

Guide to plants of the SEEP boardwalk

12 Sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*)

This species is easily identified by its star-shaped leaves that are aromatic when crushed & its woody, burr-like, spherical fruit. The seeds from the fruit are dispersed by birds & other wildlife that feed on them. The wood is used for fine furniture & interior finishing.

13 Swamp flatsedge (*Cyperus distinctus*)

A common wetland sedge found throughout peninsular Florida. The sedge has distinct spherical clusters of spikelets at the end of both short & long stalks. The strong stems of *Cyperus* species are used to make papyrus, hats, & mats.

14 Bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) & Pond cypress (*Taxodium ascendens*)

Cypress trees are iconic symbols of southern swamps. They can reach 130 feet & live up to 600 years! The trees are distinctive for their buttressed trunks & 'knees', which are woody projections sent up to assist in oxygen absorption & structural support. Many species of birds, mammals, & insects use cypress for food & cover. Pond cypress [yellow & blue flagging] has smaller, scale-like leaves that are pressed against the stem on erect branchlets. Bald cypress [yellow & pink flagging] has linear leaves on branchlets that spread outward. Try to distinguish between the 2 species as you explore SEEP.

15 Sugarberry (*Celtis laevigata*)

Sugarberry (aka hackberry) is a common large overstory tree of bottomland forests in Florida, but can also be found in drier areas near karst outcroppings. The tree is easily identified by its wart-like bumps on the bark. Many songbirds eat & disperse the sweet, red berries.

Points of interest: Along the boardwalks' guard railing are 15 numbered stations that reference plants of interest described in detail below. Each plant is marked with yellow flagging. Please visit <http://natl.ifas.ufl.edu/plants.htm> for a more comprehensive list of plants found at SEEP & throughout the Natural Area Teaching Lab. Enjoy your visit!

1 Carolina willow (*Salix caroliniana*)

Small to medium tree or large shrub with a spreading, open, irregular crown & long, narrow leaves. Willows are common throughout Florida along rivers, ponds, lakes, & marshes. Female viceroys (a butterfly) lay eggs on the tips of willow leaves, & many birds use the plant for cover.

2 Giant cutgrass (*Zizaniopsis miliacea*)

A very large grass with thick stems & flat leaf blades. Commonly occurs throughout marshlands of Florida. Clumped patches of cutgrass provide important refuge for many wading birds, fish, muskrats, & alligators.

3 Red maple (*Acer rubrum*)

Abundant & widespread tree throughout eastern North America. The leaves turn a brilliant red in autumn prior to falling. Spring buds are a favorite food of tree squirrels. Red maples can be used to produce maple syrup, although sugar maples are more commonly used.

4 Lizard's tail (*Saururus cernuus*)

Features heart-shaped leaves on erect, branching stems. The plant gets its common name from the slender, stalked flower spike with a drooping tip. The flowers, leaves, & roots have a pleasant citrus aroma. Turtles enjoy feeding on its leaves, & crayfish hide among its underwater rhizomes.

5 Louisiana iris (*Iris spp.*)

Louisiana irises are a group of species commonly found growing in swamps & wet meadows throughout the South. Flower color can vary from copper-red to orange to pure yellow. Many cultivars have been created from this popular ornamental plant, which hybridize with wild types. Irises attract bees & butterflies when they bloom in spring.

6 Soft needle rush (*Juncus effusus*)

A densely clumped, grass-like perennial that forms extensive colonies in wet soils. The cylindrical, bright green stems are soft & taper to a bristle. Tiny seeds are dispersed by clinging to the feathers or muddy feet of ducks & other wetland birds.

7 Duck potato (*Sagittaria latifolia*)

Commonly found in shallow wetlands throughout Florida. Large, firm, lance-shaped leaves that taper to the stem. Duck potato gets its name from its potato-like, bulbous tubers that grow underground & were used extensively by Native Americans for food. Ducks, however, rarely consume the tubers, which are usually buried too deep for them to reach.

8 Waxmyrtle (*Myrica cerifera*)

This fragrant evergreen shrub or small tree prefers moist, sandy soils. The distinctive scent of the tree comes from volatile oils produced in tiny leaf glands. Waxmyrtle is one of a few species that produces fruit during winter months, thus making it an important food source for many birds & mammals. Wax extracted from the berries is also used to make candles.

9 River birch (*Betula nigra*)

This tree is easily recognized by reddish brown bark that peels into papery thin layers. Commonly found throughout the Southeast in wet bottomlands. The wood is used for furniture, veneer, & cabinets. A number of species of birds eat river birch seeds, including wild turkey.

10 Parrot feather (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*)

Native to the Amazon River in South America, this aquatic plant gets its name from the delicate, feather-like leaves that emerge from the water surface. The plant was introduced to the U.S. in the late 1800's for use in indoor & outdoor aquaria. This invasive species can spread rapidly & clog water drainages, though the specimens in front of you seem to be contained to this small area.

11 Basket oak (*Quercus michauxii*)

A large oak with a compact crown & rounded teeth along leaf margins. The sweet, large acorns are a favored food of deer & many small mammals. Strips of wood are woven together to make baskets.