



Australia's rainforests - a global treasure

Australia is one of the few places in the developed world where rainforests are available for public enjoyment, global conservation and research.

Worldwide Rainforest facts:

- *Rainforests only cover 6% of the Earth's surface., this is home to 50% of all the animal and plant species on Earth and provide us with many foods, raw materials and medicines.*
- *Rainforests absorb large amounts of carbon dioxide.*
- *Every year about 20 million hectares of rainforest is destroyed worldwide. They are logged for timber and cleared to plant crops and graze cattle.*

Australia's Rainforests

- *The Australasian region separated from the southern part of Gondwanaland around the same time as South America.*
- *Nearly 700 of the plant species in these lush rainforest ecosystems are only found in Australia, and over 400 of these are only found in the rainforest pockets of north Queensland.*
- *Australasia evolved its own distinctive flora from the groups of plants that had managed to reach there.*
- *Moist tropical environments were not present in the Australasian region at the time that it split off from the other continents, but arose afterwards during the Tertiary period as it moved north towards the equator.*
- *Australia has many different types of rainforest including cool temperate, warm temperate, dry, subtropical and tropical rainforests.*

Wet Tropics - World Heritage Area

Australia's Wet Tropics region contains the oldest continually surviving tropical rainforest in the entire world. The Wet Tropics is a national treasure, it;

- *is a living laboratory for scientific research into future cures for disease / chronic illnesses.*
- *is home to an unusually high number of animals and plants that are found nowhere else in the world.*
- *contains surviving Gondwanan vegetation, providing us with information on the origins and evolution of the plant life we see in the world today.*
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Rainforest Threats

Over three-quarters of Australia's rainforests have been destroyed since European settlement. Only a series of fragmented pockets across northern Australia and down the east coast to Tasmania are left. While some of these areas are threatened, many of them are protected in state forests, national parks or World Heritage reserves.

Australian Rainforest Foundation actions:

The Australian Rainforest Foundation wants all Australians to own and protect our rainforests.

To find our more go to www.arf.net.au