

small lives through the lens

GREGORY COOTE

3 OCTOBER – 15 NOVEMBER 2025

01. *Two Ants*, 2019
Bullrush Paark/Warnpangga, Adelaide Park Lands
One small ant with a heavy load. Judging by the damage to the gaster (abdomen) the larger ant is dead. Adult workers do not consume solid food so the remains are presumably being carried back to the smaller ant's nest to be processed and fed to the maturing ant larvae.
02. *Fabriogenia sp*, 2022
Victoria Park/Pakapakanthi, Adelaide Park Lands
A Spider Wasp on a eucalypt leaf. The female wasps paralyse their spider prey before dragging them back to a pre-dug nest and laying a single egg. The spider provides a living larder for the wasp larva.
03. *Short-horned Grasshopper on Emu Bush*,
Walkerville, private garden
Phaulacridium vittatum on *Eremophila nivea*. A few minutes later this grasshopper had opened up the flower from stem to stern.
04. *Pintail Beetle on Bursaria Spinosa*, 2025
This tiny Pintail Beetle (*Mordella sp.*) is feeding on pollen from a *Bursaria spinosa* These tiny beetles also known as Tumbling Flower Beetles due to their fast-moving jumps and tumbles when disturbed.
05. *Meadow Argus Butterflies Courting*, 2024
A female butterfly (*Junonia villida calybe*) rests her head down on the dry seed head of a weedy Plantain while the male performs his courtship dance. The male circled the female wildly before the butterflies mated. The 'dance' allows him to prove his suitability as a mate.
06. *Blue-banded Bee on Grassy Bindweed*, 2022
Victoria Park/Pakapakanthi, Adelaide Park Lands
Amegilla sp. on *Convolvulus remotus*. It was hot but interesting work trying to capture Blue-banded Bees feeding on a large patch of convolvulus. No buzz pollination here, just flat on their tummies and digging deep into the flower to reach the nectar. The feeding attitude may look relaxed but it was all over in about half a second!
07. *Fairy Moth Laying Eggs on Bursaria Spinosa*, 2025
St Peters Billabong
This tiny day-flying moth's (*Nemophora laurella*) entire life cycle is centered on the wonderful Christmas Bush (*Bursaria spinosa*). A colourful and quite primitive micro moth, they feed on nectar from the flowers. Their eggs are laid on the developing seed pods, within which the larvae feed.
08. *Spider and Fly*, 2023
Walkerville, windowsill
The natural removal of pest species. Illustrating the value of letting spider webs build up around the inside of windows!

09. *Common Grass-blue Butterflies Mating*, 2020
Victoria Park/Pakapakanthi , Adelaide Park Lands
These butterflies (*Zizina labradus labradus*) abound in the remnant grassland. Here a pair are mating on the seedhead of a *Vittadinia* species.
10. *Clouded Footman Moth*, 2021
St Peters Billabong
Having just expanded his wings, this newly emerged male Clouded Footman (*Anestia ombrophanes*) rests near the remains of his pupal case, which is protected by a flimsy cocoon of silk and larval hair.
11. *Bull Ant with prey II*, 2023
St Peters Billabong
A cold morning left this large aggressive ant (*Myrmecia pyriformis*) clasping its caterpillar prey but unable to move. On a warmer morning this ant would have been moving rapidly, probably towards me. They have excellent eyesight, bite with those chainsaw jaws, and pack a mean punch of a sting.
12. *Camponotus* sp, 2024
Cobbler Creek Recreation Park
Ants are difficult to identify but this is likely to be the Saddleback Carpenter Ant (*Camponotus ephippium*), usually nesting in decaying wood and most active at night.
13. *Ribbed Case Moth*, 2024
St Peters Billabong
The ovoid case with five ribs of this flightless female moth (*Hyalarcta nigrescens*) is made entirely of finely woven silk. The moth has unfortunately found itself in a seriously unnatural environment as it works its way around a bollard of recycled plastic.
14. *Podomyrma Adelaidae with Smaller Species*, 2022
St Peters Billabong
Ants are famously aggressive, even to individuals of the same species but from a different colony. Yet in all the complex interactions I have observed between them, I have never seen a large Musclemann Patch Ant or the unidentified smaller species walk away with so much as a limp. PhD anyone?
15. *Matchstick Grasshopper*, 2018
Belair National Park
Grasshoppers come equipped with stunning camouflage, provided they choose the right surroundings. This grasshopper (*Vandiemenella viatical*) blends perfectly with the dead wood that surrounds it.
16. *Rhytidoponera* sp with Ruby Saltbush Fruit, 2022
Beaumont Common, Burnside
Ants play a major role in the transport of seeds, carrying them significant distances and dropping some as they go. It is difficult to imagine a more emphatic example than this *Rhytidoponera* carrying the ripe fruit of a Ruby Saltbush (*Enchylaena tomentosa*) back to the nest.

17. *Mallee Grass Mantis Nymph*, 2022
Walkerville, private garden
Almost pesto! I gathered up this little creature (*Archimantis sobrina*) with the basil. After a thorough wash and a trip through the salad spinner, it emerged just in time to be returned to a Silver Cassia (*Senna artemisioides*), a happy hunting ground for prey.
18. Small Gnat deep within the Weeds
Golden Wattle Park/Mirnu Wirra, Adelaide Park Lands
Possibly a Fungus Gnat or Gall Midge, *Sciaroidea sp.* (Superfamily). I believe these spend the daylight hours sheltering in the grass, which is exactly where I found this individual.
19. *Jumping Spider on Grass Stem*, 2023
Walkerville, private garden – 26 August 2023
The Salticidae. I love the way these tiny spiders follow you with their eyes and turn their bodies to face you as you move around them. The two forward-facing primary eyes have incredibly high resolution, equivalent to pigeons, cats and elephants. Not bad for creatures whose bodies span just a few millimetres.
20. *Bull Ant with prey I*, 2023
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21. *Blue Skimmer Dragonfly*, 2018
St Peters Billabong
I was waiting for a Dainty Swallowtail butterfly to alight and instead this dragonfly (*Orthetrum caledonicum*) dropped in. A nice match between the tip of the tail and the tip of the branch.
22. *Ghost Wasp*, 2017
Wildflower Walk, Vale Park
These wasps seem to float serenely just above the ground like so many aerial seahorses. They lay eggs in the nests of ground-nesting bees and wasps, where their larvae prey upon the host eggs, larvae and provisions. Don't be fooled, this Gasteruptiid Wasp is about the size of a mosquito.
23. *Hover Fly and Variable Groundsel*, 2023
Minda Dunes, North Brighton
Melangyna viridiceps, one of the two most common hover flies, on *Senecio pinnatifolius*. Hover Flies and other insects are drawn to these big, bold flowers with their copious supplies of nectar.
24. *Native bee on Dianella sp*, 2024
Victoria Park/Pakapakanthi, Adelaide Park Lands
Unidentified species (possibly *Lipotriches*) collecting pollen and nectar from Flax-lily flowers.
25. Brown Mantid Nymph with Dew, 2021
St Peters Billabong
This small Brown Mantid (*Archimantis sobrina*) was bejeweled with a heavy morning dew and looked great against the clear blue sky.

26. *Fly with Lacewing Eggs*, 2023

Marino Conservation Park

This fly (*Trypetisoma sp.*) was strutting steadily up and down these Wireleaf Mistletoe (*Amyema preissii*) flowers slowly paddling its wings in the hope of attracting a mate. Just to top it off a couple of lacewing eggs on their silken stalks are also in the frame.

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