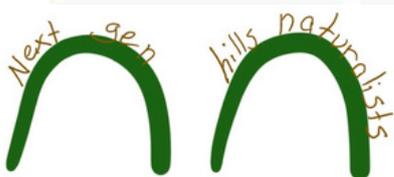


# The Brush-tail Possum: a nocturnal friend

Fungi of the month  
Graceful Parasol



Plant of the Month  
Rough Bush Pea

# A message from the Next-gen Hills Naturalists

In this edition of the Next-gen Hills Naturalists, we chose to cover the Common Brush-tailed Possum.

A common species in the Dandenong Ranges. While they might annoy some people, they also have problems of their own, as we found out in our podcast interview with Gerry, a vet nurse at Healsville Sancturay.

It was interesting to research the Plant and Fungi of the Month and see the Brush-tailed Possums in the wild. Enjoy!



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Kangaroo Apple, Koongalla Native Reserve. Credit: Coen

# Common Brushtail Possum iD Guide



## Common Brush-tailed Possum

*Trichosurus vulpecula*

- **Location:** All over Australia, but especially the east coast. Common all through the Dandenong Ranges.
- **Diet:** Leaves, blossoms, fruits.
- **Population:** Abundant
- **Habitat:** Forests, heath, urban areas and woodlands.
- **Status:** Least Concern
- **Breeding:** March-May

# Common Brushtail Possum

## iD Guide



Common Brush-tailed Possum



Ring-tailed Possum

Telling the difference between the Ring-tailed and Brush-tailed Possum can be hard, especially when they scurry past you. But there are a few key differences to look for.

Firstly, the Ringtail has a small and skinny tail with a ring on the end. Secondly, the Ring-tailed Possum has a white belly and it is much smaller than a Brush-tailed Possum.

Did you know: The ringtail possums are known to mean bad health if they live around your house?

Ringtail Possum image credit Australian Museum, G. B. Baker

# Common Brushtail Possum iD Guide

## Fun Facts

- Female Brush-tailed Possums only have a short 17 day pregnancy! This is because they are marsupials, and when they are born they come out very undeveloped.
- After the Brush-tailed Possums are born, they only have a 10-month childhood before they are adults. Female Brush-tailed Possums can start breeding after a year!
- Brush-tailed Possums communicate through rough hisses and growls especially when it's breeding season. Check out the audio recording below!

Reording by Marc Anderson on Xeno-Canto



<https://xeno-canto.org/959815>

# Brush-tail Possum Sightings

Recently I went on a camping trip to Buchan Caves Reserve. After the sun went down at the campsite, the Brush-tailed Possums where out in full force. One night, I saw 7! They would climb down the large European trees, then run about the campground trying to steal food. And they where successful. One even grabbed a tortilla and gave us the stink eye as it feasted. But, they also showed they could forage for themselves, eating the fruit of trees.

-Coen



Common Brush-tailed Possum at Buchan Caves Campground

# Brush-tail Possum Sightings

Another sighting recent sighting of Brush-tailed Possums was at my house, in the Dandenong Ranges. One night, at around 10.00PM I was outside watching the stars when a Brush-tailed Possum jumped from my neighbours roof onto our fence towards our walnut tree. Then five minutes later, another decided to pay a visit too!

-Coen



Common Brush-tailed Possum image credit  
Australian Museum, Andrew Pavlov

# Brush-tail Possum Rescue

A while ago we rescued a baby Brush-tail possum, the poor little one must have fallen from our bayleaf tree and broken her leg. Luckily I picked her up, she was very still, I took her inside and used an old towel and cardboard box to put her in. We rang the nearest wildlife shelter and they told us not to feed her or give her any water (as this could upset her more). I sat by the fire with her in the box to give her warmth waiting for the wildlife rescuers to pick her up.

If you happen to find an injured Brush-tail possum, gently place them in a cardboard box with a towel and ring the local wildlife hospital.

-Eve



Common Brush-tailed Possum image credit Australian Museum, Steve Dew

# **Why are Brush-tail Possums considered pests in the Dandenong Ranges? And what can we do to help them?**

Brush-tail Possums are often considered pests in the Dandenong Ranges because of their habit to create noise and eat plants. But in the end they are native to Australia and this is their home. People sometimes put poisons and baits out to kill the Brush Tails, this can cause a slow painful death for them. People also trap the possums and move them away from their home, this kind of displacement can potentially cause them to starve and is illegal unless handled by a registered vet. People can help the Brushys by simply putting out a wooden box, much like a bird house to provide them shelter this also helps if they are living on your roof by placing a box in a nearby tree.

-Eve

# Plant of the month

## Rough Bush Pea

*pulteneae scabra*

- **Story:** Ground
- **Habitat:** Scrubby Bush
- **Likely Locations in the Hills:** Olinda, Belgrave, Kalorama
- **Fun Fact:** Is often called Egg and Bacon plant!



# Fungi of the Month

## Graceful Parasol

*Macrolepiota clelandii*

- **Story:** Ground
- **Habitat:** Eucalyptus Forests and Subtropical Rainforests
- **Likely Locations in the Hills:** Sherbrooke Forest, Baluk Willam Flora Reserve, wet garden areas.
- **Fun Fact:** The Graceful Parasol is an edible mushroom!



# Ep 7, Australian Wildlife Health Centre with Gerry

Listen to Episode 7 of the Next-gen Hills Naturalists podcast to hear Coen and Eve chatting to Gerry, a vet nurse at the Australian Wildlife Health Centre. We discuss the animals she cares for and briefly touch on the Brush-tailed Possum. It's a great listen!

## Ep 7, Australian Wildlife Health Centre with Gerry



# Gallery

Some recent photos from the Next-gen Hills Naturalists



False-turkey Tail,  
Hughes Creek



Common Brown,  
Clarke Track



Rosy Hyacinth  
Orchid, Clarke Track



Grey-headed Flying  
Fox, Yarra Bend Park

# Gallery

Some recent photos from the Next-gen Hills Naturalists



Swamp Wallaby carcass



Tree sap (often used to heal cuts and wounds by traditional owners)

# References

- [Australian Museum Common Brushtail Possum Fact File](#)
- [DELWP Common Brushtail Possum Fact File](#)
- [The Guide to Victorian Wildlife, Angus McNab](#)
- [Echidna Walkabout Nature Tours, 5 amazing facts about brush-tailed possums](#)



Austrlain Painted Lady, Ferny Creek. Credit: Coen 16