

A Guide to Crops for the Bellinger Valley and their Use in a Food Forest

By Nick Radford. This is a guide only. All care but no responsibility is taken by the author.

Climate types

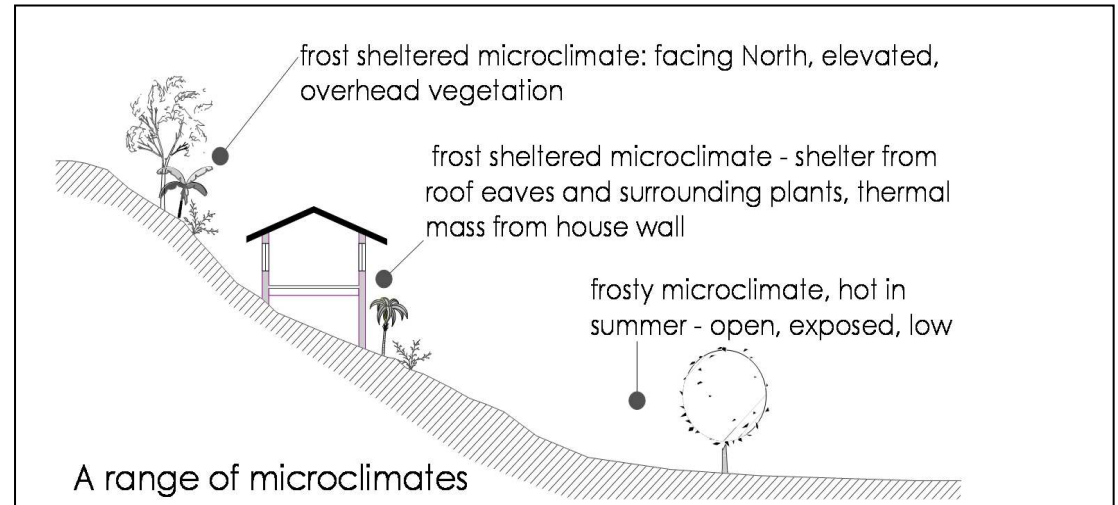
Key:

No frost – Urunga, Mylestom, elevated sites in Raleigh, Repton, maybe Fernmount. Sheltered microclimates surrounded by vegetation taller than the plant, and underneath a protective canopy. Alternatively, protected by a built environment of walls, courtyard, perhaps a roof eave. Sheltered frost free microclimates can occur in Bellingen town and some slopes of Thora, Glennifer, Kalang.

Light frost - Light covering of ice on leaves on average a couple of times a year. Some lawn grasses go purple but don't die. Open, low lying areas of Repton, Raleigh. Elevated parts of Bellingen town and elevated, sheltered parts of Thora, Kalang, Glennifer.

Medium frost – More regular and harder frosts. Open areas, perhaps low lying, in Bellingen, Thora, Glennifer, Kalang.

Heavy frost occurs in Dorrigo and is beyond the scope of this guide.



Seed reliability

Grafted plants are expensive, and have accurate reproduction of high quality parentage. They are carefully spaced and cared for. Seedlings are cheap, relatively tough and may have quality fruit depending on the species and seed source. Food forests need a lot of plants and even at a small scale can only be economically produced with DIY propagation.

Key:

Good – easy to propagate from seed and the progeny are similar to the parent tree.

Fair – easy to propagate. There is significant variability in the offspring, but some perform.

Poor – seed grown plants are unreliable and grafting is required for accurate transmission of characteristics.

Plant Location

A conventional **orchard** style arrangement is a grid of similar sized plants, without crowns touching and a mown understorey below.

A **food forest** is a collection of edible or useful plants arranged in a way that mimics the structure of a forest, although not as tall. Some of the components include umbrella shaped canopy trees, understorey trees & shrubs, edge shrubs & clumping grasses, herbs & groundcovers and vines grown over a low edge.

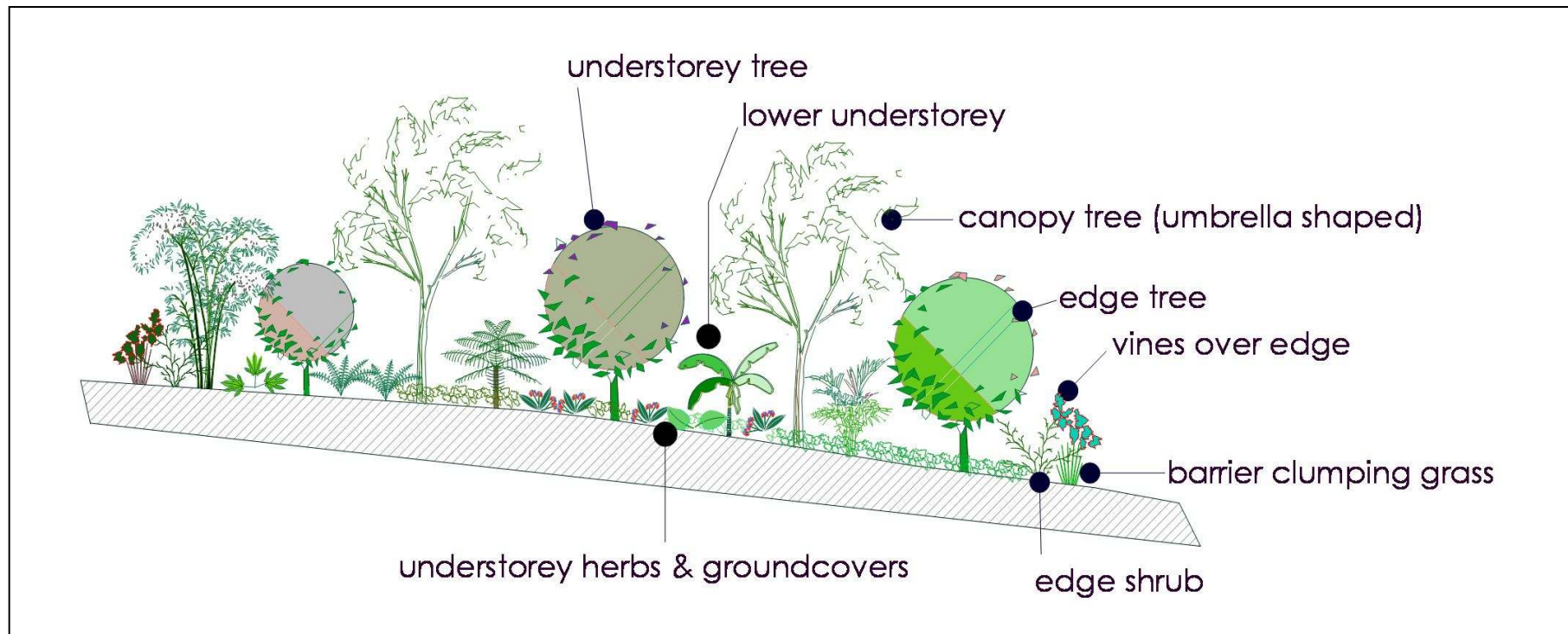
Key:

Umbrella – Can be grown in an orchard arrangement or in a food forest as an umbrella shaped canopy that can be used to shelter more tender or smaller plants below. Tolerate or prefer humidity.

Edge – Require good exposure to sun & ventilation for best cropping or prone to diseases of humidity. Grow in an orchard arrangement, isolated open locations or on the sun facing edge of a food forest.




Understorey – Prefer or tolerate sheltered, partly shaded locations, such as in the core of a food forest or the centre of an orchard.




Some components of a food forest








Fruits & Nuts




Last updated: December 2015




Name	size	frost	location	seed	harvest
Acerola Cherry 	3x 3m	light	Edge, understorey	good	Spring, summer
	Or Barbados Cherry. Can provide useful fruit in spring when there isn't a lot else available. Fruits are high in vitamin C and taste OK in good condition. Sometimes they get a bit insect damaged.				
Apple	4x 3m	medium	edge	poor	summer
	Tropical varieties can be grown in the cooler parts of the valley. Prone to pests, dislike humidity. High yields can be gained by individually bagging fruit with insect barrier nets.				
Avocado 	6-10x 4-8. Seedlings to 15m	Light - medium	umbrella	fair	Long season depending on varieties.
	Grows and crops well on well drained soils. In this area, they are the red subsoils found in Bellinghen town and parts of Thora & Glennifer. Also grow on sand with plenty of added compost in Mylestom. Unfortunately, they are unlikely to survive to maturity on the other soils, but it doesn't cost anything to try some seedlings.				
Banana	3x2 cavendish 6x 4 lady finger	None - light	understorey	Suckers only	Warm months
	Need a permit from dept Ag., a practice widely disregarded by the general public. Prop bearing stems and bag fruit. Good performer especially on heavier soils. Light frost damages the plant but it usually survives.				
Black Sapote 	4-8x 3-6	light	Understorey, umbrella	fair	Late winter
	Erratic performer here, some heavy croppers and others grow a good sized tree with little fruit. Pollination could be an issue, which could be overcome by growing multiple trees. Some people like the fruit and others don't. Don't need netting – fruit can be picked green and can take 2 weeks to soften.				




Blueberry 	1-2 x 0.5- 1.5	medium	Edge, understorey	fair	Long season depending on varieties.
<p>Easy to grow in the well drained but moisture retaining red subsoils of Bellingen town and parts of Thora & Glennifer. Elsewhere, are prone to die in the wet season from Phytopthera (a soil fungus). They can be grown in large pots with special soil mixes (acid, high organic matter, some red subsoil) - make sure the bottom of the pot doesnt contact wet natural soil. Need plenty of water to crop well and require bird netting.</p>					
Boysenberry	vine	med	edge	Divisions easy	summer
<p>Tasty. Needs a trellis and net. It's thorny so this exercise needs some thought.</p>					
Brazil Cherry 	3 x 2	light	Edge, understorey	good	Summer, autumn
<p>Easy to grow, bitter unless very ripe. Need bird netting. Birds eat the best fruit and spread the seed, where it can become a minor weed.</p>					
Bunya Pine	20x 15	med	umbrella	good	summer
<p>Every few years provide good nuts. The trees take a long time to crop and eventually become huge. The falling cones could be fatal if they landed on someone. Male and female trees are needed for pollination - there are a few trees around the district, so single female plants often crop.</p>					
Carambola 	6x 4	light	edge	fair	winter
<p>Needs shelter and plenty of heat to fully develop fruit flavour. Can crop heavily. Rather plain taste.</p>					
Carob	8 x 8	medium	open	good	autumn
<p>Dislike humidity and should be grown isolated or well spaced from other plants.</p>					




Ceylon Hill Gooseberry 	2x 2	Light - med	edge	good	
<p>Rhodomyrtus tomentosa .Small, tasty fruit. Fairly tough plant. Potentially weedy – keep an eye out.</p>					
Cherimoya 	6 x 5	light	understorey	Poor- fair	winter
<p>Superb fruit if all goes well. Sometimes low yields result from insufficient pollination. Grow a number of plants and if that fails, hand pollinate. Death from root rot can occur in wet soils.</p>					
Citrus 	4 x 4	medium	edge	poor	winter
<p>Oranges, lemons, limes, mandarins all perform well here. Tropical or Mexican lime is very cold sensitive and should be grown as an understorey plant. Grapefruit and lemonade can lack the heat required to sufficiently sweeten, and need hot microclimates. Native finger lime is semi reliable and better grown as an understorey plant. Citrus are heavy feeders that benefit from compost or a grey water trench.</p>					
Coffee 	4 x 2.5	light	understorey	good	spring
<p>Easy to grow in semi shade but time consuming to process. A minor weed.</p>					
Custard Apple	6 x 5	light	understorey	poor	winter
<p>Superb fruit if all goes well. Sometimes low yields result from insufficient pollination. Grow a number of plants and if that fails, hand pollinate. Death from root rot can occur in wet soils.</p>					





Davidson Plum 	2 varieties 6x 2m, 12 x 3m	light	understorey	good	Early summer
Attractive, compact bush tucker. Grows well in semi shade. Extremely bitter – needs heaps of sugar in jam.					
Dragon fruit 	Climber to 25m	light	Edge, understorey	Cuttings easy	summer
It will climb to the top of whatever tree supports it. I've seen one reach the top of its 25m tall host. Train against a stump or post. Needs netting.					
Feijoa 	4 x 4m	medium	edge	fair	Early summer
Dislikes humidity. Can be fruit fly prone. Otherwise grows well and quite tough, resistant to coastal wind. You can eat the petals – they're sweet.					
Fig 	4x 4m	medium	edge	Cuttings easy	summer
Grow well. They crop in the wet season and after prolonged rain, the fruit can split and taste watery. With enough summer sun they are delicious. Need bird net.					
Grape	climber	medium	edge	Cuttings easy	summer
Locally adapted varieties are vigorous. Need plenty of summer heat to ripen, and bird net.					




Grumichama 	4 x 3m	light	understorey	good	spring
<p>Good performer in heavier soils. The fruit is OK, a bit like a cherry.</p>					
Guava	3-4 x 2-3	light	Edge, understorey	good	summer
<p>There are a range of varieties, colours and sizes. Easy to grow, tough plants. Plants grow in shade but some varieties have less flavour than in full sun. Need netting. Prone to fruit fly. A minor weed.</p>					
Moringa	10x 4m	None - light	umbrella	good	
<p>Most parts of the plant are edible. Fast growing shelter. I can't get one to survive a season, but Nell at Bellingen can.</p>					
Ice Cream bean 	10x 10	light	umbrella	good	Late summer
<p>Useful, fast growing shelter tree with decent tasting fruit. Used in tropical agroforestry. One use is in alley cropping. On fragile tropical slopes, alternating rows of crop and mulch plant are grown on contour. Ice Cream Bean is the sacrificial source of nitrogen fixing mulch, regularly slashed and fed to the crop. It is also used for it's strongly umbrella shaped habit to shelter coffee and cocoa, which need shade in the tropics. Around here, if allowed to grow it soon becomes too big to harvest the fruit - the bats & rats get it all and spread the seed, so it is a minor weed.</p>					
Jaboticaba 	4x 2.5	light	understorey	good	Spring, summer
<p>Slow growing. After about 10 years gives at least 2 crops/ year of tasty fruit, a bit like a grape. Needs bird net and good soil or added compost. Tolerates fruit fly and wet soils. Can be grown near grey water trenches.</p>					

Jakfruit	10x 6	none	umbrella	good	
<p>Too tropical for most locations, but has fruited at Bundagen and Coffs Harbour. The fruit needs some skill to cut up. The seeds are edible.</p>					
Kiwifruit	vine	medium	edge	Cuttings easy	winter
<p>Needs a strong trellis to manage easily. Also needs male & female plants for pollination. Some plants grow vigorously and have good flavoured crops. Other crops can be a bit hard or fermented.</p>					
Loquat	7x 5	med	edge	good	Winter- spring
<p>Tough plant can be grown anywhere and crops reliably. Birds spread the seed and it is a weed. Prone to fruit fly.</p>					
Longan 	6x 4m	light	Umbrella, understorey	poor	summer
<p>Fairly easy to grow here. More regular cropping, just after Lychee. Taste resembles Lychee but not as good.</p>					
Lychee 	6x 4m	light	Umbrella, understorey	poor	summer
<p>Lychees tend to have variable cropping years. In good years they can crop well and taste good. They like plenty of soil moisture for full texture & sweetness and need bird netting.</p>					
Olive 	8x 4	med	edge	poor	summer
<p>Tough plant. Easily grown although it likes full sun and ventilation. The risk of botulism has scared most amateurs away from processing olives.</p>					

<p>Mango</p> 	<p>5x4 (grafted) 10x 8 + (seedling)</p>	<p>light</p>	<p>Open edge</p>	<p>Good (Kensington) fair (others)</p>	<p>summer</p>
<p>Grow well. Spring rain & humidity causes a fungus to kill the flowers and the crop to fail. Apart from frost, ventilation is the limiting factor to success. Plants will not crop where the canopy touches other vegetation. Most plants here are Kensington or Common seedlings, which have poor disease resistance. Other varieties (Florigon, Nam Doc Mai, Tommy Atkins) might give light crops in the same conditions. They are too big to net but in a good year, pick mangos as the skin starts lightening (and the bats start picking at them) and ripen in a well ventilated place. Good ventilation and hygiene is required here or the fungus can spoil the fruit.</p>					
<p>Mulberry</p>	<p>10x 8</p>	<p>medium</p>	<p>umbrella</p>	<p>good</p>	<p>spring</p>
<p>Tough plant, one of few fruit trees to give big, reliable crops in early spring. For this reason it is very attractive to birds, which spread the seed and is a weed problem, especially on Bellingen Island. It is a big tree, difficult to net.</p>					
<p>Macadamia</p> 	<p>8x 6m Seedlings 15m</p>	<p>Light- medium</p>	<p>umbrella</p>	<p>Fair- good</p>	<p>Long season</p>
<p>Good performer, a bit slow but long lived. Cockatoos and rats love the nuts, which need a special nutcracking device.</p>					
<p>Malabar Chestnut</p> 	<p>6x 4m</p>	<p>light</p>	<p>umbrella</p>	<p>good</p>	<p>autumn</p>
<p>Pachira insignis or Saba Nut. Nice looking tree. The nuts are OK. They sprout easily under the tree but don't appear to spread as a weed. A good canopy in a food forest offering protection without over dominating.</p>					

Peanut Tree 	10x 5m	med	umbrella	good	autumn
<p>Bushtucker tree, <i>Sterculia quadrifida</i>. Useful food forest canopy with a neat umbrella shape. The seeds are tasty but small - most people wouldn't go to the effort of harvesting but good for chickens.</p>					
Paw paw/ papaya	4x 2	none	understorey	good	Warm months
<p>Cold sensitive, need heat to sweeten. Some isolated plants don't set fruit because they are male or female only. The red varieties perform better here than yellow. Easy to fit in sheltered spaces.</p>					
Passionfruit 	vine	light	edge	good	Warm months
<p>Plants are vigorous but commonly die from a virus in wet soil. A bit weedy, spread by possums, bats and rats. The weedy plants often outperform the carefully planted specimens and can be very tasty. There are many varieties – purple, black (is purple coloured but bigger and sweeter than the purple passionfruit), banana, giant granadilla.</p>					
Pecan	15x 9	med	umbrella		autumn
<p>Pecans grow well on red subsoils and river flats around Bellingen and Thora. They commonly fail on other soils and closer to the coast. Cockatoos love the nuts.</p>					
Peach	5x 3	med	edge	poor	spring
<p>Adapted varieties grow well here but the fruit is prone to disease and fruit fly.</p>					
Persimmon	5x 3	med	canopy		autumn
<p>Fairly tough and crops reliably here.</p>					
Pineapple 	0.5x 0.5	light	Understorey, edge	Top cuttings	any time
<p>Pineapples are easily propagated by cutting the leaves and a bit of attached flesh off the top of a fruit. Allow to dry (a few weeks) and plant. They grow easily here. The fruit need plenty of summer heat to sweeten. If they ripen at other times of the year, the flavour is poor and the centre can be black.</p>					


Pomegranate 	3x 3m	med	edge		summer
<p>Tough & easily grown. Like figs, the fruit ripen in the wet season and can split and become insipid after too much rain. With plenty of sunlight and ventilation the fruit are better.</p>					
Rollinia	4x 3m	none	understorey	good	autumn
<p>Less successful here than other custard apple relatives, but some people get a crop.</p>					
Strawberry 	Ground cover	light	understorey	Divisions easy	Warm months
<p>Delicious when grown well at home - much better than bought fruit. Performance wanes after a few years and they should be redivided. They need semi shade, good soil & moisture, and netting. Ideal for a netted berry tunnel floor.</p>					
Tamarillo 	3x 1m	light	understorey	good	autumn
<p>Attractive, compact plant easily grown. I don't like the fruit – a bit like a slightly astringent tomato. Some people like them.</p>					
Wax Jambu 	8x 5	light	umbrella	good	summer
<p>Syzygium jambos. Relative of Lilly Pilly. Grows well and looks good. The fruit are large but rather tasteless, a bit like a lilly pilly.</p>					




<p>White sapote</p> 	8x 6	light- med	canopy	good	summer
<p>Grows well. Can have problems setting fruit – try multiple trees for pollination.</p>					
<p>Yellow Jaboticaba</p> 	4x 4	none	understorey	good	spring
<p>Nice looking plant. The fruit are nice enough although the flesh is only thin.</p>					
<p>Yellow Mangosteen</p> 	6x 3	none	understorey	good	spring
<p>Beautiful looking plant. Slow growing here. The fruit are said to be very sour, but the ones I ate were OK, just a bit insipid. They certainly don't taste anything like the famous purple mangosteen.</p>					




Groundcovers & Mulch Plants and their use in Food Forests




These plants are useful in any garden for food, mulch or to shelter young & sensitive fruit trees. They are perennial, which means they live at least 3 years. Much of what is said here about these plants can be applied to many garden types, but their role in food forests is explained. Grass is the enemy of a forest. To compete with it, you need shade, edge barriers, vigorous ground covers and a lot of plants.




Groundcovers & Mulch Plants


Name	size	frost	location	propagation	harvest
Aloe Vera	30cm spreading	light	Edge, understorey	division	any time
	Not so vigorous but worth finding a spot for. Good for sunburn. Peel the skin off younger leaves, including the yellow flesh just under the skin. Squeeze the white flesh and apply the gel. There are many aloe relatives, only get the aloe vera type.				
Asparagus	60cm	medium	edge	seed, division	spring
	Most easily grown in a mulched bed behind the protective front edge of a food forest, but with some solar access. They like a fair bit of water.				
Bamboo (clumping) 	many species 3-20m high	none- medium	shaded edges understorey	division seed (rare)	autumn
	Bamboo is a grass. Depending on species, grass can be running and invasive, or clumping and restricted, and the same applies to bamboo. There are many species of clumping bamboo grown in the area. Different species have different properties of size, timber & edible shoots. All provide high quality mulch from leaves & small stems. Even the clumpers are very competitive and must be placed with care. The smaller species are good for mulch, stakes, erosion control and can be compatible with smaller food forests. The medium- large species are better at the edges of tall food forests.				
Capsicum	80cm	none	understorey herb	seed	summer, autumn
	If protected from frost, is a short lived perennial, and a good understorey herb. Fruits in shade.				

Cassava 	2x 2m	light	edge, understory	root pieces, stems	autumn
<p>Cassava is a staple root crop in many tropical countries and a home grown alternative to rice or wheat. It's tough and fast growing. Rats and bandicoots love them, although their scratching can alert you that the roots may be ready. Immature roots are small and milky.</p>					
Ceylon Spinach (Malabar Spinach) 	vine	light	edge understorey	seed	warm months
<p>This is an annual, but can compete in a vigorous food forest environment and self seeds in some gardens without becoming a weed. It produces an abundant amount of high quality stir fry greens. Grow in the canopy of 2m shrubs at the edge or understorey of a food forest.</p>					
Cherry tomato	spreading	light	understorey, edge	seed	Warm months
<p>These self seed without being a weed. Grow around the edge of a food forest and allow them to regenerate in gaps. Other tomatoes are much less robust in this area. The common cherry tomato is about 2.5cm diameter. You may get success as a self seeding food forest tomato with other varieties 4cm diameter.</p>					
Chives Garlic chives	30cm	light	Understorey	division	all year
<p>Not so vigorous but a useful perennial.</p>					
Cocoyam 	1.5x 1.5m spreading	light	understorey	division	autumn
<p>Cocoyam is a giant taro relative that can be grown in the understorey or shaded edge. Sometimes the plant can grow a lot of leaf or slowly spread, rather than devote energy to large roots. This is less likely if it is contained by other plants or an edge. Dies down in winter.</p>					

Comfrey 	30cm spreading	light	groundcover	division, root pieces	warm months
<p>Shade tolerant ground cover under fruit trees. Self mulching - they have deep roots which draw up nutrient and then the leaves die back in winter. It becomes invasive where it is dug. The broken roots form new plants next to the old ones. If this process is repeated over the years, the comfrey will spread.</p>					
Ginger	30cm	light	groundcover	root pieces	autumn
<p>Apart from wet soils which rot the plant, this can be left in the ground as a perennial. Only the most recent seasons roots will be tender.</p>					
Lemongrass	1.5x 1.2m	light	edge, understorey	division	any time
<p>Used a mulch plant or edge barrier. In early food forests, scatter the plants around and cut periodically for mulch. As the food forest matures, they will lose vigour in the shade. Take care with the siting of lemongrass as it is fairly flammable, especially if untended.</p>					
Lomandra 	0.8- 1.5x 0.6- 1.5	medium	edge, groundcover	seed, division	any time
<p>Use for mulch as for lemongrass. It is less flammable but harder to slash. Some fine leaved varieties (e.g. Little Pal) are easier to use around vegie gardens because they are a fine mulch with less spiky flower heads.</p>					
Native Groundcovers 	spreading	medium	groundcover	self sown	n/a
<p>As the food forest develops, shade increases and native groundcovers will move in. Some are useful for their environmental services (suppressing weeds & grass, recycling nutrient, building soil) without taking much away from the crops they support. It's worthwhile recognising them and managing them.</p> <p>Australian Basket Grass (<i>Oplismenus aemulus</i>) is an early adapter to shade. It isn't competitive like pasture grass and can be tolerated under fruit trees.</p>					

	<p>Native violet migrates into deeper shade. The flowers are nice and it binds mulch without being over competitive below fruit trees.</p>				
<p>Spring Onion (shallots)</p>	0.4m	light	groundcover	seed	warm months
<p>Perennial onion will last a few years in a sheltered position. Cut the leaves or side bulbs.</p>					
<p>Pigeon Pea</p> 	2.5x 2m	light	edge	seed	warm months
<p>Important permaculture plant surviving for 6 -10 years. Tough, fast growing shelter plant for edges and young fruit trees. Leguminous, it converts Nitrogen from the air into the soil. The thin branches can be cut (a machete is quick) for mulch. The canopy is light and reachable, making it a good trellis for training vines and a good canopy for summer vegies. The seeds are a lentil with 25% protein. They are very attractive to king parrots, but the birds provide free manure which is useful, especially on fragile establishing sites.</p>					
<p>Parsley</p>	spreading	light	groundcover	division	all year
<p>Not so vigorous groundcover. Needs shade and moisture or it is more bitter.</p>					
<p>Pumpkin</p>	spreading	none	groundcover	seed	autumn
<p>Although an annual, is a vigorous groundcover that can survive in a competitive food forest environment if given a good spot. You can plant in autumn and if there is no frost below the canopy, the plant will survive the winter and be well established when spring starts.</p>					
<p>Sorrel</p>	30cm	light	understorey	seed	warm months
<p>A perennial leaf vegetable. Not so vigorous. The leaves are tender if kept moist and shaded. Otherwise the lemon taste is more pronounced.</p>					
<p>Sugar cane</p> 	4x 1.5m	light	edge, understorey	division	warm months
<p>The root of all evil - slavery, destruction of lowland rainforest, decline of the barrier reef, diabetes & obesity - is a useful garden plant. It's a rapid growing source of mulch and vigorous edge barrier. If you can find a simple cane crusher (not so easy but Dom got one from an Indian internet site) the juice makes a delicious drink. Ripe canes can be peeled and chewed. If left unattended, the canes get chewed by rats, fall and take root along the stem nodes. Mulching with the stems can also cause suckering. Clumps and strips should be sited carefully because of the flammability risk.</p>					

<p>Sweet Potato</p> 	30cm spreading	light	groundcover	root pieces, stem cuttings	autumn
<p>A staple root crop in many tropical countries and a home grown alternative to rice or wheat. Can be used as an extensive ground cover. In these conditions, the plant puts energy into spreading and only minor tubers are developed. You can stir fry the young leaves. If contained, then bigger tubers develop. Rats and bandicoots love them, although their scratching can alert you that the roots may be ready. Immature roots are small and milky.</p>					
<p>Taro</p>	40cm	light	understorey	root pieces	autumn
<p>Shade tolerant staple root crop. They tolerate shade and wet soils. Good to plant at the edge of any ponds or swales. Resistant to rats & bandicoots.</p>					
<p>Turmeric</p> 	40cm	light	understorey	root pieces	autumn
<p>Beautiful leaves and flowers, shade tolerant. The roots make a tea with remarkable medicinal properties. Dies down in winter.</p>					
<p>Vetiver Grass</p> 	1.5x 1.2m	light	edge, understorey	division	any time
<p>Used as a mulch plant (nice and fine like straw), edge barrier or for erosion control, with an impressive root system (see photo). In early food forests, scatter the plants around and cut periodically for mulch. As the food forest matures, vetiver will lose vigour in the shade. Take care with the placement, especially in strips, as it is flammable, particularly if untended.</p>					

Warrigal Greens (NZ spinach)	spreading	light	Edge, understorey	division	Any time
	Grows vigorously locally on the front edge of dunes and sandy lake edges. It seems to struggle on our clay soils but can form a thick ground cover on beds with deep (20cm) forestry mulch. Quality greens when boiled, if eaten raw the oxalic crystals can be a strong irritant to the mouth.				
Yacon	2x 2m	light	edge	root pieces	autumn
Peruvian parsnip, a tough plant producing a good root crop. It is cooked like potatoes although it can be eaten raw - thinly sliced or juiced. It is not usually bothered by rats or bandicoots. It dies down over winter and lives a few years.					

Annual Vegies

I haven't been growing annual vegies for very long and the people at North Bank community gardens know a lot more about it than me, but this is what I've learnt:

- **Seasons**

There isnt necessarily a strict spring and autumn planting time, at least in frost free areas. To get a constant supply of vegies, you might need to plant out more regularly through the year, or maybe four big plant outs per year.

- **Location**

Kitchen gardens - a few square metres of annuals close to the kitchen and conveniently watered, work really well. It's worth investing in resources to modify these few square metres for maximum productivity.

- **Grow what you eat**

It's silly to grow a whole lot of obscure stuff you don't like or eat (and this applies to food forests). However, eat what you grow. Try a few new things and over time, your diet may develop around what the garden easily gives you.

- **Self sow with mulch**

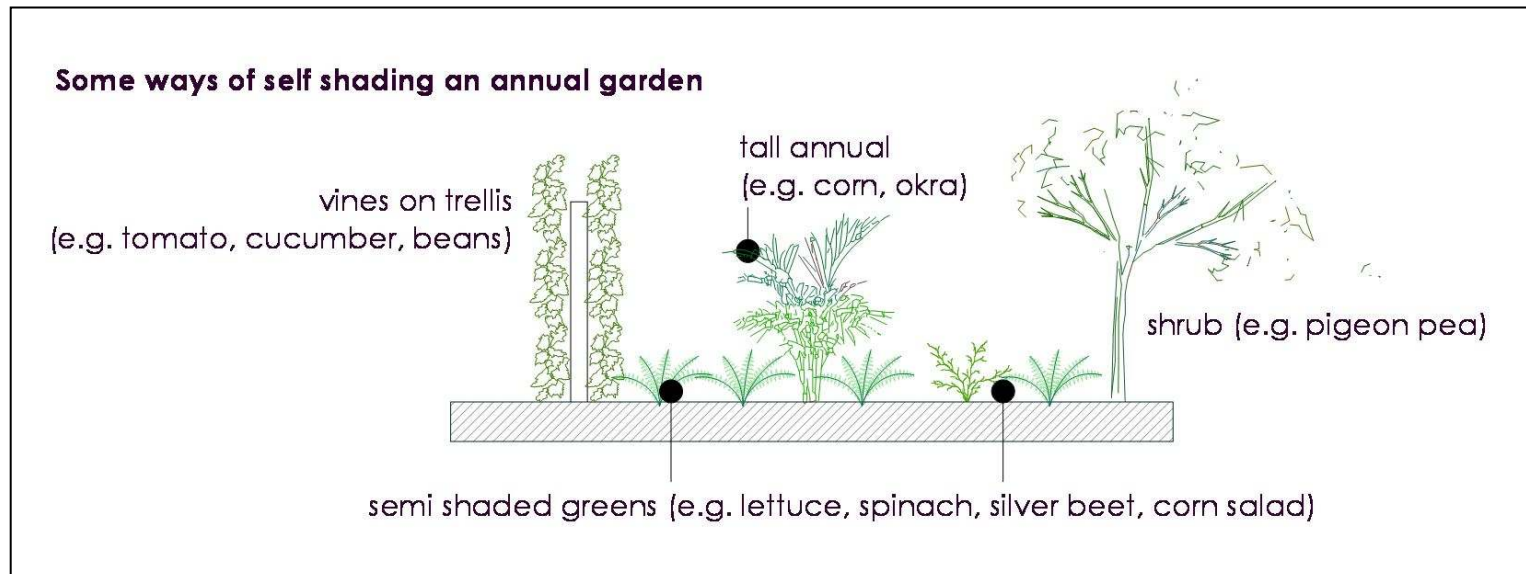
I let quite a few of the vegies go to seed. Then I use the old plant to mulch the veggie bed. You can get a whole lot of self seeded veggies popping up, which saves the work of sowing.

- Sowing methods

There are different methods. I sprout seeds on the window sill and transplant into small grow tubes. This way, you can plant into deep mulch and the survival rate at planting is almost 100%, i.e., the bed is always compactly filled and deeply mulched.

- Shade & water

A food forest has perennial plants with well developed root systems that like but don't need irrigation. Annual vegies are different – at times they need regular irrigation to get a decent crop. In this area, most greens (which are about 95% water) grow better in semi shade. In full sun they are more bitter and smaller. Small shade houses can be more productive than large, sunny beds. The principles of food forests can be applied on a tiny scale to annual gardens - i.e. that tender plants are grown in the shelter of taller ones. Alternatively, a plot of annual vegies can be grown within a food forest.



Annual Vegies

Warm season	Amaranth, basil, beans (climbing or bush), ceylon spinach, chia, corn, cucumber, eggplant, luffa sponge, okra, peanuts, potatoes, pumpkin, tomato (pick green for unblemished crop), sunflower, zucchini.
Cool season	Asian greens (bok choy, tat tsoi, Chinese cabbage), corn salad, Mizuna, english spinach, garlic, leek, lettuce, parsnip, silver beet, snow peas, spinach.

Pioneer Native Rainforest Trees

It's worth being able to recognise the local pioneer rainforest species. They are some of the first trees to emerge from the shade of weeds or the edge of forests. If you don't slash them, and especially if you slash around them and cut eucalypt seedlings, they fairly quickly convert grassy, weedy land to young rainforest. The type of forest it produces in the first 50 years is much safer for property than eucalypt forest because it is lower and less fire prone. If they pop up in food forests, they can be used for quick shelter and cut out or thinned out (most have a good canopy umbrella shape) as fruit trees mature. Pioneer rainforest trees grow to around 12m and live about 50 years.

Pioneer Native Rainforest



Black Wattle
Acacia melanoxylon
Good firewood. The leaves can be used as a weak detergent. The juvenile leaves are frilly.



Black Wattle
Callicoma serratifolia
Not botanically a wattle. The name comes from its use in wattle & daub huts. Shrub to 6m.



Breyenia
Breyenia oblongifolia
Shrub to 2-3m



Bleeding Heart
Omalanthus popularifolius
Shrub 4-5m



Cheese Tree
Glochidion ferdinandii



Corkwood
Duboisia myoporoides
Apparently quite flammable.
Shrub to 5m.



Foambark
Jagera pseudorhus



Guioa
Guioa semiglauca



Native Tamarind
Diplogottis australis
Tasty bushtucker.



Pencil cedar
Polyscias murrayi



Pittosporum
Pittosporum undulatum



Red Ash
Alphitonia excelsa



Rose Myrtle
Archirhodomyrtus beckleri
Shrub to 5m.



Sandpaper Creek Fig
Ficus coronata
Fruits are variable but some are tasty.



Scentless Rosewood
Synoum glandulosum

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