

GROWING A RAINFOREST ON A SUBURBAN BLOCK

A rainforest is not difficult to set up using a number of layers of plants and a wide variety of foliage types. It need not be large in size and can be very successfully grown on a suburban block. It relies on different heights of foliage to achieve a rainforest effect, with an upper or canopy layer creating shady pockets and protection for lower growing plants underneath.

Once established, a rainforest garden does not require much maintenance as the natural leaf drop adds to the organic mulch and, combined with the shade, suppresses most weeds.



Despite its name, a rainforest garden does not necessarily need high levels of moisture, although the addition of a small pond somewhere within the garden can provide additional humidity to the microclimate as well as providing a point of interest and attracting native wildlife.

Dense plantings of native sedges around the edge of a pond should prevent the entry of cane toads and give good protection to some of our smaller native frogs and birds. The addition of native ornate rainbow fish to the pond will control the mosquito population by eating the larvae and not eating frog's eggs or tadpoles in your pond.



A large variety of our native plants are suitable for inclusion in a small-scale rainforest garden in south east Queensland.

Glossy Laurel (*Cryptocarya laevigata*)

The tallest of the small trees or large shrubs should be planted around the perimeter of the garden to provide protection to the inner areas.

Before planting the ground can be mounded around part of the perimeter to retain water runoff within the garden area so the plants can make maximum use of rainfall.

The type of soil is not critical however if it is heavy clay an addition of gypsum or Garden Mate will be beneficial. Mulching heavily with organic matter will help retain moisture and maintain a pH of around 5-6, the range most native plants need to thrive. Dense planting also assists moisture retention by shading the ground.

Some examples of suitable native plants for a small rainforest garden include:

LOW GROWING PLANTS

Botanical Name	Common name	Height
Asplenium australasicum	Birds Nest Fern	0.5m
Alocasia brisbanensis	Cunjevoi	1m
Lomandra hystrix	Creek Mat-rush	1m
Dianella caerulea	Blueberry Lilly	0.5m
Doodia media	Rasp Fern	0.5m
Orthosiphon aristatus	Cats Whiskers	0.5m
Helmholtzia glaberrima	Stream Lily	1m

MID LAYER PLANTS

<i>Cryptocarya laevigata</i>	Glossy Laurel	2-3m
<i>Eupomatia laurina</i>	Bolwarra	2m
<i>Alpinia arundelliana</i>	Native Ginger	2m
<i>Graptophyllum ilicifolium</i>	Holy-leafed Graptophyllum	2m
<i>Graptophyllum excelsum</i>	Native Fuchsia	1-2m
<i>Pavetta australiensis</i>	Pavetta	1m
<i>Cordyline petiolaris</i>	Broad Leafed Palm Lily	1-2m

LARGE SHRUBS & SMALL TREES

<i>Davidsonia jerseyana</i>	Southern Davidson's Plum	3-5m
<i>Syzygium cryptophlebium</i>	Plum Satinash	2-3m
<i>Syzygium wilsonii</i>	Powderpuff Lilly Pilly	1-2m
<i>Waterhousea floribunda</i>	Weeping Lilly Pilly	6-10m
<i>Cyathea australis</i>	Tree Fern	1-8m
<i>Phaleria clerodendron</i>	Scented Phaleria	2-4m
<i>Atractocarpus fitzalanii</i>	Native Gardenia	2-4m
<i>Evodiella muelleri</i>	Little Evodia	2-3m
<i>Sarcotoechia serrata</i>	Fern-leafed Tamarind	3-4m
<i>Waterhousea unipunctatum</i>	Roly Poly Satinash	3-5m
<i>Pullea stutzeri</i>	Hard Alder	3-5m
<i>Lepiderema pulchella</i>	Fine Leafed Tuckeroo	2-5m
<i>Diploglottis australis</i>	Native Tamarind	4-8m
<i>Archirhodomyrtus beckleri</i>	Rose Myrtle	3-4m
<i>Ptychosperma elegans</i>	Solitaire Palm	3-6m
<i>Wilkiea macrophylla</i>	Large-leafed Wilkiea	2-5m
<i>Polyscias nodosa</i>	Noah's Basswood	6m

FEATURE PLANTS

<i>Platynerium superbum</i>	Staghorn
<i>Platynerium bifurcatum</i>	Elkhorn
<i>Thelychiton kingianus</i>	Pink Rock Orchid



Syzygium wilsonii



Phaleria clerodendron