

Getting There

The Drummer Rainforest Walk lies just off the Princes Highway, 11km east of Cann River (85km east of Orbost). Access to the walk is clearly signposted off the Princes Hwy. Be aware of log trucks as they also use Drummer road.

Flora and Fauna

We are privileged to see here a remnant of a forest type that was once widespread. Two hundred million years ago, when the climate was much wetter and warmer, dinosaurs roamed through flourishing rainforests. As the climate became cooler and drier, fire became a feature of the landscape. Rainforests became restricted to moist sheltered gullies where fire was inhibited.

Only a small percentage of Australia's original rainforest areas remain. The rainforest environment supports a diverse variety of flora and fauna, including a significant number of plant species that co-exist with many Australian mammals and birds in rainforest ecosystems.

You will be exploring a warm temperate rainforest. In Victoria, warm temperate rainforest is confined to coastal river valleys and associated gully systems from Wilsons Promontory eastwards.

Attractions

Picnic area

A picnic area, free gas BBQ and toilet facility is available at the car park.

Walking track

Drummer rainforest Walk

Skill Level: Basic Fitness Level: Low
1 km return (45 mins)

The walk is 1km in length and is a relaxing stroll through warm temperate rainforest adjacent to the Thurra River. It takes about 45 minutes to complete the full circuit, although it is easy to lose track of time as you sit and watch the river flow or just listen to the birds chirping in the trees.

We hope this walk and leaflet will help you appreciate the immense beauty, diversity and value of rainforests and discover how all living parts of rainforest depend on each other for survival. The Drummer Rainforest Walk has been developed so that people can gain a better understanding and appreciation of this diminishing and precious resource.

Drummer Rainforest Walk Points of Interest

1. The Grey Gum Community

Mountain Grey Gum (*Eucalyptus cypellocarpa*) is found scattered throughout the rainforest. This species is found in dry and wet eucalypt forest as well as the transitional zone where the rainforest merges with drier eucalypt forest types. The Grey Gum here has been scarred by the Ash Wednesday fires in 1983. The hollow that has been produced provides shelter for possums, birds, bats, insects and other fauna.

2. Dark and Damp – under the canopy

The canopy in a rainforest is very dense. Unlike eucalypts, rainforest trees hold their dark green leaves horizontally to catch the sunlight; thus very little light reaches the forest floor. This provides excellent conditions for shade loving ferns, mosses, lichens and liverworts. Vines climb towards the precious sunlight.

3. Giant Kanooka

This tree is estimated to be over 300 years old. The flaking bark on the Kanooka (Water Gum) provides shelter for insects, which are preyed upon by Huntsman spiders at night. Watch and listen for the White-Throated Tree-Creeper and its shrill piping call “peep...peep, peep”.

4. Blackwood a friend of the rainforest

This tall, rough barked tree is a Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*). Blackwoods are often found in and near rainforest and play a vital role in the recovery of rainforest after fire. Their hard, black seeds are stored in the ground and germinate readily after fire. Blackwoods provide the necessary shelter for rainforest trees to germinate.

5. Carnivorous Cockatoos

As you walk on from here you may notice some of the Lilly Pilly have scars on their trunks. This is where Yellow tailed Black Cockatoos have chewed into the wood in search of grubs. These supplement their diet of seeds from Banksias, Wattles, She-Oaks and Eucalypts. This magnificent bird is the largest of Australia's cockatoos and is often first detected by its striking call “ree-ah! ree-ah!!

6. The Middle Layer

There are a number of vines striving to reach the light at the top of the canopy. In late spring you may detect the heavy perfume of the White Milk Vine flowers. This is to attract moths and butterflies, which feed on the nectar and assist in pollination of the flowers. Like many rainforest plants, these vines produce fleshy fruits which are a food

source for the many types of fauna which inhabit the rainforest.

7. Hazel Pomaderris

Dwelling on the fringe of the rainforests, these shrubs are Hazel Pomaderris. They play a vital role by helping to break the drying wind on the rainforest edge. Notice how tattered the leaves look. You may notice some small birds like the Brown Thornbill flitting through the foliage.

8. Dragons in the Rainforest

Approaching the next footbridge, walk slowly and look carefully. Many small creatures are extremely well camouflaged in the streamside vegetation. Gippsland Water Dragons lie perfectly still on logs or low branches near the water. They prey on fish, frogs and small mammals. At the slightest hint of danger, they disappear with a splash into the water.

9. The Recycling Depot

When walking in the rainforest, not only should you look up and admire the beauty of the trees and flora, but also look down at the forest floor. Nutrients are recycled quickly in the rainforest. The leaf litter layer is like a store where everything is returned after use for recycling. Bacteria, fungi, native snails and worms break down the dead plant and animal material and return it to the soil to begin the life cycle of another plant. Lyrebirds and Eastern Whipbirds help too. As they scratch through the leaf litter searching for food, they turn the litter layer over and aerate it, thus assisting in the composting process.

10. Rainforest Network

Everything in the rainforest is connected and nothing is wasted. Insects eat the plants, they, in turn, are eaten by small birds and animals, with larger fauna preying on these smaller species. Other creatures and insects help break down droppings and any remaining carcasses. Their nutrients are returned to the soil to begin the whole life cycle once more. If any part of the cycle is disrupted, it will affect the whole system.



Traditional Custodians

Gippsland is the traditional home of the Gunai/Kurnai people. The land management of the Gunai/Kurnai over thousands of years helped shape the forest that we see in East Gippsland today. Many Gunai/Kurnai continue to live in the region and maintain their close links to country.

The area around Cann River and Mallacoota was the country of the Bidawal, who had close relations and similarities with the Gunai/ Kurnai and Monaro people.

For more information

The Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) is responsible for managing Victoria's State Forest. For further information contact the Department of Sustainability and Environment office at Cann River (☎ 03 5158 2100) or DSE's Customer Service Centre on ☎ 136 186.

Visit DSE's website

<http://www.dse.vic.gov.au> then select "Forestry".

The Drummer State Forest is managed for a wide range of uses including catchment protection, timber production, recreation and conservation. If you are interested in how State Forests are managed, the current East Gippsland Forest Management Plan can be viewed on the Department's website on the Internet at".

<http://www.dse.vic.gov.au>

then select "Forestry", then select "Publications

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