



# Rainforest Plants of South Stradbroke Island

South Stradbroke Island is home to an enormous range of magnificent plant species, with many of the most spectacular species contained within our subtropical rainforest. Only a small handful of the plants found within this beautiful area are outlined in the following information, however, if you would like more information please do not hesitate to contact our Environment Department or simply take a stroll through our rainforest and see for yourself.

## **Cabbage Palm** *Livistona australis*

This attractive species is the most widespread palm in Australia, being found on the eastern coast from Victoria north to Fraser Island. Its common name is derived from its edible core, which has a texture similar to cabbage. It can be seen in a variety of vegetation types including swamps and wetlands, coastal areas and moist eucalypt forest, with access to water being a necessary feature.



*Cabbage Palm (Livistona australis)*

In situations where there is competition for light, the glossy top of the palm can be up to 20m from the ground. Impressive breeding displays occur in spring and summer, with yellow to white flowers followed by small, round black fruit. The thick crown and mass of tangled dead vegetation below provides valuable habitat for native amphibians and reptiles.

Dense patches of Cabbage Palms are all but gone in South-East Queensland due to the clearing of coastal lowlands for development. This stand is therefore the most environmentally important area on site.

## **Thin Leaf Coondoo** *Pouteria chartaceus*

This beautiful rainforest tree is uncommonly seen in areas south-east of Brisbane and is a welcome component of Couran Cove Island Resort's rainforest. It's distribution ranges from Byron Bay in the south to New Guinea and Indonesia in the north. Planchonellas typically have a distinctive leaf shape and if this fails to confirm identification, the milky sap flowing from a leaf cutting is another generic feature. Like it's larger relative the Black Apple (*Pourteria australis*), this species produces an edible fruit, which may appear infrequently from July through to December.

## **Blue Lillipilli** *Syzygium oleosum*

The Blue Lillipilli is one of our more common rainforest trees and produces limited quantities of small, tangy fruit. Australia possesses over 60 different lillipillies with a variety of fruit shapes, sizes and colours, some of which are sour and astringent.

We are lucky to have the aromatic and distinctive taste of this species, and it has been used in the past for making jams and preserves. The Queensland herbarium has recognised the CCR site as having what are typically rainforest species, migrating into drier woodland situations. This is a good example to use, as it can be found popping up through the Eco-cabins area as well.

**Sandpaper Fig** *Ficus coronata*

The main distinguishing feature of this plant is its coarsely textured leaves, giving them a distinctive sandpaper feel, hence its common name. It can be found from as far south as Victoria up to Mackay in Queensland. Its soft, edible fruit provide a wonderful feast for the birds and flying foxes who distribute the tiny seeds from the air, as well as the mammals who eat the fallen stock.



*Sandpaper Fig (Ficus coronata)*

This species has a fruiting season which occurs from late spring to early summer and provides the resort with a very flavoursome bush food experience.

**Macaranga** *Macaranga tanarius*

This is a bushy and rounded shrub to small tree, reaching 6m in height. It has large heart shaped leaves, up to 20cm long and 15cm wide, the leaves have prominent red veins, and may be even larger on juvenile plants.

The flowers are small and green, with individual plants having flowers of a different sex. Flowering takes place between October and December.

It is a common species on the fringes of rainforest, at the side of roads and along bush tracks. It is fast growing and attractive to birds which eat the ripe seeds.

**Monkey Rope Vine** *Parsonia straminea*

Monkey Rope Vine or the Common Silk Pod, as it is sometimes called, can be found in lowland and highland rainforests from Narooma in New South Wales to areas of North-East Queensland. It is the most common large vine to be found in Couran Cove Island Resort's rainforest, with distinctive thick, twining bases that disappear into the tree tops.



*Monkey Rope Vine (Parsonia straminea)*

In some cases this vigour has resulted in the strangling of it's host, providing perfect examples of totem like growth encouraged in horticulture. The large green, cigar shaped seed pods can be found from July through to December. These open to reveal masses of white, wind dispersed seeds. This vine is also a food plant of the Common Crow Butterfly (*Eupolea core*), who is often seen in close proximity.

*Botanical Illustrations by Louise Sanders®*

