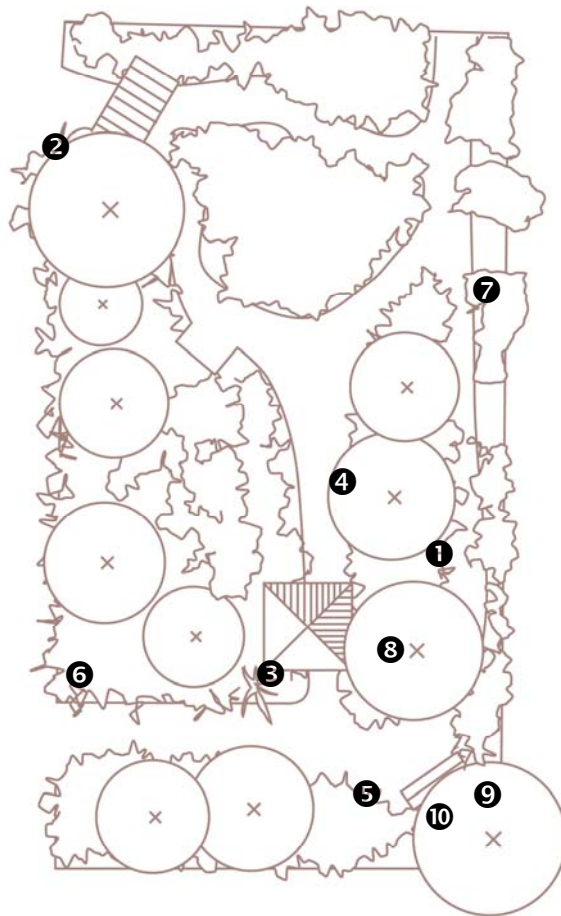


Rainforest Garden

Rainforest was once reasonably extensive in the Redlands but most of it was cleared for farming. Small remnant patches of rainforest remain in Mount Cotton, Sheldon, along the coastline and on the Bay Islands. Prior to European settlement there would have been a lot more rainforest, particularly in Wellington Point, Ormiston, Cleveland and Redland Bay. Most of the remaining rainforest is found on private property.

Rainforests are the most diverse ecosystems on earth and occur in areas of high moisture, but often poor soils. Most of the nutrients are stored in the living plants and leaf litter rather than the soil and this is cycled through rapidly by many fast acting and effective invertebrates in the leaf litter. Most rainforest plants are tall trees that grow quickly to reach the life-giving light at the forest canopy. The flowers and fruits of many rainforest trees are often of great importance for butterflies and birds.

Rainforest trees often have attractive shape and foliage, making them excellent garden specimens. In a more open garden they rarely reach the heights they do in the wild as they have no need to shoot straight up for the light. This leads to shorter, bushier specimens where the flowers and fruits are more visible. The hardiness of this group varies enormously but they will generally require a good mulch layer to keep the soil cool and moist and some water during hotter months. This garden took three years to establish and hasn't been watered since.



Species in the garden



Peperomia blanda ①
Peperomia

A small herb to 30cm, growing mostly on rocks along creek edges and also the rainforest floor. Will probably prove quite hardy in a full-shade, sheltered position. Thick succulent foliage makes a nice contrast in a native garden.



Corchorus cunninghamii ②
Cunningham's Jute

An endangered species found on the top of Mt Cotton on the edge of rainforest. An attractive plant in the garden situation if provided with a bit of water. Short-lived but easy to grow from seed.



Asplenium australasicum
Birds Nest Fern

A distinctive large fern with long fronds that will grow on trees, rocks or in the soil. Needs a fertile spot with good organic matter. Likes reasonable moisture but should have good drainage as they are prone to rot. Quite hardy.



Cordyline spp. ③
Palm Lilies

Upright shrubs to 3m but can be taller in very good conditions. They are hardy in most soils and conditions but prefer semi-shade with regular water, particularly in summer. They have purple flowers followed by bright red or black berries, depending on the species.



Alchornea ilicifolia ④
Native Holly

A shrub or small tree to 3m with distinctive, spiny, stiff leaves. Fruits turn from green to red in summer. A very hardy species in any semi-shade spot but relatively slow growing.



Eupomatia laurina ⑤
Bolwarra

A shrub to 3m with shiny leaves and red new growth. The branchlets have a zig-zag pattern and the flowers are white and daisy-like. Hardy and fast growing but it will appreciate water and some shade.



Guioa semiglauca ⑥
Native Quince

A fast growing small tree to 8m with distinctive grey-green, leathery leaves. A useful pioneer plant for establishing rainforest. The small flowers attract lots of insects and fruits are favourites of many bird species.



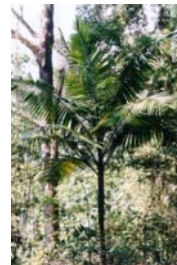
Melicope elleryana ⑦
Pink Euodia

A very fast growing tree to 10m that bears bunches of pink flowers in summer along its branches. Very attractive to birds, especially lorikeets. Its spreading crown is fairly open, providing moderate shade. Tolerates wet soil and needs plentiful water to establish in dry soils.



Commersonia bartramia ⑧
Brown Kurrajong

A hardy rainforest plant to 10m, a great coloniser of disturbed rainforest edges. The leaves have a rusty appearance from fine hairs while it has a characteristic layered appearance to its flowering, making it a very attractive tree.



Archontophoenix cunninghamii
Bangalow Palm

A tall palm to 25m that performs best in a well watered situation. It bears large bunches of mauve flowers followed by hundreds of bright red fruits 1cm across. Grows in rainforest gullies and a great food source for birds.



Gmelina leichhardtii ⑨
White Beech

A magnificent tree to 40m, typically growing along creek edges. It is semi-deciduous with distinctive large leaves. Purple and white flowers arrive in spring, with purple fruits in autumn.



Elaeocarpus grandis ⑩
Blue Quandong

Beautiful rainforest tree to 40m. Incredibly fast growing for a tree of its type. Leaves turn red before dropping and it has large blue fruits. Hardy in any moderately moist site.

Some other species to consider

Trees		Herbs, small plants	
<i>Acmena / Syzygium</i> species	Lilly-pillies	<i>Davallia pyxidata</i>	Hares Foot Fern
<i>Cryptocarya</i> species	Laurels	<i>Lastreopsis decomposita</i>	Trim Shield Fern
<i>Ficus</i> species	Figs	<i>Oplismenus hirtellus</i>	Basket Grass
<i>Mallotus</i> species	Kamalas	<i>Pseuderanthemum variabile</i>	Love Flower
Shrubs		Vines & Creepers	
<i>Alpinia caerulea</i>	Native Ginger	<i>Callerya megasperma</i>	Native Wisteria
<i>Alyxia ruscifolia</i>	Chainfruit	<i>Hibbertia dentate</i>	Creeping Guinea Flower
<i>Rubus rosifolius</i>	Native Raspberry	<i>Legnephora moorei</i>	Round-leafed Vine
<i>Tasmannia insipida</i>	Pepper Bush	<i>Pararistolochia praevenosa</i>	Birdwing Vine