

## Plant Cuttings – June 2025

### **The Top End's tropical savannas are a natural wonder – but weak environment laws mean their future is uncertain – The Conversation, 5 June 2025**

The Top End of Australia's Northern Territory contains an extensive, awe-inspiring expanse of tropical savanna landscapes. It includes well-known and much-loved regions such as Darwin, Kakadu National Park, Arnhem Land and Nitmiluk Gorge.

These tropical savannas feature open forests and woodlands dominated by eucalypts and a diverse grassy understorey. They experience an intense monsoon-driven wet season and long dry season during which fire is common.

The area is home to a spectacular range of plants and animals, including crocodiles, barramundi, speartooth sharks, the spectacularly coloured Leichhardt's grasshopper and flocks of magpie geese. Some groups are extraordinarily diverse. Several thousand ant species are thought to live there – compared to just 1,000 species in South America's Amazon basin.

<https://theconversation.com/the-top-ends-tropical-savannas-are-a-natural-wonder-but-weak-environment-laws-mean-their-future-is-uncertain-241893>

### **Operators and peak land conservation body call for Queensland to drop land tax for nature refuges – ABC News, 12 May 2025**

People operating nature refuges that play a pivotal role in the Queensland government's conservation goals say having to pay land tax is "dumb", and a disincentive to others wanting to protect habitats on their property.

Nature refuges, also known as conservation covenants, are deals struck between the state government and landholders to protect their land in perpetuity.

There are 592 such refuges around Queensland, protecting 4,930,731 hectares of important habitat.

State land tax is applied to the accumulative property owned by an individual worth \$600,000 or more, unless it is your home or subject to an exemption.

Charities and primary producers, who run a great deal of the state's refuges, already receive a land tax exemption, but Queensland is the last state charging private landholders with refuges.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-06-22/qld-land-tax-exemption-nature-refuge-protected-areas-/105435404>

### **WA government steadfast on prescribed burns despite mass tingle tree felling – ABC News, 16 June 2025**

A prescribed burn that is estimated to have felled hundreds of rare trees found only in a pocket on Western Australia's south coast has been labelled a success by the department responsible, despite acknowledging it failed to protect the under-threat trees.

The burn in WA's Valley of the Giants, about 400 kilometres south of Perth, in mid-December drew public attention after it was revealed it killed a tingle tree believed to be about 400 years old.

Red tingles can live for more than 500 years, reaching heights of 75 metres, and only grow in a narrow 60-square-kilometre envelope in WA's South West, making them a popular attraction for visitors in the region.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-06-16/wa-govt-defends-prescribed-burns-after-tingle-trees-damaged/105414958>

### **A weird group of boronias puzzled botanists for decades. Now we've solved the pollination mystery – The Conversation, 17 June 2025**

Boronias, known for their showy flowers and strong scent, are a quintessential part of the Australian bush. They led Traditional Owners to the best water sources and inspired Australian children's author and illustrator May Gibbs to pen one of her earliest books, *Boronia Babies*.

But a weird group of boronias has puzzled botanists for decades. They have closed flowers that thwart most insect visitors. Those that do gain entry may encounter alternating sterile and fertile anthers (the male part that produces pollen) and sometimes, an enlarged stigma (the female part that receives pollen).

Since the early 1960s, scientists speculated this group of boronias relied on an "unusual agent for effective pollination". Moths were occasionally mentioned in the botanical literature as potential pollinators, but the full story remained elusive – until now.

As my colleagues and I detail in our new research, moths are indeed the mystery pollinators of this strange group of flowers. This knowledge is crucial to ensuring their long-term survival.

<https://theconversation.com/a-weird-group-of-boronias-puzzled-botanists-for-decades-now-weve-solved-the-pollination-mystery-258393>

### **Colonisation cleared 95% of these woodlands – Indigenous cultural burning is bringing it back – The Conversation, 17 June 2025**

For millennia, First Nations people have shaped Australian ecosystems through the purposeful and skilful use of fire. This cultural burning is an important way for Aboriginal people to connect to and care for Country.

Under climate change, Earth is experiencing more frequent and severe bushfires. This has prompted a rethink of Western approaches to fire management, and triggered the development of cultural burning programs supported by government agencies.

At the same time, First Nations people have been calling to revitalise cultural burning as part of a generations-long pursuit of self-determination.

<https://theconversation.com/colonisation-cleared-95-of-these-woodlands-indigenous-cultural-burning-is-bringing-it-back-257883>

### **Aussies urged to check their own backyards as popular plant 'infests' major city – Yahoo News, 18 June 2025**

Aussies have been urged to inspect their own backyards as an escaped garden plant continues to wreak havoc in a major city. Spanish Moss, a hanging plant that thrives in warm, humid environments, is exploding in Sydney after months of heavy rainfall, prompting a warning to residents from local councils and landcare groups.

The ornamental, which is native to tropical and subtropical America, is a common addition for those with a green thumb, but there are concerns gardeners are unaware of just how quickly it can spread and overwhelm larger trees.

“Bush regenerators are raising the alarm as Spanish moss spreads more widely,” Dr Carol Booth, the Invasive Species Council’s policy director, told Yahoo News.

“It’s an epiphyte — a plant that grows on other plants — and it can infest dozens of native tree species. We’ve seen turpentines, brush boxes, lilly pillies and cheese trees all severely impacted. It can grow thickly, smothering trees, blocking sunlight, breaking branches and sometimes killing the host by preventing photosynthesis.”

<https://au.news.yahoo.com/aussies-urged-to-check-their-own-backyards-as-popular-plant-infests-major-city-004228932.html>

### **Eradication of destructive shot-hole borer from WA not possible, response moves to management – ABC News, 19 June 2025**

The multi-million dollar fight to eradicate the invasive shot-hole borer beetle from infecting and destroying more trees in Western Australia is being lost, the state government has conceded.

The pest was first detected in WA in 2021 and brandished a major biosecurity threat, sparking the biggest biosecurity response in WA's history to stop it spreading into agricultural areas and to east-coast of Australia.

Thousands of trees in Perth have been infected and destroyed, with some of the city's most iconic trees at Kings Park and Hyde Park chopped down and mulched.

Agricultural Minister Jackie Jarvis said it was no longer technically feasible to eradicate shot-hole borer from WA, and instead the focus will shift to managing it.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-06-19/shot-hole-borer-eradication-not-possible-wa/105435866>

### **The polyphagous shot-hole borer kills trees. Why is it so lethal, how is it treated, and can it spread across Australia? – ABC News, 20 June 2025**

The Western Australian government yesterday announced that it would stop trying to eradicate an invasive pest that's killing trees in and around Perth and start managing it instead.

The pest, the polyphagous shot-hole borer (*Euwallacea fornicatus*), is a tiny beetle native to South-East Asia that has been silently spreading in the Perth metropolitan area for at least four years.

The only approved treatment for the sesame-seed-sized pest is to chop down plants it has infested and chip them into tiny pieces.

It's something that local councils have been forced to do to hundreds of trees, including dozens of huge, old Moreton Bay figs, to try to stop the beetle's spread.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2025-06-20/polyphagous-shot-hole-borer-kills-trees-how-it-spreads/105437270>

### **Extermination efforts continue after invasive ghost snail detection at Port of Brisbane – ABC News, 20 June 2025**

A leading biosecurity officer says it will be several months before Australia can be declared free of a "speedy", sourdough-loving, invasive snail with the potential to infest hundreds of plant species.

Citrus, cotton, soybean, blueberry and peanut are among the crops being damaged overseas by the snail, which is becoming a costly problem for the horticulture sector in parts of the United States.

The "peanut" or "ghost" snails were discovered by workers at the Port of Brisbane on March 14.

Jim Eldridge, the director of the federal Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry's (DAFF) technical response team, said his staff were at the site within hours.

He said more than 350 of the snails, scientifically named *Bulimulus sporadicus*, had been collected and culled from nine sites within the port, preventing the harmful plant pest from taking hold in Australia.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-06-20/invasive-ghost-snail-eradication-port-of-brisbane/105431330>

### **ACF says satellite evidence shows mass native habitat destruction by farmers – ABC News, 21 June 2025**

Investigations are under way into a report by a leading conservation group that farmers have illegally cleared thousands of hectares of native bushland across Australia in a few years.

The Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) used satellite images and on-the-ground volunteers to document what it says are 90,000 hectares, or 900 square kilometres, of lost bush on 176 properties in NSW, QLD, WA and NT.

It says all the sites contained threatened species habitat and the land cleared between 2020 and 2025 equalled an area the size of about 320 Sydney CBDs.

ACF business and nature lead, Nathaniel Pelle, said beef production was the primary culprit.

"Among these 90,000 hectares that we've identified, the majority of it is identifiable as cattle properties," he said.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2025-06-21/acf-citizen-scientists-satellite-images-of-land-clearing/105436794>

### **Ending Victoria's timber industry has created a 'time bomb' in the state's mountain ash forests – ABC News, 22 June 2025**

Vast tracts of Victoria's alpine forests are one major bushfire away from oblivion, according to a growing number of scientists.

Alpine ash, a tall eucalypt, is most vulnerable to fire because it takes at least 20 years to produce seed.

"There's probably about 80,000 hectares which is young forest currently and will be young forest for the next decade or so," University of Melbourne scientist Tom Fairman said.

Dr Fairman, a future fire risk analyst at the School of Agriculture, Food and Ecosystem Sciences, has calculated that in the past two decades, half of the state's mountain forests have been ravaged by bushfire.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-06-22/alpine-forests-in-victoria-in-serious-trouble-scientists-warn/105432774>

### **Gardening in a climate crisis: how to be a green thumb when old rules no longer apply – The Guardian, 22 June 2025**

The sun shone on Melbourne's gardens in May – and kept shining. Warm-weather plants that had begun to die back in expectation of winter got a second wind. Basil started sprouting leaves again and roses shot new buds. The state's second-warmest May on record also confounded cold-weather plants starting to make their way out of the ground. Was it time to bloom or sink back underground?

Meanwhile, in the state's south-west, dry earth became even drier, and raised the risk of unseasonal fire. At the same time, in coastal parts of New South Wales and Queensland, it didn't just rain but it poured.

So as the seasons become more erratic and the climate crisis results in observable changes to our gardens, how should green thumbs respond? How do we know what is going to grow

well – and how can we plan for our future gardens when it feels like the old rules no longer apply?

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/jun/22/gardening-in-a-climate-crisis-how-to-be-a-green-thumb-when-old-rules-no-longer-apply>

**Woodchips from endangered possum habitat sold to Domino's for woodfired pizza – ABC News, 26 June 2025**

When Domino's advertised its "smokehouse" pizzas in 2023, it trumpeted that the meat was smoked over timber logged from "Aussie Mountain ash".

It also advertised that the timber was certified as sustainable.

But what the advertising didn't promote was that mountain ash forests are critically endangered, with logging listed as one of the key processes threatening them.

And now the ABC can reveal the certification that assured consumers that logging was sustainable was breached in seven different ways, according to the organisation that accredits certifiers.

Those breaches included potentially stealing the trees from the neighbouring state forest, ignoring protections for waterways and logging potential endangered species habitat.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-06-26/sawmill-investigated-illegal-logging-state-forest-possum-habitat/105458952>

## Events and Opportunities

### **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>

### **23<sup>rd</sup> NSW Weeds Conference – Port Macquarie NSW, 4-7 August 2025**

The NSW Weeds Conference is regarded as the premier event to discuss weeds and related vegetation and production issues. The conference is a biennially event conducted in partnership with a host council attracting up to 350 attendees from NSW and interstate.

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

### **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/>

### **Building Private Land Conservation in Western Australia – Fremantle WA, 16-17 September 2025**

Western Australia is home to 8 of 15 national biodiversity hotspots making it a significant area of interest for conservation efforts. With the right policy and support from government, we can revitalise WA's dormant covenanting program and attract funding for public-private partnerships for protected areas creation in Western Australia.

The symposium will bring together leaders from private and public conservation organisations across Australia to explore the future direction of private-land conservation in WA.

<https://events.humanitix.com/building-private-land-conservation-in-western-australia>

### **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/>