unacceptable” by Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek whose office rejected the proposal.

The supermarket giant had asked the minister to allow it to proceed with the development, and destroy roughly 35 per cent of the region's last known Wyong sun orchids (*Thelymitra adorata*). It has declined to comment on the decision.

<https://au.news.yahoo.com/woolworths-67-million-expansion-knocked-back-after-rare-flowers-found-on-site-035405339.html>

Fence me in: the bold plan to save native species on Wilsons Promontory – The Guardian, 16 January 2024

A 10km partially electrified fence could be installed across the national park to slow the steady southward march of invasive species.

Stretching 10km across a narrow land bridge connecting the prom to the mainland, the fence will run adjacent to farmland and weave around huge shifting sand dunes. To the east, it ends in a protected wetland; on the west, an inlet popular with tourists and fishers.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2024/jan/16/fence-me-in-the-bold-plan-to-save-native-species-on-wilsons-promontory>

Leading ecologist says climate change should be mentioned in Australia's new threatened species legislation – 7:30 (ABC), 18 January 2024

One of Australia's leading ecologists says climate change should be specifically mentioned for the first time in revamped threatened species legislation, due to be released by the Albanese government later this year.

"After land clearing, it [climate change] could by 2050 be the biggest threat to diversity and so we've got to think carefully about that," says Professor Hugh Possingham, chief councillor with the Biodiversity Council.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-01-18/leading-ecologist-says-climate-change-needs-mention-epbc/103250874>

Events and Opportunities

The 20th Annual WA Wetlands Conference 2024 – Cockburn WA, 1-2 February 2024

It is our 20th year of hosting this annual conference, which has traditionally been a forum for the exchange of information and ideas between wetland practitioners, with a focus on the latest developments in managing and restoring wetlands. And to celebrate World Wetlands Day.

<https://www.thewetlandscentre.org.au/conference/>

Invitation to comment, King Island scrub complex listing

Each year on behalf of the Threatened Species Scientific Committee, the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water invites public nominations for items that merit listing as threatened under national environment law. The “King Island scrub complex” was nominated for listing as a threatened ecological community and prioritised for assessment from October 2022.

You are invited to provide your views on the assessment and draft conservation advice for the King Island scrub complex.

The committee’s assessment and advice to the minister is due by **30 April 2024**.

Proposed Conservation Status: Endangered

Distribution: King Island, Tasmania

<https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/biodiversity/threatened/nominations/comment/king-island-scrub-complex>

The Australian Flora Foundation: Call for Applications for Research Grants – 2024

The Australian Flora Foundation invites applications for funding of research projects from individual researchers and research teams, to support original scientific studies on the biology, ecology, and cultivation of Australian plants. The Australian Flora Foundation was established in 1981 with the aim of fostering scientific research on Australian plants. It aims to support research that will create improved understanding and greater awareness of the value of the Australian flora, leading to pathways for their conservation and utilisation. Grants will be awarded for research projects to commence in early 2025, with funds available from December 2024.

<https://aff.org.au/grants/grant-criteria/>

Victorian Biodiversity Conference 2024 – Burwood VIC, 7-9 February 2024

The Victorian Biodiversity Conference (VicBioCon) is an annual scientific conference focused on highlighting biodiversity-related research and management projects based in the state of Victoria, Australia. The conference is held over three days towards the beginning of each year and is organised by a dedicated team of post-graduate students and professionals

from a number of Victorian universities and organisations.

<https://www.vicbiocon.com/>

2023/2024 State and Territory Landcare Awards – Closing 1 March 2024

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.

In each state and territory, the Landcare Awards will be granted to recognise the achievements that encompass climate action, environmental leadership, sustainable agriculture, First Nations, Women in landcare, youth, Coastcare and children.

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

AABR National Forum – The Rs of Restoration – Fitzroy VIC, 22 March 2024

Restoring biodiversity through resilience, regeneration, reintroduction and reconnecting to country.

With continued biodiversity decline and fragmentation of natural places across the country, there is an increasing need for restorationists, land managers, planners and on-ground practitioners to understand and recognise the importance of working with nature's resilience and restoration techniques consistent with the National Standards for Ecological Restoration.

<https://www.aabr.org.au/event/aabr-national-forum/>

Rainforest Connections 2024: Conservation, Innovation, Restoration - Ballina NSW, 4-7 June 2024

Rainforest Connections 2024 is the first conference in over two decades that is dedicated to the restoration, rehabilitation, and management of Australia's unique rainforest habitats. This event will connect more than 200 delegates from a wide range of backgrounds including scientists, program managers, on-ground practitioners, community members and specialists implementing projects in the field.

<https://rainforestconnections.com.au/>

11th Australian Stream Management Conference and Awards Gala – Victor Harbor SA, 11-14 August 2024

The 11th Australian Stream Management Conference and Awards Gala provides an exciting opportunity to share the knowledge and practice within waterway management in Australia and celebrate these incredible achievements. Held in the beautiful Victor Harbor in South Australia, the ASM Conference and Awards Gala will come together for the first time. The hope is that we can braid Australia's numerous threads of waterway knowledge together to revive our river basins for a brighter future.

<https://www.11asm.org.au/>

23rd Australasian Weeds Conference – Brisbane QLD, 25-29 August 2024

Invasive Species Queensland (formerly the Weed Society of Queensland) is excited to collaborate with the Council of Australasian Weed Societies (CAWS) in hosting the 23rd Australasian Weeds Conference (AWC). Join us from August 25 to 29, 2024 at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre for this significant national event.

<https://icebergevents.eventsair.com/awc24/>

3rd Australian Biosecurity Symposium – Gold Coast QLD, 27-29 August 2024

Building upon the groundbreaking ideas and enriching conversations that marked the success of the 1st and 2nd Australian Biosecurity Symposiums, #BioSym2024 is set to delve even deeper into the future landscape of Australian Biosecurity. This is your chance to be a part of shaping that future. Seize the opportunity to connect with key decision-makers, trailblazing innovators, influential voices, and dedicated researchers within the realm of Australian biosecurity. Mark your calendar, because this is an event you won't want to miss!

<https://www.biosym.com.au/>