

Land for Wildlife

and

Garden for Wildlife Central Australia Newsletter

MARCH 2024



Liverworts at the Land for Wildlife office after a heavy downpour. A sign of healthy soil!

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WELCOME LETTER

Hello Wildlifers,

Welcome to the transition to autumn in Central Australia! The scorching days of summer are gradually giving way to cooler evenings, the landscape is undergoing transformations that are both subtle and profound.

Have you noticed the gentle shift in temperature or rain patterns? Or perhaps you've heard the mesmerising whisper of moths, their presence marking the changing of the seasons? We encourage you to share with us your observations and reflections about what indicates a change of season here for you.

In this edition of our newsletter, we're excited to showcase a selection of articles. Prepare to immerse yourself in the intriguing world of local mistletoes, marvel at the captivating wonders of native moths, and engage in our monthly quiz... with such delightful alliteration, it's bound to be a blast! All with the aim of inspiring you to support wildlife in Alice Springs.

Warm regards,

The Land and Garden for Wildlife Coordinators

Jessie and Bill

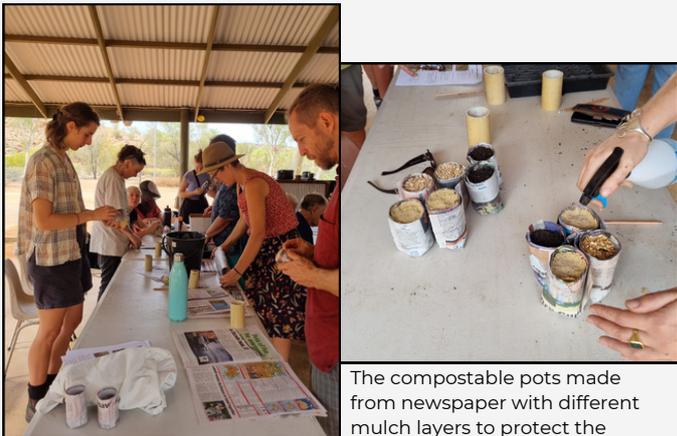
We welcome feedback from our members - it's the
best way to improve!

Please get in touch with us at
lfw@lowecol.com.au with any feedback you have.

PLANTING SEEDS FOR WILDLIFE HABITAT WORKSHOP

By Jessie Longmuir

On Saturday 9th of March, Land for Wildlife facilitated a workshop at Olive Pink Botanic Garden, bringing together 22 nature enthusiasts eager to support local ecosystems and wildlife by learning how to plant native plant seeds. Here's a recap of the event and its key takeaways.



Participants getting hands on making pots and planting seeds. Photo credit: Tamara Morgan

The compostable pots made from newspaper with different mulch layers to protect the seeds from drying out. Photo credit: Tamara Morgan

Suzanne Lollback started the learning with insightful information about the Australian Plants Society - Alice Springs (APSAS), highlighting membership opportunities and offering expert plant advice throughout the event. Next, Sam Hussey from the Olive Pink Botanic Gardens (OPBG) captivated the audience with practical guidance on propagating seven different native plant species from seed, including; Sturt's desert rose - *Gossypium sturtianum*, Cassia species (mixed) - *Senna sp.*, Coonavittra wattle - *Acacia jennerae*, Poison morning glory - *Ipomea mullerei*, Bean tree - *Erythrina vespertilio*, Desert bloodwood - *Corymbia opaca*, and Bush tomato - *Solanum centrale*. Participants gained valuable knowledge about species suitable for seed propagation and learned specific techniques for successful cultivation.

If you missed this event and are keen for further advice on strategies for particular plants, we encourage you to join the next workshop or reach out to OPBG/APSAS.

Following this, Jessie led a hands-on session crafting compostable newspaper pots, a recycling alternative to seed pots. Building on this knowledge, participants got hands-on, engaging in scarification and sowing seeds in their newly made pots to take home and propagate.



Andi and Jessie inspecting seeds. Photo credit Jazzy Story.



Participant filling their newspaper pot with soil. Photo credit: Tamara Morgan

Are you propagating native plants or did you attend this workshop? Share photos of your successful seedlings with us! Tamara, an ecologist at Low Ecological Services, shared her success story of sowing Sturt Desert Peas during the workshop, showcasing their thriving growth just three days later. Check out these pictures.

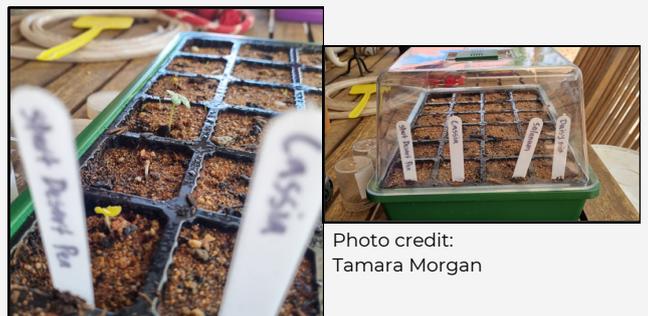


Photo credit: Tamara Morgan

PLANTING SEEDS FOR WILDLIFE HABITAT CONTINUED

Key Takeaways:

- **Pre-Treat Seeds:** Many native seeds have hard seed coats, causing dormancy. Pre-treatment methods include soaking, scarification (lightly damaging the seed coat), and smoke treatment to mimic natural conditions.
 - **Seed Soaking:** Boil water, let it cool for ten minutes, then soak seeds for the recommended time. Discard floating seeds and sow swollen ones. The floaters are most likely not viable.
 - **Scarification:** Gently scuff the seed coat with sandpaper or make small nicks with a knife or nail clippers.
 - **Smoke Treatment:** It's the chemicals in smoke that trigger changes in the seed, so to save time, all you need to do is use smoked vermiculite or soak seeds in water mixed with smoked vermiculite for a specified time before sowing. You don't actually need to create smoke!
- **Be Patient:** Native seeds may take longer to germinate than other plants. Continue to water occasionally and wait for seedlings to appear.
- **Seedling Care After Germination:** Transplant seedlings before they become root-bound, disturb roots as little as possible, water consistently, and go easy on fertilisers, especially phosphorus-sensitive natives.



Participants chatting away while planting seeds. Photo credit Tamara Morgan

Did you know that collecting seeds or cuttings from the wild in the Northern Territory (NT) is illegal without a permit? These permits are very difficult to obtain. However, you can gather them from private properties and verges with the owner's permission. Ensure you leave sufficient vegetation for wildlife and self-seeding. Let's prioritise supporting wildlife and minimising unnecessary disturbance to their habitat.



A production line of compostable pots being made! Photo credit: Jessie Longmuir

Get Involved:

- **Olive Pink Botanic Gardens:** Sam Hussey runs the propagation for OPBG and is looking for volunteers on Fridays. If you're keen to lend a hand, get in touch with Sam by calling this number: (08) 8952 2154
- **Australian Plants Society Alice Springs:** Suzanne Lollback and the whole of APSAS welcome new members, offering opportunities to connect with plant experts and contribute to conservation initiatives. For membership, contact APSAS here: apsalicesprings@yahoo.com
- **Land for Wildlife or Garden for Wildlife:** LFW is committed to providing free expert advice and support for individuals embarking on habitat restoration for wildlife on their properties. If you know someone keen to begin planting natives who need a little support, encourage them to reach out to us. We even have thorough plant lists appropriate to the kind of soils and habitat found in AS!

PROPERTY VISIT THE BANNISTERS

By Jessie Longmuir

In February, I had the pleasure of stepping into the world of Jane and Peter Bannister, longtime residents of Alice Springs, as I visited their property in Connellan. Pulling onto their land, it becomes immediately evident where their dedication lies—layer upon layer of vibrant habitat, from ground cover to mid-story shrubs, all the way up to the majestic eucalyptus trees.



Jane looking at a nest box in the distance.

Habitat layers spotted at the Bannister's property.

Welcoming me, Jane set the tone for a delightful exploration of their home and its thriving ecosystem by welcoming me to their block on the eastern flank of a very stable old sand dune at the edge of the Todd River floodplain.

As our conversation flowed, we naturally turned to the Owlet-Nightjar that had recently made a home in one of their personally installed nest boxes—the very reason for my visit. This species has a longstanding relationship with all four nest boxes installed throughout their property. Since 1992, when they first made this land their home, Jane and Peter have poured their hearts and muscles into transforming what was once barren horse paddock covered in Buffel grass, into the haven I had the privilege to explore.

Jane and Peter guided me through their property, sharing anecdotes about each nest box and the diverse fauna that calls the land home. Jane's foresight in purchasing nest boxes tailored to different owl species became evident as we navigated our tour.

We began at nest box number 1, the largest of the bunch. Though currently unoccupied, it was initially set up with Barn Owls in mind. Since being installed, it's been a cozy spot intermittently for Owlet-Nightjars, showing how nature can adapt to unexpected accommodations.



Nest box number 1, acting as a hollow on a younger gum tree.

Nest box number 2 stood out for its simplicity and adaptive design—a hollowed log snugly attached to a gum tree. It mimicked a natural hollow and has also been a favoured spot for Owlet-Nightjars, one arrived in this log just a few days after it was put in place



Nest box number 2, camouflaged in the fork of a gum tree.

At nest box number 3, stories about the antics of Galahs and their destructive modifications to the entrance brought out chuckles, while nearby, the tennis court's unexpected role as a habitat for Sand Monitors underscored the interconnectedness of their ecosystem. Amidst discussions of grey crowned babblers, comical encounters with wallabies and bird baths, and the intricate dynamics of bird life, it became evident that every corner of their property pulsates with life and stories.



Sand Goanna. Photo Credit: Jane Bannister.



Top right- A sand goanna's hole under the tennis court!
Bottom Left- Bird baths amongst habitat, where there is always a buzz!

As we approached the final nest box, a respectful distance was maintained to ensure the comfort of its current tenant—the elusive Owlet-Nightjar. Though not immediately visible, Jane's photographic documentation revealed glimpses of the hidden treasures within. This nest box overlooked a stretch of native grasslands basking in the scorching sun. Once overrun by buffel grass, the Bannisters proudly dubbed this area and their entire property "Buffel Free" after over eight years of relentless labour, predominantly wielding plumbers' shovels to manually uproot every blade of the invasive species.

Jane and Peter's endeavour is genuinely impressive. Their dedication to providing food, water and shelter for local fauna while managing invasive species demonstrates the power of individual action in conservation efforts. Their inspiring example should remind us all that making a difference in our environment is possible and within reach for each of us. Let us follow in their footsteps, observing and supporting wildlife in our communities, nurturing nature's delicate balance and exciting buzz.



An Owlet-Nightjar poking its head out of a nest box.
Photo Credit: Jane Bannister.

Where can you source nest boxes?

Nest boxes provide vital shelter for wildlife, especially where natural hollows are scarce. In urban areas and newly planted zones, they play a crucial role in offering habitat. If your trees are too young for hollows, consider a nest box – it's simpler than you think!

- Watch "[How to Build a Nest Box!](#)" on ABC [iview](#);
- Alison McGlashan provides a valuable resource for creating nest boxes for Australian Hollow using species. [Check out this document here.](#)
- Get flat-packed nest boxes delivered to your door from Nest Boxes Australia: [Follow this link.](#)



ABC iview



Hollow using species



Delivery nest boxes

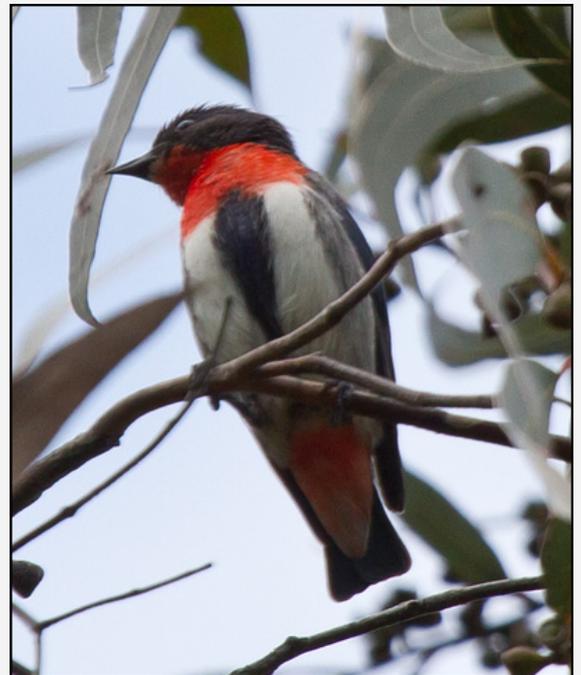
FLORA IN FOCUS

MISTLETOES IN CENTRAL AUSTRALIA.

By A.N.(Tony) Start

Research Associate, Western Australian Herbarium

Aside from the intrinsic value of these often-colourful native plants. Central Australia (CA) has a surprisingly rich array of mistletoes. (At least 15 species in three genera.) They are all indigenous to CA and are important components of the communities in which they occur. Indeed, mistletoes have been recognised as keystone species. What makes them so important? They provide food for the larvae of some beautiful butterflies like Jezabels (*Delias spp.*) and many other insects, which in turn provide food for birds, and other animals. Some birds benefit more directly from the food mistletoes provide. These include mistletoebirds and several honeyeaters, especially spiny-cheeked honeyeaters, which feed on both the berries and the nectar. Moreover, many birds select dense clumps of mistletoe to nest in and kangaroos and euros are known to rest in the shade of mistletoes on hot days.



Mistletoe birds by Nick Bradsworth.

Mistletoes need animals so the advantage is not all one-way. Many CA mistletoes need birds to pollinate them and disperse their seed. Mistletoebirds are so reliant on mistletoes that their name reflects the relationship. However, these are not the only birds that mistletoes need. As mistletoe seeds pass through a mistletoebird in as little as 4-12 minutes, they do not transport it far. It's birds like the Spiny-cheeked and other honeyeaters that effect dispersal over longer distances, which is important for regeneration after fire,



Amyema miquelii by AN Start

MISTLETOES IN CENTRAL AUSTRALIA CONTINUED

Fire is unquestionably their greatest threat. Fires hot enough to scorch their foliage invariably kills all CA mistletoes. Fires like those that commonly occur in spinifex country, kill mistletoes. To regenerate, fresh seed (only fresh seed is viable) must be brought into the burnt area. But regeneration can't begin until the hosts have regrown. Seed must come from unburnt places and, given the extent of today's bushfires, that is often faraway. Hence the relevance of birds that transport seeds further than mistletoe birds. Given the frequency with which fires occur, places where mistletoes still flourish have often burnt before they can supply seed for the initial burn area. The result has been the incremental elimination of mistletoes from vast areas of CA. We may never know what else has gone with them.

In looking at CA mistletoes, I make no apology for avoiding common names. Many are inappropriate and tell you nothing about the mistletoe or its relationships. For example, 'Drooping Mistletoe' *Amyema pendula* could apply to at least four species that occur in CA. Another example, 'Coolabah Mistletoe' *Diplatia grandibractea* has many hosts besides coolabah trees including many that don't grow anywhere near a coolabah. Moreover, it is only one of several mistletoes that grow on coolabahs. Most people reading this article will be comfortable with Eucalyptus and Acacia so if you are interested in mistletoes, *Amyema* and *Lysiana* could soon become familiar and tell you something about a plant and its relationships.



From top to bottom and left to right:
Lysiana exocarpi by Bill Muir. *Lysiana subfalcata* by G KRygsman. *Lysiana murrayi* by JD & MJ Start. *Amyema sanguinea* by AN Start. *Amyema preissii* by Bill Muir. *Amyema gibberula* by Bill Muir.

MISTLETOES IN CENTRAL AUSTRALIA CONTINUED

The genera.

There are **three** genera in CA.

- *Amyema* (11 species) all have several flowers per inflorescence, often in groups of 3 (triads).
- *Diplatia* (1 species) with flowers in two groups enveloped in a pair of large, leaf-like bracts.
- *Lysiana* (4 species) with pairs of curved flowers.

The genus *Amyema*.

Below are two to look out for when you go on bush walks to help determine their existence in the NT:

1. *Amyema fitzgeraldii*. Is common on mulga in SA and WA and grows close to the NT border. Yet there is only one record from CA and the description on its label suggests it may be a misidentified specimen of the similar *Amyema maidenii*. It would be very surprising if this species doesn't occur in the NT. Its head usually has three green flowers with red stamens surrounding a similar central one.



Amyema fitzgeraldii by Bill Muir.

If you spot either of these two plants, email Tony at tonys@wn.com.au. He is also delighted to help identify photos or answer any Mistletoe questions.

2. *Amyema subcapitata*. Is only known from the original collection from Trepina Gorge on the Ross River. The inflorescence is similar to those of, *A. maidenii* and *A. hilliana*. Each having triads (three adjacent flowers) of green flowers. However, in *A. maidenii* all three flowers lack pedicels (individual stalks). In *A. subcapitata* the lateral flowers in each triad have short stalks and in *A. hilliana* each triad is carried on a short stem (a ray) <10mm long. However, *A. subcapitata* has narrower leaves (5-3mm wide) than either of the others. Is it a real species, a hybrid or just a variant of one of the other three? Only more collections can answer that.



Amyema hilliana by Bill Muir.



Amyema maidenii by AN Start.

MISTLETOES IN CENTRAL AUSTRALIA CONTINUED

The other *Amyema* species:

- *Amyema bifurcata* and *Amyema miquelii* are both pendulous often tear-shaped mistletoes with bronzy or orange-green leaves and red flowers. They have different inflorescence structures. *A. bifurcata* having, as the name suggests, two branches (rays) each with a pair of flowers. While that of *A. miquelii* has several branches (rays), each carrying three flowers. Both grow on a variety of Eucalypt hosts including bloodwoods.
- *Amyema sanguinea* is another of the *Amyema* species growing on eucalypts, like the previous two it has red flowers, but unlike them its leaves are green, not orange or bronzy green.
- *Amyema hilliana* is a common large pendulous species with green flowers that commonly grows on Western Gidgee, *Acacia pruinocarpa*, in mulga woodlands but also on other large Acacias. The inflorescence consists of two branches (rays), each with two sets of three flowers (triads). See also *A. maidenii* below)
- *Amyema maidenii* is another mistletoe with two triads of green flowers. It differs from *A. hilliana* in not having a stem to each set of flowers and having smaller leaves. It also commonly grows on Acacias.
- *Amyema gibberula* has needle like (terete) leaves which, like its pair of orange flowers are clothed in white hairs. It grows on Grevilleas and Hakeas.
- *Amyema preissii* is another mistletoe with needle-like leaves. Unlike *A. gibberula*, leaves are bright green, glabrous (hairless) and the flowers are red. It grows on many hosts but commonly Acacias.
- *Amyema miraculosa* has flat green leaves and spindly red flowers. Its ripe fruits are lemon yellow. It commonly grows on Santalum but also many other hosts.

- *Amyema quandang* so named because early collections were found on quandangs. However, Acacias are among its many common hosts. A medium sized mistletoe with greyish leaves. Grey hairs on the outside of the petals subdue their red colour. A prominent feature is the swollen, often shiny ring on the top of the ovary.

The *Diplatia* species:

- *Diplatia grandibractea* is a pendulous mistletoe, that grows on Eucalypts. Easily identified by the pair of large leaf-like bracts that enclose the flowers and persist long after flowers and fruits have gone.

The *Lysiana* species:

- *Lysiana exocarpi* and *L. subfalcata* are similar and often confused. *L. exocarpi* has a more southern distribution than *L. subfalcata*. Both are rounded to semi-pendulous with sword-shaped leaves. The paired, curved flowers usually have bright red bases and yellow or green tips but may be all yellow and green. The globular fruits of *L. exocarpi* are dark red or black when ripe, whereas those of *L. subfalcata* are brighter red.
- *Lysiana spathulata* has a similar shaped flowers to the previous two species but distinctive oval or spoon-shaped leaves. All three have a wide range of hosts but commonly Acacias and Eremophilas.
- *Lysiana murrayi* is the most distinctive *Lysiana* in CA. Its usual host is mulga. It has smaller leaves and flowers than the others and its flowers are pastel shades, so not as brightly coloured. Its fruits are usually red but may be black and the top of the flower stalk is triangular in cross-section, a feature that's rare in the others.

FAUNA IN FOCUS

THE STRIPED HAWK MOTH

Hyles livornicoides

By Jessie Longmuir



The Yeperenye moth preserved from Ross Park Primary School.

As a teacher at Ross Park Primary School, I have an ambivalent relationship with the hundreds of moths currently gracing our school grounds after the spots of rain we've had. On the one hand, as a highly enthusiastic insect nerd, I relish any opportunity to teach kids about their roles in ecosystems. On the other hand, these moths are so intriguing that any lesson plans I have organised go out the window when a student proudly and carefully carries one into the class to show me. Amidst this delightful chaos, I've noticed not just one but hundreds of these fascinating creatures fluttering around during recess and lunch breaks over the last two weeks—the Yeperenye moth. As an amateur entomologist and relatively new to town, I was thrilled to learn more about this species and its significance to the Alice Springs community. Here's what I found below.

Hawk moths, belonging to the family Sphingidae, encompass a diverse group of approximately 850 species worldwide. In Australia, where approximately 65 species of hawk moths reside, these fascinating insects are common in suburban gardens and hold cultural significance connected to certain regions.

In Alice Springs the Australian Striped Hawk Moth (*Hyles livornicoides*), is also known as the Yeperenye moth.

These creatures are known for their streamlined bodies, flight capabilities, and distinctive features such as large eyes, wing patterns and elongated proboscises. With a penchant for nectar, adult hawk moths play a vital role in pollination as they hover in front of flowers, sipping nectar through their specialised mouthparts. I recently encountered one of these magnificent moths at the office in Connellan; while flying and pollinating, its large size, ridiculously, led me to fleetingly think it was an introduced miniature hummingbird (haha).

The life cycle of the Yeperenye moth begins with its larval stage, characterised by large, colourful caterpillars adorned with striking patterns including a huge fake eye at one end and prominent horns at the other end.



Mural of Yeperenye caterpillar, outside the Yeperenye carpark.

These caterpillars, sacred to the Arrernte people of Central Australia, hold significance in many places around Alice Springs, places such as Emily and Jessie Gap, Olive Pink Botanic Garden and a few gum trees. These caterpillars emerge from their underground cocoons to feed on the sticky tar-vine plant (*Boerhavia coccinea*), a crucial diet component. Have you checked out the display panel on Caterpillar Dreamings on ANZAC Hill where significant sites are revealed?

THE STRIPED HAWK MOTH CONTINUED.

The relationship between the Yeperenye moth and the tar-vine plant underscores the intricate ecological dynamics of Central Australia. The abundance of tar-vine, especially after periods of good rainfall, serves as a beacon for the emergence of these iconic moths. However, the increase of invasive species like Buffel Grass poses a significant threat to the delicate balance of this ecosystem. Buffel Grass competes with the tar-vine, diminishing its availability and, consequently, impacting the population of Yeperenye caterpillars.



Above: The Tar-vine plant photographed by Tamara Morgan



Left: Sculpture of the Yeperenye moth and caterpillar in the middle of a town roundabout.

Despite the challenges posed by environmental changes, this moth is still fluttering about in the masses, as seen at Ross Park Primary School. Through community initiatives and land management strategies aimed at controlling invasive species, there is hope for preserving this important species and its cultural significance.

In conclusion, the Yeperenye moth is more than just a remarkable insect—it embodies the interconnectedness of ecology, culture, and community in the heart of Central Australia. As we continue to navigate the complexities of conservation, let us recognise the importance of safeguarding these precious symbols of our natural and cultural heritage.

OLIVE PINK BOTANIC GARDENS GIFT SHOP OPENING

Congratulations, Olive Pink Botanic Gardens! Last Saturday, March 16th, marked the grand opening of their gift shop! Sam Hussey, the garden's curator, paid tribute to the tireless efforts of Doug, Trent and the dedicated volunteers who made this project happen. Then the garden's grounds manager, Doug McDougall, wielding secateurs, cut the ribbon to welcome visitors.



Doug McDougall, cutting the ribbon with secateurs. Sam Hussey celebrating in the background.

Following the formalities, amidst the native vegetation, we delighted in cups of tea, coffee, and smoothies from the cafe next door. Have a spare morning coming up? Venture to the gift shop and discover a world of treasures: books, cards, seeds, bush medicine, artwork, and exquisite handmade products!



Team Olive Pink Botanic Gardens, Doug and Sam smiling in their new gift shop.

THE SAFE USE OF ROUNDUP

By Jacqui Arnold

Glyphosate is the active ingredient in Roundup and many other herbicides. When applied properly glyphosate can effectively kill weeds invading gardens and ecosystems, including couch and buffel grass.

However, some people have legitimate concerns relating to glyphosate use. In 2015 the World Health Organisation International Agency for Research on Cancer determined that glyphosate was a probable carcinogen. Glyphosate is non-selective so can kill native plants. It can also harm native animals and microbes. Studies indicate that the surfactants used in some commercial glyphosate-based formulations may be more toxic to animals than glyphosate itself.

Glyphosate has an estimated half-life of between 2 and 197 days depending on soil and climate conditions.

The use of glyphosate in central Australia is regulated. Specific requirements for use in different areas, related offences and contacts for information are summarised in the link and QR code below:

- **Chemical Services** – advisory note
Department of Industry, Tourism & Trade
Chemical Services Branch Chemical control –
buffel grass Central Australia
nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/1350398/chemical-advisory-note-buffel-grass.pdf



Further Reading:

- Buffel Grass Management Guide for Central Australia



• nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/231416/buffel-grass-management-guide-2018.pdf

- SA Factsheet: A decision making tool for buffel grass control



• www.pir.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/288664/PIRSA_factsheet_Buffel_Grass_Control_Decision_Tool_FA2_CJ.pdf

- The Invasive Species Council has produced this report in an attempt to reconcile the conflicting findings, and to consider the outcomes if Australia bans glyphosate.



• invasives.org.au/publications/glyphosate-a-chemical-to-understand/

- IARC Monograph on Glyphosate



• www.iarc.who.int/featured-news/media-centre-iarc-news-glyphosate/

- Glyphosate in freshwater, toxicant default guideline values for protecting aquatic ecosystems - includes a summary of research into glyphosate's impacts on aquatic plants and animals.



• www.waterquality.gov.au/anz-guidelines/guideline-values/default/water-quality-toxicants/toxicants/glyphosate-fresh-2021

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED BIODIVERSITY SURVEY PITCHI RICHI HERITAGE SANCTUARY APRIL 24-27TH

Join us for an enriching four-day biodiversity adventure at Pitchi Richi Heritage Sanctuary, taking place from April 24th to 27th, coinciding with the local Heritage Festival. Engage in morning and/or evening sessions, where you'll acquire memorable skills in setting traps, data recording, and survey methodologies guided and supervised by professionals from Low Ecological Services (LES).

This is a free event, ensuring accessibility for those eager to upskill and for all passionate nature lovers. Your participation isn't merely about learning; it's about making a tangible difference. By contributing to this survey, you'll actively shape the future management and conservation efforts of Pitchi Richi Heritage Sanctuary.

Eager to learn more or already determined to join us for part or all of this event? **Secure your spot today by contacting us at lfw@lowecol.com.au**. Kindly specify your preferred date or dates of participation and whether you'll be joining us in the morning or evening. Times will be confirmed closer to the event, with mornings likely between 7 to 9AM and evenings between 4.30 to 6.30pm.

Don't miss out on this opportunity to deepen your ecological knowledge, forge new connections, and assist in developing a sustainable management plan for this special site.

SIGNIFICANT TREE REGISTER

The NT Register of Significant Trees aims to create awareness around protecting trees, which are a significant part of the heritage of the Northern Territory. Land for Wildlife manages this register. Find significant trees around town with this QR code.



Have you spotted this significant tree?

Eucalyptus camaldulensis var. *obtusa* (River Red Gum). What was once one of many River Red Gums along Todd and Parsons Streets is now the only remaining specimen to survive town developments. In 1987, the gum was invaded by white ants. Due to its historical value, however, the council decided to fumigate the tree in an attempt to poison the ants. This was thankfully successful and today the River Red Gum is a centre piece for the busy Todd Mall. This specimen is now registered as a Sacred Site through the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority and is estimated at over 160 years old.



Significant tree CA 10. [Website link can be found here.](#)

CAN YOU CRACK THE CASE-ING?

Can you crack the case of this perplexing photograph?

Are they Praying mantis eggs? Spider nests? Alien pods?! We're on a mission to uncover the truth behind these enigmatic formations! Got a hunch? A clue? A wild theory?

Share it with us! We're all ears and ready to solve this puzzle! Get in touch if you're ready to crack the case! Let's unveil the secret of these strange structures together!

Here's a clue – They were found in the southern outskirts of Alice Springs in a Witchetty Bush habitat on the Todd River Flood plain. Photos taken by Jane Bannister.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Date	Details	Group	Contact
Wednesday 20/03/24	Environmental Volunteer Gatherings Arid Lands 6.30-8.30pm	Landcare NT	Manager@landcarent.org.au
Saturday 23/03/24	Explore the Enigmatic Ediacaran fossils of the Arumbera Range! 7.30 am start	Field Naturalists	Pete McDonald 0427177450
Saturday 23/03/24	Native Plant Sale- Select from a diversity of native plant tubestock suitable for domestic and rural properties. 8 am until sold out at Olive Pink Botanic Garden.	Olive Pink Botanic Gardens	curator@opbg.com.au
Wednesday 27/03	Management Committee meeting (members welcome). Planning our events for 2024. RSVP essential. 5.30pm, Olive Pink Botanic Garden.	Australian Plant Society- Alice Springs	apsalicesprings@yahoo.com
Saturday-Saturday 20-28/04	The Heritage Festival 9 days of events at various venues. Opportunities still available, contact Bill Low	National Trust	lowecol@lowecol.com.au
24-27/04	Biodiversity Survey- Pitchi Richi Heritage Sanctuary Biodiversity survey training event. All are welcome for part or all of this event. It will be run over 4 days. Survey monitoring sessions will be held in the morning and evening. We will be monitoring- Reptiles, Insects and Arachnids, Small Mammals, Birds, Microbats, Vegetation and landscape characteristics. Register your interest with Land for Wildlife.	LFW	lfw@lowecol.com.au

THE QUIZ

Have you been paying attention? All questions in this quiz are based on information that can be found in this newsletter. Goodluck!

1. Which two species of Mistletoe should you keep an eye out for in Alice Springs?
2. What are the three pre-treatment methods for propagating native seeds mentioned in this newsletter?
3. Which birds eat and spread mistletoe berries?
4. What days is Sam Hussey from Olive Pink Botanic Gardens looking for volunteers to help with native plant propagation?
5. What is the family name for Hawk moths?
6. Where can you see evidence of the caterpillar dreaming in Alice?
7. Why are nest boxes used?
8. Why can Glyphosate kill native plants?
9. What event does the Pitchi Richi biodiversity survey event coincide with?
10. What is the scientific name for a River Red gum?

1. Amyema fitzgeraldii and Amyema subcapitata. 2. Soaking, scarification, smoke treatment. 3. The Mistletoe Bird and Honeyeater species. 4. Tuesdays and Fridays. 5. Sphingidae. 6. Emily and Jessie Gap, Olive Pink Botanic Garden. 7. They replicate a hollow of an old growth tree- habitat for many animals. 8. Because it is non-selective. 9. The Heritage Festival. 10. Eucalyptus camaldulensis.

TIMELY LIVERWORTS!

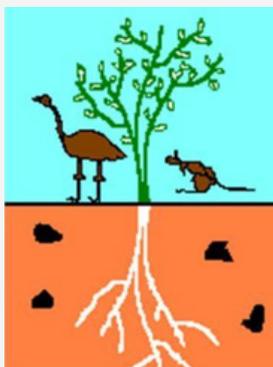
After a downpour that delivered nearly 70% of Alice Springs' annual rainfall in just five days (Bureau of Meteorology, 2024), an intriguing sight has surfaced: Liverworts. These non-vascular organisms, also known as resurrection plants (for their ability to revive after rain), are now appearing across the landscape. Belonging to the Cryptogams group, these unassuming plants reproduce through spores and significantly contribute to the health of the soil, along with the support of other microbes. **Have you spotted any on your property?**



Photographs of Liverworts taken at the Land for Wildlife office after heavy rain.

Find out more about cryptogams [through this link](#).

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