

## **Bush Ranger**

A local Bush Ranger introduces a group of new recruits to the rainforest in Queensland, Australia. Everyone collects samples of the local wildlife before discovering a bush turkey on her mound. The day ends in a smoking ceremony to welcome the new recruits to the forest, and a feast of bush turkey eggs cooked over the campfire.

The workshop uses imagery, ideas and instruments derived from the culture and beliefs of the aboriginal people of Queensland and Northern Territory. You could adapt it to other rainforests by altering the props and resources that you use.

### **Environment**

Create a lush rainforest using green and blue organza as a backdrop, with additional foliage of palm leaves, rhododendron and willow branches. This is a great way to fill and create a space that will give shadows, movement, sound and smells. Hide all sorts of 'wildlife' and props amongst the leaves, such as:

- Plastic insects, spiders, snakes and caterpillars
- Nets and specimen jars
- 'Display table' using a soundboard and tambours
- Hex-bugs with their own movements and sounds
- Jelly toys for 'witchetty grubs'

To create a turkey mound use a bean bag covered in brown voiles with a turkey puppet on top guarding her eggs. For a ceremonial area use:

- Clumps of bamboo
- Fire pit (see related Fire prop page)
- Ochre/white face paint
- Clapsticks and didgeridoos (or SFX)
- Smudge sticks made from dried sage or similar
- Bush tucker – choc eggs, chewy snakes, squishy mini marshmallows

**Costume** - Baseball caps and straw hats

**Music** - Background sounds of rainforests will set the scene. Didgeridoos will provide an instantly recognisable focus for the final section. For inspiration, check out recordings of didgeridoo artists like Jeremy Donovan or David Hudson.

### **Activities**

**Bush Rangers** - Led by the Ranger, explore the rainforest to look for new specimens – snakes, spiders, insects etc. Feel the different textures, hear the sounds they make, see them scurrying and slithering around. Pick them up with your fingers or catch in your nets and keep secure in jars. How many can you find? Bring them all together and show your finds on the display table. See and hear the hex-bugs as they buzz around the board and in tambours, tickling your legs and fingers with noisy vibrations. Catch them if you can!

**Turkey Mound** - Hear the turkey calling...gobble-gobble... Greet her, feel her soft feathers, talk to her and play games together. Ask her for eggs to cook on the fire with the other bush tucker.

**Ceremony** - Bring the eggs and witchetty grubs to the fire pit. Light the fire and see it glow and crackle. Draw signs and symbols on your skin with ochre/white face paint. Play the clapsticks and hear the didgeridoo's strange sound as the smoking ceremony begins. Chant along, light the smudge sticks and smell the fragrant smoke.

### **Links:**

Puppets

Fire

Characters  
Exploring

**Video**  
Bush Ranger