

Introduction video script

Uncle and Aunty are coming to visit next week. They expect me to tell them all about our tropical rainforest. But what am I going to say? What do I know about the tropical rainforest of north Queensland?

Well, I know its found near the coast between Cooktown and Townsville. I know it's very green, its very wet, and its very special. But why is it here? I looked up the internet and found tropical rainforests are only found between the Tropic of Capricorn and the Tropic of Cancer. This is where the sun shines on the earth the strongest.

Tropical rainforests also need to be wet **all year round**, and guess what - this is the wettest place in Australia. I better remind Aunty to bring her umbrella.

So what are the typical signs that you're in a tropical rainforest? And will I be able to recognise them to show my uncle and aunty? If I imagine I'm in a rainforest, this is what I see: It's shady and cool. There are lots of different plants apart from trees - like ferns, orchids, palms and vines.

Many of them have leaves with drip tips to funnel off all the rain.

Looking up, I can see a canopy of branches and leaves as high as a six-storey building. I can't even see the tops of some trees – they're poking out above the canopy.

I can see the flash of colourful birds and hear them calling. In the branches there are tons of epiphytes - birds nest ferns, elkhorns and orchids. Vines are climbing up trees to reach the sunshine. Some use hooks, some climb, and some wrap. A strangler fig is sending roots down to the forest floor, strangling its host tree.

I bet Uncle and Auntie won't ever have seen flowers and fruit coming from tree trunks before. People used to think they were another plant that was attacking the tree.

In the understorey there's palms, ferns and young trees growing among the buttresses of big trees. The ground is covered with heaps of dead leaves, logs, moss and fungus. Little animals scurry in the leaf litter.

I guess I know more than I thought - I could become a tour guide – at least for Uncle and Auntie!