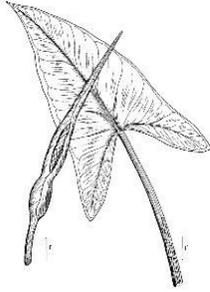


## GROUNDCOVER along the Trail .....

### green arrow arum (*Peltandra virginica*)



- ✓ Large arrow-shaped leaves
- ✓ Tiny greenish flowers on a rod (spadix) enclosed in leaf-like structure called a spathe, blooms May to June
- ✓ Produces brown berries which are a food source for water birds and other animals
- ✓ Native Americans cooked plant for many hours to make it edible

### aquatic milkweed (*Asclepias perennis*)



- ✓ Clusters of small white to pale pink flowers and lance shaped leaves
- ✓ Blooms spring to fall, longer than other milkweeds
- ✓ Food for Monarch and Queen butterfly caterpillars
- ✓ Many types of pollinating insects are attracted by its nectar

### rainlily [Atamasco lily]

(*Zephyranthes atamasca*)



- ✓ White or pinkish funnel shaped flowers and grass-like leaves
- ✓ Blooms from Jan to Dec
- ✓ Listed as threatened in Florida
- ✓ All parts of plant are poisonous but the Seminole Indians used the bulbs to treat toothaches

### royal fern (*Osmunda regalis* var. *spectabilis*)



- ✓ Upright plant with stalks up to 5'
- ✓ Green fronds (leaves) are finely divided giving feathery look
- ✓ Spores form on leaves May/June
- ✓ Largest fern in North America and most widespread on planet
- ✓ Individual plants can live up to 100 years

## WETLANDS - Kidneys of the Earth

Kidneys are the body's natural filtering system by removing waste and excess nutrients from the bloodstream. Wetlands do a similar function for the landscape. They are responsible for the filtration and purification of water that passes through them by trapping sediments and giving plants and microorganisms a chance to breakdown pollutants. Some of the richest and most diverse ecosystems on earth can be found in wetlands.

**Swamps** like this one are forested wetlands and have many trees and plants. They may border a river with moving water or occupy a pond of still water. They may even be dry during some parts of the year. The plants that live in swamps have special adaptations that enable them to tolerate high water levels.

### Wetlands also provide:

- ✓ **Control** for excess water from heavy rains. The water is slowed by wetland plants and stored in the low-lying areas of wetlands, preventing or minimizing flooding to adjacent lands. This water seeps through the soil into our underground water supplies.
- ✓ **Water Filtration** to help purify runoff waters which carry pollutants. Silt and soil, which choke aquatic life, settle out. Wastes are broken down and absorbed by aquatic plants, as are many harmful chemicals.
- ✓ **Habitat** for many fish and animals which use wetlands as their home. The environment provides an abundant supply of food and shelter for raising their young.
- ✓ **Recreational Opportunities** for us to watch birds and animals, and to fish, boat, and hunt.

Plant line drawings courtesy USDA-NRCS PLANTS database.

Green arrow arum and dwarf palmetto drawings originally published in: USDA NRCS, *Wetland flora: Field office illustrated guide to plant species*, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. All others originally published in: Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. *An illustrated flora of the northern United States, Canada and the British Possessions*. 3 vols. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.



Designed and developed as a final project for The Florida Master Naturalist Program - Freshwater Habitat Module  
[www.MasterNaturalist.org](http://www.MasterNaturalist.org)  
Created by: P. Sergi-Swinehart, E. Shackleton,  
R. Andrews, C. Glencross

# Treehouse Trail



**A short walk to explore  
spectacular forested  
wetland communities**

**Camp Chowenwaw Park**  
1517 Ball Road  
Green Cove Springs, FL  
32043  
904.529.8058

<http://parks.claycountygov.com>

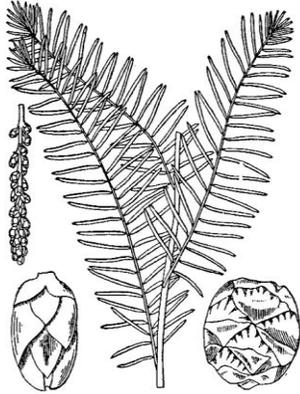


Funding for the acquisition of Camp Chowenwaw Park was provided by Clay County and the Florida Communities Trust using Florida Forever funds. The site was acquired in March 2006 and is managed for conservation, historic preservation, and outdoor recreation.



# TREES and SHRUBS you will find along Treehouse Trail .....

## bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*)



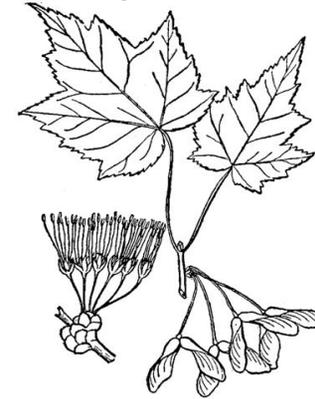
- ✓ Very tall tree with smooth bark and buttressed base
- ✓ Often surrounded by woody "knees" that are part of the root system
- ✓ Green needle-like leaves fall in the winter after turning orange-brown
- ✓ Some are the oldest living trees in the eastern US

## Carolina ash (*Fraxinus caroliniana*)



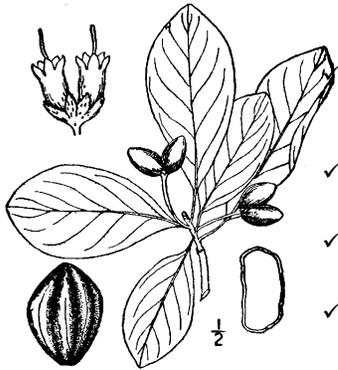
- ✓ Small tree usually with multiple trunks, enlarged at base and often leaning
- ✓ Grey bark, compound leaves with 5-7 leaflets
- ✓ Tiny yellow or green flowers in early spring before leaves form
- ✓ Fruit in summer to fall; consists of seeds in yellow-brown and sometimes violet structures called "keys" or "samaras"

## red maple (*Acer rubrum*)



- ✓ Medium sized tree with grey bark, straight trunk, and 5-lobed leaves
- ✓ Commonly found in wet areas and moist woods
- ✓ Red flowers in early spring followed by clusters of 2-winged red seed-containing samaras
- ✓ Leaves turn yellow, orange and red in fall

## swamp tupelo (*Nyssa sylvatica* var. *biflora*)



- ✓ Medium sized tree with a straight trunk, often with buttressed base
- ✓ Leaves bright green above, paler and often hairy below
- ✓ Brilliantly colored leaves and blue-black fruit in fall
- ✓ Trunks often have cavities which birds use for nesting

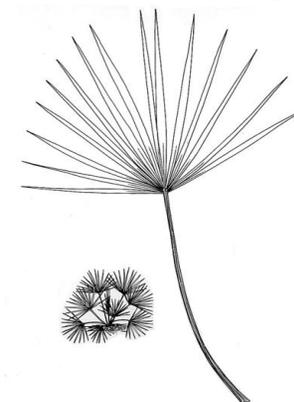
## Explore Wetlands



Courtesy US Fish and Wildlife Service

## dwarf palmetto [bluestem palm]

(*Sabal minor*)



- ✓ Large fan-shaped blue-green leaves divided into about 30 segments
- ✓ In Spring small fragrant yellow-white flowers at the end of a long stalk which extends above the leaves
- ✓ Shiny 1/2 inch diameter black berries in the fall
- ✓ Birds and other wildlife like raccoons and opossums feed on the berries

## swamp dogwood (*Cornus foemina*)



- ✓ Also known as stiff dogwood, a deciduous shrub or small tree
- ✓ Cream-colored circular flat-topped flower clusters with an unpleasant odor, blooms in spring
- ✓ Host for Spring Azure butterfly caterpillar
- ✓ Produces 1/4 inch diameter blue berries, or drupes, which provide food for birds including migratory songbirds

## shiny lyonia [fetterbush] (*Lyonia lucida*)



- ✓ Evergreen shrub sometimes taller than 6 feet
- ✓ Leathery, alternate, simple dark green leaves
- ✓ Fragrant pale to deep pink fragrant bell-shaped flowers bloom from Nov to June
- ✓ Fruits are 5-parted round capsules that turn brown when ripe

## wax myrtle [southern bayberry]

(*Myrica cerifera*)



- ✓ Evergreen shrub or small tree
- ✓ Waxy blue berries in the Fall
- ✓ Upper and lower surfaces of leaves have tiny amber spots
- ✓ Early Floridians used the aromatic leaves for a variety of medical purposes