



TERRAIN
NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

FORREST BEACH RAINFOREST RESERVE

Littoral Rainforest

Littoral Rainforest is rainforest that grows close to the sea. On the east coast of Australia, it is considered a critically endangered ecosystem.

Supported by the Australian Government, Terrain NRM is working with partners to conserve outstanding Littoral Rainforests. This includes supporting weed management by Hinchinbrook Shire Council at Forrest Beach.

Forrest Beach

Forrest Beach has the largest area of Littoral Rainforest in Hinchinbrook Shire. Most of it is found in a beachfront Council Reserve.

It is a great example of Littoral Rainforest in the drier southern Wet Tropics region. The forest is in good condition, though weeds, vehicle tracks and old campsites are present. Littoral Rainforest in good condition near a town is rare, which makes protecting it even more important.

The reserve provides habitat for wildlife, a scenic natural area and a protective buffer against erosion for the Forrest Beach community.



Natural values

The Littoral Rainforest at Forrest Beach grows entirely on sand.

Close to the beach, the Littoral Rainforest grows in low, wind-sheared thickets surrounded by open areas of native grasses and herbs.

Further inland, the Littoral Rainforest forms a tall extensive forest. A variety of big rainforest trees are present in the landward area. There are no eucalypts, which suggests it has been rainforest for a long time.

The most distinctive tree is White Apple (*Syzygium forte*) which produces white apple-like fruit in summer, sought by cassowaries. The large rainforest trees feature epiphytes.

The more inland and elevated areas are more resilient to coastal erosion, storm surges and sea level rise, and provide safe refuges for wildlife during extreme events.

On the western edge, a Melaleuca wetland acts as a natural firebreak. Fire damages many rainforest species.



Weeds

The leafy canopy of the rainforest makes it hard for most weeds to enter and establish. However, they can still invade disturbed areas and the forest edges.

Many of the weeds are garden escapees including Agave, Coral vine, Glory lily, Mother in laws tongue, Mother of millions, Periwinkle and Yellow bells. These weeds often establish via dumped garden waste.

Guinea grass seeds are dispersed by wind and on vehicle tyres. Some weeds are washed up on the dunes during extreme events, e.g. Coconut, Prickly pear and Singapore daisy. Wildlife eat and disperse some weed seeds, e.g. Lantana. Lantana and Guinea grass promote damaging fire.

Weeds that can establish within the Littoral Rainforest and out-compete native trees are a threat, for example Cashew (*Anacardium occidentale*). In the 1960s, pioneering farmers planted cashew trees in the Forrest Lane area. Possibly the cashew fruit has been eaten by pigs, bats or cassowary and spread in droppings into the Littoral Rainforest. Cashew escaping cultivation and establishing in nearby forest has also occurred in the Torres Strait. (Please avoid touching cashew plants including fruits as they may be toxic. Tar tree is a local native relative that is also toxic.)



How you can help

- Please dispose of garden waste responsibly at the nearest waste facility. Dumping garden waste or weeds in bushland and coastal areas is illegal and may result in fines.
- Please help protect our native vegetation by staying on designated tracks and avoiding off-trail access.
- Fires, camping and unauthorised vehicles are not permitted in the reserve.

Further information:

- Hinchinbrook Shire Council:
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- Terrain NRM:
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