

Plant Cuttings – September 2024

Waratah species added to threatened list alongside geckos and crayfish as Labor's environment overhaul stalls – ABC News, 4 September 2024

A relative of the iconic NSW waratah has been marked as threatened for the first time by the federal government alongside 19 other species. The Gibraltar Range waratah, native to the New England region, was added to the national list of threatened species on Wednesday.

The plant is a relative of New South Wales's floral emblem (*Telopea speciosissima*) and grows in drier and cooler climates than its well-known cousin.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-09-04/20-species-on-threatened-list-gibraltar-range-waratah/104307482>

Feral pigs the 'most destructive and invasive species' and the problem is growing in Tasmania – ABC Radio Hobart, 4 September 2024

The risk of feral pig numbers increasing in northern Tasmania is on the agenda at this year's Local Government Association conference. Gunns Plains, south of Penguin, is home to as many as 200 feral pigs. The Central Coast Council wants more support to tackle the issue.

Dr Tiana Pirtle is a conservation officer at the Invasive Species Council, she tells Leon Compton on Tasmania Mornings feral pigs are the "most destructive and invasive species" and the population can grow rapidly.

<https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/hobart-mornings/tas-council-wants-help-to-control-feral-pig-population/104308002>

How much koala habitat is cleared for mining and renewable energy projects each year? – ABC Science, 4 September 2024

Koalas are often in the middle of campaigns against development involving land clearing. But finding out exactly how much habitat for endangered koala populations will be lost — whether it's for a renewable energy project (such as a new wind farm) or a coal mine — is not easy.

ABC Science analysed development projects seeking federal permission from 2012 until June 30 2024 to breakdown how much koala habitat has already been approved for clearing — and how much is currently in proposals under assessments in New South Wales, Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory, where the koala is considered endangered under national environment law.

The deep dive shows the mining industry has been the biggest approved clearer of koala habitat since the koala was added to the threatened species list in 2012.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2024-09-04/renewable-vs-fossil-fuel-land-clearing-of-koala-habitat/103765336>

‘A symbol of our nation’: waratah among 20 more species added to Australia’s threatened wildlife list – The Guardian, 4 September 2024

Twenty more plants and animals, including a type of waratah, have been added to Australia’s list of threatened wildlife, bringing the total number of endangered species and ecosystems to almost 2,250.

The fresh listings come as the government faces a battle to pass legislation for a new national environment watchdog in the Senate, while Labor has also been under pressure from the Greens and Coalition about delays to a broader package of reforms to the country’s environment laws.

The 15 plants, two lizards, one sea snake, one crayfish and one fish recognised as threatened with extinction include the New England leaf-tailed gecko (also known as the Moritz’s leaf-tailed gecko), the granite leaf-tailed gecko and the Gibraltar Range waratah (*Telopea aspera*), a species of the popular flowering shrub.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/article/2024/sep/04/australian-threatened-wildlife-list-waratah-leaf-tailed-gecko-added>

‘For a short few weeks you realise the desert is truly alive’: Guardian Australia readers’ favourite wildflower spots – The Guardian, 7 September 2024

From desert blooms to city parks, readers share their favourite places for native seasonal flora around the country.

While a few Guardian Australia readers told us their own back yards are the best spots in the country to watch wildflowers bloom, many recommended places a little farther afield.

<https://www.theguardian.com/travel/article/2024/sep/07/best-spring-wildflower-blooms-australia-nsw-qld-vic-sa-wa-nt>

Seagrass restoration along Sydney’s coastline a vital intervention to save marine life – ABC News, 9 September 2024

Unless you are a gardener it can be hard to understand the wonder and bliss green thumbs tend to possess. But the skilled scientists growing underwater meadows can relate to their terrestrial horticulturalists.

"This is 100 per cent like underwater gardening, it's the same kind of meditative feeling, I really enjoy it," marine biologist Adriana Verges said.

The professor from the University of New South Wales also works with the Sydney Institute of Marine Science (SIMS). Her team is planting thousands of seagrass roots in different locations on Sydney's coastline.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-09-09/seagrass-meadows-planted-save-sydney-marine-life-seahorses/104324172>

Adelaide's 'abysmal' canopy cover fuels protests against tree lopping – ABC News, 10 September 2024

A group dedicated to "speaking for trees" says it will continue pressuring Adelaide councils into saving an estimated 75,000 of them from the axe each year, as a petrol giant's plan to remove two significant river red gums in the inner south is delayed.

Chevron Australia Downstream has applied to remove the trees from the Caltex petrol station on Belair Road, but the City of Mitcham has requested more information, which is likely to include a report from an independent arborist.

"Trees, especially big trees, are the best thing we have against the mitigation of a warming climate," said Speak for the Trees member Jane Preston.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-09-10/tree-canopy-cover-adelaide-protests-saving-significant-red-gums/104328072>

Australian Institute of Botanical Science Eureka Prize for Excellence in Botanical Science – Australian Museum, 11 September 2024

Professor David Keith, UNSW

Professor David Keith has developed the world's first method to catalogue and describe all ecosystems on Earth. Adopted by the United Nations and already applied in Australia, the framework has been instrumental in formulating effective conservation strategies and is helping to maintain plant diversity in the face of increasing environmental change.

<https://australian.museum/get-involved/eureka-prizes/2024-eureka-prize-winners/>

Wollemi pine saplings to be auctioned off for 30th anniversary of species' discovery – ABC News, 11 September 2024

A handful of rare Wollemi pine saplings, propagated from a secret population in the Blue Mountains, are being auctioned off to mark 30 years since the species' discovery. The pine's last wild community consists of just 46 adult and 43 juvenile trees in a secluded rainforest canyon in a World Heritage-listed area north-west of Sydney.

According to fossil records, the critically endangered "dinosaur tree" dates back more than 90 million years, and was presumed to have gone extinct around 2 million years ago, until a remnant grove was stumbled upon in 1994. The auction is the first time saplings that are each genetically distinct will be released to the public.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-09-11/wollemi-pine-rare-saplings-auction-30-year-anniversary/104332320>

Buried treasures: how seeds help us learn about fire in the Australian landscape – The Conversation, 11 September 2024

Fire is a natural part of Australian ecosystems. Many plants have developed ways to adapt and even thrive after fire. They may store their seeds in the soil, ready to sprout after fire. Or they may flower after fire, which helps them to produce the next generation of seeds.

Most of what scientists know about plants and fire comes from studying what happens above ground. In my new research, my colleagues and I examined what happens below ground.

I studied plants in the eucalypt woodlands of Gariwerd, including the species-rich Grampians National Park of Victoria. I wanted to find out which seeds were waiting in the soil, and whether their presence or absence had anything to do with past fires. But first I had to grow them.

<https://theconversation.com/buried-treasures-how-seeds-help-us-learn-about-fire-in-the-australian-landscape-235788>

Successive Australian governments have done little to stop illegal land clearing. Will a new environmental regulator do the trick? – ABC News, 12 September 2024

Australians really care about the environment. Or, at least they say they do. In a 2023 survey of 3,400 people, 92 per cent of respondents said they wanted protections introduced for a greater number of threatened species at risk from things like land clearing, invasive species and climate change.

What plenty of Australians don't know though is that we already have laws in place to protect these animals from habitat loss, by assessing the impacts of things like land clearing by cattle farmers. Professor Martine Maron from the University of Queensland says while some habitat threats like climate change require global and systematic change to address, deforestation is a much more straightforward area to control.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-09-12/environmental-protection-biodiversity-conservation-logging/104337806>

Voices of Tasmania's Tarkine call for 'no more logging' to protect ancient rainforests, cultural sites – Back Roads (ABC), 13 September 2024

Marta Dusseldorp closes her eyes as she soaks up the tranquil stillness of an ancient forest.

She is surrounded by towering, centuries-old trees and vivid green tree ferns. Beams of sunlight break through the canopy and create patterns of light on the forest floor.

"Spectacular!" she says. "Imagine the thrill of walking through forests which have stood for 65 million years."

The Australian actress is visiting Tasmania's Tarkine in the state's north-west for the latest season of ABC iview's Back Roads.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-09-13/back-roads-tarkine-tasmania-ancient-rainforest-wilderness/104213846>

Wild at Art 2024 winners: Australia's threatened species through the eyes of children – in pictures – The Guardian, 13 September 2024

Nearly 5,000 primary school students took part in the Australian Conservation Foundation's Wild at Art competition, which invites children to create an artwork depicting one of the country's threatened native animals or plants.

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/gallery/2024/sep/13/wild-at-art-2024-winners-australia-threatened-species-through-the-eyes-of-children-in-pictures>

Rainforest at Risk – Gardening Australia, 13 September 2024

Clarence is at the Sydney Royal Botanic Garden to meet the expert in charge of conserving some of our threatened rainforest species. Dr Karen Sommerville is a Rainforest Conservation Scientist and head of the rainforest seed conservation project at the Australian PlantBank.

When collecting fruit to harvest seed from, Karen looks for fruit with the best colour – usually the darkest shades – which means the fruit is ripe and the seed inside will be mature. Even then, before collecting too many, Karen cuts the seed open to check there is an embryo inside; on the seeds of *Cordyline rubra*, this looks like a white, juicy centre.

The seed is then bagged with a tag listing when the seed was collected, the GPS coordinates, and what was growing nearby.

<https://www.abc.net.au/gardening/how-to/rainforest-at-risk/104345968>

National parks and other protected areas often fail to conserve Earth's forests, research finds – The Conversation, 16 September 2024

The destruction of nature is a global crisis. Establishing protected areas of forest is a common policy governments use to tackle the problem. Indeed most countries, including Australia, have signed a global agreement to protect 30% of land by 2030. But to what extent do protected areas, such as national parks and nature reserves, actually preserve forests?

My new research examined this question. The findings are the first global-scale estimate of where protected areas are succeeding and failing. Alarming, I found protected areas fail to prevent forest loss in many parts of the world. Clearly, we must make these areas more effective to conserve the remaining diversity of Earth's plants and animals.

<https://theconversation.com/national-parks-and-other-protected-areas-often-fail-to-conserve-earths-forests-research-finds-237567>

Tasmania's first State of the Environment report in 15 years warns of 'escalating' challenges – ABC News, 17 September 2024

Tasmania's first State of the Environment report in 15 years has warned of "escalating environmental challenges" that require action to ensure the protection of the state's "extraordinary" natural assets.

The state government is supposed to provide an environmental status report every five years, but has failed to do so since 2009.

The new report, tabled in Parliament on Tuesday, has made 16 recommendations including the development of a long-term environmental strategy, with parliamentary updates every two years.

"We must build on our collaborative strengths to ensure that future efforts best serve the environment and the Tasmanian community," the report stated.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-09-17/first-tas-state-of-environment-report-released-in-15-years/104360488>

Australia desperately needs a strong federal environmental protection agency. Our chances aren't looking good – The Conversation, 18 September 2024

When Labor came to power federally after almost a decade in opposition, Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek pledged to turn around Australia's worsening environmental woes, from extinctions to land clearing to climate change.

While the government has made progress on climate action, protecting biodiversity hasn't got out of the starting blocks.

In the latest example of inaction, proposed laws to create an independent environmental regulator, Environmental Protection Australia, appear stalled in the Senate. Labor needs the backing of the Coalition or the Greens to push the reform through. At the time of writing, no deals looked likely.

<https://theconversation.com/australia-desperately-needs-a-strong-federal-environmental-protection-agency-our-chances-arent-looking-good-239099>

Walking the trees: we traced how First Nations groups moved bunya pine and black bean trees – The Conversation, 18 September 2024

For millennia, Indigenous knowledge holders have passed down lore to the next generation. Much lore describes the relationships between people and Country, including custodial responsibilities to care for other species as kin.

Each species carries a history of movement and change in its DNA. By quantifying how related one individual of a species is to another, evolutionary ecologists can infer how a species migrated in the deep past.

When we combine both types of knowledge – lore and genetics – we can make new discoveries. Our recent body of research uses genomic techniques and interviews with First Nations knowledge holders to investigate whether First Nations Peoples moved two culturally important food sources, bunya pines and black bean trees.

<https://theconversation.com/walking-the-trees-we-traced-how-first-nations-groups-moved-bunya-pine-and-black-bean-trees-229914>

Focus on Orchids – Gardening Australia, 20 September 2024

Australia's beautiful orchids often inspire us to stop, look, admire the detail – and take a photo. Hannah explores how to do this without endangering these precious plants.

Australia is home to 1300 different orchid species, and Tasmania has about 216 of these. However more than a third of these are threatened with extinction.

Dr Magali Wright is an orchid conservation scientist at the Hobart's Royal Botanical Gardens and she leads the orchid conservation program. They grow some orchids to return them to native habitat and boost their populations, and run a seedbank. The seedbank also conserves the right fungi that need to grow alongside the seed for it to germinate.

<https://www.abc.net.au/gardening/how-to/focus-on-orchids/104372642>

Hot, dry conditions kill masses of native vegetation in WA's Wheatbelt – ABC News, 21 September 2024

The remote Western Australian town of Moora is known for its vibrant landscape, filled with spring wildflowers and green crops. However, the region currently looks very different as the impacts of last summer's drought become clear.

Large patches of native vegetation in this part of WA's Wheatbelt, 170 kilometres north-east of Perth, have died from the dry conditions. Moore Catchment Council says only 10 per cent of WA's eucalyptus woodland, which spans over 1,000km between Geraldton and Esperance, remains healthy.

The woodland is a critically endangered ecological community, home to many native animals.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-09-21/wheatbelt-drought-damage-concerns-western-australia-dry-summer/104366924>

Ancient peat bog discovered below Esperance's Wharton Beach could hold climate change insights – ABC Landline, 22 September 2024

The sun casts long shadows up the beach as Hayleigh Graham sits in a hole and digs. For more than three hours she works, flinging scoop after scoop of black goopy mud onto the powder-like sand above. At the base of the hole stands a beautifully preserved tree stump, about a metre wide and 40 centimetres high.

"I'm trying to preserve as much of the tree stump as I can while I'm digging it out," Ms Graham says, using a brush to gently move away sand. "I don't want to destroy it."

The Esperance ranger suspects there is more to her discovery than meets the eye. Researchers and local Indigenous people say it may just be a thousand-year-old messenger with a story to share about climate change.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2024-09-22/climate-change-wharton-beach-esperance-peat-bog/104152472>

Queensland push for carbon farming – PM (ABC Radio), 24 September 2024

Farmers and conservationists in Queensland are optimistic state government plans will make it easier for landholders to get what are known as "carbon credits," and other types of credits.

Farmers can earn credits by improving their environmental management. Investors and companies can then buy the credits, to offset their pollution.

The Queensland Government has promised funding to educate farmers on how to enter those schemes, which are sometimes called "nature markets."

<https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/pm/queensland-push-for-carbon-farming/104391180>

Walbunja traditional custodians gifted estate of activist, academic Val Plumwood in NSW – ABC News, 24 September 2024

According to his journal, the Walbunja of the Eurobodalla on the NSW south coast were the first people sighted by Captain James Cook when he sailed the eastern coast of Australia in 1770.

More than 250 years later, in a first for NSW, the Walbunja people have been handed back a 120-hectare heritage-listed private property at Monga, owned by the estate of the late environmental activist, academic and philosopher Val Plumwood.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-09-24/val-plumwood-estate-handed-back-to-walbunja-traditional-owners/104384170>

World-travelling moss photographer highlights Tasmania as global diversity hotspot for mosses – ABC News, 25 September 2024

Moss expert Des Callaghan travels the world photographing mosses, and has just completed a trip around Tasmania.

Mr Callaghan says the state is "exceptional" for moss diversity and abundance on a global scale.

The images of Tasmanian mosses taken by Mr Callaghan will be donated to the public and freely available online, and included in a series of books currently in production.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-09-25/tasmanian-moss-photographer-des-callaghan/104366758>

Events and Opportunities

Nature Festival – South Australia, 28 September – 13 October 2024

Returning for our 5th year, over 400 nature-inspired events are blooming all across South Australia this Spring School Holidays. We have art, adventure, music, food, wine, wellbeing, and Aboriginal culture, and plenty of free and family-friendly events.

Year 5 theme: Awe

This year the festival explores the theme of Awe, with an emphasis on moments small and large that captivate us, pulling us out of the rush of daily life and away from our screens into a wider relationship with nature and the world all around.

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

ANPSA Biennial Conference: Gardens for Life – Melbourne VIC, 30 September – 4 October 2024

Australian Plants Society Victoria (APS Vic) will host the biennial national conference of the Australian Native Plants Society (Australia) (ANPSA). The Conference is being held in excellent facilities at The Round in Nunawading, near Melbourne. Registrations are now open.

<https://www.anpsa2024conference.com/>

New Zealand Plant Conservation Network (NZPCN) 2024 Conference - Whangārei NZ, 6-9 October 2024

Early bird registration discount extended to 31 July!

The New Zealand Plant Conservation Network is excited to announce its next conference for 6–9 October 2024, at Forum North, 7 Rust Avenue, Whangārei 0110. We will be reflecting on the past, present and future of plant conservation in Aotearoa New Zealand with our theme “*Ka mua, ka muri – walking backwards into the future*”. With this we will be able to celebrate 21 years of NZPCN, and hundreds of years of plant conservation in Aotearoa, and reflect on how all that has happened informs the future.

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/nzpcn/events/conference-2024/>

Australian Land Conservation Alliance (ALCA) Private Land Conservation Conference 2024 – Sydney NSW, 10-11 October 2024

The Australian Land Conservation Alliance’s annual Private Land Conservation conference (PLC24) is the country’s premier land conservation event. The Conference is a critical forum for discussions and insights into scaling nature investment, reversing environmental decline, and meeting global and national biodiversity commitments. The Conference will run adjacently to the Global Nature Positive Summit being hosted by Australia.

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

AABR Fest II – Return of the Regenerators – Central Coast NSW, 1-3 November 2024

AABR Fest II – Return of the Regenerators is a spring gathering for bush regenerators and all those interested in ecological restoration to learn and connect with one another. AABR Fest is an opportunity to connect with the wider bush regeneration community, forge new connections and rekindle old friendships. This family friendly event offers a rejuvenating, enlightening and entertaining experience at the Scout Camp Kariong, on the Central Coast of NSW.

<https://www.aabr.org.au/event/aabr-fest-return-of-the-regenerators/>

Territory Natural Resource Management Conference – Darwin NT, 19-21 November 2024

The Territory Natural Resource Management Conference is the NT's leading conference on natural resource management expertise, on-ground activities and community engagement.

The three-day conference provides critical professional development and engagement opportunities through tailored and inclusive workshop sessions, a diverse range of informative and thought-provoking presentations, engaging poster presentations and interactive exhibitions.

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

ESA 2024 – Melbourne VIC, 9-13 December 2024

The conference will showcase the science of ecology in Australia – across all its varied forms – and be an opportunity to explore the connection between science theory, science research, science policy and science on-ground outcomes.

The conference of the Ecological Society of Australia (ESA 2024) will be an in-person conference but a limited number of online options will be offered, including live-streamed plenaries, some live-streamed symposia and some of the presentations being made available online after the conference.

<https://esa2024.org.au/>

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/>