

# Am I your BUSH Bud?

## Small Ant-blue Butterfly

### About me:

The Small Ant-blue Butterfly (*Acrodipsas myrmecophila*) is a tiny butterfly endemic to Australia. It has a close relationship with Coconut Ants known as an obligate relationship - both species depend on each other for survival. The Ants carry or herd the butterfly's eggs and caterpillars into their nests, and the caterpillar feeds on ant larvae and in return provide sap secretions to the ant.

Small Ant-blue Butterflies and Coconut Ants are mainly found in woodland and open forest.

In the ACT the butterflies fly from October through to March. Males tend to fly around and perch in the canopy of eucalypt saplings near the Coconut Ant nest; the females tend to walk around on the trunk and lower branches and leaves of the saplings. Males will also congregate on summits of nearby hills where they establish territories by perching on canopy foliage of eucalypts in wait for females. Females fly to these peaks to find suitable males to mate with.



Credit: Richard Allan

### Threats:

Populations of the Small Ant-blue Butterfly are in steep decline which is likely to result in extinction. Numerous human activities associated with urbanisation contribute to the demise of the Small Ant-blue Butterfly, and these pressures can become acute and unmanageable with increasingly intense land use.

## Become my Bush Bud!

Take a stand for Canberra's Nature and sign up to get the chance to walk with an expert in the habitat of the Small Ant-blue Butterfly!

