

Self-Guided Trails in Hammock Park

Sugarberry Trail

Developed by the Dunedin Garden Club in cooperation with the Dunedin Recreation and Parks Department. This was the first trail to be developed.

Palm Trail

Developed by the Dunedin Garden Club in cooperation with the Dunedin Recreation and Parks Department.

Cedar Trail

Contains a boardwalk over salt marsh. Developed by the Dunedin Recreation and Parks Department with the aid of a \$50,000 grant under the Florida Recreation Department Assistance Program.

Other Trails

Other trails shown on the map have been left in a natural state. They may be rough under foot in places – please exercise caution.

NOTE: Station markers are stamped on small metal badges affixed to either a 4'x4' post or to a telephone pole-sized post. We are constantly updating our points of interest, so if you miss a number continue on to the next one you can find.

Sugarberry Trail

A Self-Guide to Plant Life

Trail length: 1/2-mile round-trip from picnic shelters

Enter Pine Circle (named for the tall slash pine trees growing here), cross through the picnic-playground area, and look for the Sugarberry Trail sign. Then follow the numbered posts, matching them with the numbered paragraphs below.

Station 1 — Live Oak, Cabbage Palm

Here are remains of two **live oak** trees with a **cabbage palm** growing between them. They reach heights of 50-feet or more and their arching horizontal branches can extend 150-feet from the trunk. They can live from several-hundred years to more than 1000 years. Oak wood is incredibly hard and in the past was used extensively in boat building. Bright green true moss grows on the bark and Spanish moss usually hangs from the branches. The dead ones here were left to decay naturally, as they are now more beneficial to wildlife than when alive.

The cabbage palm (often called by its scientific name, *Sabal palmetto*) is Florida's official state tree and is native to North America. The common name comes from the leaf-bud or "cabbage" at the top of the trunk. The one on the right has a large root

mass at the base, and is one of the oldest in Hammock Park. It reaches a height of thirty to forty feet and is remarkably resistant to cold, salt, flooding, fire and draught.

As you walk along, you will see numerous **laurel cherry** trees in the understory. The leaves are evergreen, glossy, and usually have a "toothed" margin. Look for fragrant white flowers spikes in February and black fruit in the summer which provides food for wildlife.

Station 2 — Sugarberry (or Hackberry)

This trail was named for the **sugarberry** tree, a member of the elm family. A double-stemmed specimen grows a few feet in back of the post, and there are others nearby and throughout The Hammock. Sugarberries reach a height of over 60 feet and can live 150 years. The bark is pale gray with numerous small "warts", and the thin, light-green leaves are shed in winter. The name "sugarberry" comes from the sweet fruit produced by the tree. It provides an important food source for birds, butterflies and wildlife. Several native American tribes used parts of the tree to treat ailments, as a food source and as a fabric dye.

Station 3 — Sweet Bay

The group of three young **sweet bays** nearby are the offspring from an older tree that died around 2000 (the dead tree was left to decay naturally). Sweet bays are a small graceful southern evergreen. A member of the magnolia family, it is also known as a **loblolly bay**. Small white lemon scented flowers are borne in the spring. Their leaves are large, evergreen, glossy on the upper surface and silvery on the underside. Birds eat the sweet bay berries but only digest the fleshy red coating and disburse the seeds in their droppings.

Station 4 — Resurrection Fern, Wild Orchid

On the upper side of one large branch of the oak extending over the trail are **resurrection ferns**, so-called because the leaves turn brown and curl up in dry weather, but become fresh and green again after a rain. The resurrection fern is a remarkable plant that can lose about 75 percent of its water content during a typical dry period and possibly up to 97 percent in an extreme drought. During this time, it shrivels up to a grayish brown clump of leaves. When it is exposed to water again, it will "come back to life" and look green and healthy. The plant gets its name from this supposed "resurrection," but it never actually dies during the process. By contrast, most other plants can only lose 10 percent of their water content before they die. The resurrection fern is a type of epiphytic fern meaning that it grows on top of other plants. It favors oak trees as a host plant. In 1997, the resurrection fern was taken into space aboard the Space Shuttle Discovery to watch its resurrection in zero gravity.

Wild orchids are also epiphytes, taking nourishment from air and rain and using other plants to live upon. Florida has the most native species of wild orchids in the United States. Many species are endangered and it is illegal to remove them from their habitat. It is virtually impossible to keep a wild orchid alive once it is removed from its native environment. Note the nearby **cabbage palm** "held

captive" within the branches.

Proceeding along the trail, you will see (on your right) a group of leaning tree-form **saw palmettos**. More commonly the stems grow horizontally along the ground. The leaves are stiff and fan-shaped. The leafstalks have very fine "sawteeth".

Station 5 — Black Gum and Notable Sweet Bay

Just beyond station 5, there is a **black gum** (tupelo) tree. The name tupelo comes from from native American Creek word for tree "ito" and swamp "opilwa". The tupelo tree is highly tolerant of wet and flooded areas. The fruit is high in crude fat, fiber, phosphorous, and calcium, is eaten by many birds and animals. Because it is a prolific producer of cavities, the tupelo is ranked as one of the more dependable den trees for birds and small mammals. Prized for its brilliant scarlet autumnal foliage, the black tupelo is a good honey tree. Look for a nice 3-trunked **sweet bay** 10-yards back to the east (left). There is also a nice **magnolia** in the same direction.

Station 6 — Red Maples

The **red maple**, also known as a swamp maple is one of the most common and widespread deciduous trees of eastern North America. It is aptly named as its flowers, petioles, twigs and seeds are all red to varying degrees. Among these features, however, it is best known for its brilliant deep scarlet foliage in autumn. It is very adaptable to a wide range of site conditions from swamps to arid soil and grows from sea level to 3000 feet. The red maple is used as a food source by small mammals, butterflies and moths.

Station 7 — Giant Sword Ferns, Shield Ferns and Giant Leather Ferns

Giant sword ferns are perennial ferns that grows up to 8-feet tall. They spread from horizontal stems (stolons) and form large masses. They are listed as threatened by the State of Florida.

Shield ferns are medium-sized woodland plants with bright green, leathery leaves that are several times divided.

Giant Leather ferns can be seen on the west side of the path as you enter East Sugarberry Trail. Florida is the only state where these ferns grow and they are found in Hammocks, mangrove swamps and along waterways, where they help control soil erosion with their strong spongy root system. Their huge frond can reach lengths of 12-feet.

Station 8 — Understory Plants

The vegetation changes beyond the area of ferns. **Elderberries** are common and easily identified by flat top cluster of white flowers. Many **stoppers** grow here. This evergreen bush/small tree is a member of the **myrtle** family and is cold hardy and salt tolerant. Small white flowers bloom regularly throughout the year with a wonderful aroma. The blossoms attract butterflies and bright orange to red berries are a favorite of mocking birds, blue jay and cardinals. Wildflowers along the side of the trail include lavender-flowered **asters**, orange and pink **lantana** and the aromatic **balsam apple vine** with a yellow flower and a yellow-orange warty fruit.

Station 9 — Bees & Spanish Needles

Nearly anyone you ask about **Spanish needles** will say it's a weed, not a pretty one, nor a useful one, nor a nice one. Yet, honey production everywhere would be hurt without this white flower. In Florida, it is the third most common reliable source of nectar. Quite an accomplishment for suburbanites who are constantly trying to get rid of it. Also, without it many butterflies would go hungry. It is also a host plant for many butterflies. This is the most important wildflower nectar source in Florida and is sought out by most pollinators.

Up in a dead tree is the Hammock's largest honey bee colony. Honey bees are known as a super organism. This is an entity made up of many distinct individuals, that has the ability to act as one on the environment to achieve specific goals using highly specialized division of labor. The individuals that make up a super organism cannot survive for extended periods independent of the super organism. The worker bees who gather nectar and produce the honey are all female. The only role of the male honey bee, called a drone is to procreate with a queen bee. Bees are a world resource essential for sustaining our environment because they pollinate plants and agriculture crops.

Station 10 — Along the Waterway

In the ditch on the right are clumps of **crinum** or string lilies growing in the brackish water. they are not real lillies, but are members of the **amaryllis** family. They bear beautiful fragrant white flower clusters in summer and fall. At certain times of the year, the creek may be carpeted with a bright green flowering aquatic plant known as **duckweed** or **water lens**. The plants float on or just beneath the surface of still or slow-moving bodies of fresh water and wetlands. Duckweed is one of the smallest flowering plants in all the world. It is a food source for many birds, fish and ducks, as the name would suggest.

Station 11 — Hickory Tree

Here, an unusually large **hickory** tree grows in relative isolation with a small **mulberry** tree in front of it. The hickory tree is a member of the **walnut** family. There is wood that is harder and stronger than hickory, but the combination of strength, toughness, hardness and stiffness found in hickory wood is not found in any other commercial wood. President Andrew Jackson got the moniker “Old Hickory” in the war of 1812 because his toughness was likened to that of the tree. Hickory is also highly prized for wood burning stoves because of its high energy content. Hickory wood is also preferred for its flavor in smoking meats.

When Florida was first settled, the mulberry was one of the most treasured fruit trees for homesteaders. Planted around outbuildings and livestock pens, they were valued as beautiful, useful and lush shade trees, needing no care. They reliably producing bucketfuls of delicious fruit. The tree grows across most of the United States with an astounding range from states with blizzards and ice to the tropics of sunny south Florida.

Palm Trail

A Self-Guide to Plant Life

Notes by Barbara H. Cline, Conservation Chairman, Dunedin Garden Club (September 1981, revised May 1986)

Trail length: 1/4-mile from picnic shelters to #9 and return

Station 1 — Coast Pignut Hickory

Entering Hickory Circle, note the large namesake hickory tree on the east side of the circle, at the edge of a tidal creek. This is the only species of hickory in The Hammock, and there are many nearby. Hickory leaves (compound, with 5 to 7 leaflets) can turn a very bright yellow in the fall. The nuts, although bitter, provide food for wildlife. Proceed further south and look for the Palm Trail sign, and continue to follow the numbered station posts, matching them with the numbered paragraphs below.

Wildflowers on Palm Trail include **violets** in the spring, **painted leaf** or **wild poinsettia**, **Spanish Needles** (white, daisy-like), **camphor weed** (yellow, daisy-like), **partridge pea** (finely divided leaves and yellow flower), and **Caesar weed** (pink flowers with Velcro-like burrs).

Station 2 — Live Oak & Water Oak

In addition to large live oaks on both sides of the trail and in the circle, there are several water oaks on the right/west. The two oak species are quite different in form. Live oaks reach a height of 50 feet and have wide-spreading branches where growing space permits. The bark is furrowed. The leaves are 2 to 4 inches long, leathery, with blunt tips and leaf edges slightly rolled under. The live oak gets its common name from the fact that it does not lose all of its leaves at one time but always has enough leaves to look green and alive.

Water oaks are taller and straighter. The bark is smooth. Leaves are 2 to 4 inches long, usually wedge-shaped (broader at the tip than at the base). The trees are nearly bare of leaves by the end of December.

Many epiphytic plants may be seen on the oak trunks and branches. These include air plants (wild pines), ball moss, Spanish moss, resurrection fern, and Florida butterfly orchids. Epiphytes use the trees only for support, getting nutrients from the air and rain water. The large one on the right/west has a Hackberry growing around a limb.

Station 3 — Cabbage Palm

Palm Trail is named for Florida's official state tree —the cabbage palm (sometimes called by its scientific name, *Sabal palmetto*). The common name comes from the large leaf-bud or "cabbage" at the top of the trunk. The leaves are fan-shaped. The leafstalks (5 to 7 feet long) are smooth, as contrasted with the toothed stalk of the saw palmetto. When the leafstalks fall off, the leaf bases or "boots" may remain attached to the trunk, giving a lattice effect (note the one

at station 10). Also note a very tall one on the east/left side of the trail just after station 4.

From here to Station 4, there are several small and slender specimens of the swamp dogwood tree. Their poor form indicates that they are not well adapted to local growing conditions. This species has a cluster of small white flowers in early spring, in contrast with the large four-petal blossom of the better-known Florida dogwood.

Station 4 — Cline Trail

This leads north-westerly to Skinner Trail exiting near Sugarberry Trail and the creek. Please see text for Station 9, as you could use this as a partial alternate return route.

From Station 2 to Station 5, there are a number of citrus tree species, including sour orange, tangerine, and grapefruit. It's probable that they were planted by a previous owner of the property.

Station 5 — Cabbage Palms

There is a notable Sugarberry to the the the right/west and many Cabbage Palms in this area. Small vines cover the laurel oaks in the understory here as well.

Station 6 — Hackberry

There are Hackberries on left/east side of the trail here, and 10 yards back is a old, battered Bay tree with several smaller trees growing around it. This is a common way the Bay trees grow in the Hammock.

Station 7 — Laurel Oak

The laurel oak, like the water oak, is taller and has a narrower crown than the live oak. The leaves are 2 to 4 inches long, narrow, with a yellowish midrib ending in a sharp tip. The leaves remain on the tree well into spring. Leaves on young trees are variable in shape, sometimes "spiny" like holly leaves. This one has a hackberry tree leaning on it — a result of a storm.

On the forward side, at the base of the oak, are Blechnum fern and soda apple (armed with prickles and bearing a white flower followed by a red berry about an inch in diameter). As you proceed south along Palm Trail, the soil becomes sandy. Saw palmettos and ferns become quite numerous.

Station 8 — Intersection with Fern Trail

The trail on the left is Fern Trail which connects to Skinner Trail. There are few canopy (overhead) trees. Instead, there are smaller oak trees (sand live oak and myrtle oak) and shrubs, vines, and wildflowers that can adapt to the drier and sunnier growing conditions. Note the large Bay tree to the west/right.

Station 9 — Kettles Trail, change of habitat

The habitat changes here as you proceed south, and the soil becomes very sandy. Kettles trail leads east through Maples, Pines and Palmettos and connects with Skinner Trail. **Tallowwood**, found nearby, has very prominent thorns and has flowers and fruits of pale yellow. **Garberia**, also nearby, is most easily identified in the fall, when fragrant lavender flower clusters appear; the leaves are small and slightly gray-green. The open area between here and Station 10 on the right was reforested with **slash pines** in an effort to increase the natural population once found here.

Station 10 — Intersection with Gopher Trail

Palm Trail ends here at the lattice cabbage palm, and you have a choice of return routes. The shortest and easiest is to return the way you came. Remember that you can return to Station 4, take Cline Trail to Skinner Trail, and follow it west back to the picnic shelters. A longer route is to continue east from here on Gopher Trail (the sandy trail to your left/east), until you reach Grant Trail and a drainage ditch. Turn left/north and follow the road and ditch all the way back to the picnic area (a little over a mile round trip). On Grant trail, there are several outstanding specimens of Maples.

Cedar Trail

A Self-Guide to Plant Life

Notes by Glenn Fleming and Barbara Cline, members of Dunedin's Hammock Advisory Committee, (September 1981, revised May 1986 and May 2008). Trail length: 1/4-mile.

Cedar Trail development was initiated by the Friends of the Hammock to provide an additional access to the park from Michigan Blvd.

From the picnic shelters, follow Skinner trail east along the ditch until you come to the first footbridge and the Cedar Trail sign. Then follow the numbered posts, matching them with the numbered paragraphs below. There is an observation structure (with benches) near the end of the trail and a boardwalk through the mangroves of Cedar Creek (Cedar Trail).

Station 1 — Live Oaks

You enter Cedar Trail under some live oaks on the right/east (the one on the left died in the '90s). Live oaks reach a height of 50 ft. and have wide-spreading branches where growing space permits. They appear to be evergreen or "live" because the leaves are not all shed at the same time. Acorns provide food for wildlife. Spanish Moss is frequently found in the canopy. Laurel cherry trees are common in the understory; look for the creamy-white flower spikes in February.

Tree species occurring commonly the full length of the trail ahead are live oak, cabbage palm, slash pine, and southern red cedar. Less common (occurring singly and sometimes in clumps) are camphor, hickory, sweet bay, and sugarberry.

Station 2 — Southern Red Cedar

Cedars once dominated this area; they are now scattered throughout this northern section of The Hammock. The many stumps visible from here through station 3 were diseased trees that were removed for safety. The lower branches on many of the remaining cedars are bare because of insufficient light. Compare these trees with the more fully-lighted specimens in the picnic area.

Cedars belong to the juniper family (*Juniperus silicicola*). They are evergreen, with blue, berry-like cones that provide food for wildlife, and have reddish-brown bark which often peels off in strips. All parts of the tree are aromatic. The wood of red cedars was once used extensively in lead pencils.

Epiphytes. Look for Florida butterfly orchids, Spanish moss, ball moss, and air plants (or wild pines) on the bare cedar branches. These epiphytes use the tree only for support, obtaining their food from the air and rain water.

Station 3 — Camphor

Camphor trees are numerous here in the north section of The Hammock, but there are only one or two in the larger south section. The wood yields the camphor of commerce, used for medicinal purposes. The leaves are evergreen, wavy, shiny on the upper surface and pale underneath, and aromatic when crushed. The blackish fruits (globe-shaped drupes) provide food for wildlife.

Station 4 — Slash Pine

A number of small slash pine trees grow here, on both sides of the trail, and a few larger specimens can be seen nearby. Identifying characteristics are needles in clumps of 2 and cones less than 6 inches long. Many pines in this area didn't survive severe drought conditions and are now providing nests for Osprey.

From here to Station 5, there are fewer canopy (overhead) trees, especially on the west (left) side of the trail. More sunlight filters through and encourages the growth of shrubs and ground cover, including *sea myrtle shrub* (silky white flowers on female plants in fall), *beauty bush* (pink flower clusters in spring and bright purple berries in fall), *goldenrod* (yellow flowers in fall), *Caesar weed* (pink flowers and clinging burrs), *greenbrier vines*, *crab's eye vine* (black-and-red seeds which are very poisonous), and *Virginia creeper vine* (palmately compound leaf with 5 leaflets).

As you cross the bridge (which spans the original Cedar Creek), look for fiddler crabs burrowing in the muck. Also note the large mangrove population in this part of the creek. The black mangrove on the left/west side of the creek is much larger than the red mangroves. The mangroves provide refuge of many species of fish and mollusks. They also support a snail population that is a favorite food of the Curlew and Limpet.

Station 5 — Cabbage Palm

This is Florida's official state tree, and there are several specimens of varying size in this immediate area. The common name comes from the leaf-bud or "cabbage" at the top of the trunk. The leaves are fan-shaped. The green leafstalks (5 to 7 feet long) are smooth, in contrast to the serrated "teeth" on the stalk of Saw Palmettos. The remains of stalks form a lattice of "bootjacks" on younger Cabbage Palms that will eventually fall off, leaving behind a slightly ridged trunk that can reach 40 to 60 feet.

Station 6 — Spanish Bayonet

On the right is a large Spanish Bayonet. (Warning — the tips of the leaves are pointed and sharp! This plant can inflict painful puncture wounds even through heavy clothing!) From here to the observation tower, you will note many saw palmettos. The name comes from the "sawteeth" on the leafstalks. The trunks run along the ground. The leaf fronds are stiff and fan-shaped. They grow only about 1" a year.

Station 7 — Young Cedar Trees

Off the trail to the right note the younger, fuller Red Cedars that are taking taking root in this area. Many were planted as part of a native species reforestation effort to restore the ones lost in the 1980s (see station 2).

Station 8 — Observation Tower / Osprey Trail

From this station, you can detour left/west on Osprey Trail over the boardwalk and return to the main parking area and shelters (see below for some things to look out for), or continue 1/4-mile on Cedar Trail for the northern boundary of the park and the Michigan Boulevard entrance.

Osprey Trail Detour From Observation Shelter

Observation tower and boardwalk: The boardwalk is one of the best places in the park to observe and photograph birds, as this area provides both a great habitat as well as great visibility. Note the distinct change in plant habitats. On three sides (east, north, and south) is the typical Oak-Pineland ecological habitat. The boardwalk, on the west side of the tower, is in the Mangrove-Salt Grass habitat, and all the plants there are adapted to brackish or salty muds.

Plants on south (left) side of boardwalk: *Marsh elder shrub* (leaves with 3 parallel veins), *sea myrtle* (silky white flowers on female plants in fall), *needle or black rush* (greenish flowers on one side a few inches below the sharp tip), *Christmas berry* (blue/white flowers followed by red, tomato-like berries), and *white mangroves*. Ground plants include *sea lavender* (lavender flowers), *sea purslane* (very succulent with pink-lavender flowers), and a sprawly, *small-flowered aster* (whitish flowers in fall). The Parks Division continues to eradicate encroaching Brazilian peppers by using special herbicides.

North side: White mangrove, salt grasses, and (toward Creek) saltwort, a striking, pale-green succulent reclining shrub which curves downward and roots at the tip.

West side: Cordgrass can be seen in the marsh. Across Cedar Creek there are black and white mangroves, and Christmas berry.

Sharp freezes tend to injure salt-flat plants, such as the white mangrove and marsh elder, but they usually recover because the root system is protected by the salt water.

Bird watchers should look for these water birds: Great blue heron, little blue heron, green heron, yellow-crowned night heron, white ibis, egrets, gulls, skimmers, and mergansers, along with a number of shore birds that fly in from the Gulf.

Station 9 — Osprey Nest

Notice the abandoned Osprey nest in the dead Slash Pine in the scrub to the west. Ospreys or “Fish-Hawks” hunt fish in the bays and gulf, and do so with a dramatic plunge after their prey. With a shake of their feathers to remove water, they’ll head home, turning the fish face-first into the wind. They are territorial birds and often show distress at people and dogs on the ground; please observe accordingly. Nesting season is late spring through early summer.

Station 10 — Pine Clearing

As we leave Station 9, the trail winds north through a thick section of saw Palmettos and Slash Pines. Also present are signs of fire damage. The salt marsh to the west gradually gives way to this nice stand of pines. Note the understorey is very clean here as the fallen pine needles make a natural mulch that limits weeds. Numerous vines thrive here: Poison Ivy, Muscadine Grape, Yellow Jessamine, and many species of ferns. Proceeding on to Station 11 you will notice the ecosystem become wetter and more like the bay-heads found in the southern section of the park.

Station 11 — Leather Fern

The clear, flowing creek under the bridge is spring-fed and supports the more water-tolerant plants in this area including the large leather fern, arrowroot, etc

Station 12 — Eastern Red Cedar

The cedar tree beyond the marker to the west/right is nice example of how cedars "weather the storm." This specimen shows signs of previous damage, yet has managed to survive (compare to the fuller "Christmas-tree" versions seen at Station 7). Note the grey bark and bare branches. There is another similar one ahead on the right/east.

Ahead on the right is an outstanding **Senegal Date Palm** (*Phoenix Reclinata*). This large specimen provides a nice shady spot, but look out for the sharp spikes near the base of the fronds. They tend to grow as clumps composed of multiple stems reaching 25 to 50 ft. in height. They are desirable as landscape palms, but are monitored in the park as non-native palms.

As you exit the trail at Michigan Blvd., you will notice the large inverted-boat-shaped roof of the Kirk Activity Center. Originally the worship center, it was designed in the 50s by famous modernist and "Sarasota-School" architect Victor Lundy.

The City of Dunedin Parks and Recreation Department welcomes you as a visitor to THE HAMMOCK and hopes you will enjoy seeing this old natural forest. Please help the Department maintain and preserve the area by observing the following rules:

Park Hours — Sunrise to Sunset

1. Service roads and trails are closed to non-official motor traffic, including motor bikes and golf carts.
2. Bicycles allowed on main trails only.
3. Horseback riding not permitted.
4. Dogs must be on hand-held leash.
5. Owners must clean up after pets.
6. No firearms or weapons of any kind.

7. Fires allowed only in city-provided grills.
8. No alcohol or drug use.
9. Removal of any plant is prohibited.

There is no entrance fee to the park. Shelter reservations may be made at the Dunedin Parks and Recreation Administrative Office in the Dunedin Community Center, 1920 Pinehurst Road, Dunedin, FL 34698. 727-812-4531. Hours are Monday through Thursday, 8 AM to 7 PM and Friday 8 AM to 5 PM. Visit **www.dunedingov.com** for more info.

This pamphlet prepared by the Friends of the Hammock, Inc. in cooperation with the Dunedin Recreation and Parks Department. Additional copies may be obtained at **www.hammockpark.org**.