So Long Senegal Date Palms!

Although the Senegal Date Palm is one of the most attractive palms to look at, it is listed as a Category Two Invasive by the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council for central and southern Florida and the Keys. It has increasingly escaped from cultivation into natural areas and habitats, forming suckling dense clusters of spiky thickets crowding out surrounding native vegetation. In Florida, it has run wild into many areas such as mangrove swamps, pinelands, hammocks and all wet and dry habitats. It spreads by seeds dispersed by birds and by suckering and division. The thicket formed alters the ecosystem dramatically.

Hammock Park has its share of this massive palm overtaking native flora. Cedar Trail has been especially devastated by Senegal Date Palms which have totally obliterated the stream bed that crosses the trail. In the ongoing invasive containment program the City of Dunedin has contracted with a company to remove the palms by cutting them down and then treating them with a selective herbicide to systemically kill them. Park staff has been asked to initially remove any cut palms along the trail edges. In subsequent phases the plan is to remove more dead trunks than just those along the trail edges, given the substantial number trees to be felled. This will improve the appearance of the trails and clear more land for natives to re-emerge. The first stage of the Senegal Palm removal began in March and will require multiple phases to fully eradicate them. The company doing the work will be in the park twice this summer in a continuing program to remove all exotic, invasive and non-native species with approved herbicides.

Hammock Photographer Continues To Amaze Us

From baby ducks to otters and baby owls to snakes, Don Solaris’s artistic eye has captured life in the Hammock. Over the years his photography has repeatedly confirmed the critical ecological importance of this beautiful urban green space as well as its delicate beauty.
Butterfly Garden Metamorphosis

When volunteers Denise Toledo, Millie Sokell and Christine Rowley enrolled in the University of Florida’s Pinellas County Extension Program to certify them as Master Gardeners they did not know that they would be instrumental in the revitalization of the Hammock Park Butterfly Garden. Their 50 hours of training taught them how to design, plant and care for plants and landscapes in a Florida-Friendly way.

As part of their training and volunteer requirements, they chose to work on the Hammock Butterfly Garden. Ms. Rowley had an additional interest as a founder of the South Pinellas Chapter of the North American Butterfly Association.

Established in 2010 by the Friends of the Hammock, the Butterfly Garden provides a valuable habitat for butterfly populations. The garden features a flowering display of butterfly favorites in 11 beds of native plants. Founders James and Theresa Polgar retired, and a new manager was needed to take over the responsibilities of maintaining the plant beds, flower displays and sprinkler system.

After her first experience working in the garden, Ms. Toledo applied for the volunteer management position and showed the Friends of the Hammock Board of Directors her revitalization vision with a detailed PowerPoint presentation. Literally thinking out of the box, she identified native butterfly plants that seemed “unruly” and would not do well in beds, but could grow freely along the edges of the garden. These would add texture and color along the borders. These include pawpaw trees with beautiful white flowers as a host plant for zebra swallow butterflies, spotted bee balm as a pollinator for both honey bees and butterflies and the firebush, whose nectar is a favorite of hummingbirds and butterflies.

The transformation could not have been completed without the help of volunteers Phil Stone and Bob and Nancy Davison and the City Parks and Recreation Department.

The City provided the recycled mulch for the flower beds and additional shell base for the walkways. Employees, John Higgins, Mike Marchione and Crew Leader Gordon Wolfe provided the manpower to install three trellises with a 20 year warranty, signage and apply the shell base.

VISION
Create and maintain an aesthetically pleasing native garden that serves the needs of all life stages of the butterfly and engages human visitors.

The Volunteer Adoption Program training to control invasives will resume in the Fall. The dates will be announced on hammockpark.org.
Butterfly Garden Metamorphosis

Denise Toledo, Nancy and Bob Davison Building Trellises
City Staff Installing Trellises
Ready For Planting
Hauling Mulch
Phil Stone, Denise Toledo and Millie Sokell Planting The Beds
Over 360 Native Plants Installed
Butterfly Attraction
Colorado Visitors Learn about the Garden
Ready for Climbing
What Does the Hammock Mean to Visitors?

The Hammock is a wonderful place. We don’t have many big pockets of green space left, so it is a treasure! — Jan Allyn

I come for the peace and quiet and have been coming for 35 years. — Joe McKenzie and his dog “Taylor”

I come for the painted rocks that I saw on Facebook. — Edy Velasco

This is a place to meet wonderful people and get great book recommendations. — Jean DeMeo

I love to photograph the birds here, like cardinals, swallow tail kites, pileated and downy woodpeckers. — Paul DeMeo

The Hammock gives us an opportunity to volunteer. With my carpentry background, I volunteered my time and built the deck for the Butterfly Garden. — Dell Pearce

Friends of the Hammock, Inc.
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Find us on the web at hammockpark.org & on Flickr.com as Dunedin’s Hammock Park

Hammock Park is a Perfect Birthday Place

Five year old Nate Chignoli, son of Brian and Beree Chignoli of Palm Harbor wanted one thing for his special birthday party. He wanted to celebrate it with 16 friends in Hammock Park. He said the playground was his favorite reason to come to the Hammock. His party included a picnic in the shelters and then frolicking on the recently installed treehouse-themed playground. Long after the party was over, other children visiting the park in the afternoon and late into the evening, were treated with a multitude of small gifts donated from the event and hidden in plain sight along several of the trails.