

## 6. SAWGRASS (*Cladium jamaicense*)

The serrated edges of the leaves of this tough grass can slice unprotected skin. Saw-grass grows in clumps and the dense foliage offers safe nesting and foraging areas for many birds and small mammals. In particular, its small brown flowers produce seeds liked by wild ducks.



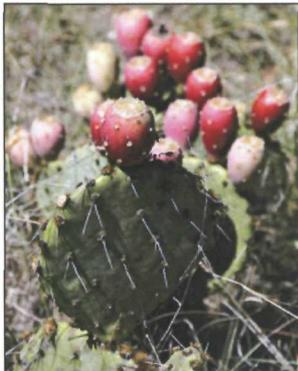
## 7. WILLOW (*Salix caroliniana*)

A small deciduous tree (to about 10 m) found all throughout Florida. The alternate leaves and bark contain salicylic acid (found in Aspirin). Tea brewed from the bark has been used to treat fever, muscle pain, headaches, and diarrhea; a poultice from leaves was used on sprains and bruises, and a tonic was used as a blood thinner and to stimulate hair growth.



## 8. PRICKLY PEAR CACTUS (*Opuntia stricta*)

Its large flat pads, or leaves, are jointed and bear long thin spines that can pierce the skin if brushed against or stepped on. Also known as Indian Fig, the despined pads can be used as a salad vegetable or



pickled. In the fall, yellow flowers ripen into a purplish fruit that can be peeled and eaten as a refreshing treat, and is said to cure many ills.

## 9. RED CEDAR (*Juniperus virginiana*)

Also known as Red Juniper, this evergreen tree is widely found across eastern North America, and grows to 12-18 m. Male and female cones grow on separate trees. Many birds eat cedar berries and their digestive juices prepare seeds for germination. Parts of the plant may be toxic to some people, but Native Americans used teas made from its hard, blue-green berries to treat colds, worms, coughs and rheumatism. They also breathed the smoke from burning leaves to ease colds and bronchitis, and for purification rituals. Cedar's aromatic lumber is used in chests and closets.

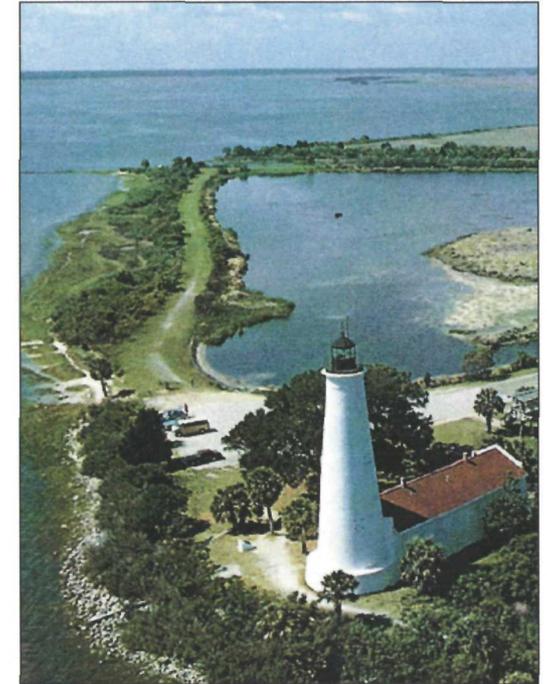


## 10. SABAL PALM (*Sabal palmetto*)

Florida's official state tree (to 12 m) is also known as Cabbage Palm because the top of the palm resembles a cabbage and can be eaten. People have used palm fronds and fibers for roofing material and weaving a rough cloth, and may eat Sabal palm's large black berries. Several wildlife species also feed on the berries.



# Plants of the Lighthouse Levee Trail



St Marks National Wildlife Refuge

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Levees, such as the one around Lighthouse Pond, were built in the 1930's by the Civilian Conservation Corps when the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge was established. The purpose of the Refuge then was to provide habitat for migratory waterfowl, and even today Refuge biologists manage impoundments, such as the Lighthouse Pond, to provide food for wintering, resident and migratory birds.

The Refuge has become crucial for other species too, such as bald eagles, alligators, salamanders, and migrating monarch butterflies that congregate along the coast in October.

Plants growing along the coast have adapted to harsh living conditions - extreme heat, lashing wind and salt. Their leaves are tough, and the plants tend to be small compared to their inland counterparts. Many of them were valuable to Native Americans as food and for medicinal purposes. They provide shelter and food for wildlife. Enjoy your stroll along this trail and take a few moments to learn more about some of these plants.



Cover photo courtesy of Lee Cook  
Prickly Ash photo with permission of Jeff Pippen  
Sawgrass photo with permission of Lowell Urbatsch

### 1. SALT BUSH (*Baccharis*)

Also known as Sea Myrtle and Groundsel Bush, this evergreen shrub (to about 4 m) is common in coastal areas, on roadsides, and in disturbed inland areas. Its leaves are alternate, thick, coarse and pale green. Small white flowers begin blooming early in the fall, and attract thousands of monarch butterflies.



### 2. WAX MYRTLE (*Myrica cerifera*)

This large shrub or small tree (to 12 m), also known as Southern Bayberry, has evergreen, spicy-smelling leaves. Its bluish waxy berries ripen in late summer and are eaten by birds. Early colonists used the berries to make candles. Teas made from various parts of the plant have been used to treat stomachaches, ulcers and colds. Because it is evergreen and beneficial to wildlife, Wax Myrtle is an excellent landscaping choice and can be found naturally throughout Florida.



### 3. DOTTED HORSEMINT (*Monarda punctata*)

Also known as bee balm, this native wildflower blooms from late summer through fall. Insect pollinators such as butterflies and

bees are attracted to its small colorful flowers. As with all members of the Mint Family, its stem is square in cross section. Native Americans used its leaves to make a tea for treating fevers, colds, and stomach cramps.



### 4. PRICKLY ASH (*Zanthoxylum clava-herculis*)

Common names for this deciduous tree (to 17 m) include Hercules Club, since the twigs are armed with spines, and the Toothache Tree, because native people used it to treat Toothaches. A member of the citrus family, all of its parts have a strong aroma.



### 5. YUCCA (*Yucca aloifolia*)

Leaves bearing sharp tips give this plant its common names of Spanish Bayonet and Spanish Dagger. In late spring, a single stalk of white bell shaped flowers appears, and in late summer red berries can be seen. Native people and pioneers used yucca soap for bathing, and especially for hair shampoo. Yucca favors desert-like areas where the living is not so easy.

