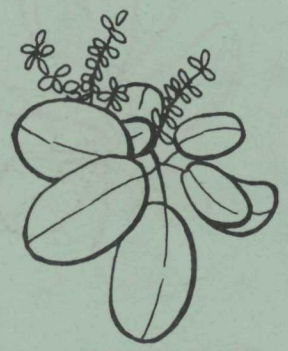
BLACK MANGROVE

Mangroves line the shores of Mosquito Lagoon and their decaying leaves are an important link in the estuarine food chain, The Black Mangrove (Avicennia germinans) can be easily identified by its vertical aerating roots called pneumatophores. The fruit is limabean shaped and dark green. The leaves excrete pure salt and the earlier settlers would dip the leaves in their stew to remove the salt and season the stew.



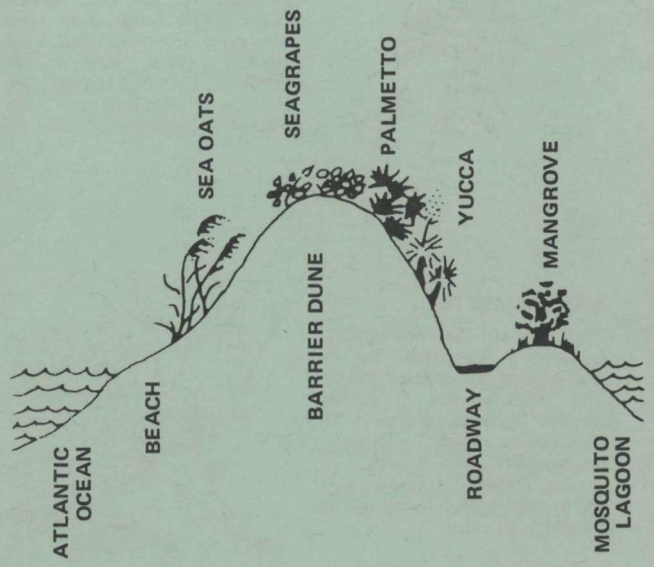
WHITE MANGROVE

The Buttonwood and the White Mangrove usually grow on the higher ground behind the Red and Black Mangroves. The White Mangrove (laguncularia racemosa) can be identified by its large, flattened, oval leaves. This mangrove excretes salt by means of two salt glands located at the base of each leaf.

BUTTONWOOD

The leaves of the Buttonwood (Conocarpus erecta) are elliptical in shape and also have two salt glands at the base of each leaf. The common name comes from the small cone-like fruit which resemble buttons. This species was used by early settlers in medicine, tanning leather, and making charcoal.

COASTAL VEGETATION COMMUNITIES



GUIDE TO COASTAL VEGETATION IN

CANAVERAL NATIONAL SEASHORE

Canaveral National Seashore includes a variety of plant communities within its boundaries. The park offers the casual observer and the more serious botanist a unique opportunity to observe undistrubed native costal vegetation. This pamphlet covers a few of the more common plants between the shores of Mosquito Lagoon and the dunes bordering the Atlantic.

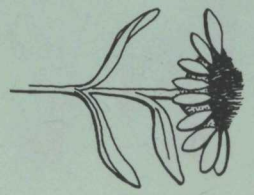
The plants in this pamphlet are only a very small sample of the over 700 species found in Canaveral National Seashore. For more information contact the Park Naturalist or stop by the Park Headquarters - Visitor Center located on State Road 402, seven miles east of Titusville.

SEAGRAPE

The large, rounded leaves of the Seagrape (Coccolobia uvifera) are green with a bright red midrib. The ripened fruit of this coastal scrub is edible and makes delicious jelly. During the fall racoons frequently visit the dunes to feed on the seagrapes. This tropical species does not naturally occur north of the seashore boundaries.

BEACH SUNFLOWER

The Beach Sunflower (Helianthus debilis) and the Sea Ox-eye (Borrichia Frutescens) are two of the more common wildflowers found along the coastal strand. Both are members of the Composite family. The leaves of the low growing Beach Sunflower are dark green and the flower is yellow with a brown center. The grayish-leaved Sea Ox-eye stands taller and displays a solid yellow flower at the end of each branch.



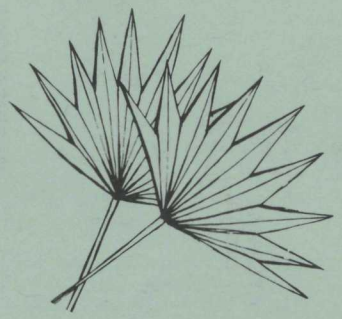
SEA OX-EYE

SEA OATS

Sea Oats (Uniola paniculata) play a major role in the stabilization of the coastal strand. The long roots hold the sand in place and help prevent wind and water erosion. The picking of Sea Oats is prohibited by park regulations and Florida law.

SAW PALMETTO

The Palmetto (Serenoa repens) is quickly identified by its many large fan-shaped leaves. The inflorescence of white, fragrant flowers make it an important plant in honey production. A variety of snakes, some poisonous, hunt the small rodents living in the palmetto thickets.

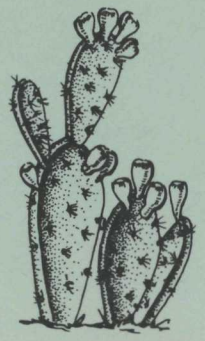


YUCCA

The sharp-pointed, bayonet-like leaves of the Yucca give it the common name of Spanish Bayonet (Yucca aloifolia). The creamy-white blossoms are pollinated only by the tiny yucca moth. The moth lays its eggs in the yucca flowers where the larvae feed on the developing seeds. The larvae mature and soon drop to the ground and pupate. When the yucca bloom the next spring the adult moth emerges to begin the cycle again.

PRICKLY PEAR CACTUS

Several species of the Prickly Pear Cactus (Opuntia) grow in the sandy soil along the coast. All have yellow blossoms which soon give way to the edible red fruit. Try a "Prickly pear" but be sure to peel off the spines first.

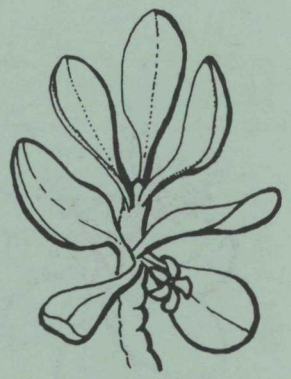


WAX MYRTLE

Wax myrtle (Myrica cerifera) is also known as Southern Bayberry. It grows as a small tree in low moist areas of the park. The aromatic leaves may be dried and used for seasoning in your favorite stew. Early settlers boiled the waxy berries and made bayberry candles from the fragrant wax.

BEACH BERRY

The Beach Berry (Scaevola Plumieri) blooms almost continuously. The inch long, white flowers are slit on the upper side and give it another common name, half-flower. The mature, black, juicy berries provide a year-round food source for wildlife.



RED MANGROVE

The long pointed seed "pods" sometimes found along the shores of the lagoon and the beach belong to the Red Mangrove (Rhizophora mangle). The seeds sprout while still on the tree. Once the seedlings fall they are carried by the tide to new locations where they send out roots and begin forming a new mangrove colony. Red Mangrove is more common to South Florida but a few seedlings can be found in the seashore.