



San Diego Zoo

Botanical Tours



Monkey Trails



The tour begins near the front of the Zoo by Jungle Java, continues along Monkey Trail to Hippo Trail to Treetops Way, and ends near the Bus Tour Ticket Booth.



1. Atemoya

Annona squamosa x A. cherimola

This is a cross between two fruits: the sugar apple *A. squamosa*, and the cherimoya *A. cherimola*. It's a popular fruit throughout the world, especially in Asia, South and Central America, Cuba, Africa, and the Middle East. Hand pollination produces the highest fruit set.

Fun Fact

The heart-shaped fruit has a creamy white flesh that tastes like piña colada.



2. Bay Rum Tree

Pimenta racemosa

This small tree in the myrtle family is related to allspice and guava. The leaves are utilized in cooking, tea, and essential oil production. Originating in the Caribbean and Central America, it has been introduced throughout the world, including the Pacific Islands, where it can become invasive.

Fun Fact

A type of cologne named Bay Rum was historically made in the early 20th century by distilling the oil using rum and water, hence the common name of the plant.



3. Giant-leaved Fig

Ficus lutea

Native to Africa, Madagascar, Seychelles, and Comoros, this can start out as a strangler fig or be cultivated as a tree reaching 80 feet tall and 150 feet wide. It is briefly deciduous and the glossy, large leaves have yellow veins.

Fun Fact

The fruits (syconia) are hairy and soft. They are sessile, meaning they have no stem but are connected directly to the branch end.



4. Moreton Bay Fig

Ficus macrophylla

This species is native to eastern Australia where, if grown without competition, it can reach 150 feet wide. In crowded, natural forest habitats—or near buildings in an urban setting—it tends to grow tall and narrow.

Fun Fact

Another example of this species grows near the San Diego Natural History Museum. It was planted in preparation for the 1915 Panama–California Exposition.



5. Red Mahogany

Khaya anthotheca

This tree is native to the evergreen forests of central and southern Africa, and is listed as vulnerable on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Its lumber is prized for making furniture and cabinets, and as a result, has been overharvested. Some countries enforce felling limits and log export bans.

Fun Fact

All the red mahoganies found along Monkey Trails were received as 5-gallon plants in 1999 and grown in the Zoo's plant nursery until their installation as 36-inch box specimens in 2006.



6. Watkins Fig

Ficus watkinsiana

This strangler fig is native to the rainforests of eastern Australia and can reach heights of up to 135 feet tall, boasting massive buttress roots. The figs are the main food source for catbirds, which disperse seeds in the canopies of host trees.

Fun Fact

This huge 220 ton tree was dug with a 40 foot by 27 foot root ball and moved 240 feet by hydraulic jacks to its current location in 2002.



7. Joy Perfume Tree

Magnolia champaca

This evergreen tree is a Southeast Asian and Indian relative of the iconic southern magnolia of the US. The sweet-smelling flowers bloom nearly year round. It is harvested for its finely grained, dark wood that is used to make furniture and cabinets.

Fun Fact

The oils from the flowers are used to make the perfume Joy, considered to be one of the costliest fragrances in the world.



8. Caribbean Royal Palm

Roystonea oleracea

This impressive palm can grow up to 130 feet tall and is often utilized in ornamental landscapes. The genus, *Roystonea*, was named after Roy Stone, a civil engineer who worked in Puerto Rico building roads. He had previously been a US Army officer during the Civil War.

Fun Fact

The fruit is an important part of the diet of orange-winged Amazon parrots and red-bellied macaws in Nariva Swamp, Trinidad and Tobago.



9. Pitch Apple

Clusia rosea

Salt and drought tolerant, this large, evergreen shrub will grow in full sun to part shade. The three-inch-wide flowers are short lived. Many species of *Clusia* begin their lives as epiphytes after seeds are dispersed by birds.

Fun Fact

The early Spanish Conquistadors in the West Indies used the leaves of this tree as writing paper and to make playing cards.



10. Red-hot Poker Tree

Erythrina abyssinica

The red-hot poker tree is a small, deciduous tree native to eastern and southern Africa. All coral trees have a symbiotic relationship with specialized soil bacteria that form nodules on the roots and fix atmospheric nitrogen. The nitrogen is utilized by the growing plant and other plants nearby.

Fun Fact

Many coral trees bloom for several weeks or months. Yet, this species has a very short flowering period, and you are lucky if you see it in bloom from April to May.



11. Miniature Date Palm

Phoenix roebelenii

Native to Southeast Asia, this is a popular palm for indoor and outdoor landscapes around the world. The species is slow growing, and only reaches a mature height of 8 to 10 feet. Look closely at this particular palm tree, and you will notice its very unique crested form with multiple heads.

Fun Fact

Miniature date palms have been in the United States for around fifty years, and the cultivated palms are typically planted three individual single trunks per pot. In native habitats, this species will naturally sucker.



12. Everglades Palm

Acoelorrhaphe wrightii

This palm forms thickets in brackish swamps in its native habitat in south Florida, the Caribbean, and southern Mexico, down into Colombia. In San Diego, it prefers light shade, coastal conditions, ample water, and good drainage.

Fun Fact

Since this species grows in swampy areas, it has a high salt tolerance. It also is surprisingly drought tolerant and does well in Mediterranean climates.



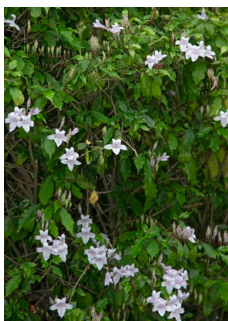
13. Thai Mountain Giant

Caryota obtusa

The largest member of the *Caryota* genus, it can reach up to 100 feet tall and is native to parts of India, China, and Thailand. It is a monocarpic species, which means the tree dies once it finishes flowering and fruiting.

Fun Fact

Another common name for this plant is fishtail palm, since the leaflets resemble the tail of a fish. *Caryota* species are the only palms with bipinnate fronds, meaning they are divided twice.



14. Forest Bush Bell

Mackaya bella

A shrub native to South Africa, it is the only species in this genus, referred to as monotypic species. It produces light lavender flowers in the spring and reaches six to eight feet tall. The fruit is a hard, woody pod that splits and scatters the seeds.

Fun Fact

Bella is Latin for “beautiful,” referring to the attractive flowers.



15. Texas Wild Olive

Cordia boissieri

This small tree grows 15 to 25 feet tall and has a native range from south Texas to Mexico. The funnel-shaped flowers attract butterflies and hummingbirds. The peak bloom season is in spring, but flowers can be found throughout the year.

Fun Fact

This tree is a host plant for the wild olive tortoise beetle, and the fruit is eaten by birds and other animals.

