

Common Plants of the Celery Fields

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Wetlands are important bird habitats and plants play an important role in attracting them. Birds use plants for food, not only by providing seeds, fruits, flowers or vegetative parts to eat, but by attracting other sources of food such as insects, snails, fish and frogs. Plants also provide a place for birds to rest, hide, breed, nest, and raise their young. The plants at the Celery Fields can be categorized in four main groups:

Shoreline plants grow in wet soil on raised hummocks or along the shorelines. These plants grow at or above the level of standing water; some may be rooted in shallow water. Examples are elderberry, saltbush, buttonbush and sand cordgrass.

Emergent plants are rooted in soil that is covered by water most of the time. These plants grow up through the water so that stems, leaves and flowers emerge above water level. Examples are pickerelweed, bulrush, alligator flag and duck potato.

Floating plants have leaves which mainly float on the water surface. Much of the plant body is underwater and may or may not be rooted in the substrate. Examples are spatterdock, duckweed and water lilies.

Submerged plants are found largely underwater with few floating or emergent leaves. Flowers may emerge briefly for pollination. Examples are southern naiad and the common exotics, water hydrilla and parrot feather.

Additionally, there are several plants found in uplands which are not seasonally flooded. Plants such as live oak and hackberry are found at higher elevations and are also beneficial to wildlife.

The Celery Fields is a Sarasota County park located on the north and south sides of Palmer Boulevard, just east of I-75 in Sarasota, Florida.



Giant Bulrush

*Schoenoplectus
californicus*



Dry fruits (achenes) are eaten by many waterfowl, shorebirds and rails. Bulrush provides valuable nesting cover for waterfowl and is a habitat for insects and young fish.



Duck Potato

Sagittaria lancifolia



Duck potato gets its name from potato-like underground corms.



Alligator Flag

Thalia geniculata



Purple Gallinules and Common Gallinules are often seen eating the seeds of alligator flag.



Sawgrass

Cladium jamaicense

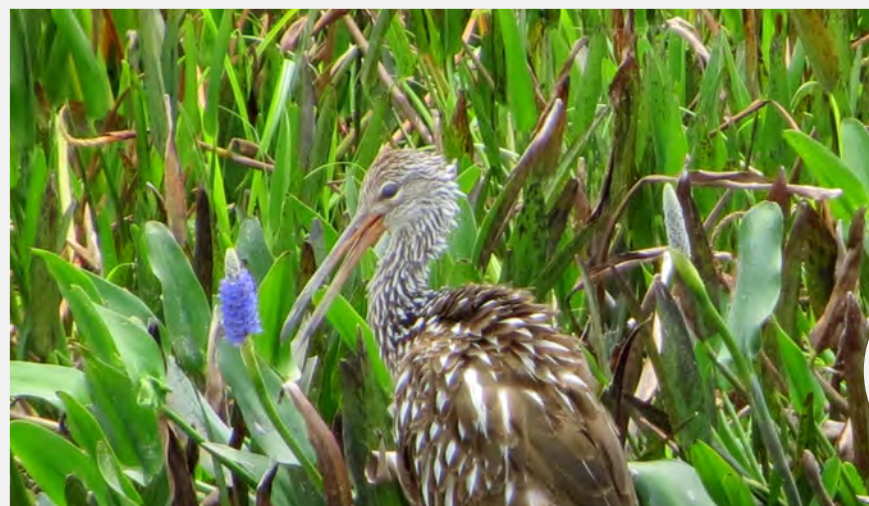
Many wildlife species use sawgrass for both food and shelter even though the coarse texture and sharp-toothed leaf blades of the plant make it difficult and even hazardous to be near. Migrating ducks and geese eat the seeds as a high-energy food source.



Knotted Spikerush

Eleocharis interstincta

Knotted spikerush is used for shelter and nesting material by Common Gallinules and other birds.



Pickerelweed

Pontederia cordata

Pickerelweed has been used for human food. Each fruit contains a nutritious, starchy seed that can be eaten straight from the plant, or dried and added to granola and other cereals.





American White
Waterlily
Nymphaea odorata



Photo by Ron Mayberry

The pads of the waterlily provide hiding places for small aquatic organisms which in turn provide food for predators such as bitterns and fish.



American Elm
Ulmus americana



Flower buds are eaten by squirrels and seeds that drop to the ground are enjoyed by small rodents and Wood Ducks.



Sweetbay
Magnolia virginiana



Sweetbay is used as forage by cattle and deer. The seeds are eaten by squirrels, white-footed mice, turkeys, quail and song birds. It tolerates periodic flooding.



Buttonbush

Cephalanthus occidentalis



Buttonbush seeds are occasionally eaten by ducks and the bush is used for nesting by many bird species.



Pop Ash

Fraxinus caroliniana



Pop ash provides significant food and cover for wildlife. It is the larval host plant for the eastern tiger swallowtail butterfly. Pop ash bark was used by the Miccosukee for "women's medicine."



Bald Cypress

Taxodium distichum



Wood Ducks, Wild Turkeys and other birds are fond of bald cypress seeds. The trees are also used for nesting by Wood Storks, Egrets and Ospreys.



Live Oak

Quercus virginiana



Many species of animals use live oaks for food and shelter.



Wax Myrtle

Myrica cerifera



Wax myrtle is also known as southern bayberry or candleberry. Early American colonists used the fruit's pale blue, waxy covering to make fragrant bayberry candles.



Slash Pine

Pinus elliottii



Slash pines seeds are eaten by gray squirrels and fox squirrels and are also a favorite food for Wild Turkeys.



Sand Cordgrass

Spartina bakeri



Birds such as Savannah Sparrows and Palm Warblers are often seen using sand cordgrass for cover at the Celery Fields. The seeds are eaten by many birds.



Hackberry

Celtis laevigata



Many birds, including quail, woodpeckers, and Cedar Waxwings, consume the sweetish fruits of hackberry. This plant is also called sugarberry.



Red Cedar

Juniperus virginiana



Red cedar fruit is a primary food of Cedar Waxwings and is also enjoyed by many other birds and animals. The tree is also a favorite nesting site for many birds.



Cabbage Palm

Sabal palmetto



Crested Caracaras nest predominately in cabbage palms. *Sabal palmetto* is Florida's state tree.



Walter's Viburnum

Viburnum obovatum



Walter's viburnum produces an abundance of fruit that is attractive to birds for food. It's a good bird attracting plant for the home landscape.



Fakahatcheegrass

Tripsacum dactyloides



Fakahatcheegrass is the larval host plant for the clouded skipper butterfly and the three-spotted skipper butterfly. Its fruits are eaten by birds.



fakahatcheegrass

sand cordgrass

duck potato

Palmer Boulevard Gazebo



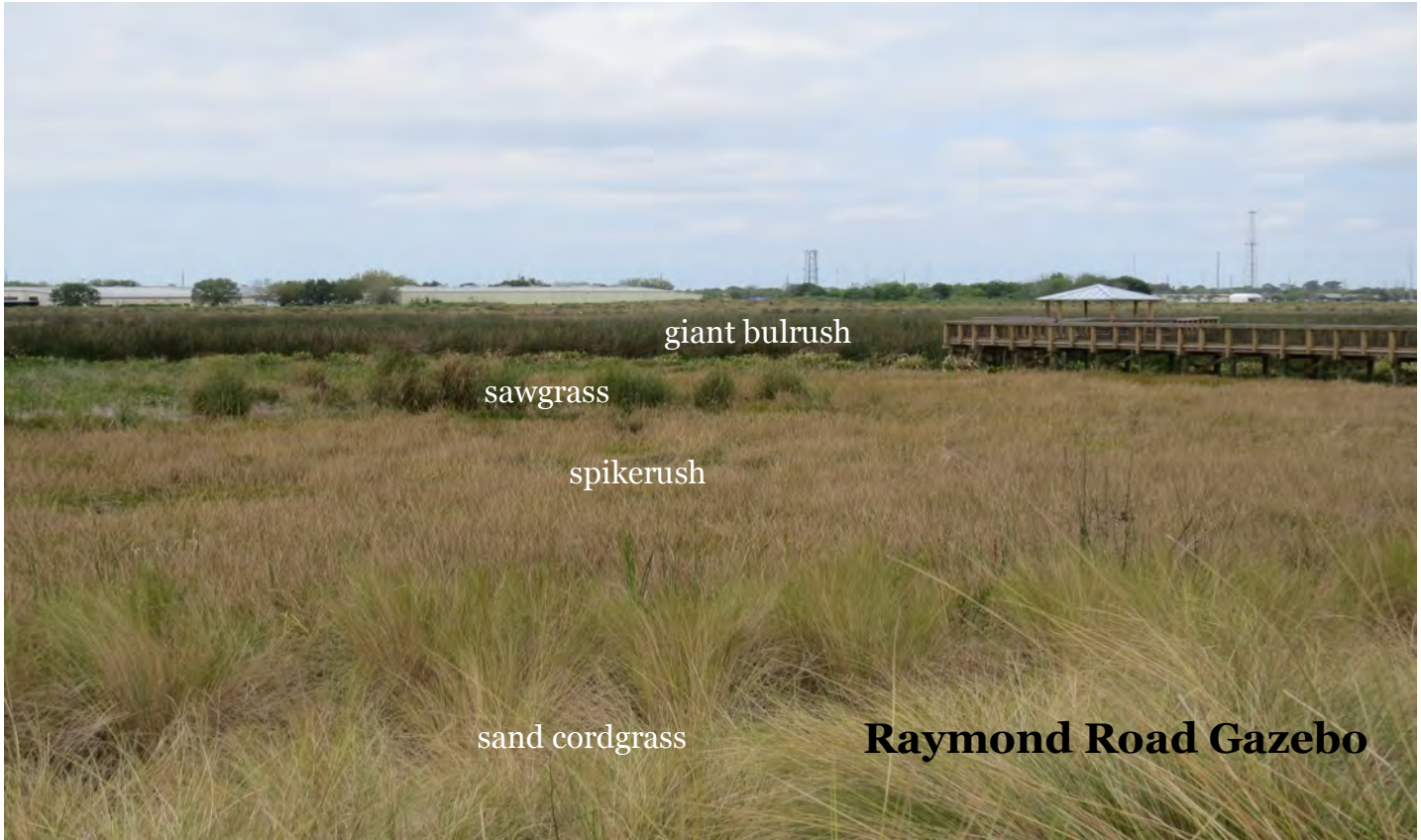
giant bulrush

duck potato

sand cordgrass

Palmer Boulevard Gazebo







Saltbush



Nuttall's Thistle



Common Mallow



Jointweed



Bushy Bluestem



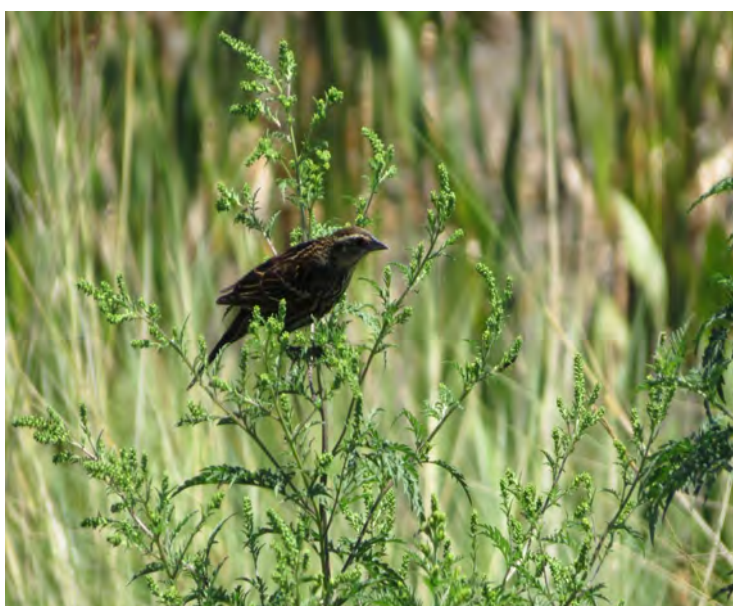
Turkey Tangle Fogfruit, Capeweed



Duckweed



Mock Bishopweed



Ragweed



Peppergrass



Spanish Needles



Camphorweed



American Alligator



Blue Gill speared by Green Heron



Corn Snake



Marsh Rabbit



White Peacock Butterfly



Spotted Cucumber Beetle



Cooter Turtle



Gopher Tortoise

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