



WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE!



The Florida Tech Botanical Garden is an “old Florida” style garden—natural and relaxed. It contains more than 200 palms, bamboos and other rare and common botanical specimens—too many to appreciate in one visit. The self-guided walking tour outlined in this brochure will introduce you to some of the more interesting and accessible specimens in the garden. If you would like more information about palms or the other plants found in the garden, you are invited to visit Evans Library located adjacent to the garden’s south entrance or use your smart phone to click on the QR codes on each tour plant label to access the online Plants Map database.

The main trail has been named the Dent Smith Trail in honor of the founder of the Palm Society, a worldwide organization primarily engaged in the study of the palm family, in all its aspects. Florida Tech’s Garden, through the intense interest of Founding President Emeritus Jerome P. Keuper and the inspiration and help of Mr. Dent Smith in the 1960s, has become one of the most unique campus

botanical gardens of its kind in the continental United States.

Also called “the Jungle,” the garden is unique—very few university campuses have dedicated botanical gardens. **To help protect the flora and the fauna and the safety of visitors, we ask that bicycles and skateboards be walked and dogs not be taken into the garden. Also, removing, cutting or tampering with the plant life in the garden is considered a serious offense.** The garden will be a pleasant place for all, if all who use it will take pride in its cleanliness and beauty.

This is a public area. As there are natural water features and other potential hazards, please exercise caution during your visit. *There are several specimen, delicate or possibly poisonous plants planted or naturally occurring in this garden and hammock.*

Parents: Please maintain appropriate control over your children at all times. For your safety, please stay on the defined trails or within walled/patio areas.



The self-guided walking tour starts at Melbourne’s original school house. Relocated to the Botanical Garden on the grounds of Florida Tech, the old school house is a reminder of the education environment of times past in this part of Florida.



Florida Institute of Technology

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BOTANICAL GARDEN SELF-GUIDED TOUR

START

Melbourne's original school house. Relocated to the Botanical Garden on the grounds of Florida Tech, the old schoolhouse is a reminder of the education environment of times past in this part of Florida.

Lady Palms (*Rhapis excelsa*) [directly across from the Schoolhouse]

Left unattended, the dark green leaves adorn the stems to the base and can form an effective screen. Older stands develop slender trunks beneath a nice mass of foliage. This palm usually reaches a height of 7 feet and can be successfully container-grown indoors. It is native to China and fairly cold tolerant.

Silk Floss Tree (*Ceiba speciosa*) [facing the Schoolhouse, look to the right and up, toward the red shed]

The bulbous green trunk of the Silk Floss tree is covered with big blunt wart-like triangular spines and turns gray as the tree gets older. These spines serve to store water for dry periods. The trees typically drop their leaves just before they put on their spectacular autumn display of five-petaled pink flowers.

Go up (west) to the end of the sidewalk and look left.

Gingerbread Palm (*Hyphaene spp.*)

The three large palms in front of you, one with a branched trunk, are Gingerbread Palms. The branched trunk looks as if it might be the aftermath of a lightning strike, but it's not. The branching of the trunk well above the base is a natural tendency of this species of palm. As you follow the path into the garden, you will be descending into the floodplain of Crane Creek. You will note that these Gingerbread Palms are growing on the higher ground above the creek's floodplain. This palm is native to the more arid regions of central Africa and is quite at home here in this relatively drier and open location on the edge of the garden.

Paurotis Palm (*Acoelorrhaphe wrightii*) [just east of the Gingerbread palm, along the asphalt road]

This native Florida palm is found in the Everglades and thrives in wet locations. The Paurotis maintain a slender trunk, grow to a height of 20 feet and, if left unattended, will form large clusters.

Silver Bismarck Palm (*Bismarkia nobilis*) [Mature specimen, in turf area near the asphalt road]

Wherever the Bismarck Palm is placed it will draw attention with its massive, stiff, silvery-blue-green fronds and its stout trunk. A slow-grower, the big 'Bizzy' will reach an average height of 20–30 feet if kept regularly watered.

Ribbon Fan Palm (*Livistona decipiens*) [just east of the Bismarck]

This palm is native to the east coast of Queensland, Australia. Its tall, graceful form and robust nature have earned this palm a place in tropical and subtropical landscapes around the world, easily adapting to many types of soil except those that are wet and soggy.

Palmyra Palm (*Borassus flabellifer*)

A widely planted crop plant in Southeast Asia, the Palmyra palm is an attractive ornamental tree, cultivated for planting in gardens and parks as landscape palm species. It can live more than 100 years and reach a height of nearly 100 feet. This one was planted from seed by our own Dr. Jerome Keuper!

Go down the road to the Dent Smith Trail stone marker, turn right; go up a bit toward the road.

Buccaneer Palm (*Pseudophoenix sargentii*)

A slow grower, this young Buccaneer palm is an endangered Florida native, once found in abundance in the upper Florida Keys. Wild collecting and development have greatly reduced its numbers. It is one of the most wind and salt tolerant palms.

Triangle Palm (*Dypsis decaryi*) [there are two on either side of sidewalk, along road]

Indigenous to the Madagascan rainforest, this unique pal is easy to identify by its striking growth habit. The fronds grow almost upright from the trunk and arch gracefully outward from their tips. The leaf bases are arranged in three vertical columns set about 120 degrees apart on the main stem, forming a triangular shape in cross section.

Turn around and go back down to the Dent Smith Trail marker.

Facing the marker, several garden specimens of interest can be seen.

Bottle Palm (*Hyophorbe lageniculis*)

The three young palms on your left are Bottle palms. Bottle palms are native to the Mascarene Islands in the Indian Ocean where they are now threatened with extinction. The trunk becomes enormously swollen at the base as the tree matures. Mature height for these slow growing palms is about 12 feet.

Foxtail Palm (*Wodyetia bifurcata*) [in turf behind you]

Also known as a "Little Royal" due to its similarities to the Royal palm, the self-exfoliating (frond dropping) Foxtail palms are prized for their beautifully smooth trunks and feathery leaves—they really look like fox tails.

Taraw Palm (*Livistona saribus*) [behind bench at edge of woods]

A native of SE Asia, the taraw can grow up to 40 feet, produces bright blue fruits and is cold hardy to 24 degrees. Watch out for those "shark teeth"—the long sharp spines along the stems are formidable!

Teddy Bear Palm (*Dypsis leptochelios*) [just beyond Taraw]

This is a very identifiable tropical palm that is noted for its distinctive ringed trunk and beautiful fronds, the crown shaft of which is a whimsical, fuzzy rust-red—thus the common name! This one must be protected from hard freezes, so we snuggled it in among other trees for protection.

Red Cabbage Palm (*Livistona mariae*)

There are several 'varieties' of this species, the most well known being *Livistona rigida* (some consider that a separate species, and some do not). It's truly a task to tell them apart. Cold tolerance is a big discerning factor. As a juvenile, this palm has a good deal of unique color—seedlings in full sun are nearly red, or at least maroon—thus the common name.

Staghorn Fern (*Platycerium bifurcatum*)

There are several large plants hanging in trees to your right — Staghorn ferns. These ferns are epiphytes or "air plants," which means they get their nutrients from the air, not soil. Since they like a shady, moist location, it's not surprising that their native habitat is the tropical jungles around the world where they are found attached to the sides of trees, for support not nutrition. Keep an eye out while in the garden, and you may spot other Staghorns hanging about.

Cuban Royal Palm (*Roystonea regia*.) FIT's 50th Anniversary palm

The tall palm with the smooth, light gray bark, located directly ahead and down the trail a bit, is a Royal Palm, a native to tropical Florida, the Caribbean, Central and South America. It is best viewed from this distant vantage point since, as you can see, they can get quite large (up to 100 feet). These palms are found in wet, swampy areas in the wild, such as this garden, but readily adapt to well-drained soils. Happier in warmer zones, Melbourne is about as far north as these palms like.

Follow the trail and turn right at the first intersection.

Cabbage Palm (*Sabal palmetto*)

This familiar looking palm, also known as the Sabal Palm, is native to the southeastern United States and is the state tree of South Carolina and Florida. This hardy palm is common in both the wild and in planned landscapes throughout Florida, including several in this garden. The terminal bud (cabbage) can be harvested for food and was reportedly done so in the past. However, the practice is destructive to the palm.

About halfway down this trail branch to the right.

Motacu Palm (*Attalea speciosa*) [on right]

A tree of the South American lowlands, this slow-growing palm is now widely planted in public places. It is a frost-resistant palm that reaches a height of about 50 feet.

Fishtail Palm (*Caryota mitis*) [on left]

This clustering palm is a native of Southeast Asia. It is relatively fast growing to a height of 20–30 feet. It gets its common name from the shape of its leaves.

King Palm/Piccabeen (*Archontophoenix cunningham*) [on right]

Originally from the rain forests of eastern Australia, this palm will grow relatively quickly to 25–40 feet in height if given adequate water and light. It is a self-cleaning palm, which means it sheds its boots naturally.

Keep to the right and start around the loop. Take coquina sand path and stop at bridge.

Reclinata Palm (*Phoenix reclinata*)

Unusual and dramatic, Reclinata palms mature to various shapes and forms, but more often to grow as clumps composed of multiple stems reaching 25–50 feet tall. Male and female flowers are borne on separate plants. Loves full sun, is drought tolerant, but prefers regular watering—ours grows right on the edge of a stream!

Turn back to Teardrop Loop and take a right.

Golden Cane Palm (*Dypsis lutescens*) [at top of loop]

A popular landscape staple in Florida, this multi-stemmed/clumping palm is a moderately fast growing one. It has smooth stems/canes and when the new growth (pups) are kept trimmed back, the golden cane palm offers a bamboo-like effect. Also called "Areca" palm.

Spiny Licuala Palm (*Licuala spinosa*)

Prized for its attractively segmented circular leaves, the most striking aspect of this clustering palm is the shape of the split leaves with their blunt, serrated ends. Note also the clustering nature of this palm and its spiny leaf stalks. This palm's home is the wet, low-lying regions in and around Indonesia.

Keep walking and exit the loop to the right.

Chocho Palm (*Astrocaryum mexicanum*) [ahead in trail fork near tiny waterfall]

This native of Mexico and Central America likes filtered light and plenty of rich moist soil. It is a spiny palm and remains small, growing to only about 15 feet. The leaves can get to 10 feet in length and the leaflets as long as two feet. Note the leaflets are bright green above and silvery below. Be careful of this one!

Turn left at trail "T".

Green Stripe Bamboo (*Bambusa emeiensis 'Flavidrivens'*) [on left]

This is a warm climate, clumping bamboo that can grow to a height of 30 feet or more. If you are visiting in the warmer part of the year, you might notice new sprouts emerging from the underground rhizomes next to the existing culms (canes). Note the alternating green and gold stripes on the mature canes. Origin: China.

Syagrus Palm (*Syagrus pseudococos*) [on right]

This slender palm originates from Brazil and can reach to a height of 50 feet. It is related to the common, locally planted Queen Palm and is not freeze tolerant.

Split Leaf Philodendron (*Philodendron selloum*) [on the right, at the bridge]

The name says it all. This large-leaved, easily grown philodendron makes a dramatic, tropical statement wherever it is used in the landscape. It can grow and develop a three- to four-foot-long, tree-like trunk and a spread of 8–10 feet—look up at see how it uses the oak as a trellis!

Silver Bismarck Palm (*Bismarkia nobilis*) [at trail T straight ahead]

This younger representative of the striking Madagascar native is a palm that would be noticed at this age in any location with its distinctively silver-blue leaves. The leaves themselves can attain a spread of over 6 feet, even on young trees, making it a specimen of choice for only larger yards and spaces

Turn right at the T toward the patio/plaza.

Miraguama Palm (*Coccothrinax miraguamma*) [on the right behind the wall, before pond]

This young palm, in the foreground, originates from Cuba and is popular in landscape plantings for its formal appearance and moderate mature size (20 feet). It likes sun and can be planted in groups. If you look carefully, you will notice a distinctive change in the width of the leaves about midway along their long axes.

Scheffer's Palm (*Ptychosperma schefferi*) [on left]

A palm from the tropical forests of New Guinea and adjacent Pacific islands. It prefers filtered light and moist conditions. It usually grows to about 15–20 feet in height when grown in the semitropical United States.

You may notice some fish and quite likely some turtles in the pond to your right. We have Florida Red-bellied Cooters and Alligator Snapping turtles. On warm days, they may come greet you ... but please don't touch!

Majesty Palm (*Ravenea rivularis*) [across pond]

The Majesty is a very large palm with a large, untidy crown. It has symmetrical leaves and develops an attractive swollen base of the trunk. Yet another perfect choice for our typically damp soils in the lower Jungle, the Majesty prefers full sun and plenty of water to ensure rapid growth. Ours is exceptionally happy next to the Turtle Pond.

Green Bamboo (*Bambusa spp.*) [huge bamboo clump at top of pond and to right of bridge]

It is estimated that this stand of warm climate, clumping bamboo has been growing here for 20 or so years. With adequate light, individual canes can grow to a height of 40 feet. Probable origin: China.

African Oil Palm (*Elaeis guineensis*)

Elaeis guineensis is a handsome tree reaching a height of 20 meters or more at maturity. The trunk is characterized by persistent, spirally arranged leaf bases and bears a crown of 20–40 massive leaves. It loves both the sun and wet, but well-drained feet!



Restrooms are straight ahead in The Rathskellar. Come back over the bridge, turn right onto the patio and head over a second bridge.

Slender Weaver's Bamboo (*Bambusa textiles gracilis*) [on right]

This tightly clumping bamboo can handle below freezing temperatures as well as heat. It grows to only 15–20 feet tall and can be planted as a standalone specimen or as part of a hedge. Origin: China.

Hurricane Palm (*Dictyosperma album var. rubrum*) [3 palms on right]

This variety is also known as the Red Princess Palm. Hurricane palms are popular landscape palms and grow to 20 feet in height. The common name relates to its supposed resistance to hurricane force winds. Like the Spindle Palm, these palms also hail from the Mascarene Islands where they, like the Spindle, are facing extinction. We liked them so much, we planted three!

Walk west, turn left at the bridge, go over the bridge and turn left.

Travelers Palm (*Ravenala madagascariensis*) [several clustered just to the left]

The Travelers Palm, indigenous to Madagascar, is not a palm at all but a tree related to the banana tree. Note the vertical leaves that spread out like an open fan. Travelers can cut the stem and drink the water found inside, but it is doubtful the orientation of the leaves can provide, as legend has it, any reliable indication of compass direction. Like bananas, they propagate by sending up shoots and, as evidenced by this grouping, can get quite tall and stately.

Timor Black Bamboo (*Bambusa lako*) [on right]

This species of black clumping bamboo originates from the Timor Islands and cannot tolerate freezing temperatures. The glossy black culms (canes) and contrasting green foliage make this a striking bamboo in any setting. However, its culms can grow to a height of over 40 feet.

Go right, up the sidewalk toward the southwest, on left.

Pindo Palm (*Butia capitata*)

The Pindo is one of the smaller palms, growing to a height only about 15 feet. Pindos are remarkably cold tolerant, down to 17°F, and are widely planted in north Florida, South Carolina and even in southern Alabama. They make attractive specimen plants with arching, usually blue green leaves.

END

