

**THE NATIVE PLANTS  
IN PAN'S GARDEN**

**GREEN PAGE**

## Directory of Plants by Common Name

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## AMERICAN BEAUTYBERRY

*Callicarpa Americana*

The American Beautyberry is named for the year-round display of beautiful magenta-colored berries, which cover its branches. Because so many different animals love to eat these berries, many gardeners plant these bushes to attract wildlife into their yards.

Native Americans ate American Beautyberry fruits, although they were not particularly tasty. Purple dye made from the berries colored clothing, pottery, and painted faces. Early settlers made jams and jellies from the fruit (adding lots of sugar!).



<b>SCIENTIFIC NAME:</b>	<i>Callicarpa americana</i>
<b>PRONOUNCIATION/ MEANING:</b>	<b>ka-lee-KAR-pa:</b> beautiful fruit <b>a-mare-ee-KAHN-ah:</b> American
<b>FAMILY:</b>	Verbenaceae (Vervain Family)
<b>HEIGHT:</b>	8'
<b>HABIT OF GROWTH:</b>	Mounding shrub
<b>HOW TO IDENTIFY:</b>	Oval, pointed, light green, fuzzy, evergreen leaves and buds; small pink flowers and magenta fruit are clustered around the branches
<b>HABITAT:</b>	Hammocks and rich woodlands throughout Florida

**BALD CYPRESS***Taxodium distichum*

The Bald Cypress can live to be hundreds of years old. Due to its massive size, it has been called the “redwood of the East Coast.” Unlike other conifers in Florida, Bald Cypress trees are deciduous; dropping its needles in the autumn and staying “bald” until spring. This tree often grows directly in standing water and has developed roots called “knees” that grow above the surface - these roots allow the tree to breathe when submerged, very much like a snorkel!

Lumber from bald cypress is highly resistant to rotting and termites. These traits have led to it being over-harvested. The few large Bald Cypress remaining in Florida are now found only in protected reserves.

Native Americans hollowed out the trunks of the larger cypress trees to make canoes. Trunks from smaller trees were used to form the frame of the chickee huts.



**SCIENTIFIC NAME:** *Taxodium distichum*

**PRONOUNCIATION/ MEANING:** **tax-O-dee-um:** in reference to its yew like foliage  
**DIS-ti-kum:** with leaves (needles) arranged in two opposite rows

**FAMILY:** Taxodiaceae (Cypress Family)

**HEIGHT:** 120'

**HABIT OF GROWTH:** upright spires, assuming a broad, pyramidal shape with maturity

**HOW TO IDENTIFY:** gray, flaky bark on buttressed trunks, inverted roots, called “knees”, usually extend above water; flat, fern-like, bright green foliage in spring and in summer, turns golden-bronze before dropping in autumn; small green cones occur along the branches

**HABITAT:** swamps and wet hammocks throughout the state

## BLUE FLAG IRIS

*Iris hexagona*

The Iris is a very popular garden plant grown for their beautiful flowers. Florida's native Blue Flag Iris blooms in the spring, producing spectacular drifts of purple-blue color in wetland areas.

Seminoles used the Blue Flag iris as a remedy to treat shock. When hunting, it was not uncommon for a hunter to be bitten by alligators or sharks, which were common prey. The hunter's body may go into shock-which can cause breathing difficulties, an irregular heartbeat and eventually death. The Blue Flag Iris was also cream or salve that sped healing and prevented infection of cuts and bruises. The root also treated digestive problems.



**SCIENTIFIC NAME:** *Iris hexagona*

**PRONOUNCIATION/ MEANING:** **EYE-ris:** in Greek mythology, the Goddess of the Rainbow and a messenger to the gods  
**hecks-a-GO-na:** six-leaved, angled blossoms

**FAMILY:** Iridaceae (Iris Family)

**HEIGHT:** 2' (leaves) - 4' (flower stems)

**HABIT OF GROWTH:** herbaceous, upright

**HOW TO IDENTIFY:** evergreen, sword-shaped leaves growing in a fan shape; large, purple-blue, showy flowers in spring; large, green, pill-shaped, 4" fruit

**HABITAT:** swamps, drainage ditches, canals, marshy shores and cypress prairies throughout the state

### CANNA

*Canna flaccida*

Cannas are large perennial wetlands plants that can grow up to 5 feet tall. The leaves are 18 to 36 inches long and are light green. The plant blooms in summer with large yellow flowers.

The Native Floridians made ceremonial musical instruments similar to rattles by filling hollow turtle shells with Canna seeds. The Seminoles made the seeds into bullets for guns when no other materials were available.

A liquid food made from the starchy roots treated the elderly and sick tribe members who could not eat solid food.



**SCIENTIFIC NAME:**

*Canna flaccida*

**PRONOUNCIATION/  
MEANING:**

**KAN-uh:** (Greek) kanna- a reed  
**FLACK-sid-uh:** flaccida-flabby

**FAMILY:**

Cannaceae (Canna Family)

**HEIGHT:**

up to 5 feet

**HABIT OF GROWTH:**

perennial

**HOW TO IDENTIFY:**

upright reed-like stems and growth, leaves are light green, arrow-shaped and 18 to 36 inches long; yellow flowers bloom in summer.

**HABITAT:**

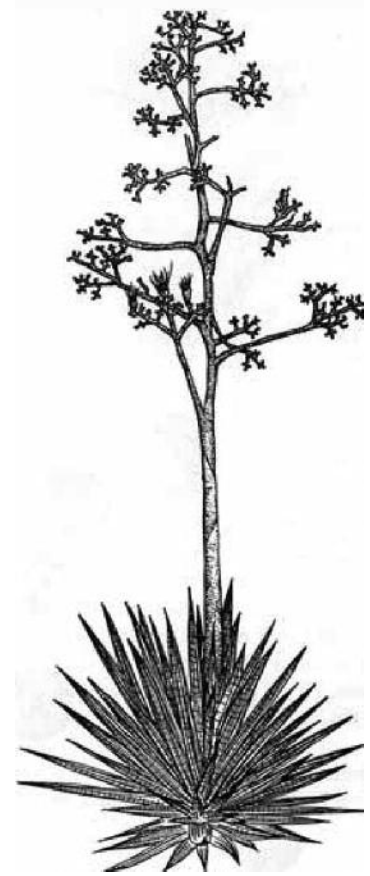
wetlands, aquatic

## CENTURY PLANT

*Agave decipiens*

The Century Plant grows in coastal areas and has thick, waxy sword-like leaves. The tip of each leaf ends in a very sharp needle-like point.

The Native Americans made thread and rope from the fiber of the Century Plant. The thick leaves were cut off, dried in the sun and pounded with a hammer-like tool to remove the out green material from the thin, yellow, stringy fiber. The fibers were then woven into thread for sewing clothing. The sharp points from the leaf tips were burned with fire in order to make them into strong and very sharp sewing needles.



**SCIENTIFIC NAME:** *agave decipiens*

**PRONOUNCIATION/ MEANING:** **uh-GAH-vay** (Mexican) meaning stone that cuts (Latin) illustrious referring to the plant's beauty  
**dee-SIP-ee-enz** (Latin) deceiving, false

**FAMILY:** Agavaceae (Century Plant Family)

**HEIGHT:** 3' – 6'

**HABIT OF GROWTH:** Low shrub with a short base

**HOW TO IDENTIFY:** Evergreen, thin, flat, gray-green leaves tipped with sharp spines; large white flowers are held in upright clusters on stalks

**HABITAT:** uplands, sandy scrub and coastal dunes

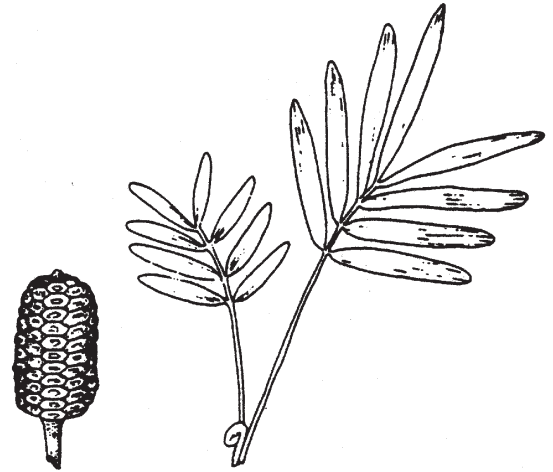
## COONTIE

*Zamia pumila*

Coontie is a very primitive plant that existed millions of years ago when dinosaurs roamed the Earth. Although the coontie looks like a fern or a small palm, it is actually a **cycad**, a close cousin of conifers, such as the bald cypress and slash pine. Coontie is the only cycad native to the United States.

Native Americans ground coontie root into a yellow flour that was baked into bread. In its raw state, this flour is **extremely poisonous** and may cause death when eaten. However, the Native Americans learned to remove the poisons by soaking coontie flour in water before cooking it.

For a time, the manufacture and export of coontie flour and starch was a main income source for early settlers of south Florida. They had little regard for conservation so that finding a coontie in the wild today is a rare experience. This plant is presently classified as an endangered species.



**SCIENTIFIC NAME:** *Zamia pumila*

**PRONOUNCIATION/  
MEANING:** **ZAH-mee-a:** (Latin) pine nut  
**pu-MIL-a:** low growing, small

**FAMILY:** Cycadaceae (Cycad Family)

**HEIGHT:** 3'

**HABIT OF GROWTH:** small shrub of fern- like appearance

**HOW TO IDENTIFY:** scaly, evergreen, feather-like leaves emerge from a very large woody base; no flowers; reddish-brown cones form in the center of the plant

**HABITAT:** found in hammocks and well-drained soil throughout the state, except in the panhandle



## DAHOON HOLLY

*Ilex cassine*

Visitors from northern regions are surprised to learn that there are holly trees native to Florida. The Dahoon Holly is a beautiful evergreen tree that has red berries at Christmas time just like the traditional English and American hollies used in decorations.

Native Americans used the leaves to brew “the black drink”, a special ceremonial tea that cleansed the body. This ritual was usually done just before a war or an important hunt. Only the men could drink this tea.



**SCIENTIFIC NAME:**

*Ilex cassine*

**PRONOUNCIATION/  
MEANING:**

**EYE-lecks:** Ancient Latin name  
**cass-SEEN-e:** Native American name

**FAMILY:**

Aquifoliaceae (Holly Family)

**HEIGHT:**

40'

**HABIT OF GROWTH:**

Upright, pyramidal tree

**HOW TO IDENTIFY:**

evergreen, glossy, oblong, 4" leaves; pale green flower clusters in spring followed by 1/4" red berries in winter

**HABITAT:**

wetland borders throughout the state

### DUNE SUNFLOWER, BEACH SUNFLOWER

*Helianthus debilis*

The Beach or Dune Sunflower is a spreading perennial with showy flowers that attract many species of butterflies. Small seeds follow the flowers and produce new plants.

The Native Florida tribes used this plant as medicine to treat many ailments. Entire plants were crushed up and made into a poultice to treat snake bites, spider bites and cuts.

Dune Sunflower flowers were cooked in liquid and made into medicine that cured chest pain and blood circulation problems. Ointment made from the leaves treated sores, swellings and bruises. Cut stems removed warts and sap from the stems killed thirst. Powdered seeds mixed into "cakes" that were eaten to cure tiredness.



Dune Sunflower plants also provided food for the Native tribes. Seeds were ground and sifted and made into dough for bread and cake seeds and baked on hot stones. Boiled seed coatings made red dye.

**SCIENTIFIC NAME:** *Helianthus debilis*

**PRONOUNCIATION/  
MEANING:** **heel-ee-ANTH-us;** (Greek) helios, sun; anthos, flower  
**DEB-i-liss;** (Latin) weak, referring to the stems

**FAMILY:** Asteraceae (Aster Family)

**HEIGHT:** 2 to 4 feet

**HABIT OF GROWTH:** spreading perennial

**HOW TO IDENTIFY:** small dark green leaves are semi-evergreen and about 2-4 inches long; flowers are 3 inches wide, have yellow "rays" (petals) that encircle a brown center and bloom year-round; fruits are not visible but attractive to birds.

**HABITAT:** coastal dunes, sunny area of hammocks

**FIREBUSH***Hamelia patens*

Firebush is a large shrub with shiny, evergreen leaves that grows in the hammocks and wetlands. Bright, slender, tubular orange flowers appear that bloom year-round.

The Native Americans crushed the Firebush leaves to make medicine and put it directly on cuts, burns, insect bites, stings, sores and rashes.

Crushed leaves and fruit added to bath water treated skin disease and relieved arthritis pain.

Tannin in the leaves and stems tanned leather and the black fruits were eaten fresh from the bush or made into a drink.

**SCIENTIFIC NAME:***Hamelia patens***PRONOUNCIATION/  
MEANING:**

**huh-MEE-lee-uh;** honors Henry L. Duhamel de Monceau, early French botanist  
**PAT-enz;** (Latin) meaning open or spreading

**FAMILY:**

Rubiaceae (Coffee Family)

**HEIGHT:**

6 to 12 feet and the same in width

**HABIT OF GROWTH:**

shrub

**HOW TO IDENTIFY:**

soft stems hold evergreen leaves 4-8 inches long in whorls (clusters) of three; flowers are bright orange, slender, tubular and 1-1 ½ inches long; fruits are ½ inch black and oval

**HABITAT:**

moist to wet areas, hammocks and wetlands

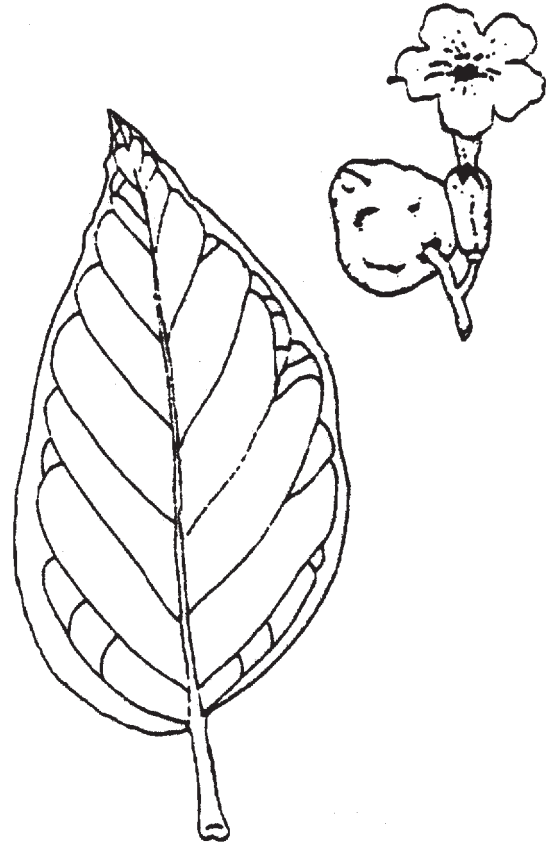
## GEIGER TREE

*Cordia sebestena*

The Geiger Tree is regarded as one of the most beautiful trees of southern Florida and is very popular for landscaping. Its spectacular, bright orange flowers cover the tree from early spring through autumn. The Geiger Tree is native to the Keys and is very sensitive to cold, so it won't be found growing much further north of Palm Beach County.

It is said that this tree was named by John James Audubon for his friend, John Geiger, a man who made his living salvaging cargo from shipwrecks in the Keys.

The Geiger Tree has an edible, ivory-colored, fruit that is shaped like a pear and smells like bananas. The leaves are very coarse and were used for scouring pots and polishing wood.



<b>SCIENTIFIC NAME:</b>	<i>Cordia sebestena</i>
<b>PRONOUNCIATION/ MEANING:</b>	<b>Cor-DEE-ya:</b> named for Valerius Cordus, 16 <sup>th</sup> century German scholar <b>seb-BES-sten-ah:</b> common name for a related species
<b>FAMILY:</b>	Boraginaceae (Borage Family)
<b>HEIGHT:</b>	20'
<b>HABIT OF GROWTH:</b>	Small tree with a rounded crown
<b>HOW TO IDENTIFY:</b>	Round, pointed, coarse, evergreen leaves; bright orange, 1" flowers in clusters; ivory, 2", pear-shaped fruit
<b>HABITAT:</b>	Native to the Florida Keys, in well-drained soil.

## GUMBO LIMBO

*Bursera simaruba*

The Gumbo Limbo is one of the most curious-looking plants of south Florida. It is a big, stout tree with a lopsided trunk, and twisted, crooked branches covered in red, peeling bark. Local people think that the tree looks as if it were badly sunburned, and call it the "tourist tree"

When cut, the wood exudes thick gum-like sap that smells like turpentine and is used in glue, varnish and medicines, such as liniments. **Some people are allergic to the sap of Gumbo Limbo and should be careful around this tree.**

The wood of the Gumbo Limbo is soft and lightweight. It carves well and was the preferred wood for making carousel horses before plastics were invented. Seminoles used the wood to carve medicine bowls. The leaves made a tea that has a slight aftertaste of varnish.



**SCIENTIFIC NAME:** *Bursera simaruba*

**PRONOUNCIATION/ MEANING:** **burr-SER-a:** for Joachim Burser, a German botanist  
**sim-a-RUBE-a:** resembles the simaruba tree.

**FAMILY:** Burseraceae (Torchwood Family)

**HEIGHT:** 60'

**HABIT OF GROWTH:** Large, irregular tree with a twisted trunk and branches

**HOW TO IDENTIFY:** Smooth, red-colored bark which flakes off in papery pieces; compound, evergreen, leaves drop off for a few weeks in late winter; clusters of inconspicuous, pale green flowers are followed by 1/2" reddish, round fruit

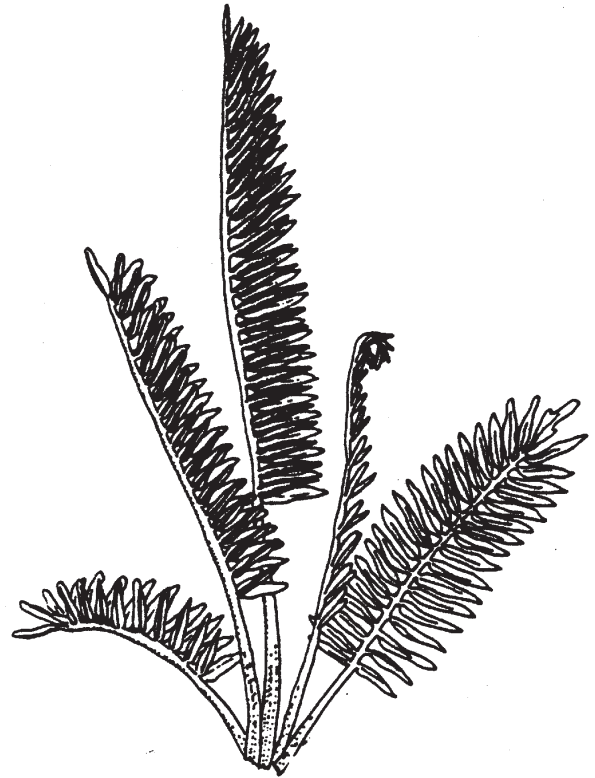
**HABITAT:** Coastal hammocks in southern Florida.

## LEATHER-LEAF FERN

*Acrostichum danaeifolium*

The Leather Fern is the tallest fern in North America and occurs only in Florida. Ferns are one of the oldest groups of plants. They have a very primitive structure and do not produce flowers or seeds; instead, they produce dust-like spores. The term "frond" describes their leaves because they are so different from other plants. Spores grouped in patterns, are usually located on the undersides of fronds.

The Native Americans used the uncoiling, new fronds to eat raw or cooked in several ways like asparagus. Seminoles made medicine of the plant to rub on the body as a treatment for high fevers.



**SCIENTIFIC NAME:**

*Acrostichum danaeifolium*

**PRONOUNCIATION/**

**a-CROS-ti-chum:** refers to the arrangement of spores on the leaflets.

**MEANING:**

**da-na-ay-ee-FOL-ee-um:** leaves like the poet's laurel, Danae.

**FAMILY:**

Polypodiaceae (Polypody-Fern Family)

**HEIGHT:**

3' - 10'

**HABIT OF GROWTH:**

Herbaceous, upright

**HOW TO IDENTIFY:**

Large, thick, bright, evergreen fronds; dark brown spores completely cover the underside of fruiting fronds

**HABITAT:**

Swamps and wet forests in central and southern Florida

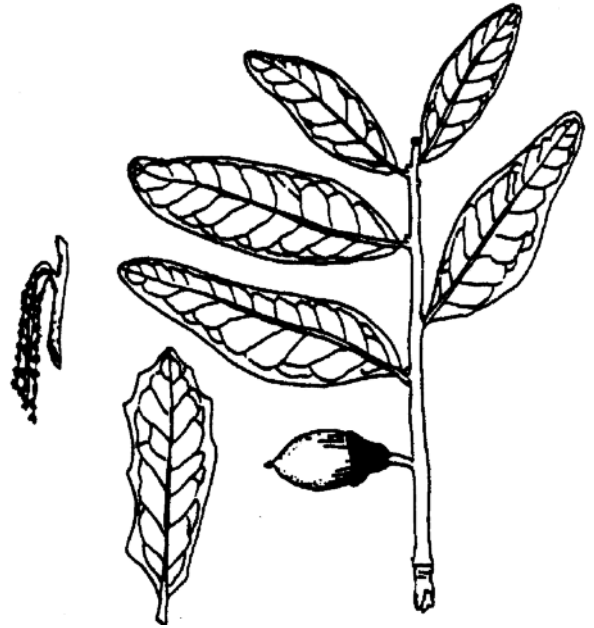
## LIVE OAK

*Quercus virginiana*

The Live Oak is so named because it lives for hundreds of years and is evergreen. Cabinets, wood floors and furniture are made from the Live Oak wood because it is beautiful, strong and heavy.

Between the 1790s and the 1890s lumber from the Live Oak was especially important in ship building. The U.S.S. Constitution, an American battleship during the Revolutionary War, earned its nickname, "Old Ironsides", because when the British ships fired cannonballs at the battleship, they bounced right off because the Live Oak ship was so strong!

Native Americans also used the wood for building and making tools. Live Oak fruits, called acorns, were ground up to make oil, porridge or bread. Tannic acid from leaves and bark was used to tan (preserve) animal hides, which could then be made into robes, blankets or clothing. Buff, gold, orange, and yellow colored dyes were made from Live Oak bark.



**SCIENTIFIC NAME:** *Quercus virginiana*

**PRONOUNCIATION/ MEANING:** **KWAR-cuss:** ancient Celtic name  
**vir-gin-ee-AY-na:** from Virginia

**FAMILY:** Fagaceae (Beech Family)

**HEIGHT:** 40' - 80' high and 60' - 100' wide

**HABIT OF GROWTH:** large tree with a wide, spreading canopy

**HOW TO IDENTIFY:** pale grey bark and massive, horizontal, arching branches; evergreen leaves are narrow and dark, glossy green; tiny, pale green flowers are held in catkins; fruit is a small brown acorn

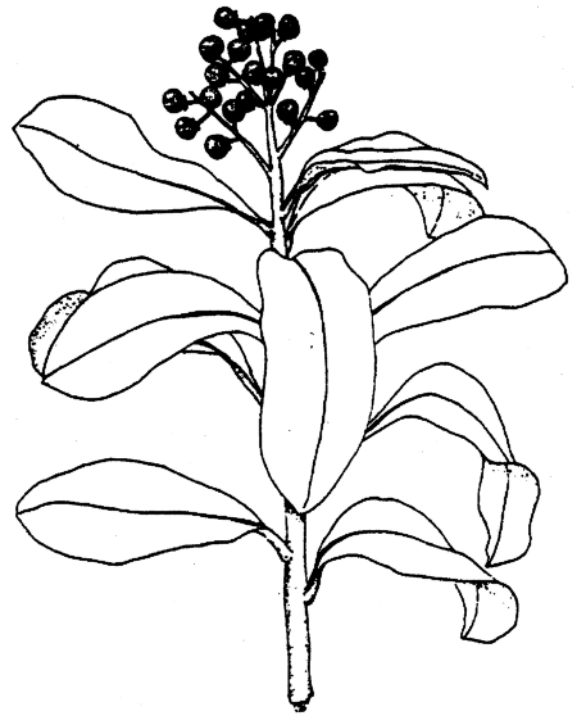
**HABITAT:** uplands and hammocks throughout Florida

## MARLBERRY

*Ardisia escallonioides*

Marlberry is a beautiful flowering tree found in coastal hammocks and ridges in southern Florida. Its name comes from its small, round, marble-sized fruit; however, this tree is often incorrectly called "marble berry."

The Seminoles mixed the leaves with tobacco to give it flavor. Marlberry fruits were used as food however; they are not very flavorful and only eaten when other more tasty foods were scarce.



**SCIENTIFIC NAME:**

*Ardisia escallonioides*

**PRONOUNCIATION/**

**ar-DEE-see-a:** Greek for "point of the arrow, referring to the shape of the flower petals

**MEANING:**

**es-call-O-nee-oy-dees:** resembling *Escallonia*

**FAMILY:**

Myrsinaceae (Myrsine Family)

**HEIGHT:**

20-25'

**HABIT OF GROWTH:**

Shrub or small tree; upright

**HOW TO IDENTIFY:**

Shiny, evergreen, oblong, pointed leaves; small, white, fragrant flowers form in clusters at the branch tips; round, 1/4", dark purple fruit

**HABITAT:**

Rock lands, hammocks and pinelands in south Florida

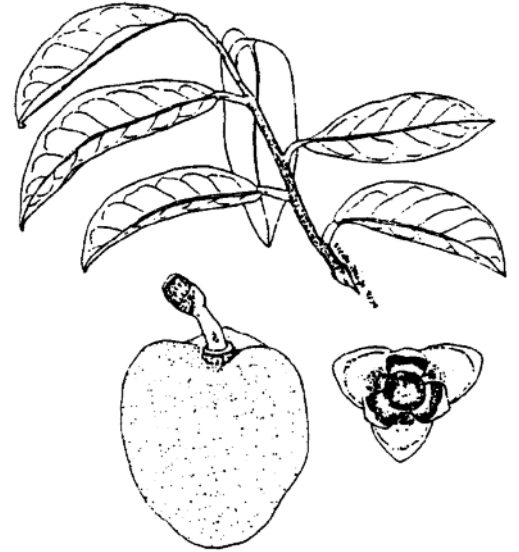


## POND APPLE

*Annona glabra*

The Pond Apple likes to grow where the soil is very wet and rich. Huge forests of giant Pond Apple trees used to grow all around Lake Okeechobee, but were cleared to make way for farming. Today it is rare to see a big Pond Apple tree.

The fruit of the Pond Apple was a favorite food of the Native Americans and the early settlers. Its wood is very light and floats easily, and was used to make rafts, paddles, bobbers for fishing lines and floats for fishing nets.



**SCIENTIFIC NAME:**

*Annona glabra*

**PRONOUNCIATION/  
MEANING:**

**an-NO-na:** from anor, a native name for the fruit of its relative, the sweetsop  
**glab-ra:** smooth

**FAMILY:**

Annonaceae (Custard Apple Family)

**HEIGHT:**

20-60'

**HABIT OF GROWTH:**

Irregular, mounding shrub, eventually grows into a tree with a thick, buttressed trunk

**HOW TO IDENTIFY:**

Evergreen, oblong, pointed leaves; strange, fleshy, bell-like flowers hang from short stalks; large, green-yellow, bumpy fruit that looks like a mango

**HABITAT:**

Wetlands, stream banks and hammocks in South Florida

## PEPEROMIA

*Peperomia obtusifolia*

Peperomia has round, smooth dark green leaves and grows in low clumps in the hammocks.

The Native Floridians used this plant as medicine to treat coughs, colds, asthma and upper respiratory infections.



**SCIENTIFIC NAME:**

*Peperomia obtusifolia*

**PRONOUNCIATION/  
MEANING:**

**pep-per-ROE-mee-uh;** (Greek) meaning pepper  
**ob-too-siff-FOLE-lee-uh;** (Latin) meaning blunt

**FAMILY:**

Piperaceae (Pepper Family)

**HEIGHT:**

½ to 1 foot

**HABIT OF GROWTH:**

spreading ground cover

**HOW TO IDENTIFY:**

leaves are evergreen, smooth, dark green and rounded, about 2 to 4 inches in size; small white flowers appear throughout the year; fruit is about ½ inch, oval, brown and fleshy

**HABITAT:**

hammocks

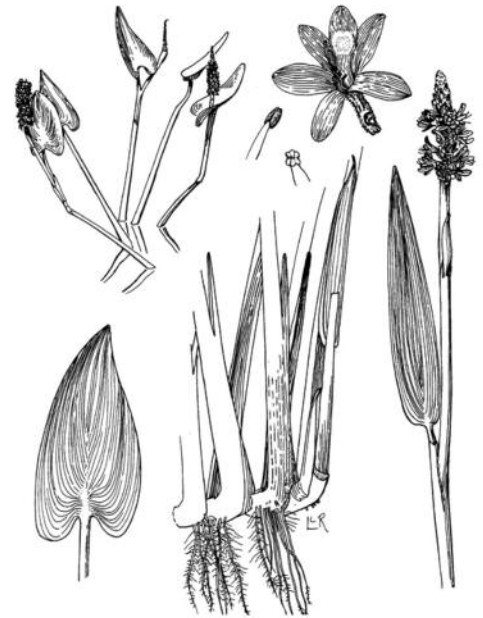
## PICKERAL WEED

*Pontederia cordata*

This aquatic plant grows around the edges of ponds and lakes and in shallow wetlands in water no more than 12 inches deep. Foliage sprouts each year from below the water's surface and stands several feet above the water.

Beautiful purple-blue flower spikes appear in the spring, summer and fall. The plant is very attractive to butterflies.

The Native Americans gathered seeds directly from the plant, then boiled and ate them like cereal. The ground up seeds made flour for making bread.



**SCIENTIFIC NAME:** *Pontederia cordata*

**PRONOUNCIATION/ MEANING:** **pon-tee-DEER-ree-uh;** after Doctor Guilo Pontedera  
**kor-DAHT-a;** (Latin) meaning heart-shaped

**FAMILY:** Pontederiaceae (Water Hyacinth Family)

**HEIGHT:** 3 to 5 feet

**HABIT OF GROWTH:** clumping stems; ground cover

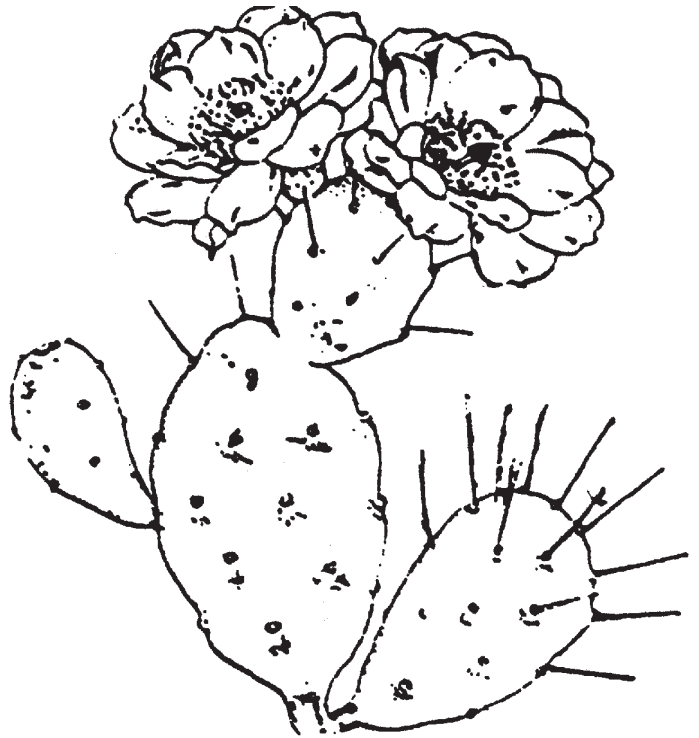
**HOW TO IDENTIFY:** leaves are deciduous, green, elongated heart-shaped and 12 to 18 inches long; flowers are blue-purple spikes that bloom in spring, summer and fall; no fruit is produced on this plant

**HABITAT:** wetlands, aquatic

**PRICKLY PEAR CACTUS***Opuntia stricta, var. dillenii*

The Prickly Pear Cactus is the most common species of cactus native to Florida. It is used in cooking to add a wonderful flavor to special dishes, and makes a tasty jelly. Scientists who are now experimenting with the Prickly Pear Cactus think that the chemicals within it will make an important medicine that can help people with heart problems.

Native Americans ate the sweet fruit of Prickly Pear and ground its seeds into flour. The fruit is indeed prickly and must be scalded to remove the tiny spines that cover it. The pads have larger spines and are also edible if these are removed. However this part of the plant was usually fed to the horses and cattle, because it wasn't as sweet and tasty.



<b>SCIENTIFIC NAME:</b>	<i>Opuntia stricta</i>
<b>PRONOUNCIATION/ MEANING:</b>	<b>o-PUNT-ee-a:</b> probably from Opus, town in Greece <b>STRICT-a:</b> strict, upright var. <i>dillenii</i> (DILL-EN-ee-eye): expanded
<b>FAMILY:</b>	Cactaceae (Cactus Family)
<b>HEIGHT:</b>	6' - 8'
<b>HABIT OF GROWTH:</b>	thick-stemmed shrub; irregular and upright
<b>HOW TO IDENTIFY:</b>	thick, flat, evergreen pads, up to 12" long and 6"-8" wide, bear very fine, sharp, 2" spines in tight clusters; large, showy, yellow 4" flowers in spring, followed by purple egg-shaped fruit
<b>HABITAT:</b>	back side of coastal dunes and scrub uplands of south Florida

**RED MAPLE,**  
(SWAMP MAPLE,  
FLORIDA MAPLE)  
*Acer rubrum*

Maples are trees mostly found in forests of the northern U.S. and Canada; however, one species grows all the way down into the Everglades. This tree is known by three common names: Red Maple, due to its red flowers; Swamp Maple, because it grows in wet areas; or Florida Maple.

This maple is deciduous, which means it drops its leaves in the autumn and remains bare all winter. In early Spring, tiny red flowers cover the branches before new leaves appear. Its fruit has a papery wing on one end, which spins when it drops - children play "helicopter" with them.

Native Americans used the wood of this tree to make arrowheads, spoons and cooking utensils. The bark was made into a tonic, or cure, for muscle pain and was made into black and brown dyes.



**SCIENTIFIC NAME:** *Acer rubrum*

**PRONOUNCIATION/ MEANING:** **AY-sir:** (Latin) for maple  
**ROO-brum:** red, referring to its flowers

**FAMILY:** Aceraceae (Maple)

**HEIGHT:** 115'

**HABIT OF GROWTH:** Large tree

**HOW TO IDENTIFY:** Deciduous, thin, dark green, lobed leaves, pale underneath, that turn red and yellow in autumn; small red flowers and green winged fruit

**HABITAT:** Swamps and wetland areas throughout Florida except for the Keys

### SABAL PALM

*Sabal palmetto*

The State tree of Florida is the Sabal Palm, and it grows just about everywhere. It is also known as the Cabbage Palm because food known as “swamp cabbage” can be made from the central bud of this tree (unfortunately, removing the bud also kills the tree!). The base of each branch often remains attached to the trunk after the old leaves have broken away. These attached branch bases provide the tree with a protective layer of insulation against fire and cold temperatures.

The Sabal Palm was the most important plant to the Native Americans because it provided many things: lumber from the trunk, leaves to thatch the roofs of their chickee huts, fiber for kindling, rope and clothing, sap for drinking, and the central bud and berries for food.



**SCIENTIFIC NAME:** *Sabal Palmetto*

**PRONOUNCIATION/ MEANING:** **SAY-bal:** unexplained origin  
**pahl-MET-to:** referring to leaves shaped like the palm of a hand

**FAMILY:** Arecaceae (Palm Family)

**HEIGHT:** 90'

**HABIT OF GROWTH:** a straight, single trunk growing upright or at a slight angle

**HOW TO IDENTIFY:** trunks are rough, bare, brown in color, usually with woody branch bases still attached; leaves are evergreen, fan-shaped, dull green, up to six feet in length; small, cream colored flowers are produced in large inflorescences; fruit is a 1/2" oval black berry

**HABITAT:** throughout Florida in uplands, hammocks and wetlands

## SATIN LEAF

*Chrysophyllum oliviforme*

The Satin Leaf is a unique and beautiful native tree in southern Florida. When the air is still, the tree is dark green in color, but the slightest breeze lifts its leaves to show off shimmering golden-brown undersides.

The Native Americans used the leaves for scouring wood to give it a smooth finish; as we use sandpaper today. The fruit was eaten and extremely chewy and sweet; perhaps it was the native people's chewing gum!



**SCIENTIFIC NAME:**

*Chrysophyllum oliviforme*

**PRONOUNCIATION/  
MEANING:**

**CRIS-o-fil-um:** (Greek) golden leaf  
**O-liv-ee-FOR-may:** referring to the olive-shaped fruit

**FAMILY:**

Sapotaceae (Sapodilla Family)

**HEIGHT:**

30'

**HABIT OF GROWTH:**

Tree with upright, arching branches

**HOW TO IDENTIFY:**

oval, pointed leaves, bright, shiny above, felt-like, golden brown, and iridescent beneath; black, olive shaped fruit follows clusters of small, green flowers

**HABITAT:**

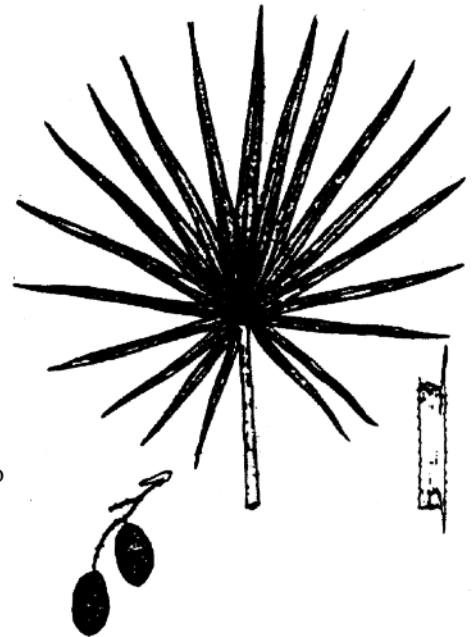
hammocks and pinelands in southern Florida

## SAW PALMETTO

*Serenoa repens*

Saw palmettos are small palms that grow in large thickets all over Florida. Their spiny stems and pointed leaves provide cover and protection for many wildlife species. The flowers of saw palmetto produce nectar and are a leading source of honey. In recent years scientists have discovered that a compound from the berries can be used to prevent some forms of cancer.

Native Americans used the fruit for food, but the taste is horrible. As with the cabbage palm, the terminal bud, or heart, of saw palmetto is edible. Tannic acid from the roots and stems of this palm were used to tan leather. The palm fronds were used to make thatched roofs for chickee huts, and to weave into baskets and sleeping mats. Fiber from around the trunk of the Saw Palmetto was used to make thread and light rope.



<b>SCIENTIFIC NAME:</b>	<i>Serenoa repens</i>
<b>PRONOUNCIATION/ MEANING:</b>	<b>Sare-ah-NO-ah:</b> named for the 19th century botanist, Sereno Watson <b>RAY-pens:</b> creeping; crawling, in reference to the plants sprawling growth habit
<b>FAMILY:</b>	Arecaceae (Palm Family)
<b>HEIGHT:</b>	7' - 15'
<b>HABIT OF GROWTH:</b>	sprawling, branching shrub
<b>HOW TO IDENTIFY:</b>	evergreen, 4', fan-shaped leaves are held on saw-toothed stems; flowers are small, white, and fragrant, borne in large inflorescences; fruit is a small, black, oval berry
<b>HABITAT:</b>	hammocks, pinelands, and scrub uplands throughout the state



## SCOURING RUSH

*Equisetum hyemale*

The Scouring Rush Horsetail is a member of an ancient plant family and has lived on Earth for 300 million years!

This dark green plant has tall, hollow stems banded with black or brown bands rings.

Florida Natives used the bristled stems of this plant to scour (wash, sand or polish) wooden bowls and cooking and eating utensils.

The Natives also used Scouring Rush Horsetail as medicine to cure kidney stones and stomach ulcers and to stop bleeding; the stems pulled and held together the openings of fresh wounds,



**SCIENTIFIC NAME:**

*Equisetum hyemale*

**PRONOUNCIATION/  
MEANING:**

**ek-wi-SEE- tum;** (Latin)

equi; horse;

seta; bristle

**hi-eh-MAY-lee;** evergreen

**FAMILY:**

Equisetaceae (Horsetail Family)

**HEIGHT:**

2-5 feet

**HABIT OF GROWTH:**

erect stems

**HOW TO IDENTIFY:**

long, bristled stems with leaves that have very small nodes that look like black rings; brown cone-like tips contain spores for reproduction

**HABITAT:**

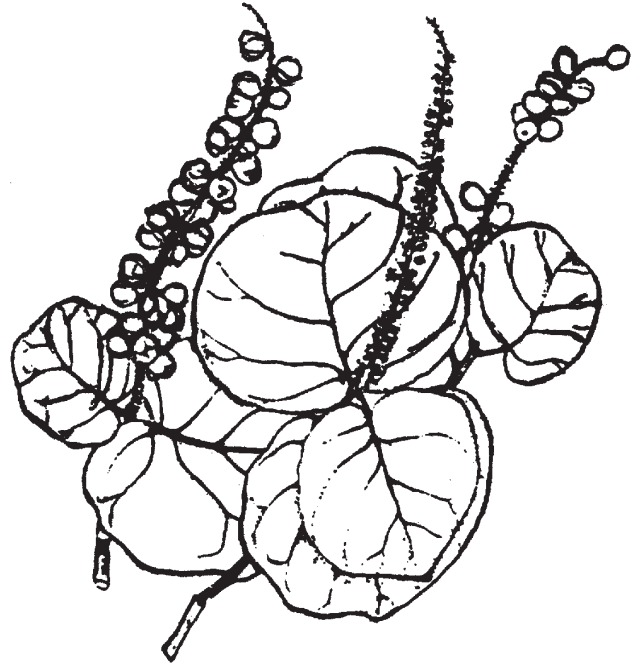
wetlands

## SEA GRAPE

*Coccoloba uvifera*

Sea grapes are one of the few trees in Florida that will grow right on the beach. These attractive, salt-tolerant trees bear purple, grape-like fruits used in making jams, jellies and even wine. The flowers are fragrant and a favorite of honeybees.

Coastal tribes ate sea grapes regularly. The round, leathery leaves were plates to hold or wrap up hot food.



**SCIENTIFIC NAME:**

*Coccoloba uvifera*

**PRONOUNCIATION/**

**ko-ko-LOBE-a:**

(Greek) lobed berry

**MEANING:**

**oo-VIFF-er-a:** grape bearing

**FAMILY:**

Polygonaceae (Buckwheat Family)

**HEIGHT:**

25'

**HABIT OF GROWTH:**

Shrub or tree; crooked, forms broad mounds

**HOW TO IDENTIFY:**

Smooth, pale grey bark, peeling in patches; round, leathery, evergreen leaves with red veins; small, ivory blossoms are borne on 1' long stalks in spring; purple, 1/2", round 'grapes' hang in long bunches

**HABITAT:**

Beaches and coastal dune forest in southern Florida

## SILVER BUTTONWOOD

*Conocarpus erectus var. sericea*

The Silver Buttonwood is a large shrub or small tree found on coastal dunes. It gets its name from its flowers held in tight little clusters that look like buttons. The leaves are soft, hairy, and silver colored. This plant is very salt-tolerant and commonly planted as hedges near the beach.

Native Americans found the wood to be an excellent source of charcoal for smoking and curing meat and fish. An extract from the bark was treated skin rashes and diseases, diarrhea, and bleeding.



**SCIENTIFIC NAME:**

*Conocarpus erecta*

**PRONUNCIATION/  
MEANING:**

**CONE-o-car-pus:** describing the conical fruit  
**ay-REK-tah:** upright

**FAMILY:**

Combretaceae (Indian Almond Family)

**HEIGHT:**

60'

**HABIT OF GROWTH:**

Large shrub or tree with upright branching

**HOW TO IDENTIFY:**

Narrow, pointed, dull green or silver, evergreen leaves; light green flowers held in round, button-like clusters; fruit is a purplish-green cone

**HABITAT:**

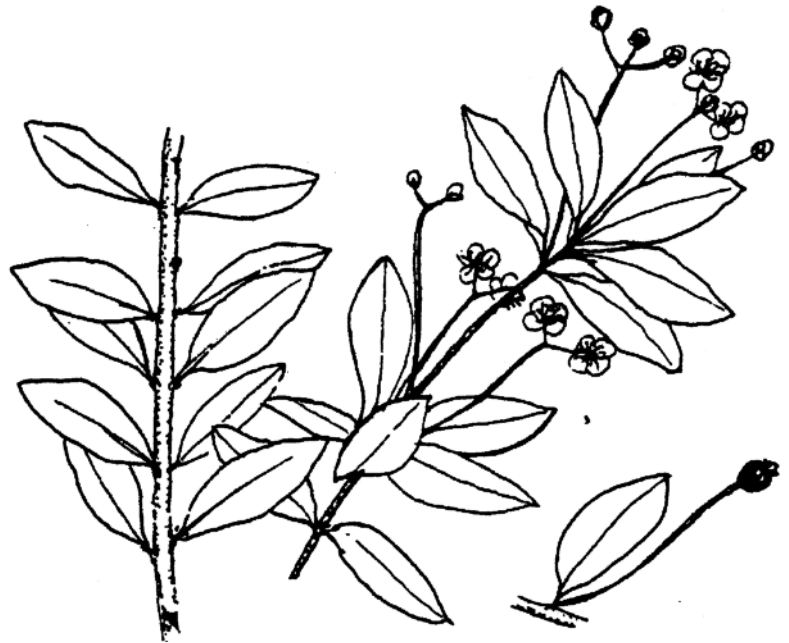
coastal dunes and mangrove forest in central and southern Florida

## SIMPSON'S STOPPER

*Myrcianthes fragrans*

Simpson's Stopper has smooth, reddish bark that flakes off in papery sections. The small, round leaves of this plant are dark green and give off a spicy scent when crushed. Star-like, fragrant, white flowers appear on the tips of branches and red berries follow that birds love to eat.

The leaves of this plant were crushed and made into tea and was medicine that stopped diarrhea; thus the name the 'Stopper Tree'! The strong, smooth wood made arrows and handles for spears and tools.



**SCIENTIFIC NAME:**

*Myrcianthes fragrans*

**PRONOUNCIATION/  
MEANING:**

**MEER-see-ann-thees:** resembling *Myrcia*.

**FRAY-granz:** fragrant

**FAMILY:**

Myrtaceae (Myrtle Family)

**HEIGHT:**

20'

**HABIT OF GROWTH:**

shrub or small tree; upright

**HOW TO IDENTIFY:**

shiny, aromatic, evergreen, 3/4" leaves; small, white, fragrant flowers held in clusters at the branch tips; oval, 1/4", red fruit

**HABITAT:**

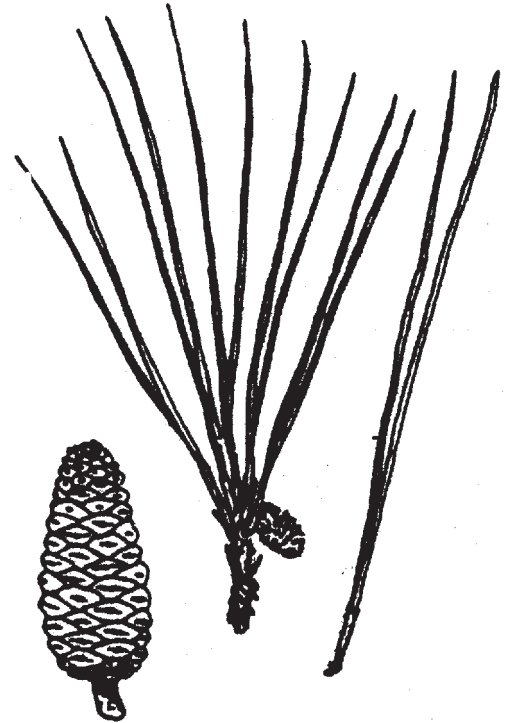
coastal hammocks and uplands in central and southern Florida

## SLASH PINE

*Pinus elliottii*, variety *elliottii*

One of the most important pines in the southeast for commercial purposes is the slash pine. The common name is derived from the turpentine face or "slash" cut into this tree's bark to collect its resinous sap. The sap is used in the preparation of turpentine and rosin (rosin is used to make furniture varnish). The culture and processing of this tree contributes significantly to Florida's economy. More than 100 million slash pines are planted in Florida each year to replace those cut for lumber, pulpwood, and rosin.

Seeds were extracted from pine cones by Native Americans to be roasted or eaten raw. The inner bark of the tree was also eaten. Needles were used for floor coverings or bedding. The resin had medicinal uses.



**SCIENTIFIC NAME:**

*Pinus elliottii*

**PRONOUNCIATION/  
MEANING:**

**PI-nus:** (Latin) pine

**el-ee-OT-ee:** in honor of Stephen Elliott, a Botanist variety *elliottii*: used to differentiate this form Of the species from the variety *densa*, found only in South Florida

**FAMILY:**

Pinaceae (Pine Family)

**HEIGHT:**

100'

**HABIT OF GROWTH:**

upright tree, becoming round-topped when mature

**HOW TO IDENTIFY:**

rough, scaly, reddish-brown bark; evergreen needles up to 5" long, in groups of two or three; tiny male flowers are held in catkins, female flowers in cones; fruit is a broadly ovoid cone, up to 6" in length

**HABITAT:**

northern coastal hammocks and uplands

## SOUTHERN MAGNOLIA

*Magnolia grandiflora*

The Southern Magnolia is a grand tree of the forest and considered to be among the most beautiful flowering trees in the world.

The Native Americans made tools from the heavy wood of the Magnolia and the beautifully scented flowers provided oil with lemony fragrance.



**SCIENTIFIC NAME:**

*Magnolia grandiflora*

**PRONOUNCIATION/**

**mag-NO-lee-a:** for P. Magnol,  
an early French botanist.

**MEANING:**

**gran-dee FLO-ra:** large  
flowered

**FAMILY:**

Magnoliaceae (Magnolia Family)

**HEIGHT:**

75'

**HABIT OF GROWTH:**

large, pyramidal tree; often with a straight central trunk and compact head.

**HOW TO IDENTIFY:**

huge, stiff, evergreen leaves that are waxy, dark green above and fuzzy, brown or light green below; huge, white, fragrant blossoms are produced in spring and summer; fruit is a brown cone that splits to reveal shiny red berries

**HABITAT:**

swamps and wet hammocks throughout the state

## SPANISH MOSS

*Tillandsia usneoides*

Spanish moss grows on other plants, but it is not a parasite. It actually absorbs moisture and nutrients from air, rain, and decomposing organic matter. Plants that use other plants for support without feeding on them are called **epiphytes**. Most species in the pineapple family, of which Spanish moss is a member, are epiphytic.

Spanish moss produces slender, branching, leafy stems that may reach 20' in length. They are covered with small, white hairs that give the plant a ghostly appearance. This plant is most often found growing on the branches of live oak and bald cypress trees. Spanish moss has been processed commercially for packing material and for stuffing upholstery.



The Seminoles steamed the plant to kill tiny insects living in it, then wove its fiber into rope, and made clothing, bedding and bandages, and even baby diapers from the long, soft stems.

**SCIENTIFIC NAME:**

*Tillandsia usneoides*

**PRONOUNCIATION/  
MEANING:**

**ti-LAND-zee-a:** named for Elias Tillands, a Finnish botanist of the late 17<sup>th</sup> century;  
**uhs-nee-oy-deez:** resembling lichens of the genus Usnea

**FAMILY:**

Bromeliaceae (Pineapple Family)

**HABIT OF GROWTH:**

herbaceous, epiphytic, hanging

**HOW TO IDENTIFY:**

evergreen, long, pendulous, grayish-green, stems; tiny, pale green or blue, fragrant flowers are borne in leaf axils

**HABITAT:**

found throughout Florida, mainly on oak and cypress trees

## SWAMP RED BAY

*Persea palustris*

The Swamp Red Bay is a large evergreen tree commonly found in swamps and moist areas. It is easily identified by its long, thin, pointed leaves that smell very spicy when crushed. This tree is related to the Mediterranean Bay Tree which is the source of the herb bay leaf that is often used to flavor spaghetti sauce and other dishes.

Native Americans and early settlers in Florida also used the leaves of the Red Bay as an herb to season their food.



**SCIENTIFIC NAME:**

*Persea palustris*

**PRONOUNCIATION/  
MEANING:**

**PAIR-see-ah:** Greek word for this genus  
**pal-LUS-tris:** marsh-loving

**FAMILY:**

Lauraceae (Laurel Family)

**HEIGHT:**

50'

**HABIT OF GROWTH:**

large, upright tree

**HOW TO IDENTIFY:**

thin gray twigs, with thin, pointed, evergreen leaves; tiny greenish-yellow flowers followed by small 1/2" black fruit

**HABITAT:**

wet areas throughout the state



## WHITE INDIGO BERRY

*Randia aculeata*

White indigo berry is a shrub or small, evergreen tree with dark, shiny leaves and small, white flowers. This plant is named for its fruit which has a white skin and dark blue pulp. The fruit is edible, but it will turn your tongue dark blue!

Native Americans used the juice from the berries to make blue body paint and dye for pottery and clothing. The strong, flexible wood of White Indigo Berry was used to make fishing poles and bows for hunting.

**SCIENTIFIC NAME:**

*Randia aculeata*

**PRONOUNCIATION/**

**RAN-dee-ya:** honors Isaac Rand, English botanist

**MEANING:**

**ah-cule-ee-AH-ta:** with spines or prickles

**FAMILY:**

Rubiaceae (Coffee Family)

**HEIGHT:**

10 - 20'

**HABIT OF GROWTH:**

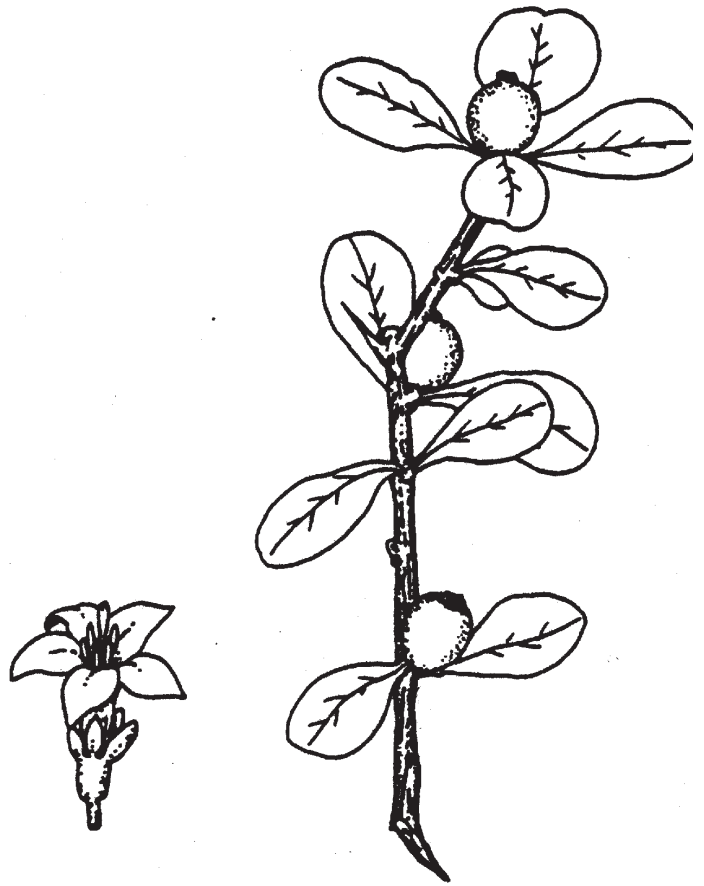
shrub or small, upright tree with opposite branches

**HOW TO IDENTIFY:**

oval, shiny, dark, evergreen leaves; opposite branches tipped with short spines; small, white flowers followed by 1/2", white berries with dark blue pulp

**HABITAT:**

coastal hammocks and shell ridges in southern Florida



## WILD COFFEE

*Psychotria nervosa*

Wild coffee is a shrub that grows in the shady hammocks.

It is not the coffee used as a drink; it gets its name from the small red oval fruit that look like a coffee beans. The leaves are shiny and dark green and white flowers appear in the spring and summer.

The Florida Natives used the leaves of this shrub as medicine to treat colds, asthma, respiratory infections and stomachaches.



**SCIENTIFIC NAME:**

*Psychotria nervosa*

**PRONOUNCIATION/**

**sy-e-koe-TREE-yuh:**

(Greek) psyche, soul or life

**MEANING:**

**ner-VOE-suh:** affecting the nervous system

**FAMILY:**

Rubiaceae (Coffee Family)

**HEIGHT:**

4 to 10 feet

**HABIT OF GROWTH:**

shrub

**HOW TO IDENTIFY:**

upright rounded shrub with dark green shiny leaves that look puckered and have veins. White flowers appear in spring and summer, followed by small red fruit

**HABITAT:**

hammocks, shade, part-shade

## YAUPON HOLLY

*Ilex vomitoria*

The wood of Yaupon (YOW-pon) was used by the Miccosukee-Seminoles to make arrows and ramrods. The bark made medicine to cure “dance sickness”, which included nightmares, shaking and talking while asleep. As with Dahoon holly, the leaves of yaupon were brewed into a tea. However Yaupon tea causes vomiting if drunk in large quantities, it was used for cleansing rituals and criminal trials!



**SCIENTIFIC NAME:**

*Ilex vomitoria*

**PRONOUNCIATION/  
MEANING:**

**EYE-lecks:** ancient Latin name  
**vom-i-TORE-ee-a:** (Latin)  
because the tea causes vomiting

**FAMILY:**

Aquifoliaceae (Holly Family)

**HEIGHT:**

25'

**HABIT OF GROWTH:**

upright, twiggy, shrub or tree; spreads by suckers to form large colonies

**HOW TO IDENTIFY:**

gray-green twigs bear small, shiny, oval, evergreen leaves; flowers are tiny and light green; clusters of small, bright red berries appear in winter

**HABITAT:**

hammocks and stream banks in northern and central Florida