

- 27) **Privet Cassia.** *Senna ligustrina*. A colorful shrub with yellow flowers. Sulphur butterflies use this plant for both nectar and caterpillar food.
- 28) **Muscadine Grape.** *Vitis sp.* This vine produces a very tasty fruit for both people and wildlife. Native Peoples such as the Calusa cut the stems and drank fluid from the plant. Meat is wrapped and cooked in grape leaves. The tender spring leaves are edible and the vines can be used for basket making.
- 29) **Cherry Laurel.** *Prunus caroliniana*. This tree has tiny white flowers in the spring and provides cover and berries for wildlife. Leaves and branches contain prussic acid that may be fatal to animals if eaten in quantity.
- 30) **Blackberry.** *Rubus sp.* These provide a wonderful thicket for wildlife and the berries are a good source of food for both animals and people. The young shoots are edible and the leaves make a nice tea. Florida's Native People used the vines for basket weaving.
- 31) **Chickasaw Plum.** *Prunus angustifolia*. This plant is striking in the early spring with its abundant white flowers. The small tart, fruits make good jellies and preserves. It also provides good cover and food for wildlife.
- 32) **Coastal Plain Willow.** *Salix caroliniana*. This plant provides good cover for shoreline wildlife. It is the caterpillar food for the Viceroy butterfly. The plant, which contains the active ingredient found in aspirin, was used by Florida Native Peoples and early settlers as a pain medication.
- 33) **Florida Privet.** *Foresiiera segregata*. This is a salt-tolerant coastal plant. Female plants produce small purple fruit eaten by wildlife, especially birds. The shrub also provides shelter and nesting sites.
- 34) **Red Mulberry.** *Morus rubra*. Notice the variety of the leaf shapes. Some are deeply lobed while others are not. The tree produces a fruit that birds and other wildlife love! Florida's Native People also ate the fruit.
- 35) **River Birch.** *Betula nigra*. Notice the peeling bark that is characteristic of River Birch trees. It has small brown catkins, or flowers, in the spring. In the fall, the leaves turn yellow.
- 36) **Royal Fern.** *Osmunda regalis*. This is a large fern. It can grow up to six feet tall. The fertile fronds bear cinnamon-colored spores at the tips. The fibers from the stems are quite coarse and have been used to make ropes and nets.



Shirley McPherson
1945 - 2000

Shirley McPherson was a devoted member of the Pinellas Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society and a great supporter of Heritage Village and the Pinellas County Historical Society. She was a dedicated volunteer who tirelessly worked to advance community understanding and awareness of Florida's natural heritage. This nature trail, created in her memory uniquely combines Shirley's love for education and native plants into an enduring legacy for the public.

This trail was made possible by:

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Shirley McPherson Nature Trail

at Heritage Village in Pinewood Cultural Park

Pinellas County has been home to people for thousands of years—the prehistoric Native Peoples, Tocobaga and later the Seminole, and then settlers of European and African descent. They all relied upon resources from the land for their basic needs—food, water and shelter. They created everything they needed from what was around them in the environment. The types of plants, animals and other materials available to them helped shape their lifestyle. For these early residents their life was intertwined with their environment.

The Shirley McPherson Nature Trail wanders through a pine flatwoods habitat. This trail guide briefly describes how some plants were used by the early people, and their importance to wildlife. As you stroll the trail and understand the relationship of people with their environment, we hope you will gain a respect and appreciation for Florida's native plants and wildlife, and their value in the past as well as for the future.

Trail Guide

(Numbers correspond to trail signage.)

1) Slash Pine. *Pinus elliotii*. Pine nuts, young shoots and inner bark provided food and young needles were used for tea. The wood was a construction material and burned for fuel; sap or resin was processed into rosin, tar, pitch and turpentine. Products made from these include disinfectants, soaps, inks and greases. Florida's Native People used pine resin to secure projectile points onto spears. Provides good cover and food source for wildlife.

2) Saw Palmetto. *Serenoa repens*. Palmetto berries provided food and medicine for Florida Native Peoples. Mammals and large birds also like the berries. Bees use the nectar for making honey. The leaves can be used to build shelters and to make baskets, mats and hats. Over 7,000 years ago, Florida's Native People made twine, rope and cord from the palmetto. The roots produce tannic acid that was used in tanning leather. The little saw-like teeth on the stems of the leaves give this plant its name.

3) Red Maple. *Acer rubrum*. Very distinctive fall leaf color. The winged seeds are eaten by wildlife and in the late winter give a beautiful red tint to the woods.

4) Cinnamon Fern. *Osmunda cinnamomea*. Has two types of fronds – sterile and fertile. The fertile fronds support the spores and the frond itself becomes a distinctive cinnamon color. The leaf-like sterile fronds can grow up to five feet tall.

5) Wild Coffee. *Psychotria nervosa*. A plant with shiny, deeply-veined leaves and attractive red berries. Contrary to its name, it does not make good coffee because it produces a severe headache. It attracts butterflies to its flowers and birds to its fruit.

6) Laurel Oak. *Quercus laurifolia*. Provides food and cover for wildlife. Its wood was burned for fuel.

7) Longleaf Pine. *Pinus palustris*. Very long needles (up to 18 inches long) and very large cones (up to 10 inches long). The seedling, called "grass stage," is easy to identify because it looks like a clump of grass. This once-dominant pine was heavily exploited for timber trade. Same uses as the slash pine.

8) Cabbage Palm. *Sabal palmetto*. Florida's State Tree. The flowers are a nectar source and the berries are food for wildlife and early residents. "Heart of Palm," commonly known as swamp cabbage, is the bud of the palm, and was food for Native People, early settlers and wildlife. However, removing the bud kills the palm. The palm provides a home for many animals. The fibers on the trunk and leaves were spun, woven or twisted into rope. The trunks were logs for construction. The leaves were used for building shelters and weaving baskets and mats.

9) Virginia Chain Fern. *Woodwardia virginica*. An identifying characteristic is the appearance of what looks like "railroad tracks" on the underside of the fern at the midrib.

Shirley McPherson Nature Trail



10) Tupelo. *Nyssa sylvatica*. Bees nectaring on tupelo flowers produce high-quality honey. The small dark fruit is enjoyed by many birds and mammals. The fluted base of the tree is an adaptation for living in a wet environment. The wood is commonly used in plywood, veneers and railroad cross-ties. In fall it is identified by deep red leaves that later drop in winter.

11) Dahoon Holly. *Ilex cassine*. Dark green leaves with a spine on the end and smooth gray bark characterize this tree. The splotches on the bark are non-harmful lichens. During the fall and winter, the red to orange berries provide food for many birds. Early settlers used the leaves to brew a tea.

12) Slash Pine. *Pinus elliotii*. (See plant #1).

13) Winged Sumac. *Rhus copallinum*. Called "winged" because the compound leaves have "wings" on the stems between the leaflets. The red berries are food for wildlife and have been used to make a lemonade-like drink. The berries were used for dyeing fibers and cloth. Caterpillars of the Red-banded Hairstreak butterfly feed on this plant.

14) Sweetbay Magnolia. *Magnolia virginiana*. Notice the silvery underside of the leaf when the wind blows. The seed's fleshy outer covering, called an aril, is a favorite wildlife food. The plant is also caterpillar food for the Spicebush, Palamedes and Eastern Tiger Swallowtail butterflies.

15) Catbrier or Greenbrier. *Smilax* sp. This vine is usually very spiny. The root can be made into a flour for cooking. The new, tender shoots can be eaten raw or boiled. The plant produces small, dark berries enjoyed by wildlife. It also provides good cover and protection for wildlife.

16) Elderberry. *Sambucus canadensis*. Another terrific food source for both people and wildlife. People enjoy deep-frying the blossoms, and making syrup, jelly, pie, champagne and wine from berries. The berries were also used for dyeing fibers and cloth.

17) Southern Magnolia. *Magnolia grandiflora*. The tree's beautiful wood was used for cabinetry. The magnolia has large, beautiful white flowers in the spring. It provides good cover for wildlife. The seed's covering, or aril, is a favorite wildlife food.

18) Rouge Plant. *Rivina humilis*. Grows to be about three feet tall with pink flowers and bright red berries that have high wildlife food value.

19) Beautyberry. *Callicarpa americana*. An understory shrub whose outstanding feature is an abundance of magenta berries that ripen along the stems in the fall. The berries make a fine jelly and are loved by birds.

20) Sand Pine. *Pinus clausa*. The short needles are 2 to 3.5 inches long with two occurring in each bundle. This pine grows on high, upland sites and requires fires for its cones to open and disperse seeds.

21) Wax Myrtle. *Myrica cerifera*. Produces a tiny, waxy fruit that can be used in making bayberry-scented candles. Birds also love these berries. Roots and bark were used medicinally; fruits and leaves were used for flavoring. Miccosukee Native People used the leaves as tobacco. The plant is caterpillar food for the Red-banded Hairstreak butterfly.

22) Red Bay. *Persea borbonia*. Leaves may be used in cooking as substitute for bay leaves. The Miccosukee Native People used the leaves to make a tea. Deformities on the leaves called galls are an identifying characteristic. The plant produces a fruit enjoyed by birds. The Red Bay is also caterpillar food for the Spicebush and Palamedes Swallowtail butterflies. The wood has been used for boat construction.

23) Gallberry. *Ilex glabra*. Produces a dark fruit, about 1/3 inch in diameter, eaten by wildlife. The leaves are used to make a non-caffeinated tea.

24) Persimmon. *Diospyros virginiana*. Only the female trees produce the orange fruits. Raccoons and opossums really like these! Fermented fruit was used to make vinegar. The leaves can be used for tea. The tree provides cover for wildlife.

25) Sweetspire. *Itea virginica*. A woody shrub which grows about six feet tall and has white, finger-shaped fragrant flower clusters. Provides some fall color.

26) Loblolly Bay. *Gardenia lasianthus*. A beautiful tree that grows in wetland areas. It has a simple, elegant flower with five petals and a yellow center, that blooms from May to September. Some leaves turn red throughout the year, adding to its beauty. Wood has been used for cabinetry; bark contains astringents for tanning.