



Plant Guide



St. Petersburg, Florida



WORLD FAMOUS HISTORIC



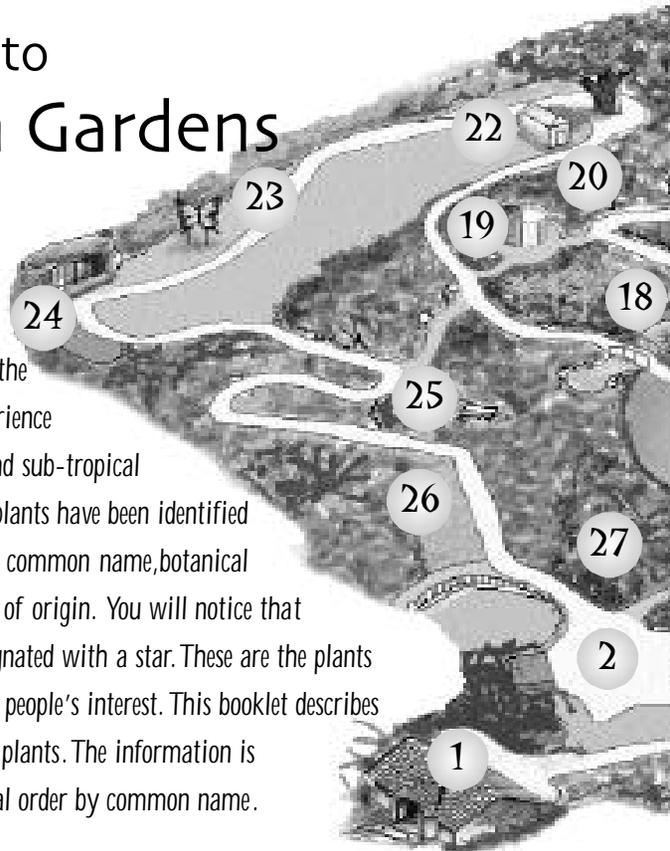
Plant Guide

A Botanical Experience

This Book belongs to:

Welcome to Sunken Gardens

As you meander along a mile of pathways of the Gardens, you will experience hundreds of tropical and sub-tropical plants. Many of these plants have been identified by markers with their common name, botanical name, and the country of origin. You will notice that some markers are designated with a star. These are the plants that just seem to pique people's interest. This booklet describes 60 of those designated plants. The information is arranged in alphabetical order by common name.



Stay to the Right to Follow Main Trail

- 1 ENTRANCE / RAINFOREST INFORMATION CENTER
- 2 OAK PAVILION
- 3 EXOTIC BIRD AREA
- 4 1924 BUILDING / ORIGINAL ENTRANCE
- 5 FLAMINGOS
- 6 RESTROOMS
- 7 TURTLE GARDEN
- 8 AMPHITHEATER
- 9 ALLIGATOR

1958 - Ralph Turner and George Turner, Jr. purchased the Gardens from their father. The attraction flourished, attracted celebrities and became world famous. Photography, beauty contests, weddings and private parties were very popular at the Gardens.

1961 - George Turner, Sr. dies. He worked in the Gardens up until a year before his death.

1965 - Walk-through bird aviary opened.

1967 - Turner family bought the Coca Cola Building and changed the entrance to this building. This became the World's Largest Gift Shop. Over one million different items were sold there.

1968 - An exhibit titled King of Kings opened in the gift shop building with life-size wax figures depicting the life of Christ.

1972 - Ralph Turner purchased George Turner, Jr.'s share of the Gardens. He did extensive advertising through billboards, brochures, radio and television.

1979 - Ralph Turner sold the Gardens to his sons: Raymond, James and Thomas Turner.

1980's - The Gardens began offering bird shows.

1989 - The Turners decided to sell Sunken Gardens due to declining attendance and increasing operational costs. The advent of the interstate highway system and large scale corporate theme parks would have a profound impact on roadside attractions throughout Florida. Of the major commercial gardens in Florida, less than 15 percent remain open today.

1994 - An alligator show was brought to Sunken Gardens.

1995 - The Turners closed the World's Largest Gift Shop and King of Kings display. The entrance was moved back to the 1952 building. The wax figures were donated to a church in Iowa.

1999 - The City of St. Petersburg purchased Sunken Gardens and formed a task force to review proposals for the operation of the Gardens. The Turners closed the Gardens in June of 1999 pending the sale. The purchase was finalized in September, 1999. The city began renovations in preparation to open the Gardens again. Two free weekends in December, 1999 attracted 28,000 visitors.

January 5, 2000 - The City of St. Petersburg Leisure Services Parks Department reopened Sunken Gardens as a botanical garden and educational center. Daily garden tours, Saturday gardening programs, wildlife presentations and school tours were offered. New wildlife displays and garden displays were designed. A walk-through butterfly aviary was built and the garden renovations continue.

Sunken Gardens' Historical Time-Line

1902 - George Turner, Sr., a plumbing contractor, moved to St. Petersburg and purchased six acres of land with a sink hole and shallow lake giving him a rich supply of muck land. Turner engineered a terra-cotta tile drainage system to reclaim the submerged land and grew flowers, fruit and vegetables. His drainage system is still in use today. Turner's first love was horticulture and the land ideally suited his hobby.

1903 - He opened a small stand to sell his vegetables and exotic fruit. He became interested in exotic and tropical plants.

1924 - The original entrance on 18th Avenue North was opened and he sold fruit, juice and vegetables. The garden was called Turner's Sunken Gardens and he charged a nickel to walk through the gardens. It became a Sunday tradition to walk through the garden after church.

1926 - The Sanitary Public Market was built at the corner of 4th Street and 20th Avenue North. It was the first public market in St. Petersburg and over 70 vendors sold all types of products.

1929 - The Sanitary Public Market closed due to the difficult economic times and stayed vacant until 1931. The five acre tract owned by Turner was saved during the Great Depression because it was then in Mrs. George Turner's name and was considered the family homestead.

1933 - The Public Sanitary Market was sold to the American Legion, which turned the building into an armory that hosted boxing, wrestling, and home shows.

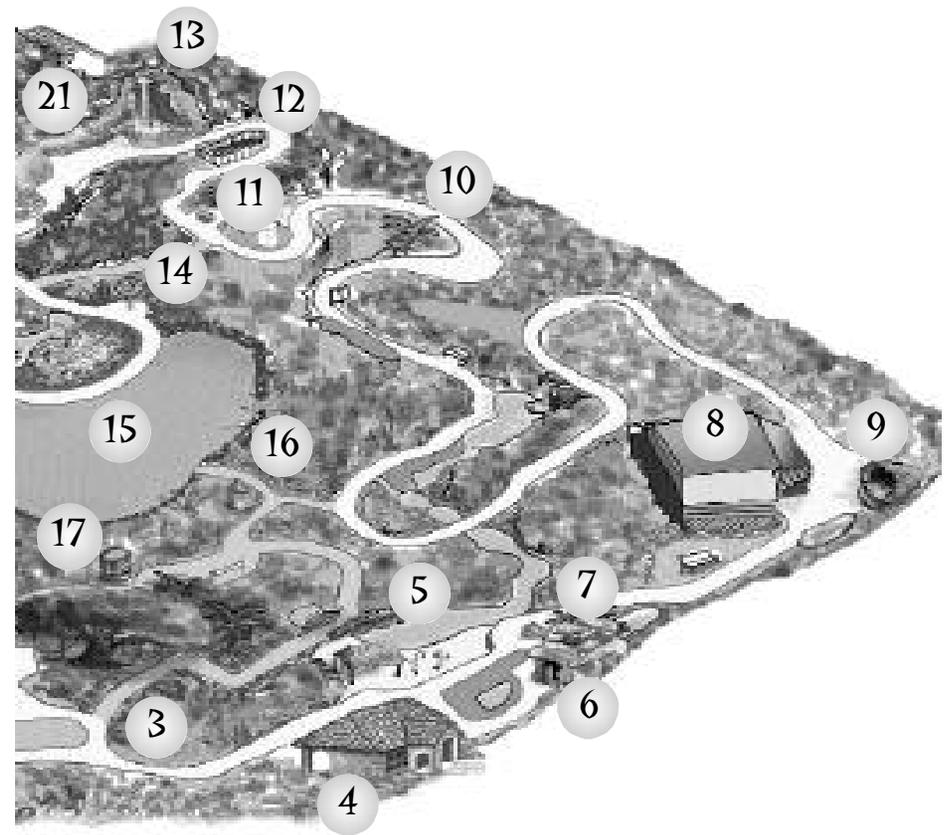
1935 - The official opening of Turner's Sunken Gardens. Flowers and exotic plants had replaced vegetables and fruits. Gardens were walled in and visitors were charged 25 cents. The garden opened seasonally.

1938 - Sunken Gardens remained open year-round.

1940 - The American Legion Armory was purchased by the Coca Cola Bottling Company. The building underwent a major exterior renovation replacing the Mediterranean Revival style with a Streamlined Moderne (Art Deco) architectural style by local award-winning architect, William B. Harvard, Sr.

1952 - A new entrance and gift shop was built along 4th Street (present gift shop).

1957 - A flock of flamingos was purchased to enhance the gardens. The number of animals continued to grow over the years to over 400. Most of the wildlife was sold prior to the sale to the City of St. Petersburg.



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|----|-----------------------|----|---------------------------|
| 10 | CROTON GARDEN | 19 | LORIKEET AVIARY |
| 11 | GROWING STONE | 20 | JAPANESE GARDEN |
| 12 | LOW POND | 21 | GARDEN HOUSE |
| 13 | WISHING WELL | 22 | BUTTERFLY ENCLOSURE |
| 14 | PHOTO RING | 23 | BUTTERFLY GARDEN |
| 15 | WEDDING LAWN | 24 | CACTUS & SUCCULENT GARDEN |
| 16 | TROPICAL FRUIT GARDEN | 25 | PICNIC AREA |
| 17 | KOOKABURRA | 26 | ROYAL PALM PAVILION |
| 18 | ARCHED BRIDGE | 27 | HIDDEN JUNGLE |

Historic Sunken Gardens

Sunken Gardens is a delightful contrast to the fast-paced world outside its historic, vine covered walls. The Gardens have been a historic, world renowned attraction in St. Petersburg since 1935. Its mixture of tropical gardens and wildlife has excited visitors for over 65 years. This unique, four acre garden, with meandering paths, drops 15 feet below street level and has unique specimen tropical trees and flowering plants. The property was purchased in 1903 by George Turner, Sr., who was an avid gardener, to plant vegetables and fruit trees. He drained a small lake to plant in the rich, muck soil. Area residents enjoyed strolling around his garden on Sunday afternoons and by the early 1920s, Mr. Turner was charging a nickel to tour his garden. In 1935 the garden was officially opened as Turner's Sunken Gardens, and this historic attraction was born.

Sunken Gardens combines the lush tropical gardens with flowing ponds and waterfalls. Flamingos, turtles and other tropical birds, enjoy the quiet of this serene garden. Visit the Butterfly Aviary, with its native butterflies, and the Gift Shop in the Rainforest Information Center. Exotic flowering trees and fruit trees can be seen around each surprising twist of the pathway.

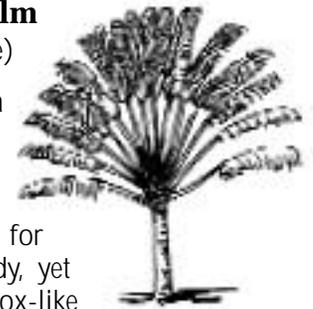
The mission of the Parks Department is to preserve and enhance historic Sunken Gardens and provide enjoyment and unique opportunities for the study of a tropical rainforest through diverse educational, horticultural and cultural experiences. Many weekly special presentations are offered at the Gardens, plus wildlife programs. Call for more information at 727-551-3100.



Traveler's Tree or Traveler's Palm

Ravenala madagascariensis (Musaceae)

This distinctive member of the banana family is mistakenly called a palm. In their native habitat of Madagascar the wood is used for house construction, the sap yields sugar, the leaves serve for roofing, the fruit is tough and woody, yet edible. At the base of the leaf are large box-like cells retaining as much as quart of water in each stalk. This tree can supply food, shelter, and water, all the things a weary traveler would need to help them on their journey.



Variegated Tapioca Plant or Cassava

Manihot esculenta variegata (Euphorbiaceae)

Originating in Central and South America, cassava spread rapidly through Africa, Madagascar, Zanzibar and India. Today, peasant farmers mostly grow cassava. For many of these farmers, it is the primary staple. They also use it as a cash crop to produce industrial starches, tapioca, and livestock feed. Various industries use it as a binding agent, because it is an inexpensive source of starch. Cassava starch is used in the production of paper and textiles and as monosodium glutamate (MSG), an important flavoring agent in Asian cooking. This variegated variety is grown as an ornamental.

brown crown-shaft. It is indeed a palm-lovers teddy bear. Many people regard palm trees as the princes of the plant kingdom.

Ti Plant

Cordyline terminalis (Liliaceae)

Native to the Himalayas and islands in the south Pacific Ocean, the Ti Plant has been used in the Pacific Islands for many years. The starchy tuberous roots were eaten after being baked in underground ovens, and a brandy like drink was fermented from the mashed roots. The leaves have been used for fiber, clothing, food wrappers, folk medicine and braided into leis. The red ti was considered sacred by many native Hawaiians. The leis made with its leaves could only be worn by priests. Propagation is usually achieved through stem cuttings to perpetuate a true cultivar. Packages of stem cuttings are commonly sold in the tourist trade.



Timber Bamboo

Bambusa oldhamii (Graminaceae)

Despite its treelike structure, bamboo is actually a giant grass. Like many grasses, it self-propagates by spreading underground, or "running". The culms, or above ground stems, form a grove connected by a network of rhizomes or underground stems, and the grove acts more like a single plant. Unlike other grasses, however, bamboo plants rarely produce seeds. If they do, it may be at intervals of 15 to 60 years or more, and the plants often die after seeding. Interestingly, all plants of some species seed at the same time, no matter where on the earth they grow. Bamboo is both decorative and useful. In many parts of the world it is food, fodder, and the primary construction material. Bamboo is used for making a great variety of useful objects including kitchen tools, dinnerware, paper, musical instruments, water fountains, wind chimes, and furniture.

Allspice

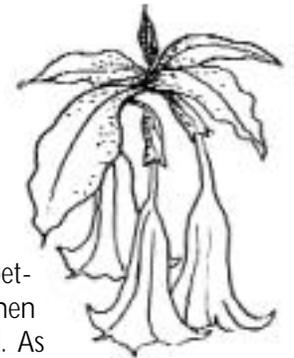
Pimenta dioica (Myrtaceae)

Christopher Columbus discovered allspice in the Caribbean. Mistaking it for pepper, he brought it to Spain, where it got the name "pimienta", which is Spanish for pepper. Allspice is not a blend of "all spices," but its taste and aroma remind many people of a mix of cloves, cinnamon, and nutmeg. You can smell the distinct fragrance in the leaves, but the unripe dark berries are dried and ground for the spice. Allspice comes from Jamaica, Mexico, and Honduras. It is used in Jamaican jerk seasoning and in soups, stews, curries, and cakes.

Angel's Trumpet

Brugmansia versicolor (Solanaceae)

Outside, and to the left of the Information Center, you will see the *Brugmansia versicolor*, commonly known as "Angel's Trumpet". This trumpet-shaped blossom is first a whitish hue, then turns slightly peach to salmon colored. As with many flowers that are pollinated by moths or bats, this flower emits a sweet, musky scent in the evenings. Since there are no creatures to pollinate this blossom in Florida, it is unable to produce seeds. This plant is highly toxic, and contains a potent narcotic, scopolamine. Eating any portion of this plant causes severe reactions and possibly even death.



Asparagus Fern

Asparagus densiflorus "sprengeri" (Liliaceae)

This is not a true fern, but a member of the lily family. This evergreen perennial herb has stiff arching stems covered in bright green, flat needle like leaflets. The flowers are small, white to whitish pink and fragrant. Widely planted as a ground cover, this fast growing, low maintenance ground cover has escaped from cultivation and invaded natural areas in Florida where large colonies of this plant are displacing native vegetation.

Australian Tree Fern

Alsophila cooperi (Cyatheaceae)

Unlike flowering plants, ferns reproduce by spores. The majority of ferns have their sporangia on the underside of the frond arranged in an organized pattern. The arrangement of the sporangia varies greatly and is used to identify the 12,000 species in the world today. Ferns were at their height during the Carboniferous Period (the age of ferns), and have been on the planet for 300 million years. These beautiful tropical ferns grow to 20 feet, and can withstand temperatures as low as 24°F for short periods. They prefer deep shade in warm weather, and require regular watering. The brown hairs on the stem can be quite irritating and may be a form of protection from foraging animals.



Banana

Musa spp. and Ensete spp.
(Musaceae)

There are many species of banana. Most cultivated bananas, however, are hybrids of *Musa acuminata* and *M. balbisiana*. Banana and plantain are native to southeast Asia, where they have been cultivated for thousands of years. They vary greatly in fruit size, quality, and resistance. Susceptibility to frost prevents the banana from spreading beyond the tropics and the warm sub-tropics.



Bird of Paradise

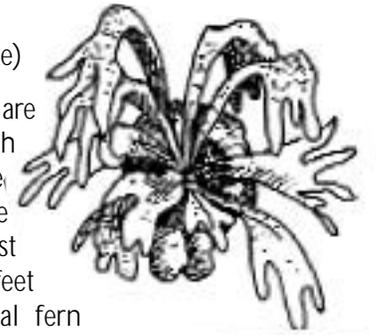
Strelitzia reginae (Strelitziaceae)

Native to South Africa, this strikingly flamboyant flower is named for the colorful bird of New Guinea. The orange flowers form the bird's crest and the brilliant blue spathe form the bill. One orange flower comes out each day, making this blossom more beautiful with the passage of time. These gleaming

Staghorn Ferns

Platycerium bifurcatum (Polypodiaceae)

Seventeen species of staghorn ferns are presently recognized, along with many varieties and hybrids. The smallest species has fronds that are only nine inches long, the largest species has fronds reaching seven feet across. The *Platycerium* is a tropical fern native to the South Pacific. In their native habitat they thrive as epiphytes, generally found growing on tree trunks, branches, or a rock out-cropping. *Platycerium* has two types of fronds, a fertile frond and a sterile or shield frond. The fertile fronds, with their distinctive shapes, aid in identifying species and cultivars, but the main purpose is to produce spores and photosynthesize. The shield frond protects the roots from bacteria and insect damage, and collects moisture and debris that can be used to fertilize the plant. Nutrients are provided by rain water washing the material off of the branches and transporting it to the root mass.



Sweet Potato

Ipomoea batatas (Convolvulaceae)

A member of the morning glory family, this twining vine grows from a tuberous root. There are two general types of sweet potatoes. One type has soft, moist flesh when cooked and a high sugar content. This type of sweet potato is commonly, but incorrectly, called "yam". The second type, when cooked, has a firm, dry, somewhat mealy flesh, which is usually light yellow or pale-orange in color. The sweet potato is truly a native American plant, originating in Ecuador and Peru. It is very nutritious, high in beta-carotenes and low in fat. The leaves are eaten as a green in the Philippines.

Teddy Bear Palm

Neodypsis lastelliana (Palmaceae)

This moderately-sized, pinnate leaved palm is from the rainforest of Madagascar. It has a smooth, waxy-white trunk, and a furry

Screw Pine

Pandanus utilis (Pandanaeae)

This unique looking tree with its long strap like leaves and walking aerial roots will only have the large drupe fruits if it is a female plant. The name *P. utilis* implies the many uses of this tree. The leaves are woven into hats, mats, and baskets. In time of famine the tender floral leaves are eaten raw, or cooked with various condiments. The fruit is called the poor man's pineapple. Although pulp contained in the lower part of the fruit is edible, it is not very tasty. Also, the seeds are baked and soaked to obtain the sweet kernels between the fibers.



Spindle Palm

Hyophorbe vershaffeltii (Palmaeae)

Native to the Mascarene Islands, which are located off the coast of Madagascar in the Indian Ocean, this palm is very sensitive to cold weather, and is easily susceptible to freeze damage. This palm makes a nice specimen plant because its trunk eventually grows in the shape of a spindle-hence the name. This palm is almost extinct in the wild.

Spiral Ginger

Costus spiralis (Zingiberaceae)

Native to South America, this ornamental ginger has an orange pinecone-shaped bract that flowers, one blossom at a time, throughout the summer. Members of the *Costus* genus are known as the spiral gingers. Their foliage spirals down and around the bamboo-like stalks, much like steps descending down and around a spiral staircase.

colors attract the birds or lizards which pollinate this unusual flower. The special pollination mechanism makes it impossible for insects to pollinate this bloom. The weight of a small bird or lizard standing on the spathe exposes the hidden stamens, and makes them protrude. The pollen adheres to the animals underbelly and is spread by the pollinator visiting other flowers.

Bird's Nest Fern

Asplenium nidus (Polypodiaceae)

This pantropical, epiphytic fern colonizes trees, rock faces and boulders in humid, tropical rainforests. The glossy green, thin, tongue-like fronds have wavy margins and a prominent, almost black midrib. They arise from a densely hairy crown somewhat resembling a bird's nest. It requires warmth and ample humidity.

Blue Ginger

Dichorisandra thyrsiflora (Commelinaceae)

Blue Ginger is a misnomer, since it is not a ginger nor does it have blue flowers. Although somewhat resembling an ornamental ginger, *Dichorisandra* is actually related to the wandering jew. Deep violet flowers form dense spikes in the late summer and early autumn, adding an unusual touch of color to tropical foliage.

Bougainvillea

Bougainvillea spp. (Nyctaginaceae)

This tropical American shrubby vine was named for the French lawyer, scientist and explorer Louis-Antoine de Bougainvillea, who discovered the plant during one of his trips to Brazil. It is sometimes called the paper flower for the colorful paper-like bracts that surrounds the small cream colored flowers. Gaudy bracts in shades of fuchsia, purple, red, pink and white testify that there has been so much hybridization that identification is difficult. The cascading wall of *Bougainvillea* in the Butterfly Garden has stems as large around as the trunks of trees, attesting to the old age of these vines.

Butterfly Palm

Dypsis lutescens (Palmaceae)

This is one of the most popular ornamental palms, and is grown throughout the tropics and sub-tropics in containers for wind-breaks or for specimen planting. Ironically, this decorative palm native to Madagascar is now rare in its native land. Known by many common names including: cane palm, golden cane palm, yellow cane palm, Madagascar palm, yellow palm, butterfly palm, and the confusing and misleading Areca palm, this plant makes a compelling argument for using scientific binomials.

Cabbage Palm

Sabal palmetto (Palmaceae)

The Sabal palmetto is the state tree of Florida, and was the first tree to be protected by state law. Old time Florida crackers called it cabbage palm or swamp cabbage. As part of the pioneers' diet, entire hammocks were harvested. After cutting away all the outer leaf stems, the trunk was severed 3 feet below the bud, and yielded a core that could weigh as much as 5 to 15 pounds. The most popular way to prepare swamp cabbage was to cut it into thin slices like cole slaw, and cook it with meat seasoning. As the state tree, the Sabal palm is protected from indiscriminate cutting.

Calathea, Prayer Plant

Calathea spp. (Marantaceae)

Calathea is found at the lowest level of the hot, humid tropical forests of the Americas. In the dim light, plants compete for all the available sunshine they can collect. The prayer plant does this with transparent cells in the upper surface of its leaves. Acting as tiny lenses, these cells focus the dim light onto the grains of chlorophyll. The purple coating on the underside of the leaf maximizes any sunlight falling its way, and reflects it back into the leaf tissue so the chlorophyll will have a second chance to use it. Each night the leaves rise to a vertical position, folding themselves together, hence the name praying hands. Many members of the Marantaceae family are sold as prayer plants.

Flour can be made from the starchy pith and seeds of this plant after a long and elaborate process to thoroughly remove the toxins. This flour has been used as a staple food in parts of Asia. There is now evidence that long-term use of this flour, even if properly prepared, may result in paralysis and other neurological disorders over time.

Sapodilla Tree

Manilkara zapota (Sapotaceae)

An evergreen tree, with its dense foliage, can grow to be 100 feet tall. This tree produces a spicy, sweet fruit that is best eaten raw. Sometimes called the chewing gum tree, because the sap contains a milky latex called "chicle" which was used to make the first chewing gum - Chicklets. Sapodilla wood is strong and durable. The timbers formed lintels and supporting beams in Mayan temples, and have been found intact in the ruins. It has also been used for railway cross ties, flooring, native carts, tool handles, loom shuttles and rulers. The red heartwood is valued for archery bows, furniture, bannisters, and cabinetry. Cutting down the tree is prohibited in Belize because of its value as a source of chicle. The tree can be tapped every two years, and may produce up to 50 quarts of chicle.

Schefflera, Umbrella Tree, Umbrella Plant or Octopus Tree

Schefflera actinophylla (Araliaceae)

Schefflera actinophylla is very common in South Florida and the warmer parts of Central Florida. *Schefflera* is also seen indoors as a houseplant all over the world. Unfortunately, this *Schefflera* is also on Florida's "Don't Plant" list of nuisance trees. *Schefflera* is a nuisance for three reasons: *Schefflera* seeds itself very easily, growing where no one wants a large tree. The root system is strong and aggressive and takes over much of the surrounding soil. *Schefflera* sheds leaves, constantly creating a littered appearance.

Look carefully near the wedding lawn, and you may find a much rarer variety with white flowers.

Princess Flower

Tibouchina urvilleana (Melastomaceae)

The deep purple flower of this shrub is sometimes called the Brazilian Spiderflower because of the large sickle-shaped stamens that resemble a spider's legs. These stamens actually serve a very important purpose. The large prominent stamens produce a sterile pollen to lure bees to the flower. The smaller pink stamens with the fertile pollen are ignored by the bees as they rush to the large pollen gains and begin to feast. Unknowingly the bees underside is dusted with the viable pollen, and cross pollination is ensured.



Queen Palm

Syagrus romanzoffianum (Palmaceae)

Native to Brazil and Argentina, it is one of the few palms that flower and fruit year-round. The bright orange berries are full of sugar, and are enjoyed by parrots in its native land. The queen palm is one of the most commonly grown non-native palms in Florida, possibly because it can thrive with little care and in a wide range of soils.

Queen Sago

Cycas rumphii (*circularis*) (Cycadaceae)

Queen sago is native to equatorial Africa. Like other cycads, the queen sago resembles a palm tree with its feather-like leaves arranged in a rosette at the crown of a single trunk. In older specimens, some branching may occur to produce plants with multiple crowns, (as with the very old plant on the northeast side of the wedding lawn).



Calamondin

Citrus mitis (Rutaceae)

This ornamental citrus is known for beauty, ease of growing, and continuous fruiting. This tree has small evergreen foliage with small orange fruit that add color to the landscape year-round. The fruit makes an excellent substitute for lemons or limes in iced tea or as a citrus juice. Calamondin can also be made into marinades, marmalades, jams and pies.

Camellia

Camellia japonica (Theaceae)

Native to the mountains of Japan and Korea, *C. japonica* is by far the most popular ornamental camellia, with thousands of varieties of white, pink or red flowers. A non-drying hair oil is made from the seeds of the flower, and the dried flower petals are used as a vegetable, or cooked with gelatinous rice. The flowers are astringent and have been mixed with sesame oil and used in the treatment of burns and scalds. The leaves are used as a tea substitute. *Camellia sinesis* is the source for both green and black teas, and has been grown for an estimated 4,000 years in China.

Carambola, Star Fruit

Averrhoa carambola (Oxalidaceae)

The carambola tree has small, fragrant white flowers which turn into a ribbed fruit that looks like a star when cut in cross section. The quince scented, edible fruit has a sweet or tart flavor. The fruit is tastiest when left to ripen on the tree, which generally takes 60 to 75 days. Easily damaged, the fruit must be packed by hand when the yellow color begins to develop. The harvest season is June through February. This fruit is high in potassium, moderate in vitamin C, and low in calories.

Chenille Plant

Acalypha hispida (Euphorbiaceae)

Native to the South Pacific, where Indonesians sometimes eat the boiled young leaves. Infusions of the leaves, roots, and flowers are used medicinally as a worming agent, a remedy for colic and intestinal disorders, and also as a poultice for sores. It is sometimes called Philippine medusa because the flower resembles the snaky locked Gorgon of Greek mythology. It is also called red hot cat's tail, and love lies bleeding. It prefers full sun and grows easily from cuttings.



Coconut

Cocos nucifera (Palmaceae)

The coconut is among the world's largest seeds. It will take a full year for the seed to ripen on the tree before it is ready for dispersal. The seed is spread to other islands by the ocean's currents. In order for the seed to survive this long and dangerous journey, it must have a buoyant husk, and enough nutrients to be viable when it lands on a distant shore. Coconut palms are among the most important trees to mankind, and are grown on plantations. The meat of the coconut is used in oils, margarine, and soap. The dried meat is called copra. The milk is important in many cultures for cooking. The husk of the seed produces coir, which is used to make rope, brushes and mattresses. The leaves are woven into mats and used in the construction of houses on some Pacific islands.

Corn Plant

Dracaena fragrans (Agavaceae)

Native to Africa, this plant was discovered by Europeans in 1768, and became a popular plant in Victorian homes. This species is named for the fragrant flowers that bloom once a year.

Ponytail Palm or Elephant Foot

Beaucarnea recurvata (Agavaceae)

Although called a ponytail palm, it is not a true palm. This native to the Mexican desert is a very slow growing tree. The large bulbous base can conserve a year's worth of water for the plant. The large tree growing near the amphitheater was planted in 1940.



Pothos, Hunter's Robe, Scindapsus

Epipremnum aureum (Araceae)

The well-known ornamental Pothos or Scindapsus is a member of the Arum family. Vines of this type are bole (tree) climbers. They begin life on the ground. Their seed germinates and sends out a tendril toward shade cast by a nearby tree. The tendril soon grows up the tree trunk and attaches itself by aerial roots to the tree. There it continues to grow ever upward, often encircling the bole as it spreads. In humid tropical forests it is quite common to see boles totally enshrouded by the wide, thick leaves of these climbers. As it grows, the plant ceases to be rooted in the ground and becomes a climbing epiphyte (technically referred to as a hemi-epiphyte). Its entire root system is invested on the tree bark. The common name of Hunter's Robe comes from the men of New Guinea wrapping the leafy vine around themselves as camouflage before embarking on a hunt.

Powder Puff

Calliandra spp. (Leguminosae)

Growing throughout the garden you will find this large tropical American shrub covered with soft fluffy powder puff shaped flowers. These blooms are actually many small flowers with inconspicuous petals and hundreds of pollen tipped stamens. Calliandra is Greek meaning beautiful male, and haematocephala from Latin literally means blood red head.



is an important part of Florida's citrus industry, and its blossom is our state flower. The orange was first introduced to European countries, and later introduced into the Americas by the Spanish.

Papaya

Carica papaya (Caricaceae)

The papaya is actually an herbaceous plant that is referred to as a tree. A native of Columbia, this plant reminds us of the day when Sunken Gardens was growing garden vegetables and exotic fruits. The fruits may be dioecious (female or male) or perfect (both male and female). Both male and females can bear fruit, and although the fruit of a male flower may be smaller, it loses nothing in flavor. If you cut open a fruit and there are no seeds inside, your fruit was produced by a male plant. Besides the fruit, this tree also produces pepsin, an enzyme used to aid with digestive tract, bowel, and gastric ulcer problems. It is the basis of many meat tenderizing products.

Peace Lily

Spathiphyllum Clevelandii (Araceae)

This peace lily is not a true lily, but a commercially produced aroid (member of the arum family) of uncertain origins. The white spathe and spadix flower is sometimes called white flag. This plant is sometimes grown by florists and used in floral arrangements.

Pitcher Plant

Nepenthes sp. (Nepenthaceae)

Nepenthes are tropical pitcher plants of the Old World. The name Nepenthes is Greek and means "soothing grief". All Nepenthes grow in extreme habitats that are poor in nutrients, such as peat swamps and mountain rainforests. While plants get their energy from sunlight, air and water, they still need nitrogen and phosphorous to grow. Carnivorous plants acquire these nutrients by digesting insects. The pitchers catching the prey are a type of passive trap, which lure the insect with color, aroma and nectar. When the victim falls into the pit, there is no way back. The term "pitcher plant" is used for a number of different carnivorous plants with pitcher-like leaves.

Cast Iron Plant

Aspidistra elatior (Liliaceae)

Aptly named cast iron plant for its seeming ability to last forever in the most adverse conditions. It has the ability to withstand severe conditions such as dense shade, poor soil, heat, cold, and drought. Many dark Victorian homes were decorated with *Aspidistra*. This plant is a staple for many shade gardens.

Croton

Codiaeum variegatum (Euphorbiaceae)

Hundreds of different color patterns and foliage forms grow in wilds of Malaysia. In Southeast Asia this plant is used in folk medicine and for animal fodder. In Melanesia, local villages will select a variety as their emblem and use it in their rites and ceremonies. Many new horticultural varieties have been cultivated in the last hundred years. Botanically speaking, this plant is not a true croton. True crotons are members of the family Leguminosae (peas).

Cuban Royal Palm

Roystonea regia (Palmaceae)

Possibly one of the most beautiful and graceful palms of the world, the royal palms are named after Roy Stone, an American engineer. There are two species of royal palms grown in Florida. The native palm that grows wild in the swamps of the Fakahatchee Strand in the Big Cypress Preserve is *Roystonea elata*. It is rarely found as a landscape plant. The Cuban royal palm, *R. regia*, was brought to this country from Cuba in the 1930's and planted extensively throughout cities in South Florida. The large royal palms at Sunken Gardens are among the oldest in Central Florida. They were saved from the occasional freezing temperatures by an extensive array of grove heaters that warmed the Gardens.



Dragon Tree

Dracaena marginata (Agavaceae)

The name *Dracaena* is derived from Greek for female dragon. The bright red sap or "dragon's blood" has been used to make incense, varnish, and photo engravings. This species name describes the red edging on the narrow sword-shaped leaf.



Dumb Cane

Dieffenbachia spp. (Araceae)

This popular houseplant is often cultivated for its variegated foliage. All parts of the plant contain calcium oxalate crystals in a highly irritating liquid. If the juice is swallowed, inflammation and blistering of the mouth, throat, and larynx can occur. South American Indians used it as an arrow poison, and in colonial times it was used to punish slaves in Jamaica by rendering them speechless.

Elephant's Ear/Giant Elephant Ear or Upright Elephant Ear

Xanthosoma sagittaeifolium/*Alocasia macrorrhiza* (Araceae)

Elephant's ear, *X. sagittaeifolium*, is a native to the American tropics. It has large, soft evergreen leaves, and may reach three feet in length. It can be distinguished from the Asian giant elephant's ear by the cleft and the downward pointing leaf. This plant is cultivated in the West Indies, Cuba, and Puerto Rico as a root vegetable. Giant elephant's ear, *A. macrorrhiza*, is native to Java, Malaysia, and other warm parts of Asia. It is grown for its large beautifully colored ornamental foliage. This variety of *Alocasia* is sometimes referred to as upright elephant ears. Upright is used to describe the leaves which stand straight up, pointing skyward. The native people



toward extinction as the destruction of the rainforest accelerates.

Loquat

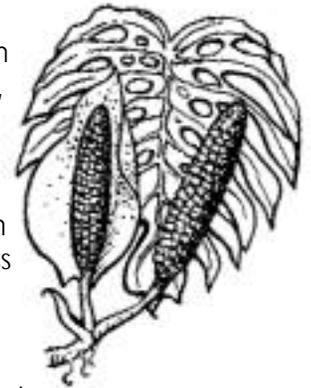
Eriobotrya japonica (Rosaceae)

The loquat is native to southeastern China. It was introduced into Japan and has been cultivated there for over 1,000 years. Loquat fruits should be allowed to ripen fully before harvesting. The loquat is comparable to the apple in many aspects, with a high sugar, acid and pectin content. It is eaten as a fresh fruit and mixes well with other fruits in fresh fruit salads or fruit cups. Firm, slightly immature fruits are best for making pies or tarts. The fruits are also commonly used to make jam, jelly and chutney, and are delicious poached in light syrup. Loquats can also be used to make wine.

Mexican Breadfruit, Ceriman, Swiss Cheese Plant

Monstera deliciosa (Araceae)

There are many aroids (members of the arum family) that are cultivated as ornamentals, but only *Monstera deliciosa* is grown for its fruit as well. The ceriman *Monstera deliciosa* is often called monstera and, inappropriately, Mexican breadfruit. Because of the holes in its leaves, it is sometimes called the Swiss cheese plant. The fully ripe fruit tastes like a blend of strawberry, pineapple, and banana. The delicious flavor of the fruit makes it difficult to wait until the fruit has ripened, but patience pays. Oxalic acid in the unripe fruit will cause burning and blistering in the mouth and skin. The aerial roots have been used as ropes and have been fashioned into coarse, strong baskets.



Orange Tree

Citrus sinensis (Rutaceae)

China has contributed many types of citrus to the gardens of the world, and today there are many varieties of oranges. The orange

found throughout the world, the subtropical king sago is native to the Far East and has been used as a choice container and landscape plant for centuries.

Lady Palm

Rhapis excelsa (Palmaceae)

Rhapis are a fascinating group of palms, and have been used as the classic ornamental palm for almost 400 years. Rhapis, known as lady palms, can be found in homes and gardens throughout the world. They were cultivated by the Japanese elite in the early 1600s, and became a prized American "parlor palm" during the 1850s. The widespread popularity of these multi-cane fan palms can be attributed to their adaptability to a wide range of soils and climates, the ease of care, durability, insect resistance, and long life. Japanese horticulturists have developed more than 100 named cultivars.

Live Oak

Quercus virginiana (Fagaceae)

The live oak in the Oak Pavilion is conservatively estimated at over 200 years old and has a limb span of over 150 feet. Considered the "guardian of the garden" it has been aptly named "The Sentinel". Live oaks are known to live for over 300 years, they are attractive shade trees and they attract a wide variety of wildlife that use the tree for food or shelter. Back in the days of sailing ships, the U.S. Navy procured large holdings of live oak forests for the tree's exclusive use in shipbuilding.

Lobster Claw

Heliconia rostrata (Musaceae)

This pendent variety of Heliconia is native to Columbia and Peru. Hummingbirds are attracted by the bright red bracts, and are the exclusive pollinators for this tropical American species. The increased destruction of the rainforest has led to the spread of many species of Heliconia, which prefer open sites along roadsides, river banks, and patches of open forest. However, the species of Heliconia that prefer shaded primary forest are heading toward

use alocasia as an important source of starch, and refer to it as "wild" Taro, but it is eaten only after an elaborate preparation. Every part of the raw elephant's ear or giant elephant's ear contains an acrid juice that causes a stinging, burning rash.

Fishtail Palm

Caryota mitis (Palmaceae)

Fishtail palms are easily identified by their bipinnate compound leaves, which distinguish them from all other palms. This is a clustering palm, that blooms and fruits continuously, displaying several clusters of flowers and fruits at different stages of maturity year round. After the last cluster of fruit has ripened, the tree dies. With a quick glance down, you will notice hundreds of young trees sprouting. All the berries the tree has produced have not been eaten by any rodent or bird. This is because the pulp contains oxalate crystals, which causes acute stinging and skin inflammation. The sensation of the acid crystallizing on the skin has been described as feeling like a fire ant bite that burns for two hours. Remember your gloves when you pick up the seeds from this tree.

Frangipani or Plumeria

Plumeria rubra or obtusa (Apocynaceae)

Native to the dry hot regions of Central America, the frangipani, sometimes called the pagoda or temple tree, is one of the most common ornamentals in the tropics. Used to make leis and an extract of scented oils, the frangipani was named after an Italian nobleman who made perfume.

Creeping Fig

Ficus pumila (Moraceae)

There are over 1,000 species of Ficus. This aggressive vine bears little resemblance to its close relative, the edible fig, *Ficus carica*. The creeping fig is an adventuresome climber able to crawl up vertical surfaces with the help of a powerful adhesive. The small heart shaped leaves are the juvenile stage of foliage. Once the vine has reached the top of its support it will begin to form horizontal branches on which the adult foliage is borne. Adult leaves are

more leathery than the juveniles, and are dark green, and about three inches long by two inches wide. The fruit is a fig, but is not edible.

Gardenia

Gardenia jasminoides (Rubiaceae)

Native to China and Japan, this shrub is widely cultivated in south-east Asia for its fragrant white blossoms and as a source of crocin, a yellow water soluble food dye. While mankind has used the scented flower as a source of perfume for centuries, the plant produces the sweet smell not for people, but for insects who must be enticed to do the job of pollination. In recent years, the food industry in western Europe has used the yellow dye made from the fruit of the gardenia as a substitute for the expensive dye made from saffron.

Glory-bower

Clerodendrum speciosissimum (Verbenaceae)

This native of Malaysia, is sometimes called the Java glorybower or the red Clerodendrum. In Indonesia and Malaysia this shrub is believed to have the magical ability to summon spirits. The long, alluring stamens are thought to have the power to beckon, so hunters use them to lure game. The leaves are made into a treatment for dysentery and burns, and the root is made into an antidote for snake bites.

Grapefruit

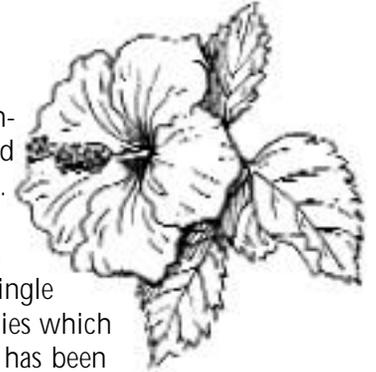
Citrus X paradisi (Rutaceae)

Grapefruit is second only to oranges as the most popular citrus fruit. An ideal fruit tree in central Florida for anyone that loves citrus. It is eaten as a breakfast food, served in fruit salads, or squeezed for the healthful juice that's rich in vitamin C and fiber. There are numerous varieties of grapefruit, and they can be difficult to identify. Many growers simply will distinguish them as seedy or seedless varieties. The older varieties are usually seedy grapefruits, having between 30 to 60 seeds in each fruit. This is a seedy grapefruit tree, and it is a reminder of the fruit and vegetable stand that George Turner Sr. owned and operated prior to 1935.

Hibiscus

Hibiscus rosa-sinensis (Malvaceae)

Native to southern China, rosa-sinensis literally means rose of China, and is often called the rose of the tropics. Like the rose, the hibiscus has hundreds of varieties. There are countless colors and combinations of colors, single or double blossoms, and some varieties which bloom almost every day. This flower has been cultivated for thousands of years. The flowers are edible and can be used to garnish a plate or flavor a salad. In Asia and India the juice is used to darken the color of hair and eyebrows, shine shoes, and has even been used as a treatment for boils. *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* is Hawaii's state flower and the national flower of Malaysia.



Hong Kong Orchid Tree

Bauhinia blakeana (Fabaceae)

The Hong Kong orchid tree is the national flower of Hong Kong and is the emblem of their national flag, but it is not an orchid. The orchid-like flowers are actually in the pea family. *Bauhinia* is named for the Bauhin brothers, two famous Swiss botanists. The two lobes of the leaves depict brotherly closeness. Sir Henry Blake discovered the tree and is immortalized by the species name *blakeana*. *Bauhinia blakeana* is thought to be a hybrid because it never produces seeds. A related plant, *Bauhinia variegata*, the poor man's orchid tree, is listed as a nuisance exotic in Florida, and is to be avoided.

King Sago

Cycas revoluta (Cycadaceae)

Cycas revoluta, is one of the most primitive living seed plants. This cone bearing plant traces its origin back to the ancient flora of the early Mesozoic era. Often called "living fossils", cycads have changed very little in the last 200 million years. Cycads are either male or female, and can be recognized by the pollen or seed cone in the center of the fronds. While various species of cycads can be