

Self-Guided Nature 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

Accessible to handicapped persons; 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.

Sugarberry Trail

A Self-Guide to Plant Life

Notes by Barbara H. Cline, Conservation Chairman, Dunedin Garden Club (September 1981, revised May 1986/ October 2009)

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

There are remains of two live oak trees on the left, with a cabbage palm growing between them. Live oaks reach a height of 50 feet or more and have wide-spreading branches. Acorns provide food for wildlife. Many times, as here, you will see bright-green true moss growing on the tree bark and Spanish moss hanging from the branches. The cabbage palm (often called by its scientific name, *Sabal palmetto*) is Florida's official state tree. 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.

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 flower spikes in February. Black fruits later in the year provide food for wildlife. There are also many wild orange trees in this section. The oranges are too tart to eat - commercially cultivated oranges are grafted onto root stock, and these grew wild from seeds.

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. The bark is pale gray with numerous small "warts", and the thin, light-green leaves are shed in winter. The berries are sweet (hence the name sugarberry) and provide food for wildlife.

Station 3 — Oak stub

This stub (blackened by fire of unknown time and origin) was some 10 feet tall when the trail was opened in November 1974. Since then the top part has broken away. Notice the textural design of the remaining portion.

Across the trail, on your left, there is a partially uprooted oak tree, especially interesting because one of the large side branches touched ground, took root, and is growing upright, looking like a second tree.

Station 4 — Sweet Bay

The sweet bay tree here, with an opening in the base of its trunk, is of the magnolia family. Small, white, magnolia-like flowers are borne in spring. The leaves are large, evergreen, glossy on the upper surface and a silvery color on the underside.

Station 5 — 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. **Wild orchids** grow on the underside of the same oak branch. Both the ferns and orchids are epiphytes, taking food from the air and rain water and using the tree only for support. Note the 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 6 — Red Maples

This area has the most maples on any of the self-guided tours. The area of the park with the most is in the western part of the park off Kettles Trail and Vivian Grant trail (see trail map of Hammock Park). In the late fall, these maples' leaves will turn yellow and red, eventually giving way to bright red flowers, which appear just before the new leaves..

Station 7 — Sweet Bays & Magnolias

There is a nice 3-trunked **Sweet Bay** 10 yards back to the east (left). Several more "clumping" Sweet Bays are located in this area. There is a nice **Magnolia** also in the east (left) of this marker.

Return trip via the Sugarberry Trail East

There are many changes in vegetation along the road as contrasted with the inner trail. **Elderberries** are common and easily identified by flat-topped clusters of white flowers, followed by purple-black berries that provide food for wildlife. The **Brazilian pepper-trees** or **Florida holly** growing along the ditch are very aggressive and crowd out native vegetation. A program to control them is under way. These trees produce bright red berry clusters in winter. **Leather ferns** are on the left, as well as many **Stoppers**. Wildflowers along the road include **Spanish Needles** (white, daisy-like flowers), a lavender-flowered **aster**, **lantana** (some orange, some pink-lavender), and **balsam apple vine** (yellow flower and yellow-orange "warty" fruit).

In the ditch to your right as you continue to Station 8, you may notice clumps of **Crinum** or **String Lilies** growing in the brackish water. They are not really lilies but, rather, are of the **amaryllis** family. They bear beautiful, fragrant white flower clusters in summer and fall. There may be **duckweed** carpeting the creek in the at this point giving it an overall green appearance.

Station 8 — Large Hickory Tree

Here is an unusually large Hickory tree growing in relative isolation. There is a small Mulberry growing in front of it.

Station 9 — Sugarberry

Two large, well-formed specimens show the characteristic “warty” bark of this species. Remember that the trail was named for the sugarberry. Continuing along the road, look for a rather large bed of wild mint with tiny blue flowers in season. You may also see a beauty-berry shrub with delicate pink flower clusters in late spring and bright purple berries in fall. These are on your left between two large oak trees. The road brings you back to the picnic area.

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 westerly to Vivian Skinner Grant Trail North exiting near Sugarberry Trail and 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 appears 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 Vivian Skinner Grant 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 Vivian Skinner Grant Trail East. **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 Tortoise 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 3, take Cline Trail to Vivian Skinner Grant Trail North, and follow it east back to the picnic shelters. A longer route is to continue east from here on Gopher Tortoise Trail (the sandy trail to your left/east), until you reach the Vivian 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 Vivian 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.

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 tower (with benches) near the end of the trail and a boardwalk through the mangroves of Cedar Creek.

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

From this station, you can continue left/west 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.

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 in the submerged mud. 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 occasional 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 will head home, turning the fish face-first into the wind. They are alert, 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 understory 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.

Shading the "Friends of the Hammock rest" ahead on the right is an outstanding **Senegal Date Palm** (*Phoenix Reclinata*). This large specimen provides a nice shady spot for visitors, 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 controlled in the park as non-native palms. The benches in this area were provided by the Friends of the Hammock.

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 Leisure Services 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; please respect the bicycle-free trails indicated by signage.
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 Leisure Services 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 or through Leisure Services.