

On the Cover: *Gopher Tortoise* N

- Gopher Tortoises are land turtles that graze on plants and grow up to 12” in length.
- Their burrows are often shared by other species including snakes and frogs.

About the Wildflower Uplands:

- Historically, much of Wildflower was seasonal wetlands with tidal Lemon Creek on the west side of the property.
- The land was re-contoured in the early 1970s to become the Wildflower Golf Course. Higher areas were filled in for the greens and fair-ways. Ponds were dug out and interconnected.
- When the course ceased operation in 2006, native and non-native plants rapidly reclaimed the land.
- The property was purchased by Lemon Bay Conservancy in 2010. LBC is converting the property into a nature preserve and restoring the wetlands.

Write-in additional species you observed:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

N = native    E = exotic

Lemon Bay Conservancy gratefully acknowledges the Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program for providing grant funding to support development of the safari walk programs at Wildflower and to print this brochure.



www.CHNEP.org

The CHNEP is a partnership working to protect the natural environment from Venice to Bonita Springs to Winter Haven.

Brochure developed by Eva Furner, Bill Dunson, ReAnna Montwheler, Dave Clayton and Bob Cooper.  
Photos by Eva Furner and Bill Dunson.  
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# WILDFLOWER PRESERVE

## Upland Species



Gopher Tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*)

**Take a Nature Safari:** Use this brochure to take a “safari” walk through the uplands at Wildflower Preserve. On a safari, travelers take note of the species they see. You can do that too! As you spot the various species mentioned in this brochure, use the checkboxes next to the pictures to mark the animals and plants you see. You may want to write a date in the checkbox and save your brochure from visit to visit to mark additional sightings on later walks. The descriptions below each picture will tell you a little about the species that you are observing.

Wildflower is open to Lemon Bay Conservancy members daily. The public is invited to visit the preserve during regularly scheduled walks and public events. LBC membership information and the schedule of walks are available on the Lemon Bay Conservancy website and at the entry kiosk.

All visitors must review and comply with all posted preserve rules. Visitors to Wildflower Preserve do so at your own risk.



941-830-8922  
www.lemonbayconservancy.org



N  
**Saltbush**  
*Baccharis halimifolia*  
Grows up to 12’

- A brittle, fast growing shrub that quickly took over higher ground on the old golf course.
- Some call it “Florida Snow” when the white bristles carry seeds through the air in the fall.



E  
**Brazilian Pepper**  
*Schinus terebinthifolius*  
Grows up to 35’

- An invasive exotic brought to Florida from South America as an ornamental.
- Birds eat the seeds, contributing to its rapid spread.



N  
**Beautyberry**  
*Callicarpa americana*  
Avg. height 3’ to 8’

- Very showy clusters of berries encircle the stems in the fall.
- Berries are eaten by Mockingbirds and other species.



N  
**Wax Myrtle**  
*Myrica cerifera*  
Grows up to 20’

- Only female plants bear the clusters of grayish waxy berries.
- Wintering Tree Swallows descend in large flocks to fill-up on the ripe berries.



N  
**Slash Pine**  
*Pinus elliotii*  
Grows up to 100’

- A native pine common from central to south Florida.
- Its common name comes from slashes made in the tree to extract sap for turpentine.



E  
**Australian Pine**  
*Casuarina equisetifolia*  
Grows up to 90’

- Not a true pine tree, this native of Australia was introduced into Florida in the 1890s for erosion control and is considered very invasive.
- The “needles” are whorls of tiny leaves.



N  
**Cabbage Palm**  
*Sabal palmetto*  
Grows up to 50’

- The State Tree of Florida is adaptive to a wide variety of conditions.
- Bees swarm the flower stalks when they emerge in summer.



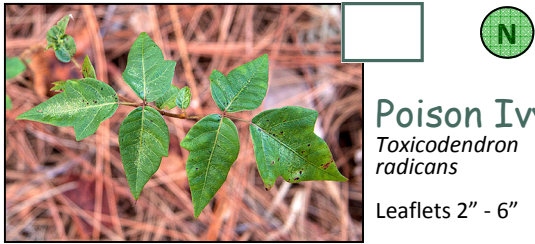
N  
**Spanish Moss**  
*Tillandsia usneoides*  
Grows in strands

- Spanish Moss is not a moss. Instead, it is a bromeliad, related to Pineapples.
- It is an “epiphyte”, a plant that draws nutrients from the air and rain. It has no roots.





- Leaves turn bright red in fall to attract birds to eat the ripe berries and spread the seeds.
- Some people get a rash from touching this plant.



- All parts of the plant are poisonous. Can cause a rash and in rare cases anaphylactic shock.
- Can exist as a shrub, vine or bush. Remember the phrase: "Leaves of three, let it be."



- A fast-growing member of the Aster family that is very attractive to butterflies and other insects.
- Each plant has hundreds of black needle-shaped seeds that cling to fur and clothing.



- Larvae feed on milkweed plants which contain unpalatable compounds that persist in the adult.
- The bright orange color warns predators to stay away.



- Elongated wings are orange on the upper side and have silvery-white spots on the lower side.
- Lays its eggs on plants in the Passion Flower family, including Corky-Stemmed Passion Vine.



- The male has a rose-colored abdomen and a deeper pink/lavender thorax. The female is predominately brown with white streaking.
- Often hunts in meadows and fields.



- Often seen along the trails. It can move very quickly and poses no threat to people.
- Snakes evolved from burrowing blind ancestors and lack eyelids and external ears.



- Have largely pushed out the native Green Anole to higher locations in bushes and trees.
- The male extends his "dewlap" to tell other males to keep away and to attract females.



- Adults have reddish-brown crown above eye. Bobs its tail constantly.
- Often feeds in flocks. Seen in our area during non-breeding season, from fall through spring.



- A raptor feeding primarily on small mammals, reptiles and amphibians.
- The most commonly seen hawk in Southwest Florida.



- Feeds primarily on insects, nuts and seeds.
- Can mimic the call of the Red-shouldered Hawk, perhaps to warn other birds or possibly to scare other birds away from a food supply.



- Lives only in peninsular Florida where it is a "threatened" species due to loss of habitat.
- Fledged Scrub-Jays help breeding adults to raise new chicks.



- Hides in the brush and makes a catlike mewing sound.
- Red patch on underside of tail. Resides in our area from fall through spring.



- Can mimic the calls of many different types of birds and even sirens. Eats fruit and insects, but not seeds.
- White wing bars are clearly visible in flight.



- Native to all continental US. Can live in varied habitats. Feed primarily on rabbits and rodents.
- Usually hunt at night, but often seen during the day as they sleep only 2 to 3 hours at a time.



- Not a Florida native, but can be found in all 67 counties.
- Rooting activity can be very disruptive to planted areas.