

## John D. MacArthur Beach State Park



John D. MacArthur Beach State Park is one of the finest examples of subtropical coastal habitat in South Florida. Encompassing 436 acres of uplands and submerged land, the Park is a unique mixture of mangroves and coastal plant communities.

Several native tropical species that thrive in the Park are rare or endangered, including sea lavender, beach peanut, beach star, and hand fern.

All plants, animals, and other resources are protected in Florida's State Parks. Please take nothing but pictures and memories. For your protection and that of your natural heritage, please stay on designated trails and obey all Park signs.

### John D. MacArthur Beach State Park

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North Palm Beach, FL 33408

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Nature Center 561-624-6952  
Beach Outfitters Gift Shop  
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[www.macarthurbeach.org](http://www.macarthurbeach.org)



## Plant Guide



## John D. MacArthur Beach State Park





**Welcome to John D. MacArthur Beach State Park!** This Plants Guide provides a self-guided walking tour of the Park's native coastal flora. Look at the trails on the map for a botanical exploration of three unique park ecosystems – through the **maritime hammock**, over the **estuary boardwalk**, and down the **Dune Trail**.

**1** Brown numbered plant markers are located along the trail on walkway railings and free-standing posts. The plant markers are numbered 1 through 24 and correspond to the numbered descriptions in this guide.



**1. Snowberry** (*Chiococca alba*) Growing in sunny locations, the snowberry shrub has leathery, oblong leaves which grow up to 3 inches, and belongs to the same family as wild coffee. The yellow flowers are followed by profuse clusters of white berries.



are very aromatic when crushed and can be a substitute for the common spice bay leaf.

**3. Strangler Fig** (*Ficus aurea*) Roots growing from the limbs to the ground distinguish this massive tree which provides fruit for birds and mammals. Birds spread the seeds through their droppings which attach to other trees such as cabbage palms. The strangler fig will then send down roots overshadowing the host tree and eventually killing it.

**4. Gumbo Limbo** (*Bursera simaruba*) The red peeling bark of the gumbo limbo has given this canopy tree the nickname "Tourist Tree."



**5. Sea Grape** (*Coccoloba uvifera*) In the hammock, sea grape grows as a tall, straight tree. However, sea grape trees can grow in varying conditions and adapt to suit their setting. Sea grape fruits are eaten by birds and animals.

**6. Buttonwood** (*Conocarpus erecta*) On the landward fringe of the mangrove community, the buttonwood is easily distinguished from mangroves by its gnarled trunk and the shape of the fruits in cone-like heads or buttons.

**7. Red Mangrove** (*Rhizophora mangle*) Characterized by thin gray bark, dark red wood and prop roots, red mangrove trees filter out salt by reverse osmosis, only allowing freshwater to enter their systems. Propagules (seeds that germinate on the tree) grow to almost a foot in length, drop from the tree, float for up to 40 days, and then take root in shallow areas.

**8. Black Mangrove** (*Avicennia germinans*) Identified by black bark and pneumatophores (breather roots). The pneumatophores grow upward out of the soil and water to bring air to the plant. In the sun, you can see the salt these mangroves excrete through the tops of their leaves.

Look for mangroves, large gumbo limbos, strangler figs, and sea grapes along the trail as you continue on the east side of the boardwalk.



**9. Pigeon Plum** (*Coccoloba diversifolia*) Although the fruit is a favorite of many birds, it is not as tasty to humans as its relative, the sea grape. Seminole Indians dried the purplish fruit to enhance its flavor.

**10. Blolly** (*Guapira discolor*) A small tree with smooth light bark, the leaves are rounded with a blunt tip. The translucent (permits the passage of light) mid-vein of the leaf is important in identification.

**11. False Mastic** (*Sideroxylon foetidissimum*) A dominant canopy tree that grows to 80 feet, it produces yellow fruit that ripen in winter as an animal food source.



**12. Rougeberry** (*Rivina humilis*) This understory plant produces small red berries year-round, providing food for animals.



**13. Blackbead** (*Pithecellobium keyensis*) The name describes the seeds of this small tree which were traditionally used in making jewelry. Surrounding the seeds are bright reddish arils which make the seeds more visible to wildlife.

**14. Torchwood** (*Amyris elemifera*) A medium-sized tree with thin gray bark and leaves which droop from thin yellow stems in threes, the torchwood attracts many birds and insects.



**15. Wild Coffee** (*Psychotria nervosa*) A relative of commercial coffee, this small shrub has shiny green leaves and red fruit and is not recommended for human consumption.

**15. Paradise Tree** (*Simarouba glauca*) A large canopy tree with compound leaves of 10 to 16 leaflets, this plant is dioecious, with male and female flowers on separate trees. The fruits found on female trees are very important for wildlife.

**16. White Indigoberry** (*Randia aculeata*) The spiny shrub has small leaves usually clustered at the ends of the twigs. Fruits are white on the outside, indigo on the inside, and produced year-round at the base of the leaf clusters.



**18. Nickerbean** (*Caesalpinia bonduc*) vine-like shrub covered with curved spines, it is easily identified by the shiny compound leaves and prickly, brown seed pods.

**17. Cabbage Palm** (*Sabal palmetto*) Designated as the Florida state tree in 1953, this palm grows in almost any soil and has many uses, including food, medicine, and landscaping.

**18. Spanish Stopper** (*Eugenia foetida*) This small tree has opposite leaves that are dark green above and lighter below. The species name foetida (fetid) is for the unpleasant scent of the flowers.

**21. Coin Vine** (*Dalbergia ecastophyllum*) Shrubs are found on the edge of the mangroves and hammock. Ovate pointed leaves are large and leathery; fruits are round and flattened, resembling a coin.



**22. Jamaica Caper** (*Capparis cyanophallophora*) One of the smallest trees in the hammock, its glossy leaves are folded when new. It produces numerous flowers with long purple stems and white petals.

**23. Saw Palmetto** (*Serenoa repens*) Known for the distinctive trunk which can grow upright or horizontally along the ground, the stems of each frond are edged with small spines giving them a saw-like feel and appearance.



**24. Wild Lime** (*Zanthoxylum fagara*) A member of the citrus family, wild lime leaflets are aromatic when crushed. This is a primary food source for the Giant Swallowtail.

### Look Up for Common Spiders

**Golden Orb Weaver** Commonly known as banana spiders due to their black and yellow banded legs, these photogenic creatures are not harmful to humans. They are usually found during late summer and fall.



**Spiny Orb Weaver** These small animals are found from North Carolina to Florida. They are not harmful to humans and help with insect control.