



The site was purchased with funds from Florida Communities Trust's Preservation 2000 program.

Safety Tips

Visitors use this site at their own risk:

Carry an adequate amount of drinking water.

There is no potable water on-site.

A series of trails cover the site, and may be accessed directly from the parking lot.

- ◆ While hiking the trails, you may encounter an alligator, feral hog, or poisonous snake.
- ◆ These animals may be dangerous.
- ◆ Please observe all wildlife from a distance.
- ◆ Public hours are dawn to dusk.
- ◆ To maintain the site's pristine character, remain on the trails.
- ◆ Please leave plants and animals for others to enjoy.

◆◆ A honey bee hive is located near the hiking trail. Please do not disturb the hive and use your discretion if you are allergic to bee stings.

In case of emergency, call 911.



A multi-use site with something for everyone. Recreational opportunities include volleyball, horseshoes, disc golf, and hiking through historic and natural areas. Picnic areas include tables and charcoal grills.

ST. LUCIE VILLAGE BOARD OF ALDERMAN

Site Managed in Cooperation with
St. Lucie Board of County Commissioners Environmental Resources Department

**2300 Virginia Avenue
 Ft. Pierce, FL 34982
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www.stlucieco.gov/erd

Interpretative Trail



1) Bracken fern (*Pteridium aquilinum*)

Its large triangular fronds are divided into three main parts. Bipinnately compounded fronds can grow 2-4 feet long and 1-3 foot wide. Spores are born on the outer edges of the undersides in late summer.

2) Saw Palmetto (*Serenoa repens*)

A small fan palm that grows dense usually close to the ground. Older saw palms can grow more upright in areas of dense canopy. Palmate leaves protrude in a whorled formation from the trunk; these leaves (fronds) can grow to 2-3 wide. Foliage color can vary from light green to bluish-silver; the latter being the choice variety of landscapers. The petioles (attachment "stems" to the trunk) can be up to 2 feet long and are sharply-toothed much like a saw. Berries of the palm, born in fall, are a key component to wildlife diets and as a human medicinal product.



3) Beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*)

Evergreen shrubs are appealing in flower and especially in fruit. They are known for their colorful fruit rather than for flowers or foliage. The white/pink blossoms are hidden beneath 2 to 4 inch leaves in midsummer attracting butterflies and followed in the fall by tiny berries that cluster along the stems. The berries last two to three weeks and are an excellent food source for birds and for making jellies.



4) Giant Leather Fern (*Acrostichum danaeifolium*)

Florida's largest native fern, will grow in almost any damp area, forming thick clumps. It is stiff with a leathery look to it and are thick and tough feeling. Grows in fresh & brackish water swamps; likes wet feet; prefers full sun for at least part of the day; grows in clumps arching to more or less erect in the middle of the clump. It tolerates more sun than most ferns. Is a tough problem-free plant.



5) Cabbage Palm (*Sabal palmetto*)

Florida state tree. The large fronds are deeply divided and folded in the middle, coloring a dull gray-green and 3-5 ft. across. The trunk is smooth and dark gray on older trees; younger trees are covered with cross-hatched old leaf bases. Blooms are small, white, fragrant flowers that hang in clusters on 3 ft. stems, appearing in early summer. The fruit is round, and black, ripening in fall. The edible bud, called heart of palm, is considered a delicacy but collecting it kills the tree.

6) Wild Coffee (*Psychotria nervosa*)

There are two species of wild coffee in this area; this species with glossy light green leaves and another with dull, darker green leaves (*Psychotria sulzneri*). Each species has leaves that can be up to 6 in. long with prominent veins. Multi-trunk, shrub with brown bark. The blooms, small white flowers in clusters appear in spring & summer with fruit of oval red berries about 1/3 in. long. Fruit was used by Natives from this region for making "coffee", although this drink is bitter and causes headaches.



7) Laurel Oak (*Quercus laurifolia*)

These oaks are semi-evergreen trees which keep their leaves until early spring, just before the new season's leaves appear. Its leaves are elliptical and rather small, usually two to four inches long and up to one inch wide. Its dark brown acorns are also small, about one-half inch long. On mature trees, the bark is very dark, thick and furrowed with broad, flat ridges. A major component of the hydric hammock canopy. **CAUTION: Honey Bee Hive Ahead**



8) Honey Bees (*Apis mellifera*)

One of the most familiar insects, the honeybee produces honey as a food reserve in colder months and when flowers are not in bloom. The queen, workers, and drones make up the types of bees found within this social community called a hive. Each bee has a important job to help the overall health of the hive. Honey bees beat their wings 11,000+ times per minute giving off the distinctive buzz.



9) Marlberry (*Ardisia escallonioides*)

An evergreen tall-shrub or small tree that can grow up to 25' high. The narrow leaves are 3" to 6" long and 1" to 2" wide, simple, and alternately arranged. The leaves can be a variety of shapes: oblong, ovate, oblanceolate, and elliptical. The fruit is a round, glossy drupe that is 1/4" wide. The berry first appears as red and then turns dark purple to black as it ripens. It has a thin skin covering a dry, fleshy interior enclosing a single red-brown seed. The fruit hangs in dense clusters. Marlberry prefers well-drained, sandy, ridge soils. It is most common in hammocks, pine-lands, and other areas near the ocean.

10) Red Bay (*Persea borbonia*)

A large shrub to medium-sized tree, up to 70 feet. Leaf is alternate, simple, entire margins, lance-shaped, evergreen, 3 to 7 inches long, 1 to 2 inches wide, spicy odor when crushed, dark green above, pale green below. Galls common on leaves. Red bay has very aromatic leaves which can be substituted for the common spice, bay leaf, which normally is obtained from Bay laurel (*Laurus nobilis*), a European species in the same family. Substitute 2X the amount needed from the commercial bay.



11) Dahoon Holly (*Ilex cassine*)

Dahoon holly is a small tree that has a narrow growth habit of upward pointing branches that grows to a height of up to 30 ft. Evergreen in this area, the leaves are 2-4" long and 1" wide, simple with smooth edges with just a few small sharp teeth and a sharp bristle at the tip. The male tree carries flowers during the spring, while the female produces red berries during the winter; both can be quite showy in the landscape. Highly adaptable, but prefers wetter areas bordering marshes and swamps.

12) Myrsine (*Rapanea punctata*)

Tall shrub or small tree growing to 20 feet. It has thick, leathery leaves and small flowers. Dark blue to black fruits, loved by birds, are produced along the branches. Myrsine is native to hardwood hammocks and swampy areas. Often confused with Marlberry, but this has berries on stems, and petioles are greener.



13) Wax Myrtle (*Myrica cerifera*)

An evergreen shrub, or small tree that is highly adaptable, grows with multiple trunks that can colonize an entire area. The aromatic leaves are light-green, vary from 1-5 inches long and 1/2 inch wide, are alternate, simple and glossy above. The fruit is Round, waxy bluish-white drupes (1/8 inch in diameter), appearing in clusters on short stalks. Pioneers fashioned candles from the waxy berries.

14) Live Oak (*Quercus virginiana*)

South's most distinctive tree, especially when draped in Spanish moss. Trees have been reported with a branch spread of more than 150 feet and a trunk of 30 ft. or more. It is slow-growing but long lived. The flowers, typical of oaks, are catkins that hang down 2-3". The acorns provide food for squirrels and birds. Live oaks are often festooned with Spanish moss, resurrection fern, and other epiphytes. Acorns produced by these long-lived giants provide food for all types of wildlife.



15) Swamp Fern (*Blechnum serrulatum*)

While seven species of the *Blechnum* genus occur in the U.S., this species occurs only in Florida. A common understory plant of the hydric hammock, this fern can also be found in wetter marshes and prairies. Typically 2-4 feet in height, spreads on underground stems (rhizomes) and tends to form dense clusters. Like all ferns, produces spores for reproductive purposes.



16) Gall berry (*Ilex glabra*)

A small evergreen of the holly family, it grows to 4-8 feet, with stems arising from tuberous rhizomes. This shrub layer species has alternate, oval leaves 1-2 inches in length and 1/2 inch wide with smooth edges except the tooth tips. The 1/3 inch berries turn black in early fall, providing food for wildlife. These berries hang on to the plant for most of the winter. Honey bees are frequent visitors to this plants flowers to help make honey.

