

Plant Cuttings – April 2025

From trading nutrients to storing carbon: 5 things you didn't know about our underground fungi – The Conversation, 1 April 2025

If you're walking outdoors, chances are something remarkable is happening under your feet. Vast fungal networks are silently working to keep ecosystems alive. These fungi aren't what you might picture. They are not mushrooms, or brightly coloured growths on tree trunks. Arbuscular mycorrhizal (AM) fungi look like spools of thread wrapped around plant roots. What makes these fungi remarkable is the deal they struck almost half a billion years ago with another kingdom of life – plants.

AM fungi make threads of hyphae thinner than spider silk and weave them through plant roots. Then, they begin to trade, offering plants water and phosphorus, a vital plant nutrient in soils. In return, plants offer carbon-rich sugars and fats from photosynthesis. Fungi can't photosynthesise, but plants can. This symbiotic relationship can help plants survive periods of drought and live in nutrient poor soils. More than 80% of all plant families rely on these fungi, while AM fungi cannot live without plants.

<https://theconversation.com/from-trading-nutrients-to-storing-carbon-5-things-you-didnt-know-about-our-underground-fungi-252184>

Australians want nature protected. These 3 environmental problems should be top of the next government's to-do list - The Conservation, 2 April 2025

Australia is a place of great natural beauty, home to many species found nowhere else on Earth. But it's also particularly vulnerable to introduced animals, diseases and weeds. Habitat destruction, pollution and climate change make matters worse. To conserve what's special, we need far greater care.

Unfortunately, successive federal governments have failed to protect nature. Australia now has more than 2,000 threatened species and "ecological communities" – groups of native species that live together and interact. This threatened list is growing at an alarming rate.

The Albanese government came to power in 2022 promising to reform the nation's nature laws, following a scathing review of the laws. But it has failed to do so. If re-elected, Labor has vowed to complete its reforms and introduce a federal Environment Protection Agency, in some other form.

The Coalition has not made such a commitment. Instead, it refers to "genuine conservation", balancing the environment and the economy. They've also promised to cut "green tape" for industry. But scientific evidence suggests much more is required to protect Australia's natural wonders.

<https://theconversation.com/australians-want-nature-protected-these-3-environmental-problems-should-be-top-of-the-next-governments-to-do-list-253336>

Invisible losses: thousands of plant species are missing from places they could thrive – and humans are the reason - The Conversation, 3 April 2025

If you go walking in the wild, you might expect that what you're seeing is natural. All around you are trees, shrubs and grasses growing in their natural habitat.

But there's something here that doesn't add up. Across the world, there are large areas of habitat which would suit native plant species just fine. But very often, they're simply absent.

Our new research gauges the scale of this problem, known as "dark diversity". Our international team of 200 scientists examined plant species in thousands of sites worldwide.

What we found was startling. In regions heavily affected by our activities, only about 20% of native plant species able to live there were actually present. But even in areas with very little human interference, ecosystems only contained about 33% of viable plant species.

<https://theconversation.com/invisible-losses-thousands-of-plant-species-are-missing-from-places-they-could-thrive-and-humans-are-the-reason-252378>

Government passes responsibility of approving private native timber logging to councils – ABC News, 3 April 2025

A "loophole" in the law banning Victoria's native timber harvesting means logging projects can still go ahead as the state government passes project approval responsibility to local councils.

East Gippsland Shire Council on March 18 accepted a proposal for native timber harvesting on a private property, despite a statewide ban on logging in state forests since 2024.

The Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA) is concerned the decision would set a precedent and by passing the responsibility to councils, the state government was "outsourcing" the job to avoid backlash.

"Hundreds of thousands of hectares of forest habitat on private land may be open to logging, but the government can close these loopholes quickly by amending statewide provisions in the planning scheme," VNPA campaigner Jordan Crook said.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-04-03/timber-harvesting-ban-victoria/105123078>

A beetle is killing some of Perth's grandest trees. The eastern states could be next – Sydney Morning Herald, 3 April 2025

In the WA capital, century-old Moreton Bay figs are among the trees falling victim to an alarming pest. The city has taken extreme measures to counter it, but it's feared the nightmare will spread to the eastern states.

In Kings Park, only stumps remain of borer-infested century-old trees, some of which would have been worth "more than \$500,000 each", says the CSIRO's Bruce Webber. "...In a city, no amount of resources will instantly create huge trees."

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/a-beetle-is-killing-some-of-perth-s-grandest-trees-the-eastern-states-could-be-next-20250210-p5laup.html?collection=p5lauc&gb=1>

It's not easy being a street tree, but this heroic eucalypt withstands everything we throw at it – The Conversation, 4 April 2025

Street trees usually grow in appalling soils, have little space for their roots, are rarely watered and often get aggressively trimmed by road authorities or utility companies. If they do get established, many street trees suffer damage from vehicles, have to live in wind tunnels or are forced to grow in the permanent shade of large buildings. But despite everything we throw at them, many street trees don't just survive, they thrive. So let's meet one of these heroic species: the yellow gum, (*Eucalyptus leucoxylon*).

Yellow gum is widely planted across southeastern and eastern Australia as a street tree. In some suburbs and towns, it is so common that people think it is a native tree (in fact it is from South Australia, Victoria or southwest New South Wales). It is not to be confused with yellow box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*), a different eucalypt altogether. Yellow gum has been widely planted because it meets many of the demands we place on urban trees.

<https://theconversation.com/its-not-easy-being-a-street-tree-but-this-heroic-eucalypt-withstands-everything-we-throw-at-it-246040>

Garden stores selling plants that could be Australia's next invasive weeds – ABC News, 6 April 2025

When you're next shopping in your local nursery or garden store it's worth considering whether the plant you've put in your cart could escape your garden and turn into a weed.

The Invasive Species Council (ISC) estimates there are tens of thousands of plant species available for sale by gardening retailers, large and small, but fewer than a quarter of the plants have been assessed for their potential to become invasive weeds.

The ABC last year reported retail giant Bunnings was selling varieties of gazania, — an invasive flowering weed native to southern Africa — despite its status as a declared weed in Victoria (all subspecies), Queensland, Tasmania and New South Wales (*Gazania rigens*).

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-04-06/garden-stores-selling-plants-that-could-be-next-invasive-weeds/105128092>

Australia is in an extinction crisis – why isn't it an issue at this election? – The Guardian, 7 April 2025

Most parliamentarians might be surprised to learn it, but Australians care about nature. Late last year the not-for-profit Biodiversity Council commissioned a survey of 3,500 Australians – three times the size of the oft-cited Newspoll and representative of the entire population – to gauge what they thought about the environment. The results tell a striking story at odds with the prevailing political and media debate.

A vast majority of people – 96% – said more action was needed to look after Australia’s natural environment. Nearly two-thirds were between moderately and extremely concerned about the loss of plants and animals around where they live.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2025/apr/07/australia-is-in-an-extinction-crisis-why-isnt-it-an-issue-at-this-election>

Bottle Bend Reserve turned into thriving home for plants and wildlife – ABC News, 8 April 2025

In the mid-2000s, there was little life to be found at Bottle Bend Reserve. Located on the New South Wales side of the Murray River, on Kureinji and Barkindji country, near the regional centre of Mildura, the 1,650-hectare nature reserve was hit hard by the millennium drought. Kureinji man Drew Fincher remembers visiting the land when it was saline and acidic and facing total collapse.

"I went down once, and I just said, 'I can't come down here anymore.'"

The reserve was marred by tree skeletons, diminished ground cover, and a devastated native fish population.

"It was really saddening to the Kureinji nation mob ... [animals] couldn't drink it and we couldn't use it."

But a lot has changed since then. This year, the reserve boasts rejuvenated ecosystems supporting an array of plant and animal life, including threatened black box trees and golden perch. Locals say the success has been the result of hard work by community members, in conjunction with environmental bodies and the government.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-04-08/bottle-bend-nature-reserve-murray-river-transformed-by-community/105117836>

Fears for 'precious' plant found in only one place in Australia: 'Don't know if any survived' – Yahoo News, 9 April 2025

There are fears over the survival of an incredibly rare plant found in only one place in Australia. The “precious” Grampians rice flower, otherwise known as *Pimelea pagophila*, is a delicate and intriguing native that is only known to exist in two small populations in Victoria’s Grampians National Park (Gariwerd).

While the endangered plant, which is endemic to the Mt William Range, is “naturally scarce across its known range”, botanist Alastair Robinson told Yahoo News Australia local conservationists working to save the species have noticed a dramatic drop.

<https://au.news.yahoo.com/fears-for-precious-plant-found-in-only-one-place-in-australia-dont-know-if-any-survived-030406959.html?guccounter=1>

Wild deer destroying Tasmanian wetlands restoration project, as conservationists call for help – ABC News, 10 April 2025

Since the 1980s, a group of environmentally conscious residents on Tasmania's east coast has been rehabilitating a wetland beside a beach.

"We're a ragtag bunch of people," said Quentin Smith, president and a founding member of the Seymour Community Action Group.

The group has tackled gorse infestations and planted countless trees, and in 2022 successfully lobbied to have the project area added to the Seymour Conservation Area. Its 115-hectare conservation area borders the Douglas-Apsley National park north of Bicheno and is ecologically important as the home of vulnerable plant species as well as Tasmania's largest frog, the green and gold frog. But recently, trees planted by the group have been destroyed by deer.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-04-10/seymour-wetland-tas-project-battles-deer/105156466>

New trial against polyphagous shot-hole borer achieves early success – ABC News, 10 April 2025

Just four months into a new chemical trial, the City of Canning believes it has found a way to combat the polyphagous shot-hole borer.

In the trial, 131 infested trees were injected with a small vitamin-like capsule containing insecticide and fungicide, and are now showing no signs of live beetles or larvae.

The tiny invasive tree-killing pest was detected in 2021 and has since led to the destruction of more than 4,000 trees in the Perth metropolitan area as the state government follows an elimination strategy.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-04-10/polyphagos-shot-hole-borer-trial-early-success-canning/105157656>

Allowing forests to regrow and regenerate is a great way to restore habitat - The Conversation, 16 April 2025

Queensland is widely known as the land clearing capital of Australia. But what's not so well known is many of the cleared trees can grow back naturally. The latest state government figures show regrowth across more than 7.6 million hectares in Queensland in 2020-21. These trees, though young, still provide valuable habitat for many threatened species – as long as they're not bulldozed again.

Our new research explored the benefits of regrowth for 30 threatened animal species in Queensland. We found regrown forests and woodlands provided valuable habitat and food for species after an average of 15 years. Some species were likely to benefit from trees as young as three years. This presents an opportunity for governments to support landowners and encourage them to retain more regrowing forest and woodland, especially where it can

provide much-needed habitat for wildlife. But it's a challenge because there is strong pressure to clear regrowth, largely to maintain pasture.

<https://theconversation.com/allowing-forests-to-regrow-and-regenerate-is-a-great-way-to-restore-habitat-254325>

Narooma High School's native plant nursery supports Walawaani Way forest regeneration project – About Regional, 19 April 2025

It was only 500 small native plants, but it was a huge milestone for Narooma High School's native plant nursery. It was also a big moment for natural conservation burial site Walawaani Way. Its founder, Fiona McCuaig, plans to return cleared farmland to native forest. One of the six species of plants that Ms McCuaig picked up from Narooma High School last term was particularly special to her.

The seeds of *Allocasuarina littoralis*, or black she-oak, are a favourite of glossy black cockatoos. She hopes her 18-hectare property will eventually lead to a recovery in the population of the vulnerable species around the Bodalla area.

<https://aboutregional.com.au/narooma-high-schools-native-plant-nursery-supports-walawaani-way-forest-regeneration-project/474812/>

Farmer Fred Perry's 30-year conservation project creates bird haven after years of 'bashing and burning' – ABC News, 21 April 2025

Its immaculate golf courses and rolling green farms have made King Island iconic for food and sport tourism. But it is also a reminder of what was lost, as ancient trees were removed to make vast farmland. It took about 200 years to transform a once wild island into an agricultural powerhouse, and modern residents are dealing with the fallout.

One of them, local beef farmer Fred Perry, was raised to conquer the land; slashing native vegetation to make way for agriculture. Like many others, he followed in the footsteps of generations of farmers before him, helping tame the Tasmanian island in the middle of Bass Strait into green pastures. When Mr Perry started "bashing and burning" about 50 years ago, much of the damage had already been done.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-04-21/king-island-environmental-destruction-farmer-conservationist/104743516>

Former treasury boss looking past logging to expanded carbon credit scheme - ABC News, 25 April 2025

Decades before Ken Henry became a household name in Canberra, he spent many of his days in the New South Wales bush. The former Treasury Department boss grew up on the Mid North Coast, where his father logged native forests as a worker in the timber industry.

"On the weekends I would go out with my father and my brothers to places where he worked as a contractor," Dr Henry said. "We would talk to him about what he was doing and why he

was doing it. I've had this interest in the condition of the natural environment since I was a kid."

That nature-loving child would go on to become one of Australia's most prominent economists, serving as treasury secretary during the years of the Rudd and Howard governments. But his passion for the environment never faded.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-04-25/protect-trees-native-forest-logging-nsw-ken-henry-carbon-scheme/105207512>

Scent-detection dogs trained to track elusive Wyong sun orchid - ABC News, 29 April 2025

Noses at the ready — Paddy, Sully, and Vera have a critical job.

The three dogs have been trained to locate underground tubers of the Wyong sun orchid in a trial that is an Australian first. The plant lies dormant beneath the earth's surface most of the time and is hard to see unless it's flowering. Found on the New South Wales Central Coast, the orchid blooms only on warm, sunny days between September and November, and has dark, bluish-purple flowers.

Senior regional biodiversity conservation officer Paul Hillier is working on the trial as part of the NSW government's Saving Our Species program, in collaboration with the Central Coast Council. Mr Hillier said if the furry trio had not been introduced, the orchid's future could have been "tragic".

"[The dogs'] noses are pretty remarkable, they can pick up a whole other ecosystem beneath our feet," he said.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-04-29/scent-detection-dogs-sniff-out-wyong-sun-orchid/105210696>

The time bomb the election campaign ignored - Alice Springs News, 29 April 2025

Central Australia's buffel grass hardly got a mention in the campaign for Saturday's election which is a time bomb mirroring the experience of desert regions in the United States. The rise of environmentalism in Arizona shares remarkable similarities with semi-arid Australia while Queensland's obsession with buffel fed beef seems more politically aligned with Texas and possibly Mexico.

The international and multi-headed story of buffel grass is impossible to convey here. In Kenya, the Maasai and Kalenjin are fighting efforts to corporatise endemic buffel seed and in the Amazon, biodiverse rainforests are being razed to plant buffel pastures for cattle.

<https://www.alicespringsnews.com.au/posts/the-time-bomb-the-election-campaign-ignored>

Completion of the Central Monaro Plains Deep Landscape Values Assessment

This report presents one of the most comprehensive independent assessments of environmental and cultural heritage landscape values ever undertaken for the Central Monaro Plains Region. The report has been prepared over 14 months of uninterrupted research and assessment. The report has been prepared by Dr. Dennis Williamson, Director of Geoscene International.

[Geoscene Public Access - Central Monaro Plains Deep Landscape Values Assessment](#)

Events and Opportunities

Pest Animal and Weed Symposium 2025 - Gladstone QLD, 19-22 May 2025

Strategies for pest success is the 2025 symposium theme, with a focus on planning, coordination and collaboration to achieve long term successes in pest animal and weed management. The subthemes of 'Early invasion curve prevention and eradication' and 'Managing pests, protecting assets' highlight the benefits of targeted actions at varying stages within the invasion curve timeline. Whereas the other subthemes 'Building resilience through community empowerment' and 'Harnessing research and technology' reflect the critical importance of community and science contributions to successful pest management.

<https://icebergevents.eventsair.com/paws-2025/>

Protect our National Parks.org website launch – Hosted by Bushwalking NSW – Online, 20 May 2025 (7:30PM)

Protect Our National Parks (ponp.org) is a space to keep track of proposals for private large-scale construction projects in national parks and other public land across Australia. It gives an overview of the problem, showing the results of the National Parks' Service shift of focus from protection to profit. The site also helps community organisations battling these proposals by providing a central space to host information, educate the public and media, and monitor the status of these projects.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYkcOytrTlqG9zKlAx2fOY0gl8C2eqgtsWE#/registration>

NSW Nature Conservation Council, 14th Biennial Bushfire Conference – Surry Hills NSW, 21-23 May 2025

Can we burn to learn? Sustaining people, nature and Country

This will be an in-person event held in Sydney, at the Teachers Federation Conference Centre, 37 Reservoir St, Surry Hills NSW 2010.

There will also be hybrid options available, however we would encourage you to attend in person in order to fully enjoy the conference offerings, with a conference dinner, poster session and field day to be included.

https://www.nature.org.au/bushfire_conference_2025

XII International Rangeland Congress 2025 – Adelaide SA, 2-6 June 2025

The Australian Organising Committee of the XII International Rangeland Congress, on behalf of the Australian Rangeland Society and the International Rangeland Congress Continuing Committee, invites you to participate in the International Rangeland Congress to be held June 2-6, 2025 at the Adelaide Convention Centre, Adelaide, Australia.

<https://irc2025.rangelandcongress.org/>

Draft threat abatement plan for ecosystem degradation, habitat loss and species decline due to invasion by introduced grasses

Submissions due 13 June

Draft threat abatement plan for ecosystem degradation, habitat loss and species decline due to invasion of northern Australia by introduced gamba grass (*Andropogon gayanus*), para grass (*Urochloa mutica*), olive hymenachne (*Hymenachne amplexicaulis*), mission grass (*Cenchrus polystachios*) and annual mission grass (*Cenchrus pedicellatus*).

<https://consult.dcceew.gov.au/draft-threat-abatement-plan-for-introduced-grasses>

International Congress for Conservation Biology 2025 – Brisbane/Meanjin, 15-19 June 2025

ICCB is a global forum for addressing conservation challenges and for presenting new research in conservation science and practice.

With ~1,500 conservation professionals and students in attendance, ICCB is the major networking event for anyone interested in conservation.

SCB's 32nd International Congress for Conservation Biology (ICCB 2025) will take place in Brisbane/Meanjin, Australia at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre (BCEC) from 15-19 June 2025!

<https://icriforum.org/events/iccb-2025/>

Species Survival Symposium 2025 – Sydney NSW, 2-3 July 2025

This 2-day event will bring together researchers, practitioners, First Nations people, Industry and Government representatives, and other experts and stakeholders in species conservation.

<https://www.aciucn.org.au/species-survival-symposium>

Australasian Myrtle Rust Conference 2025: From knowledge to impact – Auckland NZ, 16-17 June 2025

Many of Australasia's best-known and most highly valued native trees – from Australia's eucalypts to New Zealand's pōhutukawa – are in the family Myrtaceae. Many species in this family urgently need protection from myrtle rust, a disease caused by the globally dispersed pathogen *Austropuccinia psidii*.

Collaborative research efforts have improved our understanding of our myrtles, the pathogen, and plant/pathogen interactions. Management tools have been developed and deployed, and communities are rapidly mobilising to protect and conserve native plants.

Join us for the second Australasian Myrtle Rust Conference to share and learn about the latest research and management approaches. Be part of the conversation as we celebrate our mighty myrtles and the progress made towards protecting them.

<https://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/discover-our-research/biodiversity-biosecurity/ecosystem-resilience/beyond-myrtle-rust/australasian-myrtle-rust-conference-2025/>

9th National NRM Knowledge Conference – Cairns QLD, 8-12 September 2025

Co-hosted by North Queensland regional NRMs (Cape York Natural Resource Management, Gulf Savannah NRM, Terrain NRM, NQ Dry Tropics NRM & NRM Regions Queensland) and running from the 8-12th in and around Cairns, our sector's conference is for anyone working, participating or interested in natural resource management – to share, learn and inspire.

<https://nrmregionsaustralia.com.au/articles/9th-national-nrm-knowledge-conference/>

15th Biennial International Society for Seed Science Conference 2025 – Perth WA, 15-19 September 2025

The International Society for Seed Science fosters research, education, and communication in the scientific understanding of seeds, and the ISSS 2025 will bring together, for the first time, two of the Society's premier events as a joint conference to celebrate seeds and to inspire synergies across the seed science community.

<https://iss2025.com.au/>

5th International Congress on Biological Invasions POSTPONED TO 2026

Postponed to September/October 2026

<https://www.icbi2025.com/>

2025 National Landcare Conference – Gold Coast QLD, 24 September 2025

The program dates for 2025 are:

Sunday 21 September – First Nations Gathering and NextGen Summit

Monday 22 September – Conference and Welcome Reception

Tuesday 23 September – Conference and 2025 National Landcare Awards Gala Dinner

Wednesday 24 September – Field Trip Program.

We welcome Landcare champion and ABC TV presenter, Costa Georgiadis, as the master of ceremonies for both the National Landcare Conference and National Landcare Awards events.

<https://nationallandcareconference.org.au/>

Australasian Seed Science Conference 2025 – Horsham VIC, 22-25 September 2025

Hosted by the Australian Grains Genebank and Australian Seed Bank Partnership, the ASSC2025 is a leading conference exploring research and innovation across the agricultural and biodiversity conservation sectors. This conference provides a platform for Australasian seed researchers, industries, policymakers, and communities to promote research, insights, technologies, and exchange ideas on how we can address similar scientific, legal and policy challenges.

<https://www.seedpartnership.org.au/events/assc25/>

Australian Land Conservation Alliance 2025 Annual Conference – Cairns QLD, 7-10 October 2025

Across Australia and beyond, diverse communities, businesses, and organisations are leading with solutions that tackle the biggest environmental challenges of our time by enabling, delivering, and scaling conservation, land management, and restoration action.

The 2025 ALCA Conference will showcase these efforts, celebrating the people and partnerships driving this work: from Australia's First Nations leaders to dedicated conservation, farming and business professionals, community volunteers, and local champions— their collective onground efforts strengthen the cross-sector and cross-cultural solutions we urgently need.

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

2025 BGANZ Congress - Advancing our reach: Innovation and leadership in botanic gardens – Canberra ACT, 2-5 November 2025

The next BGANZ Congress will be in Canberra, on Ngunnawal Country. The main venue will be Old Parliament House (OPH), with unique social events at both OPH and the gardens, and field trips from subalpine regions to the sea, as well as our national public institutions focusing on education and horticulture.

Congress attendees will have the opportunity to share knowledge and experience to advance the role of botanic gardens and arboreta as globally recognised centres of excellence for plant science, conservation, education, and outreach.

<https://www.bganz.org.au/2025-bganz-congress-2/>