



Did you know that quite a few native bird and bat species traditionally dispersed rainforest seeds - and they are still doing it? Well, why don't we deliberately plant certain trees to attract bird dispersers! It is likely to make our job of replanting rainforests easier - and, what's more, more authentic.

Seed sources

Around 50 or so small, isolated remnants survive in the Lismore area, along with hundreds of residual rainforest fragments on farms, roads and creeks. These can act as seed sources for bird dispersal to smaller patches or clusters in between these remnants. However, closer seed sources need to be planted between these remnants, if we are going to achieve restoration on a larger scale. (Especially for wind-dispersed species that cannot travel far - and the many "mature phase" rainforest trees that are under-represented in the area.)

Receiving trees

It seems that birds will drop seed under all sorts of trees. This has been demonstrated as Victoria Park, Alstonville, NSW, and at numerous sites around the district.

While any species can provide perches that are attractive to birds, particularly attractive trees are those with desirable fruits (eg. Corkwood, Bleeding Heart etc) or those which are taller or more prominent (perhaps as vantage points). Trees that last only about 15 years are good foster trees for regeneration because they die and allow the new recruits to develop.

Poisoned Camphor laurels are ideal perch trees because they are often tall and make good vantage points, they are usually located along bird flight paths, and they allow plenty of light in to the developing seedlings.

Closer to remnants, it is not uncommon to find 10 rainforest species under the driplines of trees, where the site was previously bare paddock. But further away from a remnant, the number will be smaller, and will be dependent on what grows in isolated local seed sources. In the later cases, it might be more worthwhile to plant new seed sources - and subsequently poison the Camphors.

So think twice before sawing down camphor laurels. They make excellent dispersal attractants if left standing!

Need for weed control

But it is important to understand, that - as well as dispersing rainforest trees - birds will also disperse weeds. These weeds should be culled before they fruit - or before they shade out desirable natives. This sobering reality should be factored into your plan to clear or plant any area.