

Garden Wildlife

Several species of wildlife have been spotted visiting *The Learning Garden* at Eagle Point. From mid-January through May we are home to two colonies of nesting *Purple Martins* in condos near the media center. Many varieties of butterflies flutter around campus year-round. Be sure to visit the Passion Vine arbor and butterfly garden located behind the Science Lab (between the main building and the West Wing). Several other species of birds, both native (*Mourning Dove*, *Blue Jay*, *Common Yellowthroated Warbler*, *White Ibis*, *Boat-tailed Grackle*, *Northern Mockingbird*, *Red-bellied Woodpecker*, and *Killdeer*) and exotic (*Muscovy Duck*), also enjoy *The Learning Garden*. Several bird nests – some no longer in use – have been spotted in *Learning Garden* trees. How many of these species have you seen during your visit? Did you see anything not on this list?



Interactive Learning

Try a few of these activities while exploring the garden:

Sounds of Nature – Standing or sitting still hold both hands in a fist. Every time you hear a new bird song raise one finger. How many sounds do you hear in a minute or two?

Colors of Nature – Standing or sitting in one spot in the garden, how many different colors can you spot? Think about why plants and animals have the coloring they do.

Lifecycle Scavenger Hunt – Pick a living thing (plant or animal) and see if you can find several stages of its lifecycle (for example, flowers, seeds, seedling). Can you find a conifer (needles for leaves and cones for seeds)? What is the function of each part of a tree?

What's the Weather? – Visit the white pavilion behind the art room and look up. Identify the parts of the weather station and what each part measures: anemometer, wind vane, rain bucket, solar cell, wireless antenna. Visit the black boxes in the Media Center or Science Lab or the weather at www.eaglepointschool.com to find out the current weather conditions.

Smaller than the Eye can See – Take a *Micro-hike* through the garden using a magnifying hand lens. Get low to the ground. Observe what's alive in the grass and dirt. Draw a picture of the ecosystem from this point of view.

The Shadow Knows – Stand in the courtyard by the Building 3 Purple Martin house near the Media Center door. Face north (towards Building 3 with the Media Center door behind you). Raise your right hand and notice where your shadow points. Come back and try this at another time of day. Did your shadow move?



The Learning Garden

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Plant Guide

Bald Cypress (*Southeastern U.S.*): This tree looks dead during the winter, but it is just dormant (sleeping). Watch that you don't trip on its knobby knee like roots that poke out of the wetlands. Well adapted to the Everglades, especially in the area known as Big Cypress National Preserve just west of Eagle Point.

Barbados Cherry (*Caribbean*): This shrub has a fruit with the most Vitamin C of any fruit. One cherry a day can supply a person all the Vitamin C recommended. These fruits are also enjoyed by birds and other wildlife.

Bloodberry (*Florida*): Also known as Butterfly Sage, it has small flowers with nectar for butterflies and berries that birds love.

Branched Porterweed (*Florida*): The host plant for the Zebra Longwing butterfly – the state butterfly of Florida.

Cabbage/Sabal Palm (*Florida*): State tree of Florida, birds use this tree for nests and to find insects to eat. Native American's call this the "tree of life" because it has long provided shelter, food, tools, utensils and fibers for clothing.

Christmas Palm (*South Pacific*): This tree has green flowers and bright red berries, that is why it is called a *Christmas* palm.

Coco Plum (*Tropical Americas*): This shrub has a red-purple plum like fruit with an edible white flesh.

Elk Horn Fern (*Tropical/Australia*): Usually found attached to a tree it helps the tree by bringing in water and nutrients.

Lifecycle of a Butterfly:



Green Buttonwood (*Florida*): Buttonwood gets its name from the brownish-red fruits which are cone like and referred to as buttons. In the past the wood of the Green Buttonwood was used to make charcoal as well as to smoke fish and meat.

Gumbo Limbo (*Florida*): Called the *Tourist Tree* because its bark looks like it is sunburned and peeling.

Jane Cowell Hibiscus (*Hawaii*): The state flower of Hawaii. The beautiful blooms are attractive to bees, butterflies and birds.

Longleaf Blolly (*Florida*): The Blolly is related to Bougainvillea which is a common landscaping plant. The unusual name is an abbreviation for "loblolly" which describes a thicket growing in wet depressed areas. The red, oval fruit is both decorative and useful as a wildlife food source. The threatened White-Crowned Pigeon of the Florida Keys is one of the birds that feed on the fruit of the Longleaf Blolly.

Mahogany (*Florida*): A hard wood tree useful for its wood. Its seeds are encased in a hard nut. Seeds are shaped so they spin like a helicopter and travel by wind.

Peregrina (*Cuba*): Sometimes called the Firecracker for its one-inch-wide red flowers produced year-round in beautiful clusters.

Powder Puff (*Madagascar*): These pink flowers bear a resemblance to exploding fireworks or pom-poms.

Saw Palmetto (*Florida*): The saw palmetto is an important source of food and shelter for many creatures.

Slash Pine (*Florida*): A coniferous tree that provides nesting places for birds, including the screech owl.

Sunshine (Scrambled Egg) Cassia (*India*): Bright yellow flowers attract bees and butterflies.

Silver Buttonwood (*Florida*): The leaves of silver buttonwood are covered with a dense mat of silky hairs giving this tree a beautiful silver-gray color. The flowers are inconspicuous but the fruit clusters are rather showy brownish-red cone-like buttons, each containing many tiny fruits that float.

Southern Live Oak (*Southeastern U.S.*) Native Americans bent samplings over so they would grow at extreme angles and serve as trail markers. This tree is very attractive to wildlife with its acorn seeds.

Weeping Bottlebrush (*Australia*): Fluffy red flowers are especially attractive to hummingbirds.

Wild Coffee (*Florida*): Flowers are a favorite nectar source for several butterflies and its bright red berries are enjoyed by birds including the *Northern Mockingbird*, Florida's state bird.

Wild Tamarind (*Florida*): An excellent shade tree with fern like leaves and large seed pods. Wild Tamarind grows fast, produces fragrant little powder puff-like flowers, and is the host plant for several species of butterflies.

Parts of a Flower:

