 

**Wet and Wild**

**2024, Week 4 – Clues**

**Suburban Superstars in the Wet and Wild**

1. I have gone from being near extinction to being an entrenched urban dweller, sited in many Sydney suburbs and along the east coast of Australia.

2. My fragrant white flowers occur in spring and summer are followed by blue berries.

3. My new leaf shoots and berries have a mild ginger flavour.

4. Citizen science is helping fuel research about how big my urban populations can become.

5. I am an egg laying, flat bodied, insect eating creatures growing to 15cm long.

6. I’m found from Nowra, through Sydney and the Blue Mountains and to Port Macquarie.

7. I am a medium sized species, growing to 40mm in body length and 130mm in leg span.

8. I have rough, scaly skin and a brown/grey, mottled pattern that resembles my sandstone habitat.

9. On my grey body I have 4-6 black spots on my abdomen and bands on the underside of my legs.

10. I grow from an underground rhizome and can form a clump up to 2-3 metres tall.

11. I have black plumage, a bald red head and dangling yellow wattle and can weigh 2.3kg.

12. I have a sword shaped leaf that are 40cm long and 10cm wide with attractive red leaf underside.

13. I am quite common and often found inside sheds and houses, camouflaging with the brick walls.

14. I am found in SE Qld and northern NSW. I live in coastal sandstone heath.

15. Extremely timid, extremely fast and I can climb smooth surfaces.

16. Males make and maintain large mounds in which females lay their eggs, in clutches of 20 eggs.

17. I am native to NSW and QLD, hardy although I like damp soil to do my best in.

18. My babies are fully independent and can feed and fly within a couple of hours.

19. I feed at night and shelter during the day in crevices or under rocks clinging with my claws.

20. I am an attractive easy to grow feature plant and can grow in shade in the understory.

21. I eat insects, seeds and fallen fruit which are exposed when I scratch leaf litter on the ground, and I scavenge to find food in the city.

22. When threatened, I discard my tail as a decoy so I can escape to safety. I will re-grow a leaf shaped tail.

23. I do not construct webs. I hunt as my common name suggests but I’m harmless to humans.

24. Females produce a flat, oval egg sac of white papery silk, and lay up to 200 eggs which she guards for 3 weeks.

