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A Field Guide to the Medicinal Plants of Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, Spring 1998

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**A Field Guide
to the
Medicinal Plants
of
Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary**

*Compiled and written by
Jessica Bekman,
Seasonal Naturalist
Spring 1998*

This field guide is designed for volunteers, seasonal interns, and staff to serve as another medium to giving nature interpretation on the vascular plants of Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary. By cross-referencing our list of vascular plants with various field guides and sources of medicinal plants, I was able to compile the following guide to the "Medicinal Plants of Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary." There were two reasons as to why I was interested in creating this field guide: First, it is documented that there are over 800 different species of plants in the eastern United States alone, that have medicinal qualities. Secondly, it demonstrates the fact it is important to conserve preserve our native flora. The American Indians were tuned in to this idea. Of the more than 200 different plants the Indians utilized for medicinal purposes, all but five have been shown by the United States Dispensatory to be proven effective as pharmaceuticals. By conserving our native flora, we are not only accounting for intact ecosystems and aesthetic beauty, but we are saving answers to questions not even asked yet. These plants contain genetic information and chemical compounds which could possibly be used to treat diseases such as cancer and AIDS which today plague our society. "More than 40% of the prescription drugs sold in America have at least one ingredient derived from nature." Through research and investigation of our native flora, it may be possible to reinstate natural compounds as the drugs of choice, over synthetic man-made chemicals. If thought about logically and scientifically, it is safer for the human body to receive doses of naturally derived compounds other than man-made laboratory compounds. We should learn a lesson from our Eurasian counterparts and that is to conserve our native plants!

In this field guide, I have first stated the common and scientific names, as well as the family from which they are from. A description is listed below to help in the identification of each plant. The medicinal uses of the specific plant are then listed. I have tried to list Native American uses, colonial American uses, and modern-day medicinal uses, if applicable. Finally, if there are any warnings you need to be aware of regarding the plant, they are also listed. Here I would like to state that this is a field guide to enhance your nature interpretation. It is not meant to be used as an instrument in gathering plants for personal medicinal use, which I'm sure you're aware of. I've also included a small glossary in cases where there may be terms you're unfamiliar with. Enjoy!

American Beauty Berry: *Callicarpa americana*

Verbena Family

Description: Shrub; 3-6 ft. Leaves ovate-oblong, toothed, woolly beneath. Tiny whitish blue flowers June-August. Rich, blue-violet berries in clusters October-November

Uses: American Indians used leaf and root tea in sweat baths for rheumatism, fevers, and malaria. Root tea also used for dysentery, stomach-aches. Berry and root tea used for colic. Formerly used in the South for dropsy and as a "blood purifier."

Related Species: The Chinese use the leaves of a related *Callicarpa* species to stop the bleeding of wounds. It is also used to treat flu in children and for some menstrual disorders.

Blackberry: *Rubus argutus*

Rose Family

Description: Shrub with arching canes that root at tips. Stem glaucous with curved prickles. Leaves whitened beneath, sharply double-toothed. White flowers April-July; Purple-black fruits July-September. Rows of white hairs between drupelets.

Uses: Astringent root tea traditionally used for diarrhea, dysentery, stomach pain, gonorrhea, back pain, "female tonic," blood tonic for boils. Leaf tea is used as a wash for sores, ulcers, boils. Early Americans combined it with honey and alum to tighten loose teeth or they used the juice to dissolve tartar on their teeth. Indians believed it was effective in preventing miscarriages. It was also thought to *help mothers in childbirth and was given as a refreshing drink* during delivery. It was also used as a mouthwash and recommended for bad breath. There are reports that 500 Oneida Indians plagued with dysentery one season recovered after using blackberry tea, while the white neighbors fell before the ailment. In colonial America, a medicine chest wasn't complete without blackberry brandy or cordial!

Black-eyed Susan: *Rudbeckia hirta* var. *angustifolia*

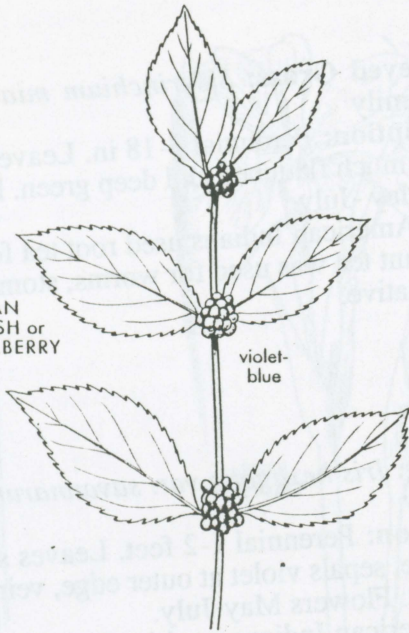
Aster Family

Description: Biennial or short-lived perennial; 1-3 ft. Leaves lance-shaped to oblong, bristly-hairy. Flowers yellow, daisy-like, with 8-21 rays around a deep brown center June-October.

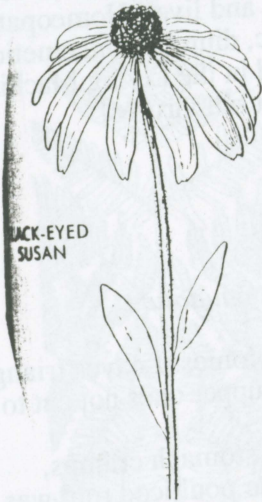
Uses: American Indians used root-tea for worms, colds. An external wash was used for sores, snakebites, swelling. Root juice used for ear-aches.

Warning: Contact sensitivity to the plant has been reported!!

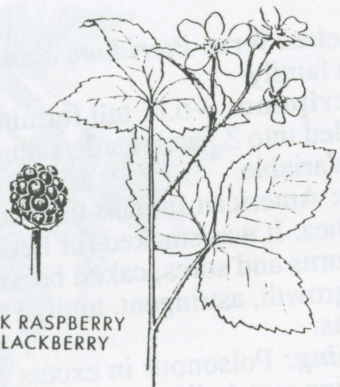
AMERICAN
BEAUTY BUSH or
FRENCH MULBERRY



violet-
blue



BLACK-EYED
SUSAN



BLACK RASPBERRY
or BLACKBERRY

Blue-eyed Grass: *Sisyrinchium miamiense*

Iris Family

Description: Perennial 4-18 in. Leaves are narrow (1/4 inch wide), much flattened and deep green. Flowers at tip of long, flat stalk May -July.

Uses: American Indians used root tea for diarrhea (in children). The plant tea was used for worms, stomach-aches. Sometimes used as a laxative.

Blue-flag: *Iris hexagona var. savannarum*

Iris family

Description: Perennial 1-2 feet. Leaves swordlike. Flowers violet-blue, sepals violet at outer edge, veins prominent, sheaths prominent. Flowers May-July.

Uses: American Indians poulticed root on swellings, sores, bruises, rheumatism; analgesic agent. Internally root tea used as strong laxative, emetic, and to stimulate bile flow. Physicians formerly used root of this plant in small, frequent doses to "cleanse" blood and stimulate the bowels, kidney, and liver. Homeopathically it is used for migraines and as a cathartic, diuretic, and emetic. As you may already know, this plant is used in the Living Machine because "its roots produce chemicals that kill viruses!"

Warning: Considered poisonous!!

Bracken fern: *Pteridium aquilinum var. caudatum*

Fern family

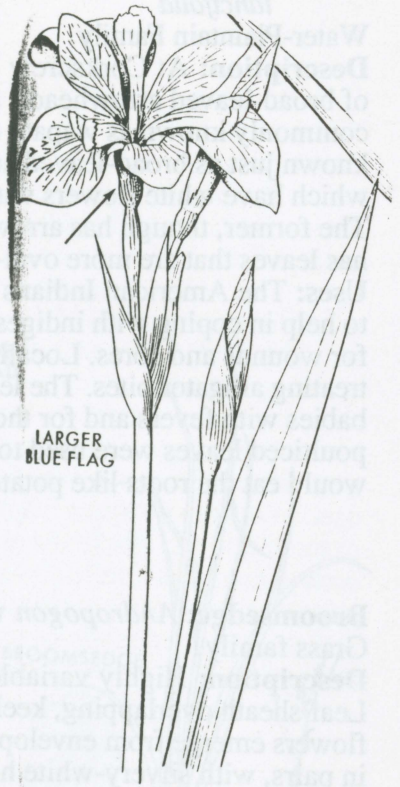
Description: 3-6 ft. tall forming large colonies. Leaves triangular, divided into 3 parts; leaflets blunt-tipped, upper ones not cut to mid-rib. Variable.

Uses: American Indians used root tea for stomach cramps, diarrhea. It was smoked for headaches. The poulticed root was used for burns and sores, caked breasts. The wash was used to promote hair growth, astringent, tonic. Historically, root tea was used for worms.

Warning: Poisonous in excess doses, especially to cows, disturbs thiamine metabolism. Contains at least 3 carcinogens!!



BLUE-EYED GRASS



LARGER
BLUE FLAG



BRACKEN FERN

Broad-Leaved Arrowhead: *Sagittaria latifolia* and *Sagittaria lancifolia*

Water-Plantain Family

Description: At Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, we have two types of broad-leaved arrowheads, as seen above; the first being commonly known as wapato or duck potato and the latter being known just as broad-leaved arrowhead. Both are aquatic perennial which have white flowers with 3 rounded petals June-September. The former, though has arrow-shaped leaves, whereas the second has leaves that are more oval-shaped.

Uses: The American Indians used the tubers of these plants in tea to help in coping with indigestion. As a poultice they used the tubers for wounds and sores. Locally, the Seminole Indians used it for treating alligator bites. The leaf tea was used as a wash in treating babies with fevers and for those suffering from rheumatism. The poulticed leaves were used to stop milk production. They also would eat the roots like potatoes.

Broomsedge: *Andropogon virginicus* var. *virginicus*

Grass family

Description: Highly variable grass 28-55 in. Bluish or green stem. Leaf sheath overlapping, keeled, and strongly compressed. Small flowers emerge from envelopes that are not inflated, racemes usually in pairs, with silvery-white hairs.

Uses: The root decoction was used for back-aches. Leaf tea used for diarrhea. Externally, a wash was used for frostbite, sores, and itching. Also used for piles and poison ivy rash.

Buttonbush: *Cephalanthus occidentalis*

Madder Family

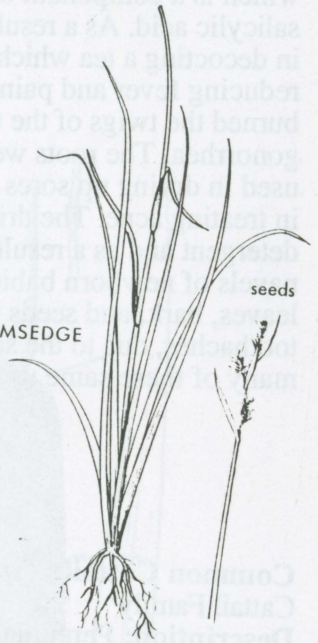
Description: Shrub 9-20 ft. Leaves oblong-ovate, essentially smooth. White flowers in a globe-shaped cluster July-August. Stamens strongly protruding.

Uses: American Indians chewed inner bark for tooth-aches. Bark tea used as a wash for eye-inflammation, also emetic-stops bleeding. Leaf tea was drunk to check menstrual flow. Thought to be tonic, diuretic, astringent, promotes sweating. Also was once used for fevers, coughs, kidney stones, malaria, palsy, pleurisy, and tooth-aches. Believed to relieve fever and malaria.

Warning: Contains the glucosides cephalanthin and cephalin. They have caused poisonous in grazing animals.

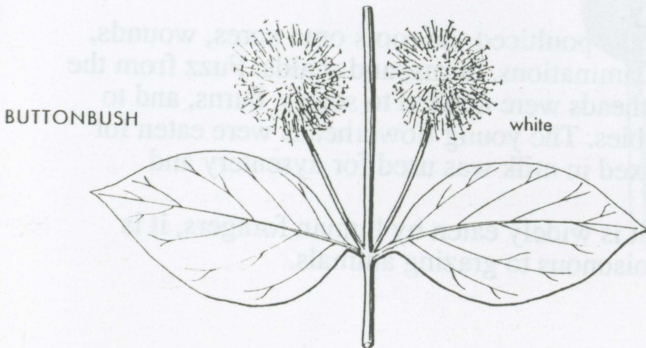


BROAD-LEAVED
ARROWHEAD



BROOMSEDGE

seeds



BUTTONBUSH

white

Coastal Plain Willow: *Salix Caroliniana*

Willow Family

Description: A small southern tree up to 35 in. with very narrow leaves that are long-pointed and somewhat whitened. The twigs are somewhat hairy and reddish. The trunk bark is gray and the leaves grow 2-7 in. It flowers May-June.

Uses: The willow's leaves and inner bark contain salicylic acid, which is a component of aspirin. It's name *Salix* comes from salicylic acid. As a result, the Native Americans used the cambium in decocting a tea which was used in treating arthritis and for reducing fever and pains, long before aspirin was around. They burned the twigs of the tree and mixed the ashes with water to treat gonorrhea. The roots were poulticed and the resulting paste was used in drying up sores from syphilis. Salicylic acid is today used in treating acne. The dried and powdered bark is astringent and detergent and as a result it had several uses. It was applied to the navels of newborn babies and used to stop bleeding. The crushed leaves, bark, and seeds were used in treating bad nosebleeds and toothaches, due to the salicin. The colonial settlers later adopted many of these same uses.

Common Cattail: *Typha latifolia*

Cattail Family

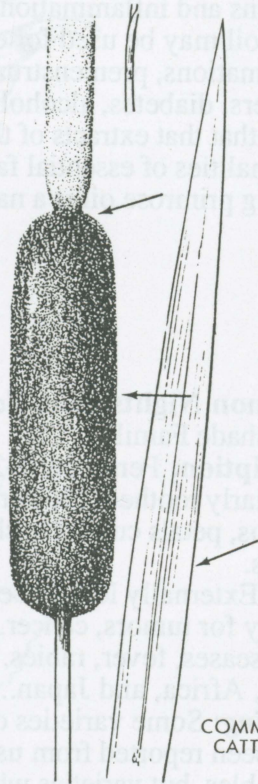
Description: Perennial 4-8 ft. forming thick stands. Leaves swordlike. Stiff, erect flowering stalks, topped with yellow, pollen-laden male flowers above hot dog-shaped, brown female flowerheads May-July.

Uses: American Indians poulticed the roots onto sores, wounds, boils, carbuncles, inflammations, burns, and scalds. Fuzz from the mature female flowerheads were applied to scalds, burns, and to prevent chafing in babies. The young flowerheads were eaten for diarrhea. The root mixed in milk was used for dysentery and diarrhea.

Warning: Although it is widely eaten by human foragers, it is suspected of being poisonous to grazing animals.



COASTAL PLAIN
WILLOW



COMMON
CATTAIL

Common Evening-Primrose: *Oenothera biennis*

Evening Primrose Family

Description: Biennial 1-8 ft. Leaves numerous, lance-shaped. Flowers yellow with 4 broad petals June-September. Sepals drooping, stigma X-shaped. Flowers bloom after sunset, opening before the eyes of those who watch, hence the common name.

Uses: American Indians used the root tea for obesity, bowel pains. The poulticed root was used for piles, bruises. The root was rubbed onto muscles to give athletes strength. It was one of the first plants to be exported to Europe around the time of the Pilgrims. It was regarded as one of the better remedies for coughs and to lessen the spasms of whooping cough. It was also thought to help asthma and scrofula. A salve made from it, was believed to help cure skin eruptions and inflammations. Recent research suggests that the seed's oil may be used for eczema, asthma, migraines, inflammations, premenstrual syndrome, breast problems, metabolic disorders, diabetes, alcoholism, and arthritis. It has also been shown that that extracts of this plant can alleviate imbalances and abnormalities of essential fatty acids in prostaglandin production. Evening primrose oil is a natural source of gamma-linolenic acid.

Common Nightshade: *Solanum americanum*

Nightshade Family

Description: Perennial 1-2 1/2 ft. Leaves broadly triangular, irregularly toothed. Flowers white stars with protruding yellow stamens, petals curved back May-September. Fruits are black berries.

Uses: Externally leaf-juice preparations have been used as a folk remedy for tumors, cancer. Berries formerly used as a diuretic for eye diseases, fever, rabies. Extracts are used in tea in India, Europe, China, Africa, and Japan...

Warning: Some varieties contain solanine, steroids, and deaths have been reported from use. In India some varieties are eaten as vegetables, but varieties which are very similar may be violently toxic.



COMMON
EVENING-PRIMROSE



fruit
black

COMMON NIGHTSHADE

Common Ragweed: *Ambrosia artemisiifolia*

Aster Family

Description: Annual 1-5 ft. Leaves dissected, artemisia-like, highly variable- *as a rule alternate*, but opposite as well. Drooping, inconspicuous green flowerheads on erect spikes July-October.

Uses: American Indians rubbed leaves on insect bites, infected toes, minor skin eruptions, and hives. The tea of it was used for nausea, fevers, intestinal cramping, mucous discharges, very astringent, emetic. The root tea was used for stroke and menstrual problems.

Warning: Pollen from the genus *Ambrosia* causes 90% of pollen-induced allergies in the U.S. Goldenrods are often pointed out as the source of late-summer allergies, but at the same time they are blooming, the ragweeds are really guilty!

Cudweed: *Gnaphalium falcatum*

Aster Family

Description: Highly variable aromatic perennial, up to 3 ft. Leaves white and felty underneath, lance-shaped. Flowers in dense panicles July-September.

Uses: Used by the American Indians alot as an astringent to induce sweating, curb pain and diarrhea. A weak tea was used for menstrual disorders and stomach-aches. The leaf snuff was used for headaches, sinus ailments, and nosebleeds. As a wash, it was used externally for rashes, itching, swelling, skin eruptions, sores, and boils. In sweatbaths, it was used to help treat fevers, rheumatism, colds, and the flu.

Daisy Fleabane: *Erigeron quercifolius*

Aster Family

Description: Slender, hairy perennial 1-3 ft. Basal leaves oblong, stem leaves smaller, clasping at base. Flowers less than 1 in. across, pinkish to magenta with numerous slender rays and a yellow disk April-July.

Uses: The plant tea was used as a diuretic and astringent. It was used as a folk remedy for kidney stones, diarrhea, painful urination, and diabetes. It was also used to stop hemorrhaging of the stomach, bladder, bowels, nose, and kidneys.

Warning: Contact with plant may cause dermatitis.

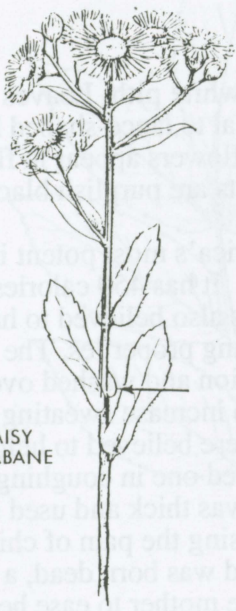
COMMON RAGWEED



Cudweed



DAISY FLEABANE



Dodder: *Cuscuta obtusifolia* var. *glandulosa*

Morning-Glory Family

Description: Parasitic, chlorophyll-lacking, leafless annuals. The leaves are replaced by a few scales. Stems are yellow or orange.

Uses: Stems were used by the American Indians as a poultice for bruises. In China, the *Cuscuta* species are used in lotions for inflamed eyes. They also use the seeds for urinary tract infections. The Chinese dodder tea has been shown to produce cholinergic, anti-inflammatory, and CNS-depressant qualities.

Dog Fennel: *Eupatorium capillifolium*

Aster Family

Description: Bad-smelling annual 8-20 in. Fine, thrice-cut leaves. Flowers white May-November. Disk flowers are studded with stiff chaff.

Uses: In a tea, it was used to induce vomiting, sweating. It is an astringent, diuretic and used for colds, diarrhea, fevers, rheumatism, dropsy, headaches, and obstructed menses. The leaves were rubbed on insect stings.

Warning: Plant has been known to cause allergies from touching or ingesting.

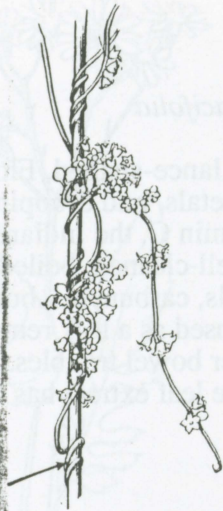
Elderberry: *Sambucus canadensis*

Honeysuckle Family

Description: Shrub 3-12 ft. Stem with white pith. Leaves opposite and compound with 5-11 elliptical to lance-shaped leaflets that are sharply toothed. Aromatic white flowers appear in flat, umbrella-like clusters June-July. The fruits are purplish black July-September.

Uses: The fruit is said to be North America's most potent in vitamin A, thiamine, calcium, and niacin. It has 450 calories and 9 grams of protein per pound! The fruit was also believed to have cooling, gentle laxative and urine-increasing properties. The elderberry wine was used as a cooling lotion and washed over those with fevers. It was also taken internally to increase sweating which in turn would reduce fever. The berries were believed to help arthritis and gout, if eaten. They also helped one in coughing up phlegm. The juice was simmered until it was thick and used as a cough syrup. The bark tea was used in easing the pain of childbirth. Another unexplainable use was if the child was born dead, a few sips of the bark decoction was given to the mother to ease her pain. The bark was also used by American Indians, with good results, to help ease toothaches and as a poultice it was used on cuts and newborn's navels. Crushed leaves were used as a bug repellent.

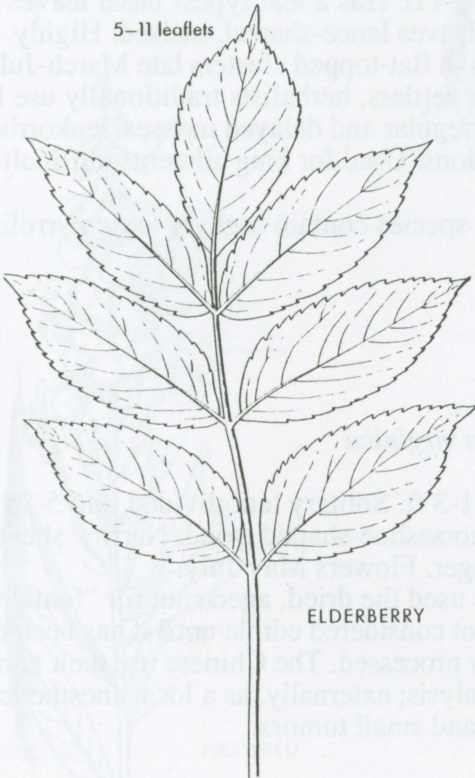
Warning: Bark, roots, leaves, and unripe berries are said to be toxic. Fruits are edible when cooked, and flowers are not toxic.



DODDER



Dog Fennel



5-11 leaflets

ELDERBERRY

Fireweed: *Erechtites hieracifolia* var. *hieracifolia*

Aster Family

Description: Perennial 1-7 ft. Leaves are lance-shaped. Flowers are rose-pink July-September. 4 rounded petals, bud drooping.

Uses: Having an abundant amount of Vitamin C, the Indians cooked and ate fireweed like asparagus. Well-cleaned, boiled roots were used to make swelling disappear, boils, carbuncles, burns, and skin sores alike. The leaf and root tea was used as a folk remedy for abdominal cramps, dysentery, and "summer bowel troubles." The leaf poultice was used for mouth ulcers. The leaf extract has been shown to reduce inflammation.

Golden Ragwort: *Senecio glabellus*

Aster Family

Description: Perennial 2-4 ft. Has 2 leaf types- basal leaves heart-shaped, rounded; upper leaves lance-shaped, incised. Highly variable. Yellow flowers in flat-topped clusters late March-July.

Uses: American Indians, settlers, herbalists traditionally use leaf and root tea in treating irregular and delayed menses, leukorrhea, and childbirth complications. Used for lung ailments, difficult urination, dysentery.

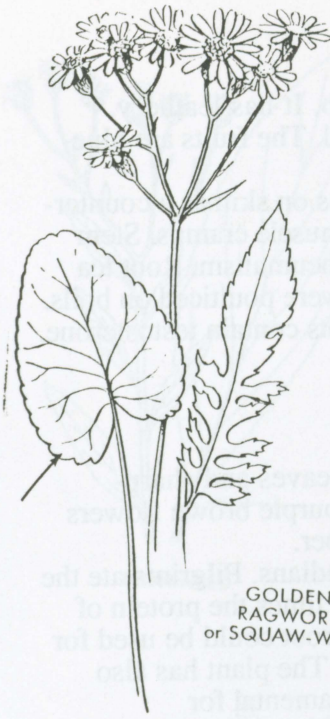
Warning: Some *Senecio* species contain highly toxic pyrrolizidine alkaloids.

Green Arum: *Peltandra virginica*

Arum Family

Description: Perennial 1-3 ft. Solitary leaf divided into 5-15 lance-shaped leaflets along a horseshoe-shaped frond. Narrow sheathlike spathe; spadix much longer. Flowers May-July.

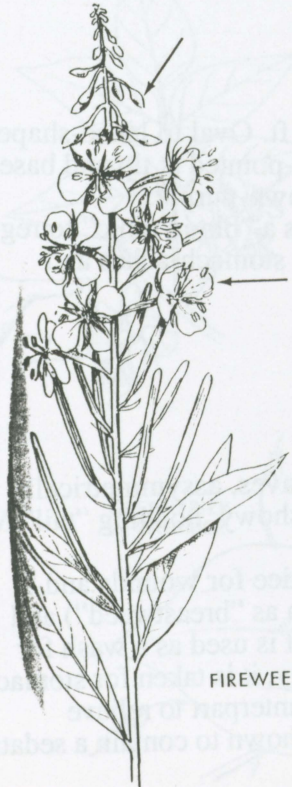
Uses: American Indians used the dried, aged root for "female disorders." The root is not considered edible until it has been dried and aged and elaborately processed. The Chinese use their similar species for epilepsy, paralysis; externally, as a local anesthetic or in ointments for swellings and small tumors.



GOLDEN
RAGWORT
or SQUAW-WEED



DRAGON or
GREEN ARUM



FIREWEED

Greenbrier: *Smilax auriculata*

Smilax Family

Description: Green, thorny, climbing shrub, It has leathery, round, shiny leaves. The base is heart-shaped. The fruits are blue-black July-November.

Uses: American Indians rubbed stem prickles on skin as a counter-irritant to relieve localized pains, twitching, muscle cramps. Stem and leaf tea used for stomach problems and rheumatism. Root tea taken to help expel afterbirth. Wilted leaves were poulticed on boils. It is rumored, but not proven that *Smilax* roots contain testosterone.

Groundnut: *Apios americana*

Pea Family

Description: Twining vine. It has 5-7 oval leaves and sharp-pointed leaflets. Sweetly fragrant maroon or purple brown flowers in crowded clusters in leaf axils July-September.

Uses: It was the favorite food of American Indians. Pilgrims ate the tubers during their first bleak winters. It has 3 times the protein of potatoes. John Josselyn said a poultice of the root could be used for cancerous conditions known as "proud flesh." The plant has also been suggested as a nitrogen-fixing edible ornamental for permaculturists.

Ironweed: *Veronia blodgettii*

Aster Family

Description: Blue-green perennial 2-5 ft. Oval to lance-shaped leaves only on the stem; narrowly sharp-pointed at tip and base. Flowers July-October. Seed crowns brown-purple.

Uses: American Indians used the root as a "blood tonic" to regulate menses, relieve pain after childbirth, for stomach-aches and bleeding.

Lizard's-tail: *Saururus cernuus*

Lizard's tail Family

Description: Perennial 2-5 ft. Large leaves, assymmetrically heart-shaped. Tiny, white flowers on a showy, nodding "tail" May-September.

Uses: American Indians used root poultice for wounds and inflamed breasts (the plant is also known as "breastweed") and inflammations. Tea from the whole plant is used as a wash for general illness and rheumatism. Internally, it is taken for stomach ailments. The Chinese use their plant counterpart to relieve inflammation also. It has recently been shown to contain a sedative compound.



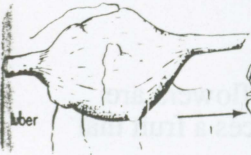
IRONWEED



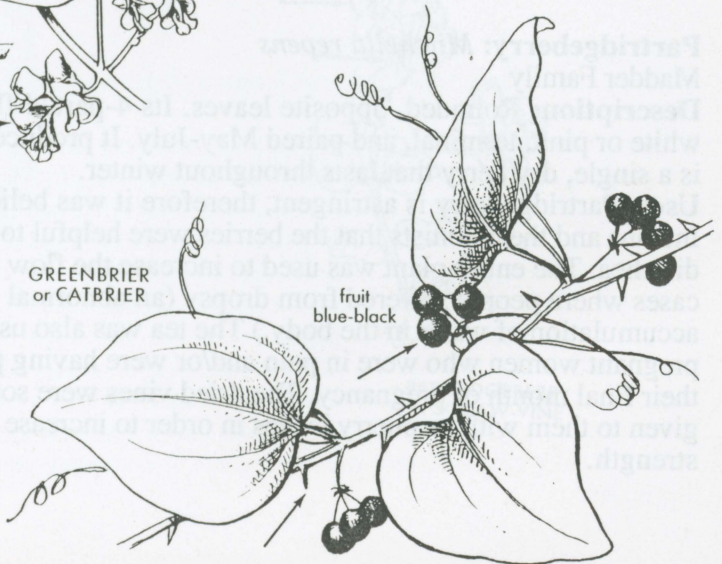
LIZARD'S-TAIL



GROUNDNUT



GREENBRIER
or CATBRIER



fruit
blue-black

Maypop: *Passiflora pallens*

Passion-Flower Family

Description: Climbing vine, up to 30 ft. Tendrils springlike. Leaves cleft with 2-3 slightly toothed lobes. Large, showy, unique flowers that are whitish to purplish with numerous threads radiating from the center July-October. The fruits are fleshy and egg-shaped.

Uses: American Indians poulticed the root for cuts, boils, inflammation, and earaches. Traditionally it was used as an anti-spasmodic and a sedative for epilepsy, neuralgia, painful menses, restlessness, tension headaches, and insomnia. Research shows that the extracts are mildly sedative, slightly reduce blood pressure, increase respiratory rate, and decrease motor activity.

Warning: Potentially harmful in large amounts.

Mistletoe: *Phoradendron serotinum*

Mistletoe Family

Description: Parasitic, thick-branched perennial that is semi-evergreen. The leaves are oblong to obovate and up to 3 in. long. The flowers are small and its fruits are a translucent white.

Uses: The American Indians used the tea for "fits", epilepsy, hypertension, headaches, debility, lung ailments. It was also used as by them as an oral contraceptive and to stop bleeding after childbirth.

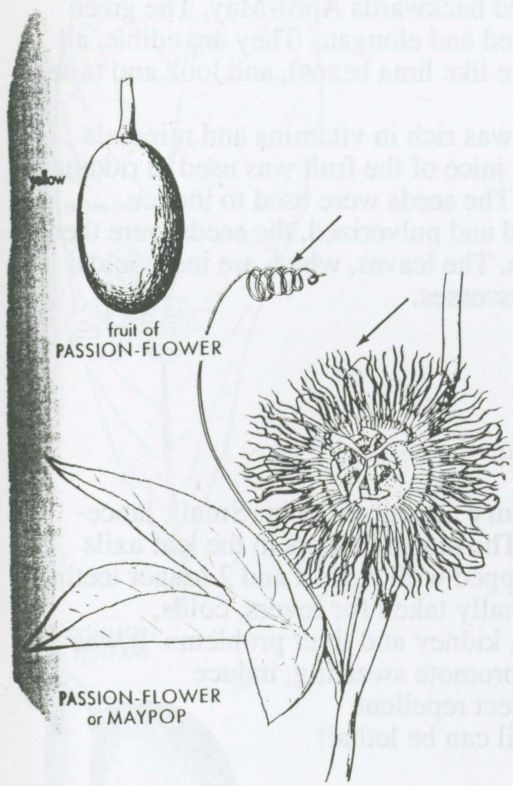
Warning: Often considered poisonous!

Partridgeberry: *Mitchella repens*

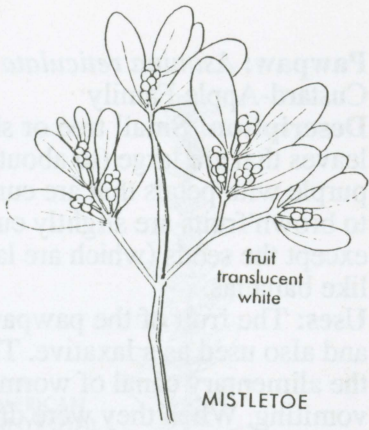
Madder Family

Description: Rounded, opposite leaves. Its 4-parted flowers are white or pink, terminal, and paired May-July. It produces a fruit that is a single, dry berry that lasts throughout winter.

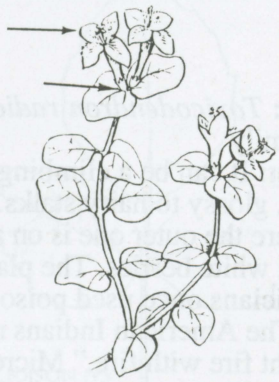
Uses: Partridgeberry is astringent, therefore it was believed by the Indians and the colonists that the berries were helpful to control diarrhea. The entire plant was used to increase the flow of urine in cases where people suffered from dropsy (an abnormal accumulation of water in the body.) The tea was also used for pregnant women who were in pain and/or were having problems in their final month of pregnancy. The dried vines were sometimes given to them with raspberry leaves in order to increase their strength.



PASSION-FLOWER
or MAYPOP



MISTLETOE



PARTRIDGEBERRY
or SQUAW-VINE

Pawpaw: *Asimina reticulata*

Custard-Apple Family

Description: Small tree or shrub 9-30 ft. Oblong to lance-shaped leaves that are large (to about 1 ft.) The drooping flowers are a dull purple with petals that are curved backwards April-May. The green to brown fruits are slightly curved and elongate. They are edible, all except the seeds (which are large like lima beans), and look and taste like bananas.

Uses: The fruit of the pawpaw was rich in vitamins and minerals and also used as a laxative. The juice of the fruit was used in ridding the alimentary canal of worms. The seeds were used to induce vomiting. When they were dried and pulverized, the seeds were then used to rid the scalp of head lice. The leaves, which are insecticidal and diuretic, were applied to abscesses.

Pennyroyal: *Piloblephis rigida*

Mint Family

Description: Aromatic, soft-hairy annual, 6-18 in. Small, lance-shaped leaves that are toothed. The bluish flowers in the leaf axils bloom July-October. Calyx 2-lipped with 3 short and 2 longer teeth.

Uses: The leaf tea was traditionally taken for fevers, colds, indigestion, coughs, headaches, kidney and liver problems. It was also used as an expectorant, to promote sweating, induce menstruation, and also as an insect repellent.

Warning: Ingesting essential oil can be lethal!

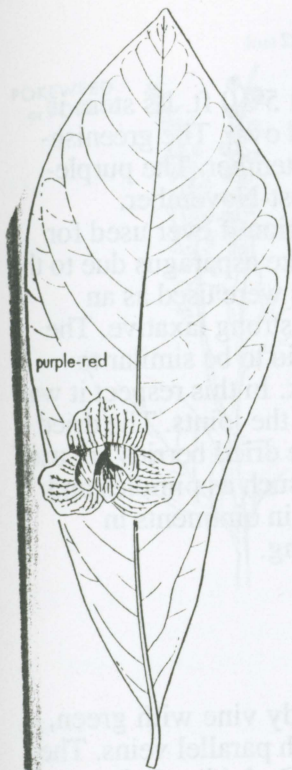
Poison Ivy: *Toxicodendron radicans subsp. radicans*

Cashew Family

Description: It can be a climbing vine or erect shrub. The leaves are on long, glossy to hairy stalks. There are 3 highly variable leaflets where the outer one is on a longer stalk. It has whitish flowers and white berries. The plant fruits from August-November.

Uses: Physicians once used poison ivy to treat liver and paralytic disorders. The American Indians rubbed the leaves on poison-ivy rash to "fight fire with fire." Microdoses are still used homeopathically to treat the rash. Medically, urushiol (the active ingredient) has been proven to inhibit prostaglandin synthesis.

Warning: Touching poison ivy often causes severe dermatitis. Eating it may cause severe effects which will require steroid or other therapies.



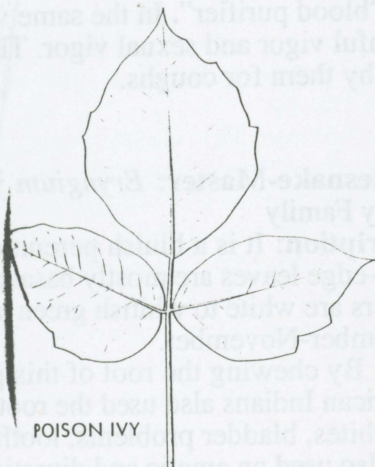
purple-red

COMMON
PAWPAW



greenish, then brown

AMERICAN
PENNYROYAL



POISON IVY

Pokeweed: *Phytolacca americana* var. *rigida*

Pokeweed Family

Description: Coarse, large-rooted perennial 5-10 ft. Its stem is often red at the base. The leaves are large and oval. The greenish-white flowers have petal-like sepals July-September. The purple-black fruits appear in drooping clusters August-November.

Uses: This plant should be handled with caution if ever used for medicinal purposes. The shoots are cooked like asparagus due to the fact that they are high in vitamin C. The roots were used as an emetic and for arthritis. The berries contain a strong laxative. The pokeweed's major medicinal component is said to be similar to cortisone in stimulating the glandular network. In this respect it was also used for chronic arthritis and stiffness of the joints. The dried root is still used for treating hemorrhoids. The dried berries are used as poultices for bleeding and bringing sores (such as pimples and blackheads) to a head. It is a major ingredient in ointments in treating things such as eczema, syphilis, itching.

Rattan Vine: *Berchemia scandens*

Buckthorn Family

Description: A high-climbing, twining woody vine with green, smooth stems. It has alternate, oval leaves with parallel veins. The tiny white flowers appear in panicles in May. Dark blue fruit come in clusters September-October.

Uses: The American Indians used the rattan vine leaf and bark tea as a "blood purifier". In the same way, they used it to restore youthful vigor and sexual vigor. The tea of burned stems were also used by them for coughs.

Rattlesnake-Master: *Eryngium yuccifolium*

Celery Family

Description: It is a bluish perennial that stands 1 1/2-4 ft. The spiny-edge leaves are mostly basal and parallel-veined. The tiny flowers are white to whitish green and are covered by bristly bracts September-November.

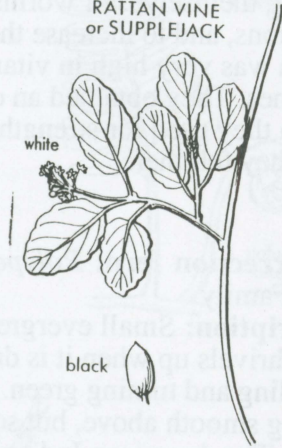
Uses: By chewing the root of this plant, saliva flow increases. The American Indians also used the root as a poultice for treating snakebites, bladder problems, toothaches, neuralgia, and coughs. It was also used an emetic and diuretic. Female reproductive disorders, piles, gleet, gonorrhoea, and rheumatism were some of the ailments rattlesnake-master was used to treat.

Warning: Do not confuse with rattlesnake-master (*Manfreda virginica*.)

POKEWEED
or POKE



RATTAN VINE
or SUPPLEJACK



RATTLESNAKE-MASTER



Red Maple, Swamp Maple: *Acer Rubrum*

Maple Family

Description: A medium-sized tree that grows 20-40 ft. with smooth, gray young bark and broken, darker older bark. The leaves have 3-5 lobes and are hairy underneath. The twigs and buds are reddish and the leaves grow 2-8 in. The flowers are red March-May as are the fruits May-July.

Uses: The Native Americans used the maple trees as a poultice in ridding themselves of worms, in treating eye infections and irritations, and to increase their appetite. They gathered the syrup which was very high in vitamin B, phosphorous, calcium, and enzymes. They obtained an extract by boiling the leaves and bark, which they used for strengthening the liver and for reducing any pain they felt there.

Resurrection fern: *Polypodium polypodioides*

Fern Family

Description: Small evergreen fern which grows up to 8 in. This fern shrivels up when it is dry, but after a rainfall "resurrects," unfurling and turning green. The leathery leaves are blunt-lobed feeling smooth above, but scaly beneath.

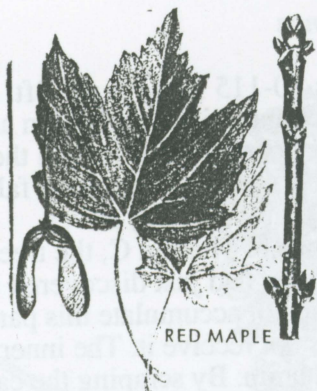
Uses: The American Indians heated the stem and leaves, using the ointment in the treatment of ulcers, and sores. As a leaf tea, it was used in treating dizziness, headaches, sore mouth, thrush, and bleeding gums.

Saw Palmetto: *Serenoa repens*

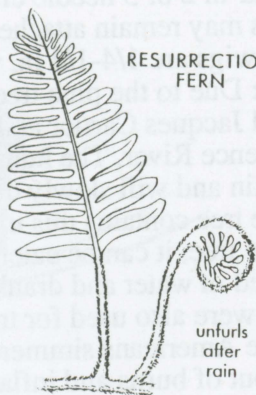
Palm Family

Description: This shrub grows to 6 ft. with horizontal, creeping stems above the ground. The leaf stems look like sawlike teeth, hence the name. The whitish green flowers have 3-5 petals and appear from May-July. It produces a black, fleshy fruit about 1 in. long surrounding 1 large seed.

Uses: The fruit extracts, tablets, and tinctures of this plant were traditionally used in treating prostate enlargement and inflammation. Historical pharmacological studies do suggest the plant may be useful in treating prostate disorders. A suppository of its fruits mixed with cocoa butter were used as a vaginal and uterine tonic. It was also used in treating coughs, colds, tickling feeling in the throat, irritated mucous membranes, chronic bronchitis, asthma, migraines, and head colds. The fruits are still picked locally for medicinal purposes!

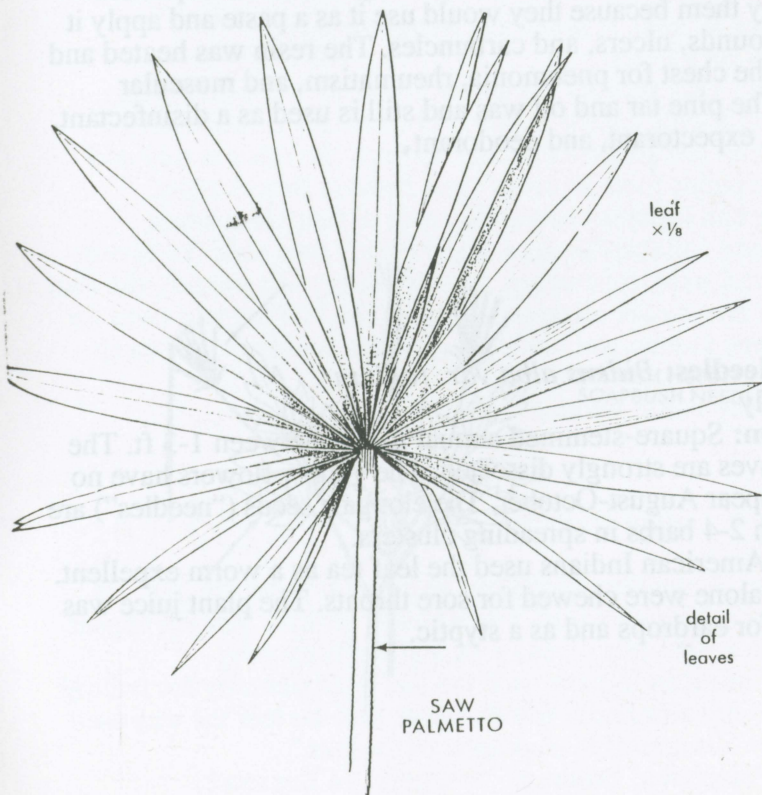


RED MAPLE



RESURRECTION
FERN

unfurls
after
rain



leaf
 $\times \frac{1}{8}$

detail
of
leaves

SAW
PALMETTO

Slash Pine: *Pinus elliottii* var. *densa*

Pine Family

Description: This pine tree grows 80-115 ft. with a 1-3ft. diameter and has needles which are broad, rigid, and green and can appear in 2 or 3 needle clusters. The cones are 3-6 in. and the cone stalks may remain attached to the tree after the cones have fallen off. The twigs are 1/4-1/2 in. with buds that are a rusty silver.

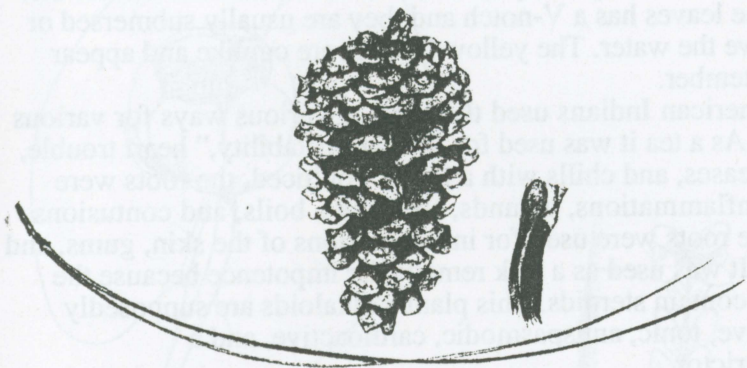
Uses: Due to the pine trees abundance of vitamin C, the tree once saved Jacques Cartier and his crew who had just discovered the St. Lawrence River. The human body cannot accumulate this particular vitamin and will slowly die if it does not receive it. The inner bark of a pine tree contains this important vitamin. By scraping the cambium off the tree, it can be eaten raw or cooked. The needles can also be steeped in water and drank as a tea to provide the antiscorbutic. They were also used for treating sore throats and consumption. The Native Americans simmered the bark of the young pines to draw the heat out of burns and inflammations. They also used it to guard against infection. The inner bark was thought of as an important medicine by them because they would use it as a paste and apply it to sores, wounds, ulcers, and carbuncles. The resin was heated and spread on the chest for pneumonia, rheumatism, and muscular soreness. The pine tar and oil was and still is used as a disinfectant, insecticide, expectorant, and deodorant,

Spanish Needles: *Bidens alba* var. *radiata*

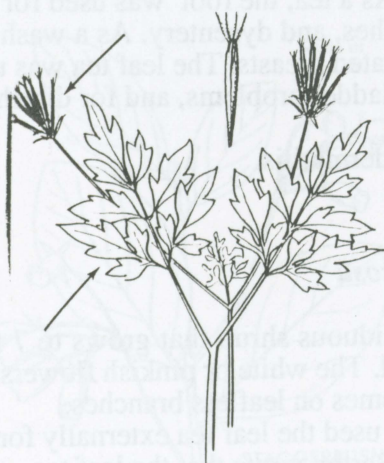
Aster Family

Description: Square-stemmed annual that is between 1-3 ft. The fernlike leaves are strongly dissected. The yellow flowers have no rays and appear August-October. The elongate seeds ("needles") are topped with 2-4 barbs in spreading clusters.

Uses: The American Indians used the leaf tea as a worm expellent. The leaves alone were chewed for sore throats. The plant juice was once used for eardrops and as a styptic.



SLASH PINE



SPANISH NEEDLES or SOAPBUSH NEEDLES

Spatterdock: *Nuphar luteum subsp. macrophyllum*

Water-Lily Family

Description: This aquatic perennial has round to oval leaves. The base of the leaves has a V-notch and they are usually submersed or erect above the water. The yellow flowers are cuplike and appear May-September.

Uses: American Indians used the roots in various ways for various ailments. As a tea it was used for "sexual irritability," heart trouble, blood diseases, and chills with a fever. Poulitced, the roots were used on inflammations, wounds, swellings, boils, and contusions. Alone, the roots were used for inflammations of the skin, gums, and stomach. It was used as a folk remedy for impotence because the rhizomes contain steroids. This plant's alkaloids are supposedly hypotensive, tonic, antispasmodic, cardioactive, and a vasoconstrictor.

Warning: Large doses of the root can be toxic!

St. Andrews Cross: *Hypericum hypercoides*

St. John's Wort Family

Description: This smooth subshrub grows to 1-2 1/2 ft. The linear-oblong leaves appear in pairs. The solitary flowers have 2 pairs of sepals- one pair is large and leaflike, the other is tiny and narrow. The petals form a "cross" and flowers July-August.

Uses: American Indians chewed the root of this plant when suffering from a snakebite. As a tea, the root was used for fevers, colic, diarrhea, pain, toothaches, and dysentery. As a wash, the root was used externally for ulcerated breasts. The leaf tea was used for skin problems, kidney and bladder problems, and for diarrhea in children.

Warning: May cause photodermatitis.

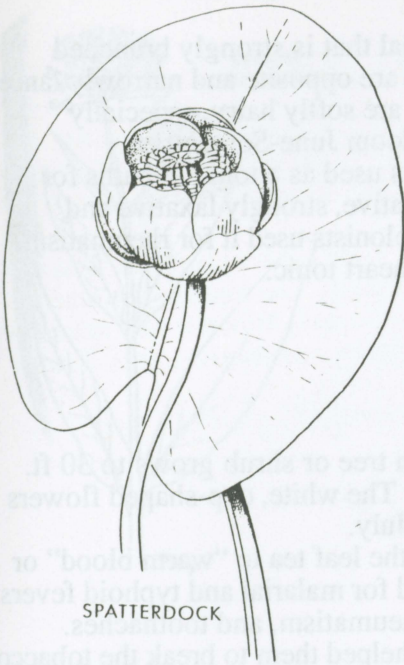
Staggerbush: *Lyonia fruticosa*

Heath Family

Description: A slender, deciduous shrub that grows to 7 ft. Its thin leaves are oblong to oval. The white or pinkish flowers appear April-June in umbel-like racemes on leafless branches.

Uses: The American Indians used the leaf tea externally for itching and ulcers. Benjamin Smith Barton wrote that the leaf tea was used on slaves for "disagreeable ulceration of the feet."

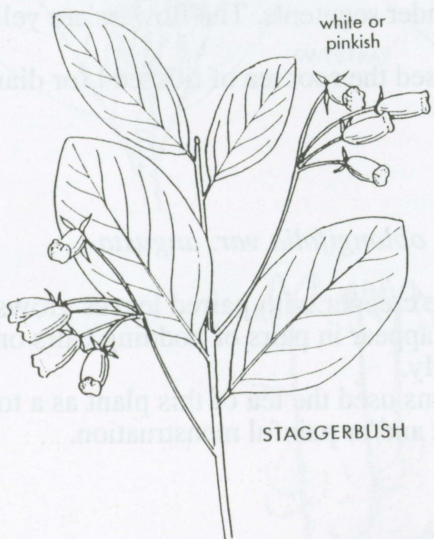
Warning: Poisonous! Produces "staggers" in livestock.



SPATTERDOCK



ST. ANDREW'S
CROSS



white or
pinkish

STAGGERBUSH

Swamp Milkweed: *Asclepia incarnata subsp. incarnata*

Milkweed Family

Description: This smooth perennial that is strongly branched grows 2-4 ft. The numerous leaves are opposite and narrowly lance-shaped. It has ascending veins that are softly hairy, especially underneath. The reddish flowers bloom June-September.

Uses: The root tea of this plant was used as a tonic in baths for weak patients. It is diuretic, carminative, strongly laxative and induces vomiting. The American colonists used it for rheumatism, asthma, worms, syphilis, and as a heart tonic.

Warning: Potentially toxic!

Sweetbay: *Magnolia virginiana*

Magnolia Family

Description: This small evergreen tree or shrub grows to 30 ft. The leathery leaves grow to 3-6 in. The white, cup-shaped flowers are very fragrant and flower April-July.

Uses: The American Indians used the leaf tea to "warm blood" or "cure colds." The bark tea was used for malarial and typhoid fevers and also for indigestion, worms, rheumatism, and toothaches. Chewing the bark also supposedly helped them to break the tobacco habit.

Tickseed: *Coreopsis leavenworthii*

Aster Family

Description: A smooth-stemmed annual that grows 2-4 ft. The leaves are divided into slender segments. The flowers are yellow June-September.

Uses: American Indians used the root tea of tickseed for diarrhea and as an emetic.

Twinflower: *Dyschoriste oblongifolia var. angusta*

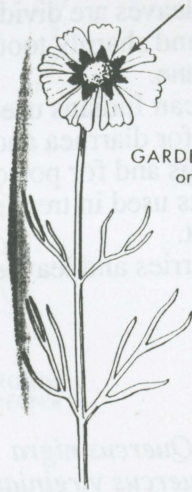
Acanthus Family

Description: This delicate creeper with paired leaves grows 3-5 in. These fragrant flowers appear in pairs of nodding pairs on a slender stalk from June-July.

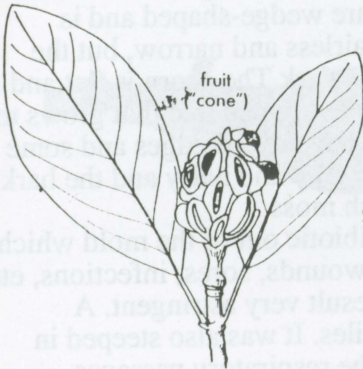
Uses: The American Indians used the tea of this plant as a tonic for pregnancy and for difficult and/or painful menstruation.



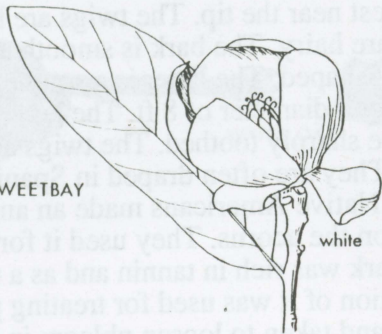
SWAMP MILKWEED



GARDEN COREOPSIS
or TICKSEED

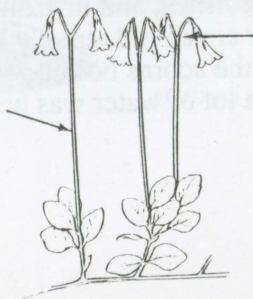


fruit
("cone")



SWEETBAY

white



TWINFLOWER

Virginia Creeper: *Parthenocissus quinquefolia*

Grape Family

Description: This climbing vine has adhesive disks on its tendrils. The leaves are divided into 5 leaflets which are elliptical to oval shaped and sharply toothed. The small flowers appear in terminal in June.

Uses: American Indians used this plant tea for jaundice. The root tea was used for diarrhea and gonorrhea. The leaf tea was used to wash swellings and for poison sumac rash. When it was mixed with vinegar, it was used in treating lockjaw and wounds. It is diuretic and astringent.

Warning: Berries and leaves are reportedly toxic!

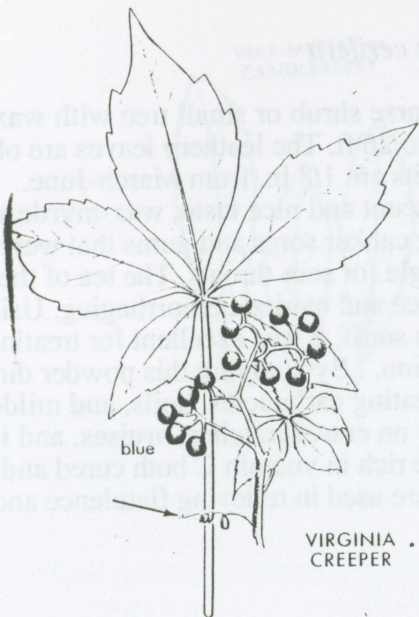
Water Oak: *Quercus nigra*

Live Oak: *Quercus virginiana*

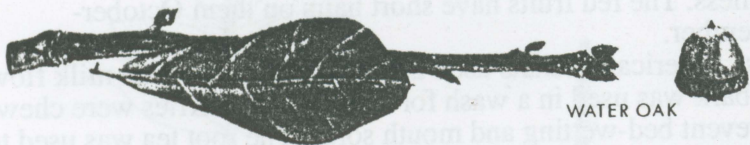
Beech Family

Description: The former is a southern tree that grows to 50-60 ft. with a diameter of 2-3 ft. The leaves are wedge-shaped and is broadest near the tip. The twigs are hairless and narrow, but the buds are hairy. The bark is smooth and dark. The acorn is flat and saucer-shaped. The latter is a southern evergreen tree that grows to 60 ft with diameter of 8 ft. The leaves have rolled edges and some may be sharply toothed. The twigs are gray and hairy and the bark is dark. They are often draped in Spanish moss.

Uses: Native Americans made an antibiotic out of the mold which grew on the acorns. They used it for wounds, sores, infections, etc. The bark was rich in tannin and as a result very astringent. A decoction of it was used for treating piles. It was also steeped in water and taken to loosen phlegm in the respiratory passages. Another formula called for using it to bathe feverish patients in, and as a wash for ulcers, gonorrhea, and inflammations. The powdered acorns mixed with water are an old remedy for treating diarrhea. The Indians also liked to eat the acorns because it made them thirsty. They believed drinking a lot of water was healthy!



VIRGINIA
CREEPER



WATER OAK



VIRGINIA LIVE OAK

Wax-Myrtle: *Myrica cerifera*

Bayberry Family

Description: This coarse shrub or small tree with waxy young branchlets, grows up to 26 ft. The leathery leaves are oblong to lance-shaped. The fruits are 1/8 in. from March-June.

Uses: Because of its scent and nice taste, wax-myrtle was used as a mouthwash in treating canker sores and gums that were sore and bleeding, and as a gargle for sore throats. The tea of the tree was used in treating jaundice and uterine hemorrhaging. Using the powder of the tree as a snuff, it was excellent for treating catarrh and clearing nasal congestion. . By applying this powder directly to the skin, it was used in treating carbuncles, boils, and milder sores. As a poultice, it was used on cuts, scratches, bruises, and insect bites. The leaves which were rich in vitamin C both cured and prevented scurvy. The berries were used in relieving flatulence and to ease cold symptoms.

Winged Sumac: *Rhus copallina*

Cashew Family

Description: This shrub or small tree grows to 30 ft. The leaves are divided into 9-31 shiny leaflets, that for the most part are toothless. The red fruits have short hairs on them October-November.

Uses: American Indians used the bark tea to stimulate milk flow. The bark was used in a wash for blisters. The berries were chewed to prevent bed-wetting and mouth sores. The root tea was used to treat dysentery. The leaves were also mixed half and half to stop break the smoking habit, which still may be employed to this day.

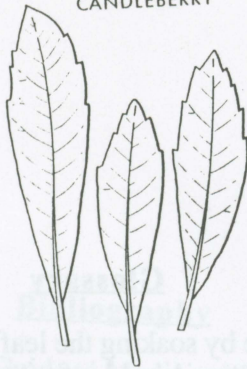
Yellow-eyed Grass: *Xyris caroliniana*

Yellow-eyed Grass Family

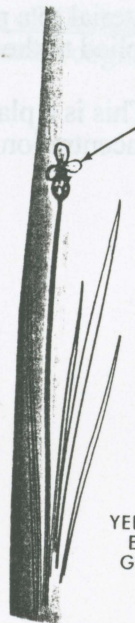
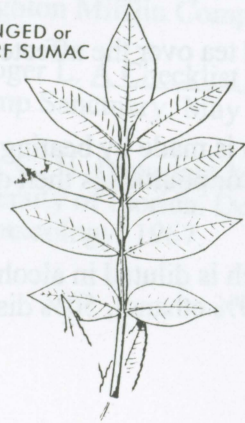
Description: This perennial can be 6-36 in. The grass-like leaves are 1/8 in. wide. The yellow flowers are 3-petaled and above a conelike head of leathery scales June-September.

Uses: American Indians used the root tea for diarrhea.

WAX-MYRTLE or
CANDLEBERRY



WINGED or
DWARF SUMAC



YELLOW-
EYED
GRASS

Glossary

Infusion: This is made by soaking the leaf or the flower in hot water for 10-20 minutes. A cold infusion is made by soaking the same in cold water for anywhere between two hours until overnight, or by letting the hot infusion get cold.

Decoction: This is made by simmering the root, bark, or seed under a low heat. (Infusion refers to the flowers or leaves, whereas a decoction refers to seeds, root, or bark.)

Wash: This refers to applying a cold tea over the affected skin externally.

Poultice: This is a moist paste which is made by beating the plant material to a pulp. The paste or poultice is then directly applied to the affected area.

Tincture: This is a plant extract which is diluted in alcohol. The concentration is generally 50% ethanol, 50% distilled water.

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