

Planting Vines

- Most rainforest climbers are twiners and need a structure such as lattice, fence or tree stump to climb on
- Some larger varieties can spread over trees and damage them so choose carefully to suit your site.
- Smaller plants will fill spaces and soften edges, some growing to barely a metre
- Because of the hot, mostly dry spring weather in the Northern Rivers area best results will be obtained by planting once the wet season has arrived
- Rainforest Vines need to be mulched around their root zones with leaf litter or well decayed compost.
- Once established, they can survive long dry spells. Though in very hot, dry, or windy periods an occasional good soaking will help keep them healthy.
- Do not use lime or dolomite unless the pH of your soil is less than 5, as these plants like to grow in acid soil.

The Vines described in this brochure are growing in the Gardens, and many can be found in the nearby Wilson's Park Reserve. Most are available from local nurseries – Burringbar Rainforest Nursery, Firewheel Nursery being good sources.

References

Growing Native Plants on the North Coast of NSW, by Coffs Harbour Group, Australian Plant Society, NSW, Ltd., 2006. Descriptions of plants and information about propagation for some individual species as well as general information about plant management and propagation techniques

Rainforest Climbing Plants J B Williams & G J Harden. University of New England, 1980, 2000 A line illustrated field guide to rainforest climbing plants of NSW using vegetative characters.

Native Plants intro Peter Cundall, Global Book Publishing 2004. A large comprehensive well illustrated book of Australian plants

Plants of the Forest Floor, compiled by Penny Watford and illustrated by Margaret Elliott, 2006. Very useful pen and ink illustrations and comes with a CD of photographs

Australian Rainforest Plants I-VI, by Nan and Hugh Nicholson. Beautiful photographs and descriptions of rainforest plants and includes information about their use in the home garden. Describes plants from tropical and subtropical Australia

Mangroves to Mountains, revised edition, by Glenn Liepen, Jan Glazebrook, Denise Cox and Kerry Rathie, 2008. Beautiful photographs. Most of the plants described occur in northern NSW.

Produced by

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Rainforest Vines for the Home Garden



Climbers are amazing plants that are able to grow and expand to fill the space available to them, and as such are incredibly useful in the home garden. They are mostly light loving plants and do best along rainforest edges or on boundaries of cleared land.

Vines have great variety in their methods of climbing including tendrils, twining stems, prickles, thorns and even climbing roots. Many have interesting foliage, magnificent flowers and/or fruit so are well worth growing.

These plants can cover bare patches, screen areas, add vertical elements to the garden, and give protection to other plants where needed. A light pruning after flowering is all the maintenance these plants need to look good from year to year.



Birdwing Butterfly Vine

Birdwing Butterfly Vine

Pararistolochia praevenosa

This is not a particularly showy vine, but its interest lies in the fact that it is the food plant of the larva of the Richmond Birdwing Butterfly. It is a large, woody vine, with dull, dark green leaves and small almost insignificant flowers with a slightly unpleasant smell. It can be propagated by cuttings. Seeds take a little time to germinate

Twining Guinea Flower

Hibbertia scandens

This plant naturally occurs on the margins of rainforests and has dark glossy green leaves which are silky-hairy underneath. The flowers are large (3-6cm diameter), yellow and occur throughout the year, but mostly in spring and summer. It flowers best in full sun, but will thrive in part shade. Propagated by cuttings.

Common Silkpod

Parsonia straminea

This vine grows naturally in the Gardens. It is a moderately vigorous climber with glossy leaves

up to 12 cm. The small perfumed flowers are yellow. The fruit is very obvious – long thick pods which grow up to 20cm and contain silky seeds. Prefers shady, well watered areas and is good for fence or trellis.

Native Hoya or Australian Wax Plant

Hoya australis

A succulent scrambler with thick, fleshy leaves, which bears circular clusters of long-lasting, waxy, pink or white perfumed flowers. It flowers each year on the same short stalk close to the stem, and climbs by clinging with small roots on the stem. Once established it grows well in sun or shade, and can be grown indoors, where it needs some form of trellis. Propagate by cuttings.

Native Wisteria

Callerya megasperma

This is a strong woody vine, needing sturdy supports and space. It is evergreen with large glossy green leaves with leaflets and the purple pea flowers are in large bunches in the spring. The seed pods are large pea pods with round, orange hard-coated seeds. Propagate by seed.

Native Yam

Discoraea transversa

The native Yam grows rapidly when given enough water and nutrients. It is hardy, tolerating full sun or deep shade and can regrow from just a little piece of root. Seeds germinate easily. The most obvious part of this plant is the shiny pink red or white fruit. It is three lobed and appears in summer or autumn, but remains on the vine well into the dry season, by then dry and papery. The root is edible raw – differentiating it from other yams which need cooking.

Scrambling Lily

Geitenoplesium cymosum

A fine, wiry climber with stiff, shiny green leaves and clusters of white (occasionally pale pink) flowers at the ends of the branches. The fruit is a black fleshy berry with hard black seeds. Propagate from seeds, but this may be patchy.

Wombat Berry

Eustrephus latifolius

A fine wiry vine with narrow glossy green leaves, small pink to white flowers amongst the leaves and yellow to orange fruits which split open to reveal black seeds in white flesh. In full sun it can tangle around and form a discreet clump. Grow from seed.

Wonga Vine

Pandorea pandorana

A large climber, with deep green opposite leaves with leaflets, and clusters of tubular flowers with white petals and coloured throats. There are many cultivars available, and it will grow in full sun or part shade. Can be propagated by cuttings or seed.

Zig Zag Vine

Melodorum leichhardtii

This woody vine with its zig zag stems and firm slightly glossy leaves is easy to grow, however initial growth can be slow. Orange/brown flowers are perfumed and the orange fruit, which are on the vine in late summer can be visible for many months. This vine can be a very beautiful addition to the garden. It can be pruned to shrub size in a small garden. Grows from seed but it is very slow to germinate