

# Cicada Nature Trail

This 3,500-foot accessible nature trail winds through scrub, flatwoods, and basin marsh habitats. Keep a sharp eye out for gopher tortoises and mottled ducks!



## 1 Entryway to Yamato Scrub

The natural areas protect historic native ecosystems and their biological diversity. They are also open to the public for passive recreation. How do we solve the problem of saving the land and also providing facilities for public use? We carefully design the parking lots and trails so that they have only minimal impact on the native ecosystems. The parking lot was built on a previously-disturbed area that contained invasive exotic plants. Hundreds of native plants were installed around the parking area by volunteers.

## 2 Pines and Palmettos

The scrubby flatwoods and mesic flatwoods plant communities together cover more than 40 acres (roughly 19%) of the natural area. This community is dominated by South Florida slash pines and saw palmettos. The slash pines can grow up to 100 feet tall. They are the source of "Dade Pine" timber. The saw palmetto is a low-growing member of the palm family. The trunk sprawls across the ground, sending 3-foot-tall, fan-shaped leaves skyward. Rows of razor-sharp, curved spines line the leaf stalks. Early settlers compared these spines to the teeth of a saw blade, thus giving the plant its name. Saw palmetto berries provide food for raccoons and other wildlife.



Inset: Saw Palmetto Berries

## 3 Airplants of the Scrub

The natural area is home to many types of epiphytes or airplants. These plants are generally found attached to rough-barked trees. They obtain water and nutrients from rainwater runoff. Spanish moss is perhaps the airplant familiar to most people. This silvery-gray plant was used by Native Americans to make garments. Later it was collected to stuff mattresses and furniture cushions. Synthetic materials have largely replaced it for commercial use.



## 4 A Wetland Wonderland

This 10-acre wetland was created on the site of a former basin marsh that was drained in the early 1960s. An estimated 75,000 cubic yards of sand was removed to create the two wetland areas. The sand was hauled to beaches at Singer Island and Lantana to repair the damage left by Hurricane Wilma. This wetland is used by many of the natural area's wildlife species including southern toad, gray fox, mottled duck, killdeer, and shorebirds such as sandpipers.



Inset: Sandpiper



## 5 The Musician of the Forest

The cicada is a large insect, up to 2 inches long, that is often confused with grasshoppers and crickets. Cicadas are nonjumpers, unlike those other ever-hopping insects. Cicadas spend most of their lives underground, feeding on the roots of trees. They emerge as adults and climb up trees to find mates. Male cicadas have sound-producing organs below the base of the abdomen. They produce a loud buzzing sound to attract female cicadas to their branch. This sound is frequently heard throughout the natural area on hot summer days.

## 6 Managing Nature

The Yamato Scrub Natural Area contains several dirt roads that might look out of place in the middle of a protected wilderness. These management roads provide numerous benefits, including more rapid access in the event of a wildfire, protection of adjacent areas from fire (when used as a firebreak), and access for monitoring of animal and plant species within the natural area. The roads also enable management staff to move easily about the site to remove invasive exotic plants and perform maintenance repairs on fences and other structures.



## 7 Sand Pines and the Spark of Life

The scrub community covers more than 137 acres (roughly 63%) of the natural area. Except for a few small areas in neighboring states, scrub is a plant community unique to Florida. Sand pines are the most numerous pines present in scrub habitat. They have shorter needles, smaller cones, and a shorter life expectancy than most pines. Although some people may think that fires are devastating in natural areas, they actually are very beneficial. Sand pines depend on fire for their very existence. Like all pines, they reproduce by dispersing seeds from their cones. However, sand pines have closed cones that typically require heat from a fire to open them so that the seeds can drop to the ground. The natural area is divided into management units, which are prescribed burned periodically to maintain the scrub and flatwoods communities and to reduce the possibility of a destructive wildfire.



Sand Pine Cone



Sand Pine Tree



Prescribed Burn

# Yamato Scrub Trail System



The Yamato Scrub Natural Area is located on the west side of Interstate 95, between Congress Avenue and Yamato Road, in the City of Boca Raton. This 217-acre natural area protects Florida scrub, scrubby flatwoods, mesic flatwoods, prairie hammock, and basin marsh communities. Public use facilities include a parking lot, an accessible nature trail, an informational kiosk, a bicycle rack, portable toilets, and hiking trails. There is no drinking water on the site.

Please use the designated nature and hiking trails as you explore the natural area. Going "off road" can damage delicate plants and get the explorer lost, especially on larger sites. Do not feed the animals. Potato chips, salted nuts, and crackers are not what nature intended as a healthy diet for wildlife. When wild animals become dependent on handouts, they may lose their natural fear of humans and become aggressive and dangerous. Help us keep your natural areas clean. Please dispose of your trash responsibly. Some sites are not equipped with trash cans. Visitors are asked to dispose of their trash at home or at other appropriate locations.

**P** Parking

**i** Information



**Natural Area Boundary**

**Cicada Nature Trail 0.7 miles**

**Skyblue Lupine Hiking Trail 2.4 miles**

0 0.5 1.0 Miles

## 8 Protected Scrub Inhabitants

The natural area is home to several protected plant and animal species. The gopher tortoise is threatened by loss of habitat due to Florida's booming growth and development. The gopher tortoise uses its strong front legs to dig a burrow up to 30 feet long. The giant airplant, like Spanish moss, is an epiphyte. This species is now threatened by the Mexican bromeliad weevil. The Florida scrub lizard is found in sand pine scrub, where dry, well-drained, deep sandy soils with open patches of unvegetated sand are present. Scrub lizards feed primarily on ants, beetles, and grasshoppers.



Gopher Tortoise




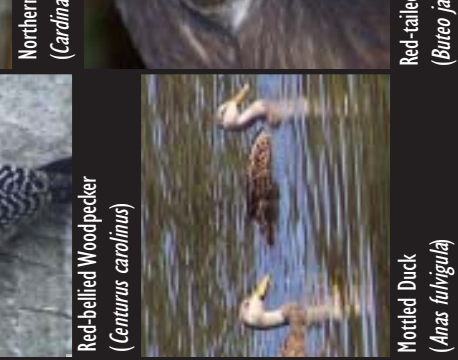


Giant Airplant



Florida Scrub Lizard

# Yamato Scrub Photo Album

 <p>Eastern Racer (<i>Coluber constrictor</i>)</p>	 <p>Six-lined Racerunner (<i>Cnemidophorus sexlineatus</i>)</p>	<h2>Mammals</h2>	 <p>Eastern Gray Squirrel (<i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>)</p>	 <p>Raccoon (<i>Procyon lotor</i>)</p>
<h2>Reptiles</h2>	 <p>Rough Green Snake (<i>Ophiodrys aestivus</i>)</p>	 <p>Green Anole (<i>Anolis carolinensis</i>)</p>	 <p>Osprey (<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>)</p>	 <p>Tricolored Heron (<i>Egretta tricolor</i>)</p>
 <p>Robber Fly (<i>Machimus</i> sp.)</p>	 <p>Halloween Pennant (<i>Celithemis eponina</i>)</p>	 <p>Northern Cardinal (<i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>)</p>	 <p>Red-tailed Hawk (<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>)</p>	
<h2>Insects</h2>	 <p>Common Buckeye (<i>Junonia coenia</i>)</p>	 <p>Gulf Fritillary (<i>Agraulis vanillae</i>)</p>	<h2>Birds</h2>	 <p>Red-bellied Woodpecker (<i>Centurus carolinus</i>)</p>
 <p>American Beautyberry (<i>Callicarpa americana</i>)</p>	 <p>Hog Plum (<i>Ximenia americana</i>)</p>	 <p>Muscadine (<i>Vitis rotundifolia</i>)</p>	 <p>Narrowleaf Silkgrass (<i>Pityopsis graminifolia</i>)</p>	
<h2>Plants</h2>	 <p>Baldness (<i>Tillandsia recurvata</i>)</p>	 <p>Skyblue Lupine (<i>Lupinus diffusus</i>)</p>		

## Yamato Scrub Natural Area Trail Guide



Tallflower  
(*Begonia racemosa*)

A Conservation and Recreational Lands Preservation 2000 Project

## Preserving Palm Beach County's Good Nature

Welcome to one of Palm Beach County's natural treasures! The Yamato Scrub Natural Area preserves and protects Florida scrub habitat - one of Florida's most endangered natural communities. Scrub communities formed on old dunes, which became inland ridges as the sea level fell. Because lands with scrub vegetation are typically high and dry, they were the first areas to be developed. It is estimated that less than 2% of Palm Beach County's original scrub remains.

The Yamato Scrub was formed by a long series of natural processes dating back millions of years. Just north of the site, a river flowed into the Atlantic Ocean when sea levels were higher. Sand transported by the river built up in dunes. These dunes became the scrub habitat found in the northern, eastern and southern portions of the natural area. In the low area between the dunes, where sand was not deposited, a basin marsh formed that existed until recent drainage lowered the water table.

This 217-acre natural area is part of a countywide system of natural areas, protected to maintain the diversity of biological communities and species in Palm Beach County. The natural areas are open to the public for educational use and passive recreational activities such as hiking, nature photography, and bird watching.



The Yamato Scrub Natural Area is home to hundreds of plant and animal species. One of the easiest to spot is the monarch. Its bold black-and-orange coloring warns potential predators that it is poisonous. Other butterflies found at the Yamato Scrub include the cloudless sulphur, queen, and white peacock.

## Rules and Regulations

**Prohibited on the Site:**

- Smoking
- Hunting
- Fishing
- Firearms
- Feeding wildlife
- Alcoholic beverages
- Pets or domestic animals
- Bicycles or motor vehicles
- Collecting plants or animals

Use only existing trails. This is a "no trash" area. All items taken in must be taken out. The natural area is open from sunrise to sunset, seven days a week, including holidays.

There is no drinking water at this site.

**In an emergency, call 911, or the Boca Raton Police Department at 561-338-1234.**



Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners

In accordance with the provisions of ADA, this brochure may be requested in an alternate format.

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