



6. RED CEDAR (*Juniperus virginiana*)
This evergreen tree grows in many areas of eastern North America. Male and female cones grow on separate trees. Many birds eat the blue berries and their digestive juices prepare seeds for germination. Parts of the plant may be toxic but Native people made tea from the hard, blue-green berries to treat colds, worms, cough, and rheumatism. Breathing smoke from burning leaves seems to ease colds and bronchitis and is used for purification rituals. The aromatic lumber is used in chests and closets.



7. LIVE OAK (*Quercus virginiana*) A large, slow-growing evergreen tree. The live oaks along this trail were planted. The live oak, Florida's most widespread oak, grows in a variety of sites. They can live hundreds of years. The heavy branches of old trees bend to the ground. In the days of wooden ships, the Navy set aside large tracts of live oak forests for their exclusive use. The limbs were prized as ship's knees and ribs and the strong wood was also used for hubs and cogs. Oil expressed from the acorns is used for cooking.



8. YAUPON HOLLY (*Ilex vomitoria*) A small tree or shrub usually growing in thickets. Like other

holly species, male and female plants are necessary for reproduction. Small white flowers bloom in the spring and bright red berries are present for migrating songbirds from fall through early spring. Yaupon is the only holly that contains caffeine. Dry the leaves (DO NOT use the berries) and crush or grind to a powder to steep into a tea. **All holly berries are highly toxic to humans.**



9. SABAL PALM (*Sabal palmetto*) The sabal palm is Florida's state tree. People have used palm fronds and fibers for roofing and rough cloth. Leaves can be woven into hats and baskets. The palm's large black berries can be eaten by people as well as songbirds and game birds.



10. SHELL MOUND PRICKLY PEAR CACTUS (*Opuntia stricta*) Long thin spines on the flat jointed pads of the prickly pear can pierce the skin. Also known as Indian Fig, the pads can be eaten in salads or pickled. Pretty yellow flowers ripen into reddish fruit and can be used for jelly. This plant is currently listed as threatened by the state of Florida.

PLANTS ALONG THE LIGHTHOUSE LEVEE TRAIL St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge

Where Wildlife Comes First!



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St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge was established on October 31, 1931, to provide habitat for migratory waterfowl. Levees, such as the one around Lighthouse Pool, were built in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps. Refuge biologists continue to manage impoundments for wintering, resident, and migratory birds. The refuge is crucial for other species such as bald eagles, alligators, salamanders, migrating monarch butterflies that congregate along the coast in the fall, as well as a number of rare and threatened plants.

Plants growing along the coast must withstand harsh conditions – lashing winds, extreme heat, occasional low temperatures and salt water. Their leaves are tough and the plants tend to be smaller than their inland counterparts. Many were valuable to Native Americans for food and medicines. All of them provide shelter or food for wildlife from insects to birds to mammals. Enjoy a stroll along this trail and take a few moments to learn about some of these plants.



1. SALT BUSH (*Baccharis halimifolia*) Also known as sea myrtle and groundsel, this evergreen shrub is common along coastal areas, roadsides, and disturbed inland areas. Small creamy flowers bloom against its pale green leathery leaves throughout the fall attracting thousands of monarch butterflies.



2. WAX MYRTLE (*Myrica cerifera*) This aromatic evergreen, also called southern bayberry, can grow to about 25 feet tall. Clusters of small bluish berries ripen in late summer and attract flocks of yellow-rumped warblers. Early colonists made candles from the wax on the berries. Teas made from various parts of the plant have been used to treat stomach aches, ulcers, and colds. Leaves can also be used to flavor soups and stews in place of bay leaves. Wax myrtle is an excellent landscape plant throughout Florida, however male and female plants are necessary to produce berries.



3. DOTTED HORSEMINT (*Monarda punctata*) This distinctive wildflower, also known as bee balm, blooms from late summer through fall. Many insect pollinators are drawn to the small pinkish flowers. As with all members of the mint family the stem is square. Native Americans made tea from the leaves for treating fevers, colds, and stomach cramps.



4. PRICKLY ASH (*Zanthoxylum clava-herculis*) Common names for this deciduous tree include Hercules club, because the bark bears thick corky spines, and toothache tree, because chewing on the bark or leaves can relieve toothache pain. A member of the citrus family, all parts have a strong aroma. It is a host plant for the giant swallowtail butterfly.



5. YUCCA (*Yucca aloifolia*) Sharp-tipped leaves give this plant its common name of Spanish bayonet. Because of the stiff pointed leaves, yuccas are great security plants around windows. Do not place where people and pets walk or play. In late spring, a single stalk of white bell-shaped flowers become greenish fruits in late summer. The tuberous roots contain saponins from which people made soap and shampoos.