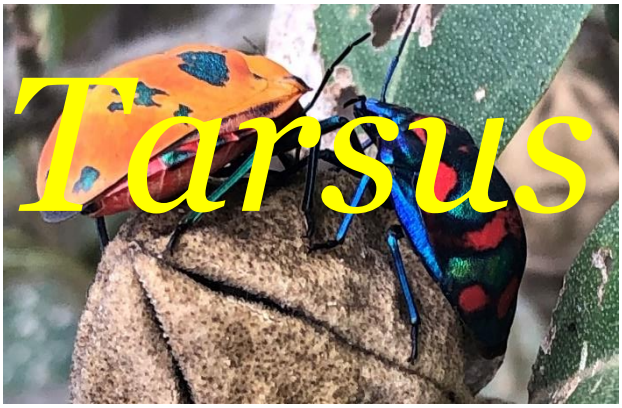

April 2026

Issue

No. 645

CIRCULAR OF THE ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES Inc

Hello Members,

This edition has an article by David Flumm on his moth collecting exploits in Tenterfield recently. This edition also provides some interesting recent hyperlinks to entomological stories on the net.

Once again, we can ensure that each edition of Tarsus is of maximum interest to members if we have members contributing articles or simple observations and photos as we see here from David Flumm.

Kind Regards

Garry Webb

Circular editor

Moth trapping in the ‘Granite belt’ at Tenterfield, March 2026

David Flumm

During 2nd-5th March 2026, I stayed at an Airbnb just north-west of Tenterfield in the aptly named ‘Granite-belt’ and on two of these nights, 3rd & 4th I set up my moth trap to see what it might attract (Fig.1).

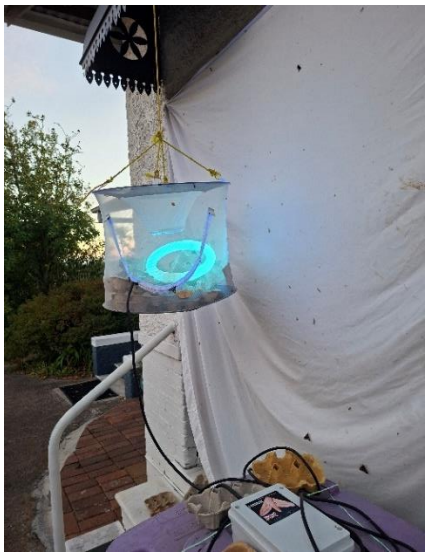

Figure 1 Moth trap in situ at Tenterfield

The private accommodation was set in farmland and the front garden held many shrubs, trees and other vegetation that looked good for Lepidoptera (Fig. 2), although my circular black light, a 22W UV actinic bulb set inside a “Safari moth trap” (both sourced from the U.K.) seems to attract species from far and wide, not just from within the immediate vicinity. On both nights I set the trap at the rear of the building against a white sheet and left the light on between dusk and dawn. The following mornings I examined the trap contents and those on the sheet and walls of the house and after photographing the insects I released them (unharmed of course).

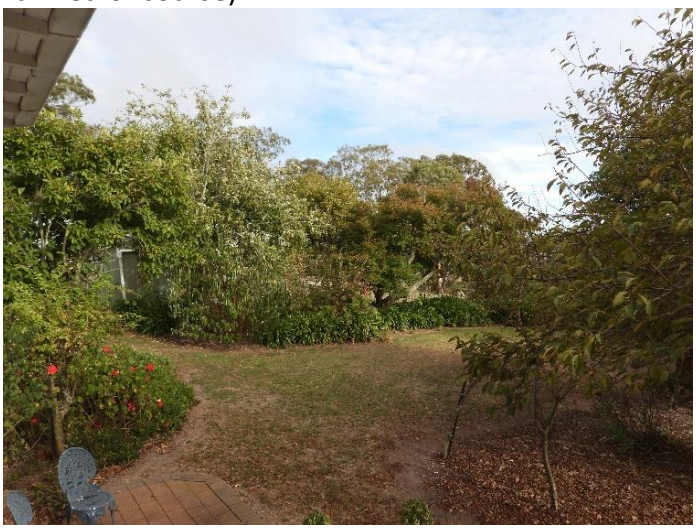

Figure 2 Front garden of accommodation at Tenterfield

A total of 705 moths were attracted over two nights and of these I tentatively allocated 423 to species or generic level after photographing and posting on iNaturalist (Table 1). A total of 103 species were identified but a further 17 remain unresolved and await identification on the iNaturalist website. Table 1 summarises the results and shows those that have been confirmed thus far in bold type.

The commonest species trapped was the Pyralid, *Faveria tritalis* (Couchgrass Webworm, Fig. 3) with 115 individuals (16%) of the total 705 recorded but I was especially pleased to trap 29 *Peripyra sanguinipuncta* (Blood-spotted Noctuid, Fig. 4), a completely new species for me: I live in Goonellabah, 175 km due east and in >2 years trapping, I have never recorded this species there. Figs 5-13 show a selection of other species trapped.
[Table 1 to be inserted here]

Figure 3 Couchgrass Webworm, Faveria tritalis

Figure 4 Blood-spotted Noctuid, Peripyra sanguinipuncta

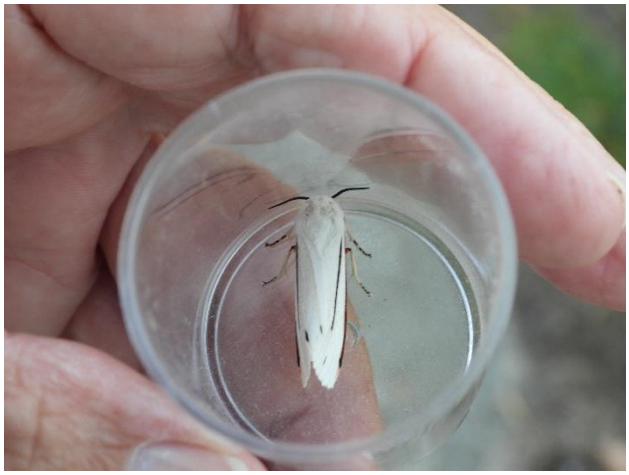

Figure 5 Donovan's Tiger Moth, Aloa marginata

Figure 6 Elhamma australasiae

Figure 7 Eulechria triferella

Figure 8 Eyespot Anthelid Moth, Anthela occellata

Figure 9 Hectobrocha pentacyma

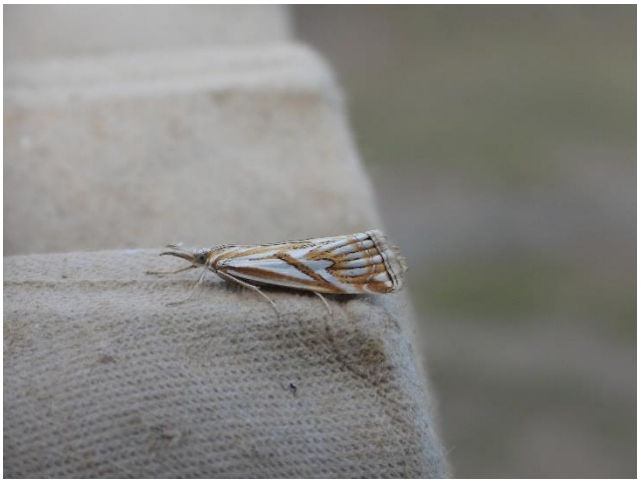

Figure 10 Hednota pleniferellus

Figure 11 Hoplomorpha abalienella

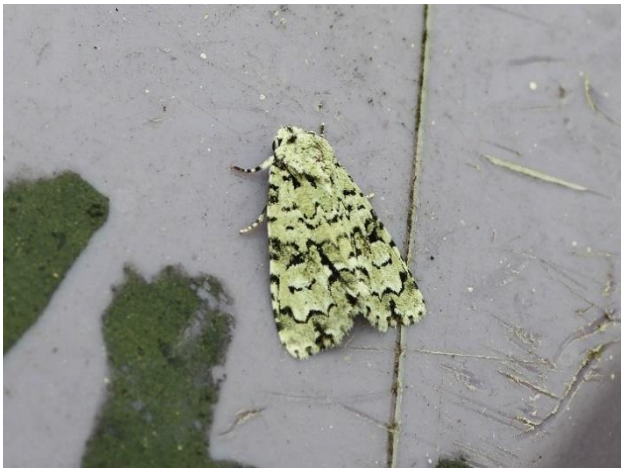

Figure 12 Thalatha melanophrica

Figure 13 Microbela monodyas? 1st for NSW, 21st for Australia

David Flumm, 5 Homestead Avenue, Goonellabah, NSW 2480

Table 1. List of moths recorded (trapped) at Tenterfield 03-04 March 2026					D.S.Flumm		
NB: Species highlighted in bold have been confirmed via iNaturalist							Status as per
				3-Mar	4-Mar	TOTAL	iNat database
			No. trapped:	279	426	705	
Family	Common name	Scientific name	No. species:	54	76	103	
ANTHELIDAE	**Eyespot Anthelid Moth**	***Anthela occellata***		4	6	10	
		Anthela sp?		1	1	2	
COSMOPTERIGIDAE		*Labdia argophracta*		9	16	25	62nd for Australia
CRAMBIDAE	Cotton Web Spinner	*Achyra affinitalis*		2		2	
		Culladia cuneiferellus		5	6	11	
		Hednota bivittella		5		5	
		Hednota grammellus		1		1	
		Hednota mesochra		1	10	11	44th for Australia
		Hednota pleniferellus		10	11	21	
	Cabbage Centre Grub	***Hellula hydralis***			2	2	
	Grass Webworm	*Herpetogramma licarsisalis*			1	1	
	Poroporo Fruit Borer	***Leucinodes cordalis***		1	1	2	
	Asian Corn Borer	*Ostrinia furnacalis*			1	1	
		Scoparia chiasta			3	3	
		Scoparia exhibitalis			2	2	
	White Rush Moth	*Tipanaea patulella*		1		1	
EREBIDAE	**White Tussock Moth**	***Acyphas chionitis***			1	1	
	Donovan's Tiger Moth	***Aloa marginata***		1	1	2	
		Amata aperta		3	3	6	
	White Antennae Wasp Moth	*Amata nigriceps*		3		3	
		Asura bipars		1		1	
		Eublemma pectorora		1		1	
	Jute Looper	*Gonitis involuta*			1	1	
	Bird Dropping Lichen Moth	***Halone sejuncta***			1	1	
	Five-banded Footman	***Hectobrocha pentacyma***			4	4	144th for Australia
	White Cedar Moth	***Leptocneria reducta***			1	1	
		Mataeomera dubia		1		1	
	Three-lined Snout	*Meranda susialis*		1	4	5	
		Pantydia sparsa			1	1	
		Philogethes metableta			1	1	
	Triangles	***Trigonodes hyppasia***			1	1	
ETHMIIDAE		*Ethmia clytodoxa*			1	1	
GELECHIIDAE		*Orthoptila abruptella*			1	1	174th for Australia
GEOMETRIDAE	Cape Moths	Amelora sp?		1	2	3	
	Guenee's Emerald	*Chlorocoma dichloraria*		1		1	
	Cleora Looper Moth	*Cleora illustraria*			1	1	
		Cleora injectaria			1	1	
	Red-lined Looper	***Crypsiphona ocultaria***		1		1	
	Neat Epidesmia	***Epidesmia tryxaria***			3	3	
		***Furcatrox* sp?**			2	2	
	Varied Grey Moth	*Hypobapta tachyhalotaria*			1	1	
		Idaea costaria			1	1	
	Purple Wave	*Idaea inversata*			3	3	
	Flecked Wave Moth	*Idaea philocosma*			2	2	
		Nearcha tristificata			1	1	43rd for Australia
	Plantain Moth	*Scopula rubraria*		1		1	
HELIOCOSMA group		*Heliocosma argyroleuca*		2		2	
HEPIALIDAE		***Elhamma australasiae***		7	13	20	
LASIOCAMPIDAE		***Porela cinerea***		2		2	

Table 1 (Continued)

LECITHOCERIDAE		*Lecithocera imprudens*			1	1	169th for Australia
NOCTUIDAE	Ipsilon Dart Moth	*Agrotis ipsilon*		3	1	4	
	Variable Cutworm	*Agrotis porphyricollis*		2	3	5	
		Athetis striolata			1	1	5th for NSW
		Athetis tenuis			1	1	
	Indian Weed Caterpillar	***Australothis rubrescens***		2	1	3	
	Tasmanian Cutworm	***Dasygaster padockina***		3	1	4	
		Leucania uda			1	1	
	Brown-bar Moth	***Maliattha amorpha***		1		1	
	Black Turnip Moth	*Neumichtis nigerrima*		1		1	
	Blood-spotted Noctuid	***Peripyra sanguinipuncta***		10	19	29	
		Proteuxoa capularis			1	1	216th for Australia
	Tawny-collared Noctuid	*Proteuxoa testaceicollis*			1	1	
		Thalatha melanophrica			3	3	
		Thoracolopha sp?			2	2	
NOLIDAE		*Nola desmotes*		1		1	
		Nolini sp?		1		1	
NOTODONTIDAE	Long-tailed Bombyx	*Trichiocercus sparshalli*			1	1	
OECOPHORIDAE		***Chezala privatella***		1	1	2	
		Enchronista proximella			2	2	
		Eulechria basiplaga		1	4	5	175th for Australia
		Eulechria triferella		1	8	9	
		Garrha costimacula			1	1	
		Hoplomorpha abalienella			1	1	
		Microbela monodyas			1	1	1st for NSW
		Mimobrachyoma sp?		1		1	
	Scat Moth	*Oxythecta acceptella*		1	2	3	60th for Australia
		Philobota curvilinea		1		1	
		Philobota sp?		1	1	2	
		Tachystola sp?		1	1	2	
OENOSANDRIDAE	Lucas' Stub Moth	*Discophlebia lucasii*			1	1	148th for Australia
PSYCHIDAE		*Conoeca guildingi*		1	2	3	
PYRALIDAE		*Endotricha pyrosalis*		2	4	6	
	Mediterranean Flour Moth	*Ephestia kuehniella*			1	1	3rd for NSW
		Ephestiopsis oenobarella		1		1	
	Couchgrass Webworm	***Faveria tritalis***		43	72	115	
		Heteromicta pachytera			1	1	
		Homoeosoma vagella		1		1	
	Teatree Web Moth	*Orthaga thryrisalis*		1	1	2	
	Senecio Blue Stem Borer	*Patagonoides farinaria*		1		1	
TINEIDAE		*Edosa* sp?		2	7	9	
		Monopis argillacea			1	1	71st for Australia
	Bird Nest Moth	*Monopis crocicapatella*			1	1	
	Blotched Monopis Moth	*Monopis meliorella*		1		1	
		Opogona comptella			1	1	
TORTRICIDAE		*Anisogona simana*			2	2	
		Asthenoptycha sphaltica			1	1	158th for Australia
	Lucerne Leafroller Moth	*Clepsis divulsana*		1		1	
		Conchylis vacuana		1	1	2	
		Isochorista ranulana			1	1	119th for Australia
		***Meritastis* sp? (unknown)**		1		1	
		Tortrix sp?		1	1	2	
XLORYCTIDAE		*Lichenaula onychotypa*			4	4	
		Scieropepla polyxesta			2	2	173rd for Australia
Total No. identified:				155	268	**423**	

New Entomological Research

(**Right Click** on the titles (or **CTRL Right Click**) to see the full articles)

Enormous Prehistoric Insects Puzzle Scientists

The true reason ancient insects grew so huge just got a lot more mysterious. Three hundred million years ago, Earth looked nothing like it does today. The continents were joined into a single landmass called Pangaea. Around the equator, vast coal-swamp forests dominated the landscape. Oxygen levels in the atmosphere were much higher than they are now, and wildfires occurred frequently. Life was thriving in every environment. Oceans were filled with fish, while land was home to amphibians, early reptiles, crawling arthropods, and even giant cockroaches. Above it all, insects ruled the skies, and some reached extraordinary sizes.

Why Are Giant Ants Letting Tiny Ants Crawl All Over Them?

In the deserts of southeastern Arizona, researchers have observed an unusual interaction between two very different ants. Large harvester ants gather outside the nests of much smaller cone ants, holding their serrated jaws open. Instead of showing aggression, the smaller ants climb onto the larger ones and begin licking and nibbling their bodies, including sensitive areas. Scientists say this is the first recorded case of one ant species cleaning a much larger ant. The behavior was detailed this week in the journal Ecology and Evolution and was documented by entomologist Mark Moffett, a research associate at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History. He likens the discovery to marine "cleaner fish" that remove parasites and debris from larger fish, even from species that could easily eat them. "This new ant species is the insect equivalent of cleaner fish in the ocean," Moffett said. "The potentially dangerous harvester ants even permit the visitors to groom between their open jaws."

10 deadliest, most venomous spiders on the planet: Are these dangerous spiders as fearsome and lethal as their reputation?

Here are the most venomous spiders in the world, but just how deadly are they really? Spiders list among some of the most feared animals on earth, but is this reputation fair? It is true that some, including all on this list, can inflict a painful bite in the right conditions, but there are many myths surrounding venomous spiders and their perceived deadliness.

NZ may be winning the fight against the invasive yellow-legged hornet – but a crucial phase lies ahead

Six months on from the discovery of a yellow-legged hornet queen in Auckland there are encouraging signs New Zealand's eradication effort is gaining ground. Teams that have been searching intensively for the highly invasive predators haven't turned up a new nest since last month. This result suggests the country's $12 million response programme – which has seen dozens of nests found and destroyed, alongside a huge public reporting effort – may be starting to get on top of the incursion. From my perspective, having closely followed the response, there is good reason to be cautiously optimistic this serious threat to New Zealand and its vulnerable ecosystems can be stamped out before it gains a foothold.

Still, this progress comes at a critical moment, when any remaining hornet nests will shift into a new phase and rapidly seed a new generation. At this time of year, worker numbers peak and colonies would normally begin producing new queens, known as gynes. These queens mate, then disperse and overwinter in sheltered sites, ready to establish new nests in spring. From a biosecurity perspective, the goal is straightforward: find and destroy every remaining nest before new queens are produced. The coming weeks may determine whether that goal is achieved.

Hybrids On The Horizon

In a Fort Lauderdale, Florida, park, Thomas Chouvenc made a discovery he'd been dreading for years. It was October 2024, and inside an infested tree the entomologist and his team found wild termites that resembled—but didn't quite match—two of the world's most destructive species: the Formosan and Asian subterranean termites. For years, the scientists had been watching with concern as invasive Asian and Formosan termites mingled on the South Floridian landscape. With some regularity over the previous few years, the scientists had been spotting suspected hybrid termite soldiers. But finally, here it was—the thing Chouvenc hoped he'd never find: a fully established colony of Formosan-Asian termite hybrids. Every year, Formosan subterranean termites (*Coptotermes formosanus*) and their Asian counterpart (*C. gestroi*) cause an estimated US $20 billion in damage globally. As with other termites, they have a penchant for wood. But these termites also like chewing electrical cables—a modern threat for a modern world. A hybrid version could potentially increase that threat. The hybrid colony has likely existed undetected for years, and there are probably others, says Chouvenc, a researcher at the University of Florida. It's worrisome.

What is the world's largest moth species?

There are a few moth species vying for this title of biggest moth, and the winner depends on what you are measuring – the wingspan, the weight or the surface area of wings. The answer to the biggest moth question really depends on what you are measuring – surface area of the wings, wingspan or weight?. The title of biggest moth is most commonly bestowed upon two similar-looking giant silk moths: the atlas moth (*Attacus atlas, below*) and the Australasian Hercules moth (*Coscinocera hercules, above*), which can confidently be compared to dinner plates on the basis of the surface area of their wings.

Butterfly vs moth: what's the difference?

Many people ask what the difference is between butterflies and moths, but the answer is not as straightforward as most would think, says Butterfly Conservation. There are several useful rules of thumb you can start with that help you tell a butterfly from a moth:

- Butterflies usually have 'club-shaped' antennae, moths meanwhile normally have antennae that taper to a fine point and may or may not also be feathery. The two can have quite similar shaped antenna, however, take the dingy skipper butterfly and six-spot burnet moth, for example.
- Butterflies usually fold their wings vertically above their backs, while most moths hold their wings horizontally when resting.
- Moths also have a frenulum, a tiny bristle that hooks the front and hind wings together – no European butterflies have these.

"She emerges, not looking like a moth at all, but rather a peculiar pale thing with reduced legs and antennae that you could easily mistake for a maggot..."

Halfway up a woody heather stem, I spied what appeared to be a caddisfly case. Nowhere near a pond, my suspicions were roused as this was too big a case to belong to a land caddis. I placed it on a stone and waited. A few minutes later, a small black head peeked out of the open end of the tube. It belonged to a caterpillar. It turns out that I had bagged a bagworm, an insect with a very interesting and surprising life-cycle, particularly given its uninspiring name.

Scientists looked inside a bee hive. What they saw is remarkable

Bees most definitely do not dance like no one is watching. A study published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* shows that the insects adjust their famous 'waggle dance' depending on the composition of their audience. Bees know how to cut some shapes. The insect's impressive waggle dance is a nifty figure-of-eight move, performed with a pulsating abdominal wiggle. Returning foragers perform it to their hive mates to convey food-related information. The angle of the dance indicates the direction of the food relative to the sun, whilst the duration signifies distance.

Scientists Track Bees in 3D and Discover Remarkable Secret Navigation Skills

Honeybees fly consistent, landmark-guided routes with remarkable precision, revealing better navigation than their waggle dance suggests. A research team at the University of Freiburg, led by neurobiologist and behavioral biologist Prof. Dr. Andrew Straw, investigated how honey bees fly between their hive and a nearby food source. Using a drone, the scientists tracked bees traveling through an agricultural landscape over a distance of about 120 meters (394 feet). To follow each bee's route, the team used the "Fast Lock-On (FLO) Tracking" method developed in Straw's lab. This technique involves placing a tiny reflective marker on the insect. A computer mounted on the drone then analyzes reflected light to detect the bee within milliseconds and continuously monitor its position.

This Bizarre Insect Turns Pink to Green in Just 11 Days

A rare rainforest insect can transform its appearance in a matter of days, shifting from bright pink to leaf green in a way that may help it avoid predators. Researchers report that *Arota festae*, a tropical katydid also known as a "bush cricket," undergoes this dramatic color change over about two weeks. The species lives in the forests of Panama, Colombia, and Suriname, where survival often depends on staying hidden in plain sight. The discovery, published in *Ecology*, began when scientists noticed a female katydid resting under a light at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute's field station on Barro Colorado Island in Panama. At first, she stood out vividly in hot pink. Just eleven days later, she had blended in completely after turning green.

Ants Can "Reprogram" Who Belongs in Their Colony

Ant societies rely on precise recognition systems to maintain cooperation, but new research reveals that these systems are more adaptable than once believed. For ants, quickly telling friend from foe can mean the difference between survival and collapse. A new study reveals that the system ants use to recognize colony members is not fixed, but surprisingly adaptable. Published in *Current Biology*, the research shows that clonal raider ants adjust their sense of colony identity throughout their lives based on repeated encounters. Even so, they still retain a built-in ability to recognize their genetic relatives. The study explains how

ants can learn to accept outsiders while outsiders begin to fit in, and it lays the groundwork for future research on how the brain processes social smells. "We've known for a long time that ants are very good at distinguishing between an ant from a different colony and one of their own, but less was known about how flexible this behavior is," says Daniel Kronauer, head of the Laboratory of Social Evolution and Behavior at Rockefeller University. "This work is a first step toward figuring out, on a behavioral level, how ants make that distinction, and it will help inform future experiments into the neurobiological underpinnings of ant society."

It looks like bird poop, is armed with a deadly projectile weapon and imitates 'perfume' to lure prey

My hungry eyes were scanning leaves and twigs for anything 'bug'. It was evening and the light was fading fast in the Arizona forest, particularly here in the understory. I don't know what made me do a double-take but I'm glad I did. A fresh and particularly succulent bird dropping sat next to the midrib of a leaf. Then I noticed it had eyes… and legs – eight of them. I had just found a bolas spider, an arachnid master of both disguise and a rare and remarkable skill.

Why on Earth do we say 'bees knees' - and for that matter do bees even have knees?

The 'bees knees' is one of those phrases that sounds perfectly normal – until you stop and think about it. The 'bee's knees'? Really? Why are we praising something by comparing it to a tiny insect's joints? Like many quirks of the English language, the expression has a habit of slipping past unnoticed. We use it to mean something excellent, the best of the best – yet few of us could explain where it came from, or whether it makes any literal sense at all.

9 brutal insect photos that show how these ruthless predators sting, swarm and devour their prey

These incredible images demonstrate the brutality of the creepy crawly and how they can overpower prey. They may be small, but many are exceptionally mighty – and insects are some of the most formidable predators on the planet, from those that sting, to those that work together to overpower their prey.

Flesh-eating bacteria spread from possums and mozzies. But Buruli ulcers are preventable and treatable

Flesh-eating bacteria spread from possums and mozzies. But Buruli ulcers are preventable and treatable

A number of cases of the flesh-eating Buruli ulcer have now been detected on the New South Wales south coast. There is growing evidence mosquitoes are at least partly responsible for the spread of this "flesh-eating" bacteria, with possums also implicated. Health authorities have urged locals to avoid mosquito bites. Cases of Buruli ulcer are usually concentrated to parts of Victoria. So why is it being found in NSW? And how does a mozzie bite turn into a flesh-eating ulcer? Here's what we know about this bacteria, how it spreads, and how you can prevent and treat these ulcers.

We Finally Know How Bumblebee Queens Can Survive Underwater For Days

The discovery that bumblebee queens could shake it off and emerge unscathed after more than a week submerged in water stunned scientists back in 2024. Now, a new paper reveals how they do it. Included in the bumblebee survival toolkit is the remarkable ability to extract oxygen from the water around them – literally allowing them to breathe underwater temporarily. It's a skill set that can help the heart of a colony weather a crisis such as a flooded burrow, allowing her to survive and rebuild when conditions are more stable. And its discovery suggests that some species may have hidden reserves of resilience against environmental extremes. "Our findings," writes a team led by evolutionary physiologist Charles Darveau of the University of Ottawa in Canada, "reveal a remarkable flooding-tolerance strategy and provide a foundation for exploring the limits, mechanisms, and ecological significance of underwater survival in terrestrial insects."

"Unlike Anything We've Ever Seen" – Bizarre New Insect Discovered in South America Stuns Scientists

A newly identified termite species with a whale-like head reveals unexpected diversity within the *Cryptotermes* genus. In the canopies of a South American rainforest, a tiny soldier termite has stunned a team of international scientists with its whale-like features. *Cryptotermes mobydicki*, the name given to the termite by the international research team — led by a University of Florida scientist — boasts features of an elongated head and hidden mandibles. It resembles the iconic sperm whale from Herman Melville's classic novel — hence its name. "This termite is unlike anything we've ever seen," said Rudolf Scheffrahn, professor of entomology at the UF Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS). The specimen was so distinctive that the team of international entomologists thought it was looking at specimens of an entirely new genus, said Scheffrahn, whose taxonomic research is based at the UF/IFAS Fort Lauderdale Research and Education Center.

Aussies urged to look for tiny white marking to solve years-long mystery of iconic creature

Next time a moth gets trapped inside your home, take a close look at its wings before you help it outside. Your efforts could help prevent the extinction of one of Australia's most important creatures. More than 14,700 bogong moths living in Australia's High Country caves have been tagged with either white stickers or white paint to help solve a years-long mystery. For decades, the species was so numerous that their swarms blacked out the moon during their annual migration of up to 1,000km, and they were a key food of alpine species like the mountain pygmy possum.

Is Australia's scorched earth baiting program actually paving the way for fire

Right now, Australia is undertaking the world's largest removal of invasive ants. The goal: eradicate fire ants (*Solenopsis invicta*). These aggressive South American ants are named for the burning sensation of their sting. They pose risks to many native species – and to human health. Fire ants have made it to Australia nine times, arriving in cargo ships. Eight times, authorities were able to stamp them out early. But an infestation detected in Brisbane suburb in 2001 has now spread across more than a million hectares of South East Queensland. Authorities have used broadcast baiting to tackle fire ants, releasing pesticides over massive stretches of land since 2001. This approach works for small outbreaks. But my recent research suggests it may actually be making it easier for fire ants to spread.

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