

Cooktown Botanic Gardens

North Queensland



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Back in 1878, 184 acres was set aside in Cooktown as a Botanic Reserve and part of this became the Gardens. The reserve extends to the wonderfully unspoiled coast. A walking track leads from the Gardens to two picturesque beaches. Take your time as Cooktown's climate is hot but do not swim with the crocodiles!

The reserve had a chequered history including intensive early development of the Gardens area in keeping with the fashion of the late 19th century. This area later fell into disrepair. Reconstruction commenced in 1984 and today the Gardens include a Palmetum, a section of native plants and a Solander's Garden featuring plants collected by Banks and Solander during Captain Cook's 1770 voyage on the Endeavour.

These are all well labelled and part of our living history. A gallery displaying beautiful botanical illustrations of the local flora is part of Cooktown's tourist information centre, located within the Gardens.

Old mango trees planted for their economic value remain a feature but are becoming a pest plant as local fauna distribute the seed. Other notable trees are huge melaleucas and the smaller Red Beech (*Dillenia alata*) with bright yellow flowers and flaky red bark. A comprehensive list of plants in the Gardens is available and includes aboriginal names and uses.

Access to this location: Located about 1km from 'Top Pub' on Charlotte Street, Cooktown.

