

FAST GROWING RAINFOREST SPECIES

When planting a rainforest plot, the main aim is to get a canopy quickly established. This is to shade out weeds, which will smother any small plants and many larger ones for that matter. Thus, a list has been presented of rapidly growing species, which should comprise most of the trees in the initial plantings. The larger growing species should be planted out in a grid with about 3 to 4 metres between each tree. Once the canopy starts shading out the weeds, then interplant with slower growing species.

Most listed species are native to the north east NSW & south east Queensland. Species denoted by NEQ are native to north east Queensland.

Recommended Reading

Jones, David L. *Rainforest Plants of Australia*. Reed Books P/L. 1986.

Lines-Kelly, Rebecca & Currey, Anne (Eds). *Trees for the NSW North Coast*. NSW Dept of Agriculture. 1992.

Nicholson, Nan & Nicholson, Hugh. *Australian Rainforest Plants*. Vols I, II, III, IV & V. 1985-2000.

Radke, Peter & Radke, Ann. *Growing Australian Tropical Plants*. Frith & Frith Books, 1993.

Williams, J B, Harden, G J & McDonald, W JF. *Trees & Shrubs in Rainforests of NSW & South East Queensland*. Botany Department, University of New England. 1984.

Abbreviations: DRF: Dry Rainforest. STR: Subtropical Rainforest
NEQ: Native to North East Queensland.

Species	Rainforest Type	Tall (m)	Comments
Ash species			
Alphitonia species	STR, DRF	12	Fast growing pioneer species. Often will self sow, if mature trees are located in the area. Excellent in initial plantings to create a quick canopy. Hardy in full sun and tolerant of cold conditions. Grows on a wide range of soils and is frost hardy.
Koda			
Ehretia acuminata	STF, DRF	10	Flowers and fruits at an early age. Briefly deciduous in winter. Fruit avidly eaten by birds. Frost resistant.
Blue Quandong			
Elaeocarpus grandis	STR	30	Moist sites along permanent creeks & rivers or around swamps and springs.

Weeping Fig (NEQ) <i>Ficus benjamina</i>	STR	20-25	Fastest growing of the large native <i>Ficus</i> species. Warm sites with little or no frost.
Creek Sandpaper Fig <i>Ficus coronata</i>	STR, DRF	8-10	This small tree some is usually found along streams. Produces prolific quantities of fruit for wildlife.
Sandpaper Fig <i>Ficus fraseri</i>	STR, DRF	8-10	A common species that will often self regenerate. Food source for birds. It is easy to grow and plants will establish themselves quickly. Briefly deciduous in cold areas.
Queensland Maple (NEQ) <i>Flindersia brayleyana</i>	STR	20	Excellent regeneration tree, as it becomes quickly established. White scented flowers in summer. Valuable timber tree. Copes with some frost.
Cudgerie <i>Flindersia schottiana</i>	STR	50	Fast growth makes this an excellent regeneration tree. White scented flowers in summer. Valuable timber tree. Copes with mild frost.
Cheese Tree <i>Glochidion ferdinandi</i>	STR, DRF	10	Fast growing pioneer species.
Silky Oak <i>Grevillea robusta</i>	STR, DRF	20	Cabinet tree. The nectar rich, yellow flowers are a good food source for fruit bats and bird in September & October.
Guioa <i>Guioa semiglauca</i>	STR, DRF	10	Common pioneer species and will often self regenerate if adult trees are found in the area. May grow with multi trunks. It is prone to wind damage so plant in a sheltered site for protection from strong winds. The fruit is relished by birds.
Native Frangipani <i>Hymenosporum flavum</i>	STR, DRF	10	Tall slender medium sized tree. Clusters of yellow, scented flowers in spring. Strong winds may damage the branches.
Foambark Tree <i>Jagera pseudorhus</i>	STR, DRF	10	Fast growing pioneer species. Grow in an area protected from strong winds.

Brush Box Lophostemon confertus	STR, DRF	20-30	Fast Frost hardy. Tolerates a wide soils. May be grown on dry ridges and in exposed positions. Excellent border tree for rainforest plantings to protect the more sensitive trees from hot winds and burning sun.
Macaranga Macaranga species	STR, DRF	10	Fast growing pioneer species.
Kamala Mallotus species	STR, DRF	10	Fast growing pioneer species.
White Cedar Melia azederach	STR, DRF	15	Grows well in difficult sites. The perfumed, lilac-coloured flowers. Fruit is poisonous to humans but is readily eaten by birds. Frost tolerant.
Pink Euodia Melicope elleryana	STR	20	Swamp and moist sites only. Flowers and fruit attract birds. Prone to frost damage, especially when young.
Bower Vine Pandorea jasminoides Wonga Vine Pandorea pandorana	Vine	Fast	These species have attractive flowers, which bloom over several months. Plant these in house gardens, as alternatives to exotic vines, which can become a serious weed problem.
Sweet Pittosporum Pittosporum undulatum	STR, DRF	8-10	Beautiful scented white flowers in spring. Good landscape tree and excellent pioneer species in rainforest plots.
Deep Yellow Wood Rhodosphaera rhodanthema	STR, DRF	15	Very attractive tree. It is hardy to dry spells and copes well with sun. Must have well drained soils. Valuable timber tree. Sun hardy.