

# 1. Forest structure

The interdependence of plants and animals



Photo: Jeremy Rolfe.



Photo: Les Molloy.

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## The interdependence of plants and animals

- Find an interesting place to stop and observe lots of different forest plants.
- Compare the structure of this area of forest to a house. Look for the floor (ground cover), the upstairs level, the roof (canopy).
  - Sketch the structure of this area of forest. Make sure you include:
    - Large trees that form the canopy (roof) of the forest
    - Smaller trees growing under the canopy
    - Epiphytes and creepers – the plants that grow on the trees
    - Leaf litter – dead leaves, fallen branches (the recycling department in the forest)
    - The forest floor – the ground area of the forest. It may include lots of small plants (a bit like a nursery)
    - Roots are mostly out of sight but sketch any that you can see.
- Can you see windows in the house? How have they been made? (broken branches, fallen trees?) What role do these windows play in the structure of the forest?
- With a partner, share your ideas about the importance of each part of the forest? What role does each part play?
- Suggest what might happen to the forest if:
  - Possums were left to munch through the leaves and fruit of our forest plants.
  - Weeds were left to smother or replace native plants.

Leaves filter dirt particles and reduce air pollution. Enjoy the fresh air in the forest.

