



Native Plants of the Perry Tract



J.N. *Ding* Darling
National Wildlife Refuge



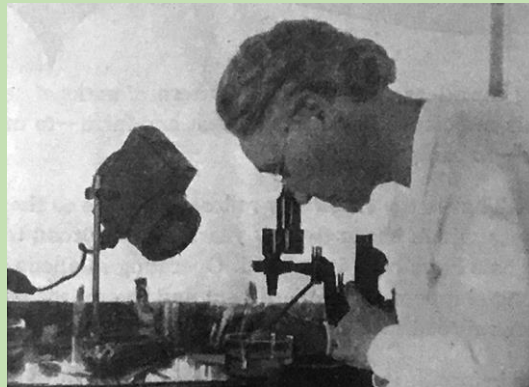
Please note: harvesting or eating plants, flowers, or fruits growing on refuge property is illegal.

Native plants are protected by federal law. Information on edibility and human use is included for educational purposes only.

Outside the refuge, never eat parts of any wild plant unless you are **100%** confident of the identification.

*Larval host data indicates how many species of moths or butterflies feed on the plant as caterpillars.

More information about the Perry Tract and Dr. Louise Perry's story [here](#).



Beach Bean, *Canavalia rosea*

The stems of this vine species can reach up to 20 feet in length along the ground. This species is highly salt-tolerant and, as its name implies, prefers the sandy soils found on beaches.

Wildlife use: flowers attractive to pollinators.

Human use: no extensive human use.

Larval host to 6 species of moths or butterflies.



***It is illegal to remove any plants or other items from federal lands.**

Blue Dwarf Palmetto, *Sabal minor*

The blueish green fronds of this small palm make it easily distinguishable from other similarly shaped palms. This species rarely reaches above 10 feet in height, and is often much smaller.

Wildlife use: shelter for birds and other wildlife.

Human use: as a garden and landscape plant.

Larval host to **10** species of moths or butterflies.



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Blue Porterweed, *Stachytarpheta jamaicensis*

In peak flower, this species has long spires of purplish blue flowers. It can also be recognized by its serrate, ovular leaves. Look for it growing in shady areas at the Perry Tract.

Wildlife use: flowers attractive to pollinators.

Human use: as a garden and landscape plant.

Larval host data unavailable.



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Bushy Bluestem, *Andropogon glomeratus*

This warm-season grass reaches heights of 2 to 4 feet and blooms from September to October. Bushy bluestem can be found growing throughout the dunes in the Perry Tract.

Wildlife use: excellent cover for wildlife, seeds eaten by birds and mammals.

Human use: historically, gathered into a broom for sweeping.

Larval host to **17** species of moths or butterflies.



Coastal Inkberry, *Scaevola plumieri*

Not to be confused with *Ilex glabra*, another species known as inkberry, *Scaevola plumieri* is common in the dunes at the Perry Tract. This evergreen shrub is easily recognized by its succulent leaves and large blueish black berries. **Berries poisonous to humans.**

Wildlife use: berries are food for small mammals and birds, shelter for wildlife.

Human use: provides stability to dunes and prevents erosion.

Larval host data unavailable.



Coastal Ragweed, *Ambrosia hispida*

This fast-growing plant only reaches a maximum height of three feet, and is a principle ground cover plant in the dunes of the Perry Tract.

Wildlife use: shelter for wildlife.

Human use: occasionally as a groundcover plant.

Larval host data unavailable.



Coontie, *Zamia integrifolia*

Also known as cardboard palm, this small shrub is common by the entrance of the Perry Tract.

Wildlife use: shelter for wildlife.

Human use: **plant is toxic**, but was historically eaten by Native Americans after leeching the toxin.

Larval host to **3** species of moths or butterflies.



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Cucumberleaf Sunflower, *Helianthus debilis*

A short sunflower species common in sunny areas in the Perry Tract. These plants bloom year-round in warm climates.

Wildlife use: seeds are an important food source for birds and flowers are attractive to pollinators.

Human use: flowers used for yellow dye, often planted intentionally on beaches to provide stability and prevent erosion.

Larval host to **58** species of moths or butterflies.



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Erect Prickly Pear, *Opuntia stricta*

As its name implies, the erect prickly pear grows with a rigid, upright posture. This is the dominant species of *Opuntia* in the southeastern USA.

Wildlife use: fruits and seeds consumed by wildlife, in particular gopher tortoise; flowers attractive to pollinators.

Human use: no extensive human use.

Larval host to **13** species of moths or butterflies.



Firebush, *Hamelia patens*

This medium to large bush is easily recognizable by its clusters of red and orange flowers. Look for this species growing in partial shade at the Perry Tract.

Wildlife use: food and shelter for wildlife, flowers attractive to pollinators including hummingbirds.

Human use: as a garden and landscape plant.

Larval host to **3** species of moths or butterflies.



Florida Fishpoison Tree, *Piscidia piscipula*

Keep an eye out for this shorter threatened tree species near the entrance of the Perry Tract. This species is highly drought-tolerant. Also known as Jamaican Dogwood

Wildlife use: food and shelter for wildlife, flowers attractive to pollinators.

Human use: **plant is toxic**; historically as an analgesic and sedative, and by Native Americans to sedate fish. Often used in woodcarving.

Larval host to **4** species of moths or butterflies.



Goat's-Foot Morning Glory, *Ipomoea pes-caprae*

This pantropical creeping vine grows almost exclusively on beaches, and is usually one of the first plant species to colonize bare dunes. This species is highly tolerant of extreme growth conditions including sand blast and saltwater.

Wildlife use: flowers attractive to pollinators.

Human use: as a primary sand stabilizer.

Larval host to **13** species of moths or butterflies.



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Gumbo-Limbo, *Bursera simaruba*

Sometimes jokingly referred to as the “tourist tree” because of its red and peeling bark, the gumbo-limbo is a small-to-medium sized tree native to southern Florida.

Wildlife use: berries are a food source for migratory birds.

Human use: manufacture of musical instruments, as firewood, and the resin is used as glue, varnish, or incense.

Larval host data unavailable.



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Paradise Tree, *Simarouba amara*

This small, evergreen tree species is fast-growing but short-lived. Look for it growing in full sun at the Perry Tract.

Wildlife use: food and shelter for wildlife, flowers attractive to pollinators.

Human use: historically, used to treat diarrhea and dysentery.

Larval host at least **5** species of moths or butterflies.



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Privet Senna, *Spartina spartinae*

This evergreen perennial shrub mainly flowers in spring and autumn when warmer temperatures overlap with shorter days.

Wildlife use: extensive shelter for wildlife such as birds and alligators.

Human use: no extensive human use.

Larval host to **13** species of moths or butterflies.



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Saw Palmetto, *Serenoa repens*

A short and slow-growing species, some individuals of this species in Florida could be 500 to 700 years old. Saw palmetto usually reaches no more than 7 feet in height, and most at the Perry Tract are significantly shorter.

Wildlife use: flowers attractive to pollinators.

Human use: leaves used as thatching by Native Americans.

Larval host to **8** species of moths or butterflies.



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Sea Oats, *Uniola paniculata*

These tall grasses are perhaps the most conspicuous plants growing in the dunes at the Perry Tract. In late summer and autumn, look for the large, golden-brown seed heads that give the plant its name.

Wildlife use: extensive shelter for wildlife.

Human use: prevents beach erosion.

Larval host data unavailable.



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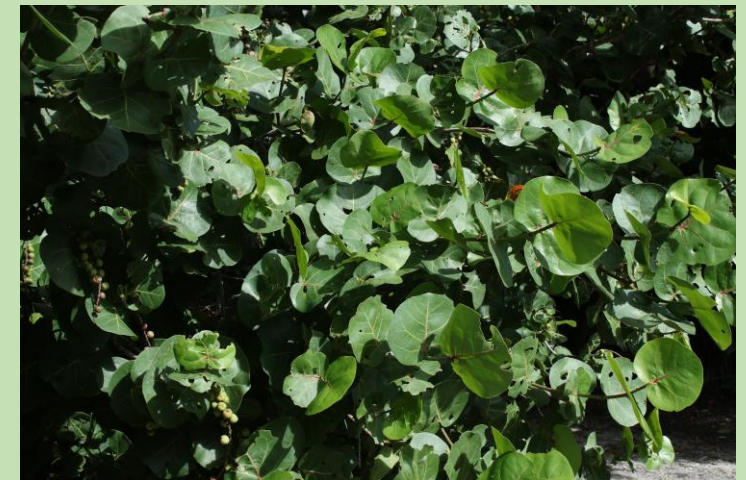
Seagrape, *Serenoa repens*

A common tropical beach plant in southern Florida and the Caribbean, seagrape is easily identified by its fruits and broad, round leaves.

Wildlife use: cover for birds and mammals, food source from edible fruit.

Human use: fruit is often made into jam.

Larval host to **15** species of moths or butterflies.



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Skeleton Fork Fern, *Psilotum nudum*

This incredibly unique species lacks roots and most of the other organs associated with regular vascular plants.

Wildlife use: flowers attractive to pollinators, shelter for small animals.

Human use: historically as an ornamental plant.

Larval host data unavailable.



Tropical Sage, *Salvia coccinea*

Often reaching up to four feet in height, tropical sage is easily recognized by its bright red flowers.

Wildlife use: flowers attractive to pollinators, particularly hummingbirds and butterflies.

Human use: widely cultivated as a garden plant.

Larval host to 6 species of moths or butterflies.



Acknowledgements

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www.dingdarlingsociety.org

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