

## NSW Rainforest walks

The NSW RAINFOREST WALK is a 300 metre, easy grade stroll along paths and boardwalks. Allow 20 minutes to complete. The paths are wheelchair accessible.

The trees were planted in a grassy cleared paddock in 1987.

The five major lowland North Coast rainforest types have been planted with about 350 local species:

- Subtropical Rainforest
- Palm Swamp Rainforest
- Temperate Rainforest
- Developing Rainforest
- Dry Rainforest

To the north is the DRY RAINFOREST. DEVELOPING RAINFOREST is found beneath a mature blackbutt forest, SUBTROPICAL RAINFOREST on sunny high ground, WARM TEMPERATE RAINFOREST where it is more shady, and PALM SWAMP FOREST on the flat.

To enjoy the NSW RAINFOREST WALK, start at the Display Board east of the sensory garden and follow the yellow markers.

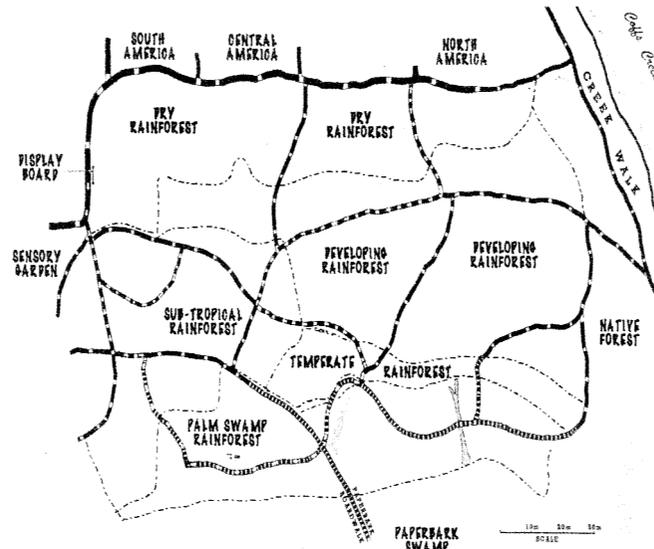
SUB-TROPICAL RAINFOREST occurs on high rainfall fertile river flats and basalt plateaus. Many trees have large leaves, and pronounced buttresses.

TEMPERATE RAINFORESTS are found in higher altitude wet mountain forests. The soils are generally less fertile, trees smaller and buttresses less common.

PALM SWAMP RAINFOREST is found on periodically flooded sites, which are protected from wildfires.

DRY RAINFOREST occurs where there is a marked dry spring and generally lower rainfalls.

A typical situation along the North Coast is for gullies to have tall eucalypts and Brush Box trees, with a less tall DEVELOPING rainforest beneath.



## North Coast Regional Botanic Garden

# Rainforest Walks

The FRIENDS OF THE NORTH COAST REGIONAL BOTANIC GARDEN Inc. is an active community group who would very much appreciate your donation.

All donations and proceeds from the shop and café go towards further development in the Garden, its attractions and amenities.

As you walk through the SUB-TROPICAL RAINFOREST, note that many of the trees have large leaves: e.g. Tamarind, White Ash, Doughwood and the Stinging Tree. The latter is a common understory species in the subtropical rainforest—be careful not to touch this!

The Subtropical Rainforest contains many species prized by local woodworkers who find them particularly suitable for fine pieces of art, wood turning and features: e.g. Coachwood, Sassafras, Red Cedar, Red Carabeen, Red Bean, Silky Oak, and Blush Tulip Oak. The SPECIALTY TIMBERS PLANTINGS are an offshoot of the Sub-tropical section.

A feature of mature forests is pronounced buttressing or spreading of the trunk just above ground level. This can be seen on the Blue Fig and Yellow Carabeen. Large epiphytes such as Birds Nest Ferns and staghorns are typically found in this type of forest.

As you proceed down the boardwalk into the PALM SWAMP RAINFOREST, much of the canopy consists of Bangalow and Cabbage Tree Palms, with Walking stick Palms and palm lilies forming the understory. Palms do not produce any lateral branches, but merely a feather duster clump of leaves at the end of a

slender trunk.

Thus a palm forest has a rather open appearance in the lower layers despite the dense shady canopy above. There are few shrubby species except for the diminutive Walking Stick Palm and Palm Lilies.

Apart from the palms, there are several trees which reach considerable size in these swamps. Some of the largest here are the Blue Fig and the Blueberry Ash. Both can produce conspicuous buttresses and snaking surface roots.

This special type of rainforest inhabits sites which are periodically flooded, but are protected from wildfires. It is often found on islands in the lower reaches of the major North Coast rivers.

After crossing the Paperbark Boardwalk on the left you enter TEMPERATE RAINFOREST. Trees here are generally smaller in height and diameter, buttressing is less common. Vines are wiry rather than woody, epiphytes are less obvious being mainly lichens and mosses. Leaves are generally smaller than in the Subtropical rainforest.

Many species such as Coachwood, Crabapple and Sassafras have toothed leaves. This rainforest is found in the higher altitude wet

mountain forests. It does not require fertile soils, as does the Subtropical Rainforest.

Many of the species in the DEVELOPING RAINFOREST are capable of sprouting from ground level and from suckers from the roots if they are burnt. Others produce large quantities of seed which may be spread by birds or wind. This seed may lie dormant in the ground until awakened by a fire.

Called Pioneer or secondary species the role of these plants is to produce a temporary protected environment within which the slower longer-lived species can thrive.

Despite the apparent contradiction in terms, the DRY RAINFOREST occurs in somewhat lower rainfall areas and where there is a marked dry spring. Typical sites are in the upper Macleay, Clarence and Richmond valleys.

So as to conserve precious moisture in the dry season, some plants lose their leaves in spring. Others have small thick leaves as in Hoop Pine. Toothed leaves and spiny branches are common.

