Plant Cuttings – October 2026

Aussie plant nursery risks $125,000 fine after illegal 'decades-old' discovery – Yahoo News, 30 September 2026

A Victorian plant nursery has risked $125,000 in fines for the alleged illegal sale of 13 protected Australian trees.

Grass trees are extremely slow-growing native plants that are highly sought after but tightly controlled, with suppliers requiring a licence to sell them.

The trees have increased in popularity over the years, with Australians paying large sums to have them as a statement piece in either their front or back yards.

The nursery in Traralgon, in the Gippsland region, had the trees advertised for sale for up to $2,000 each. Some appeared to have trunks around a metre long, meaning they could be at least 50 years old based on a growth rate of one to two centimetres a year.

https://au.news.yahoo.com/aussie-plant-nursery-risks-125000-fine-after-illegal-decades-old-discovery-010158225.html

Checking the conservation status of Australia's trees – The Science Show (ABC), 3 October 2026

Many Australian native trees are struggling. Nearly 25 per cent of all eucalypt species are threatened with extinction, impacted by land clearing, climate change and other factors.

In 2015 it was decided to assess the conservation status of all Australian trees. Chantelle Doyle meets two ecologists, Ella Plumanns Pouton and Rachael Gallagher, coordinating Australia's contribution to The International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List of Threatened Species.

https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/scienceshow/checking-the-conservation-status-of-australia-s-trees/107223264

Australian National Botanic Gardens conservationists cloning rare ice age gum – ABC News, 5 October 2026

Gum trees are synonymous with Australia, but only a handful of people have ever seen the *Eucalyptus recurva*.

Known as the Mongarlowe mallee or ice age gum, only six plants have been discovered in the wild, just south of Canberra.

"When it was first found, it was a real botanical curiosity," said Genevieve Wright, a senior threatened species officer with the NSW Saving Our Species program.

Their age, based on the growth of the woody lignotuber of the largest specimen, is estimated to be between 3,000 and 6,000 years old.

"It's got these really small, beautifully recurved leaves," Ms Wright said.

https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-10-05/canberra-conservationists-cloning-rare-gum-trees/107217244

Farmer fined $60k for clearing more than 250 hectares of native vegetation – ABC News, 5 October 2026

A South Australian man with "lifetime involvement in pastoral and agricultural enterprises" has been fined $60,000 for unlawfully clearing 277 hectares of native vegetation at a property about 70 kilometres north of Adelaide.

The 73-year-old farmer was fined last month in the Environment, Resources and Development Court of South Australia after pleading guilty to clearing native vegetation contrary to the Native Vegetation Act 1991.

In his judgement handed down on September 23, Senior Judge Michael Durrant said the man was leasing the land, at Port Wakefield, "for agricultural purposes including grazing and cropping" and that the clearing "occurred progressively between November 2023 and March 2024".

"The vegetation affected comprised native vegetation within the meaning of the Act. It included indigenous plant species and native chenopod shrubland communities including saltbush and samphire associations," he said.

https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-10-05/port-wakefield-native-vegetation-clearing-leads-to-court-fine/107221572

Colonisation, not climate change, first primed these forests to burn – The Conversation, 8 October 2026

Bushfire season is here. The Bureau of Meteorology expects the declared El Niño to be strong to very strong. Southeastern Australia is bracing for a long run of dangerous fire weather.

Weather is only part of a catastrophic fire. Another factor is fuel – combustible vegetation. Our new research, published today, shows the current fuel load in some Australian forests is not “natural”. It is a product of colonisation, which loaded Australian landscapes with fuel a century before human-made climate change began.

Consider Croajingolong National Park, in Victoria’s far east. It has every level of protection possible: national park, designated wilderness area and UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. It’s also one of the most repeatedly incinerated forests in Australia: the 2019–20 Black Summer fires alone burned through 90% of the park.

The reprieves between bushfire have collapsed, from roughly 40 years in the late 1800s to about five years in the most recent decade.

https://theconversation.com/colonisation-not-climate-change-first-primed-these-forests-to-burn-292997

Resurrecting a reef oasis – ABC News, 10 October 2026

The cotton-wool clouds separate to reveal the first glimpse of Lady Elliot Island.

A ring of waves crashes on the outer edge of the reef, and the island's airstrip is a prominent ribbon of jade encased in forest green.

From the sky, the coral cay 80 kilometres off the coast of Bundaberg is a picture of pristine natural beauty.

On land, birdcalls fill the air.

Humans now have a permanent presence here, but for millennia, this island belonged solely to seabirds.

That's what made it such a prize to guano miners in the mid-19th century.

"The thing that seabirds do really well is poo," says Christine Dudgeon, who manages the island's research and rehabilitation program, Leaf to Reef.

https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-10-10/guano-mine-rehabilitation-on-lady-elliot-island-birds-return/107138364

Still wielding a chainsaw at 85: the Australians restoring nature in retirement – The Guardian, 11 October 2026

When Susan Downes stepped into the hallway of an old farmhouse for sale in York, Western Australia, she felt an oddly certain sense of knowing. "Oh, this is my house," the retired GP remembers thinking. There was just one problem: it came with 200 hectares.

Widowed and with her children grown, Downes, then in her 60s, was finally able to act on a long-held wish to move to the countryside. She had imagined something modest: an old house with "a little bit of garden and stuff". Two hundred hectares was rather more than she had in mind, no matter how charming she found the high ceilings. "I thought, the house is lovely, but I can't possibly do that."

But the property had gotten under her skin. Returning for another look two weeks later, she discovered Mount Mackie, a 295-metre hill at the back of the farm where ancient York gums and wandoos had survived about 150 years of grazing. Almost all of the understorey had disappeared. "These magnificent old trees" were all that remained. "I felt a great connection to the land," she says.

https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/ng-interactive/2026/oct/11/australians-restoring-nature-in-retirement-bush-conservation

Over 40 years ago, a mystery vigilante released a fungus to control blackberry in Australia. But why? – The Conversation, 13 October 2026

Over the summer of 1983–84, a fungus called *Phragmidium violaceum* was introduced to Australia. It was done secretly, deliberately and illegally. And it was done for one purpose: to kill blackberry plants.

I’m a historian, not a detective. My recent research on the illicit introduction of violaceum (also known as ‘blackberry rust’) doesn’t identify a culprit. But it does shed light on one of Australia’s most significant and mysterious breaches of biosecurity over the past half-century.

Like so many other animals and plants, blackberry was deliberately introduced to Australia from Britain. The earliest records date to the 1840s. The plant was valued for its abundance of juicy fruit as well for its uses as a hedge. Few herbivores other than tough-lipped deer and goats can eat the thorny plant. But its delicious berries are prized by all sorts of animals, from foxes to fairywrens.

https://theconversation.com/over-40-years-ago-a-mystery-vigilante-released-a-fungus-to-control-blackberry-in-australia-but-why-287304

State government missing in action over fight against arum lilies choking WA's southern forests – ABC News, 14 October 2026

The sea of white lilies carpeting the forest floor south of Margaret River is a picturesque view, but an ugly sight for conservationists.

The arum lily, considered one of the most damaging weeds in the country, was banned from sale in WA more than 20 years ago, but the rogue garden plant's infestation of forests across WA's South West shows no sign of slowing.

More than 3,000 private landowners have requested help to eradicate the weed on their properties.

But there are questions over the WA government's willingness to do the same in the state's national parks.

https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-10-14/questions-over-wa-government-arum-lily-eradication/107172158

Orchid conservationists help photographers snap great pictures with minimal impact on native flora – ABC News, 19 October 2026

Native orchids are a sought-after subject for photographers.

"They're very variable but they're also really cryptic and so you have to really know your landscape and your place, so it's like a special discovery," Landscape Recovery Foundation chief executive Josie Kelman said.

But with the joy of photographing orchids comes dangers to the more than 200 species recorded in Tasmania. Of those, 77 are listed as threatened under state legislation.

The majority of threatened orchid populations occur in dry forests and woodlands, grasslands, and coastal areas — all of which have been subject to "significant loss and modification" since colonisation, according to the state and federal governments' flora recovery plan for Tasmania's threatened orchids.

https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-10-19/native-orchid-conservation-photography/107254588

Efforts to rehabilitate land damaged by Roe 8 works exceeding expectations – ABC News, 20 October 2026

Almost a decade after parts of sensitive West Australian bushland were razed for a controversial Roe Highway extension that was never completed, efforts to restore the area have exceeded expectations.

But while conservationists say rehabilitation is on track, it will take centuries to get back what took just months to destroy.

The extension of Perth's Roe Highway, known as Roe 8, was planned to ease congestion by providing trucks better access to the city's only freight port in Fremantle.

It was a part of the Liberal government's $1.9 billion Perth Freight Link, a heavy-haulage route designed to ease congestion.

The government said the project would take 2,000 trucks off Leach Highway between the freeway and Stirling Highway each day, and thousands more off surrounding roads.

https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-10-20/roe-8-rehabilitation-progressing-well-almost-decade-on/107266880

Great Koala National Park established after more than a decade of campaigning – ABC News, 23 October 2026

After a marathon parliamentary debate, the state government has established New South Wales's second-largest national park.

The Great Koala National Park (GKNP) will take in 478,000 hectares of land between Kempsey and Grafton on the Mid North Coast, following a key promise from Labor during the 2023 state election.

It will comprise a patchwork of existing national parks and more than 178,000 hectares of state forest and Crown Land.

The legislation passed today after more than 14 hours of debate in the Legislative Council, which considered approximately 160 amendments.

NSW Environment Minister Penny Sharpe hailed the GKNP as a win for the environment that would protect more than 100 species of flora and fauna.

"This is a defining moment for conservation in NSW," she said in a statement.

https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-10-23/great-koala-national-park-legislation-passed/107296314

Good Riddance Gazania – Gardening Australia, 23 October 2026

Originally from South Africa, this brightly coloured plant is now proving to be an invasive weed. Introduced to Australia as garden plants in the 1950s, they were admired for their vibrant flowers and hardiness, but they have leapt over the garden fence and now invade coastal dunes, cropping land and inland grasslands which is bad news for our wildlife.

Weeds like gazanias are choking native plant species and depriving our precious native birds and animals of vital food sources and habitat. Gazanias are now a significant environmental and agricultural weed across southern Australia and parts of Western Australia.

By definition, a weed is classified when it creates negative impacts on the environment, production systems, or overall society, and unfortunately Gazanias are doing most of those negative impacts. In a changing climate they are spreading, specifically in Victoria and South Australia, being extremely drought hardy, they can survive harsh climates.

https://www.abc.net.au/gardening/how-to/good-riddance-gazania/107298222

Biodiversity offset now protects habitat in same region as development – ABC News, 24 October 2026

It took Peter Barton four years of deliberation to sign over one-fifth of his western NSW property to conservation.

What clinched his decision was something that initially had made him hesitate: the land must be maintained in its natural condition forever.

Mr Barton's 480-hectare property in Wellington, north-west of Mudgee, is one of those contracted by the NSW government to offset environmental damage caused by construction within the Central West Orana renewable energy zone (REZ).

"That land cannot be used for houses, for mining, for renewables, for agriculture, for anything," Mr Barton said.

https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-10-24/nsw-government-new-biodiversity-offset-approach-protects-habitat/107260482

Broulee students plant 1,000 native trees to turn playground into microforest – ABC News, 25 October 2026

Armed with wide-brimmed hats and child-sized gardening gloves, year 4 students on the NSW Far South Coast are swapping schoolbooks for tree saplings in a bid to boost biodiversity in their playground.

Students from St Peter's Anglican College at Broulee have spent the past week transforming a barren patch of their playground into what will become a self-sustaining microforest, to create a cooler, greener space.

"We're trying to bring back some of those endangered species that were lost in the 2020 bushfires, which was really unfortunate for all of our native animals and plants," year 4 student Zale Neal said.

https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-10-25/microforest-planted-with-1000-native-trees-at-broulee-school/107292384

While some eucalypts are hard to kill, climate change may test the ability of others to survive – The Conversation, 26 October 2026

There's no tree like the humble eucalypt.

Eucalypts play a pivotal role in forests, cycling nutrients, storing carbon and providing hollows and shelter for animals, including the elusive yellow-bellied glider (*Petaurus australis*) and aptly named glossy black cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus lathami*). In particular large, old eucalypts are critically important for thriving ecosystems.

Tragically, eucalypt forests across the country have been ravaged by fire in recent years. In early 2019, fires in Tasmania killed many of Australia's largest known eucalypts. A short time later, the horrific Black Summer bushfires of 2019-20 burned roughly seven million hectares of eucalypt forests across eastern Australia.

Our latest research examined eucalypt forests burnt by the 2019-20 bushfires. Our findings suggest large, old trees growing in wet forests were most affected. Our other research shows species growing at the dry edge of their natural range are most at risk of being wiped out by future severe fires.

https://theconversation.com/while-some-eucalypts-are-hard-to-kill-climate-change-may-test-the-ability-of-others-to-survive-293533

Events and Opportunities

Territory NRM Conference – Darwin NT, 17-19 November 2026

The Territory Natural Resource Management (TNRM) Conference is the Northern Territory's leading event focused on natural resource management. It showcases leading expertise, on-ground initiatives, and community-driven solutions from across the NT.

Over three dynamic days, the conference offers valuable professional development and networking opportunities. Attendees can participate in tailored workshops, engage with a wide range of insightful presentations, explore poster displays, and interact with innovative exhibitions.

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

Victorian Threatened Plant Symposium – Online, 24-25 November 2026

Note that in-person registration is at capacity so the event is now virtual only. Virtual attendance is free but registration is required.

The Victorian Threatened Plant Symposium will bring together researchers, practitioners, Traditional Owners, land managers, policy makers, community groups and conservation organisations to strengthen collaboration and outcomes for threatened plants across Victoria.

This two-day gathering will create space to connect science, strategy and on-ground action – ensuring that plant conservation is visible, influential and effective.

In addition to presentations and keynote sessions, the symposium will include workshop discussions focused on future research, action, strategy and connection for threatened plant conservation in Victoria.

Presentations will include outcomes from the Preventing the Extinction of Victoria's Threatened Flora Project and other threatened plant work from across the state.

https://www.anpc.asn.au/victorian-threatened-plant-symposium/

AABR 4040 Forum - Grounded in Experience. Guided by Science. Looking to the Future. – Sydney NSW, 27 Nov 2026

AABR's 4040 Forum will be an end-of-year cerebral and social celebration of bush regeneration. The practices. The people. The problems we set out to solve. The solutions we've developed. And the opportunities ahead.

Forty years on, ecological restoration has growing momentum. The challenge now is to scale up, skill up and measure up, while ensuring the quality of restoration outcomes keeps pace with the ambition.

The Forum brings practitioners, researchers, volunteers, land managers and restoration thinkers together to share knowledge, question assumptions, make connections and consider what bush regeneration needs for its next 40 years.

https://events.humanitix.com/4040-forum

ESA 2026: Conference of the Ecological Society of Australia – Brisbane QLD, 29 November-4 December 2026

ESA2026 will deliver a dynamic and engaging program showcasing the latest ecological research, innovation and practice from across Australia and the broader ecological community.

The conference program will feature a range of presentation formats, including poster presentations, five-minute speed talks and 15-minute oral presentations, providing opportunities for delegates at all career stages to share ideas, research findings and practical insights.

In addition to the scientific program, ESA2026 will offer a diverse range of workshops, field trips, networking opportunities and social events designed to foster collaboration, professional development and meaningful connections across the ecological community.

https://esa2026.org.au/

Island Arks Symposium IX: Ridge to Reef: Sustaining Biodiversity, Culture and Connection – Norfolk Island, 30 November-2 December 2026

Norfolk Island National Park, together with the Norfolk Island Flora & Fauna Society and the Australian Island Alliance, is honoured to host the Island Arks Symposium IX on Norfolk Island.

The Island Arks Symposia are held biennially to foster collaboration among practitioners and custodians dedicated to protecting island ecosystems across Australia and beyond. They bring together land managers, scientists, First Nations Peoples, and policymakers to discuss, deliberate, and shape responses to critical issues affecting conservation and sustainable development. Through open knowledge exchange and partnership building, the symposia strengthen networks, build shared strategies, and drive tangible conservation outcomes across island landscapes.

https://kaigi-islandarkssymposiumix.eventsair.site/

2027 Global Congress of the International Land Conservation Network- Melbourne VIC, 26-29 October 2027

Running for over a decade, the Global Congress of the International Land Conservation Network connects practitioners, leaders, funders, researchers, and communities working to scale practical, on-ground conservation impact. Each Congress strengthens an international community of practice, showcases host-country leadership in private and community-led land conservation, and accelerates the ideas, investment, and collaboration needed to protect healthy ecosystems – which underpin cultural and social wellbeing, economic prosperity, and climate resilience.

Join us in 2027 for four days of world-class speakers, dynamic programming, expert-led workshops and immersive field trips across iconic landscapes.

Call for proposals: Oceania delegates submit by 13 Nov 2026.

https://www.alca.org.au/events/conference/2027