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Village Eco News

A publication of Bangalow Land and Rivercare.

We should talk about...Ticks

Ticks are parasites that are found in moist bushland, parks and gardens, especially on the Eastern seaboard of Australia. There are about 70 different species of tick in Australia. The most common tick along the East Coast is the paralysis tick (*Ixodes holocyclus*).

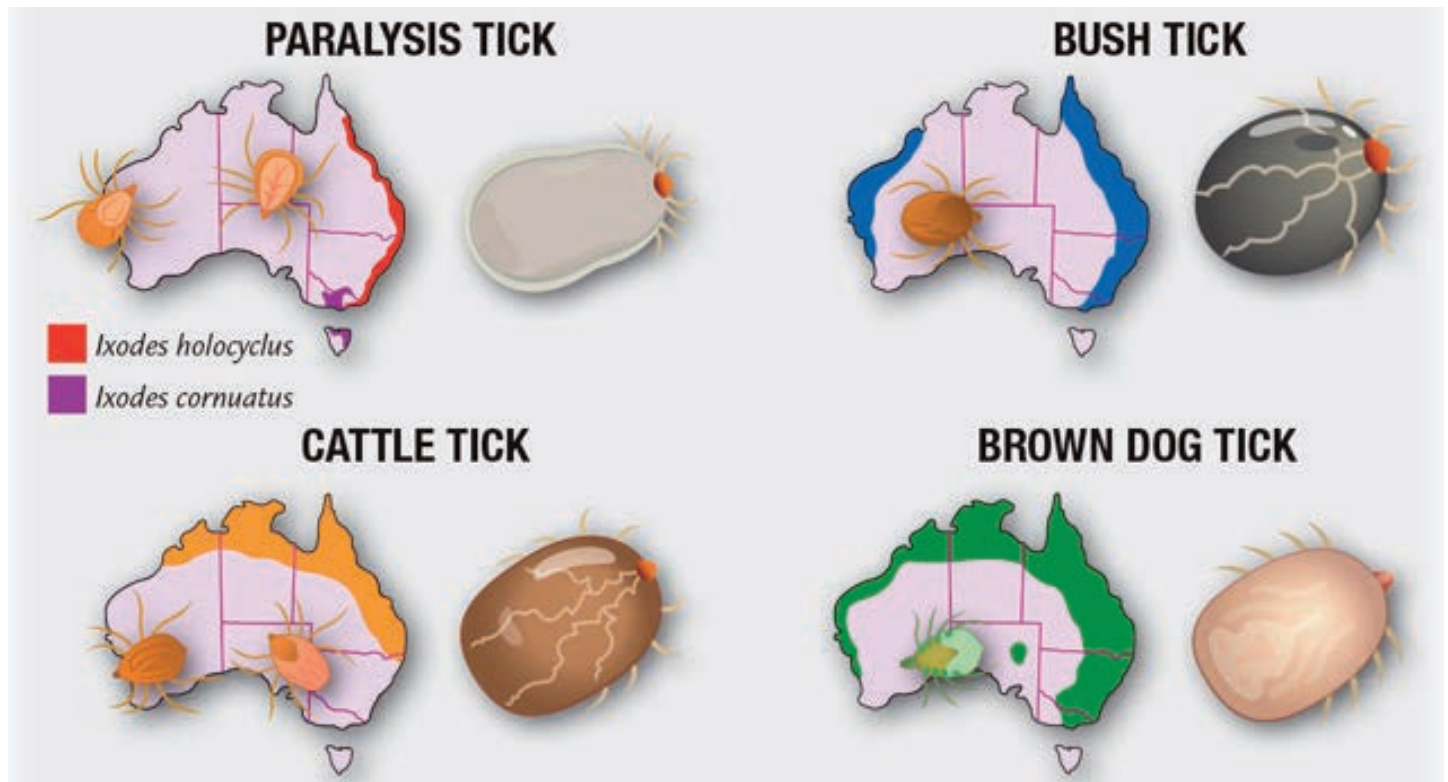
Ticks feed on the blood of humans and animals, and can cause allergic reactions and transmit diseases to their hosts. They attach to the skin by piercing their mouthparts into it and like to attach to soft areas such as armpits, groin and scalp

Although most cases of tick bite are uneventful and cause only minor signs and

symptoms, such as redness, swelling or a sore on the skin similar to the bump of a mosquito bite, some can result in life threatening illnesses including paralysis, tick typhus and severe allergic reactions but they can also transmit a condition called Ehrlichiosis.

Ehrlichiosis is a bacterial illness that causes flu-like symptoms that include fever and aches. It can cause very serious complications if left untreated but can be cured with prompt treatment.

Showering within two hours of coming indoors has been shown to reduce the risk of tickborne diseases and helps to wash off unattached ticks



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Landcare Working Bee

Our team of friendly volunteers work every Saturday morning, weather permitting from 8.30am to 10.30am rotating through the various sites around Bangalow. All welcome.

and it is a good opportunity to do a tick check, as they can be as small as a poppy seed!

Make sure to check between joints (behind the knees, elbows, armpits), behind your ears and anywhere covered in hair (behind the neck) as ticks love warm, dark places.

Apparently wearing light colored clothing lures ticks to you. That's why it is recommended that bush walkers etc wear darker colors and long-sleeve pants and shirts.

Killing a tick safely as soon as possible after you notice it can help prevent tick-related illnesses, but be aware that symptoms can develop or worsen even after a tick has been removed.

The ASCIA (Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy) now recommend you kill the adult tick on your skin with a freezing product such as Wart-Off Freeze or Elastoplast Cold Spray. These sprays contain ether which freezes the tick, thus immediately killing it and preventing it from injecting its saliva or regurgitating its contents into you.

You should then leave the tick in place until it drops off (taking care not to compress or squeeze it during this time) which it should do in the next 24 hours. Take care not to compress it or squeeze it during this time. These sprays are available from pharmacies in Australia. Once the tick has dropped off, clean the area with an antiseptic or soap and water.

Seek medical attention if you have the clinical features of tick typhus which include fever, a small ulcer at the site of the tick bite, swollen glands nearby and a red raised rash. Whether Lyme disease occurs in Australia is open to heated debate but it is far better to err on the side of caution if you experience the first symptom that is usually an expanding "bull's-eye" rash, see below.



Meet the endangered Bunyip bird living in our rice paddies

Figures obtained from the Environment Department showed 200 000 ducks were shot on more than 1500 private properties each year under the guise of pest eradication to protect rice crops. But there is another story. In the Riverina region of southern New South Wales, a strange waterbird is using rice fields to live in and breed.

The endangered Bunyip Bird, also called the Australasian Bittern, is famous for its deep booming call – for thousands of years thought to be the sound made by the mythical Bunyip. It's a sound now familiar to most rice growers.

In 2012, Birdlife Australia and the Ricegrowers' Association teamed up to learn more about bitterns in rice. The total bittern population, including New Zealand and New Caledonia, is estimated at no more than 2,500 adults.

Across the Riverina, it is conservatively estimate these rice crops attract 500-1,000 bitterns during the breeding season, about 40% of global population. It turns out the way rice is grown provides ideal water depths and vegetation heights for bitterns and their prey: frogs and tadpoles, fish and yabbies.

However, rice fields are no substitute for natural wetlands, and it's now clear both play a crucial role in sustaining the bittern population. Working closely with growers, we are identifying ways to develop cost-effective incentive programs for bittern-friendly rice growing, where a sufficient ponding period is provided, with complementary habitat on banks, in crop edges and adjacent constructed wetland refuges with the aim to boost the bittern population with the help of rice farmers.

Source: The Conversation



Tree Waratah

by Dawn lotty

The Tree Waratah or *Alloxylon flameum*, photographed in our yard in Bangalow, is a one of the most spectacular of all Australian native plants from North Queensland rainforest areas. It grows to 25 metres there, but is smaller in cultivation. The flowers are bright red and they occur in clusters up to 75 mm in diameter in spring and early summer and are conspicuously displayed in the leaf axils towards the ends of the branches.

It is a hardy and adaptable tree. It can be grown on a wide range of soils, and tolerates moderate frost. The adult leaves are glossy green, elliptical and about 150 mm long by about 50 mm wide. Juvenile leaves may be much larger and may also be lobed.

It is tolerant of a range of soils provided they are not waterlogged. It will even survive extended dry periods once established but flowering is reduced under these conditions.



DID YOU KNOW?

Every year, approximately 3000 Australians die as a result of air pollution.

Our addiction to coal is killing people. It's time to start saving lives.

Doctors for the Environment Australia
www.dea.org.au

Why have Doctors taken this Stand?

Coal has long been a reliable source of Australian energy, but it comes with tremendous costs because it is incredibly dirty. The same chemistry that enables coal to produce energy, the breaking down of carbon molecules, also produces a number of profoundly harmful environmental impacts and pollutants on public health

When coal burns, the chemical bonds holding its carbon atoms in place are broken, releasing energy. However, other chemical reactions also occur, many of which carry toxic airborne pollutants and heavy metals into the environment. These pollutants includes:

Mercury - that can damages nervous, digestive and immune systems

Sulfur dioxide - linked to asthma & bronchitis

Nitrogen oxides - exacerbates existing lung problems

Arsenic - a known poison causing cancer and lymphoma

Lead - effects almost every bodily system

Cadmium - associated with high blood pressure and kidney damage

Vanadium - connected to lung damage and birth defects

Selenium - linked to Cirrhosis (liver failure) and pulmonary edema (fluid in the lungs)

Without these doctors taking a stand who would have know about the 3000 preventable deaths.



Argan Oil

In recent times Argan Oil has appeared on the shelves in shops such as chemist and health food stores. So what is Argan oil.

Argan oil is a plant oil produced from the kernels of the argan tree (*Argania spinosa* L.) that is endemic to Morocco where it is used to dip bread in at breakfast or to drizzle on couscous or pasta. It is also used for skin ailments such as acne, wound healing, stretch marks, aging skin and for hair treatment and also reported to have many health benefits.

The fruit of the argan tree is small, and round, oval, or conical, see above. Extraction is key to the production process. To extract the kernels, workers first dry argan fruit in the open air and then remove the fleshy pulp. The next stage involves cracking the argan nut to obtain the argan kernels then the workers gently roast the kernels.

After the argan kernels cool, workers grind and press them. The brown-coloured mash expels pure, unfiltered argan oil. Finally, they decant unfiltered argan oil into vessels. The decanted argan oil is left to rest about two weeks so the suspended solids settle to the bottom. The clearer argan oil is further filtered, depending on the required clarity and purity.

Argan oil contains tocopherols (vitamin E), phenols, carotenes, squalene, and fatty acids, (80% unsaturated fatty acids). It contains anti-oxidants and inflammatories.

The argan tree provides food, shelter and protection from desertification. The trees' deep roots help prevent desert encroachment.

The canopy of argan trees also provides shade for other agricultural products, and the leaves and fruit provide feed for animals. The argan tree also helps landscape stability, prevent soil erosion, providing shade for pasture grasses, and helping replenish aquifers.

Much of the argan oil produced today is made by a number of women's co-operatives. Co-sponsored by the Social Development Agency with the support of the European Union, the *Union des Cooperatives des Femmes de l'Arganeraie* is the largest union of argan oil in Morocco and comprises 22 co-operatives that are found in other parts of the region.

Employment in the co-operatives provides women with an income, which many have used to fund education for themselves or their children. It has also provided them with a degree of autonomy in a traditionally male dominated society and has helped many become more aware of their rights.



Village Eco News

Our aim is to inform, interest, amuse and educate our readers on all things environmental. We welcome you to submit your contributions or to subscribe to this free Newsletter send your name and email address to:

bangalowlandcare@gmail.com

Please pass this publication on to your family and friends. Receiving our Newsletter online will help to save the environment we work to preserve.

editor, design and layout, Dawn Lotty

Contact Details:

President: Noelene Plummer 6685 4470

Secretary: Liz Gander 6687 1309

Email: bangalowlandcare@gmail.com

www.bangalowlandcare.org.au

