

Migratory Birds And Trees They Rely On

Many species of birds migrate through the Florida Keys. Fall migration begins around October and the Spring migration begins around March. These birds have made a difficult journey and rely heavily on local food supplies. Our native trees are vital to the survival of these little travelers. Trees such as Poisonwood, Shortleaf and Strangler Fig, Black Torch, Blackbead and many others are great sources of food for the fruit they produce, the insects they attract as well as the shelter they provide, especially for the birds that nest here.

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Summer Tanager

Sitting in a Strangler Fig
a very important food tree
for birds, deer, turtles and
other wildlife.

Cardinal

Cardinals love palm fruit. This baby is learning to eat on his own.



Immature White-crowned Pigeon

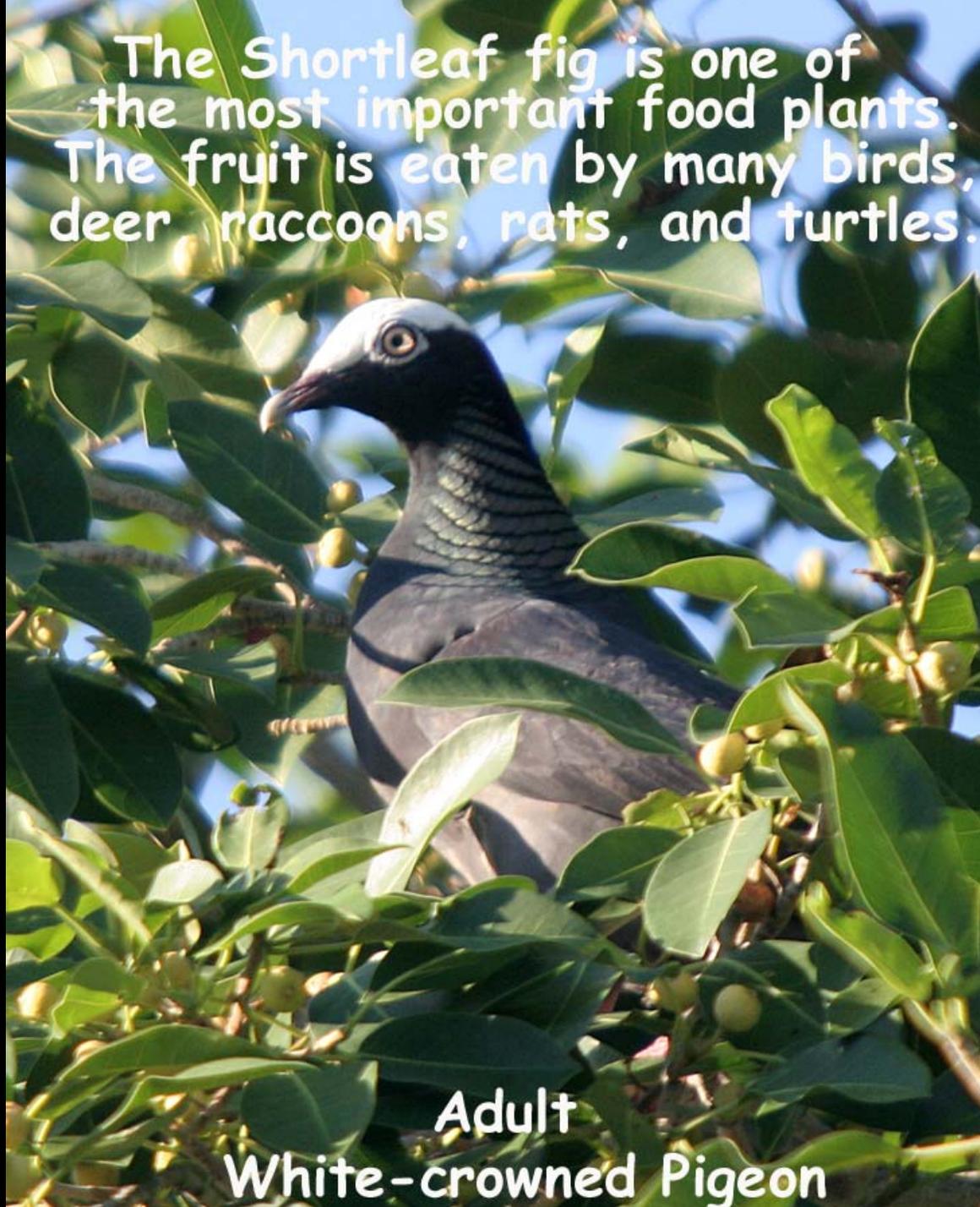
Feeding on Palm fruit



Common Grackle
Palm fruit is enjoyed
by many birds.



The Shortleaf fig is one of the most important food plants. The fruit is eaten by many birds, deer, raccoons, rats, and turtles.



Adult
White-crowned Pigeon

Yellow-throated Warbler

This beautiful little bird is always a welcome visitor and enjoys feeding on insects attracted by native trees and fruits.



Blue-grey Gnatcatcher

This very tiny bird loves browsing native trees for insects. When native trees and shrubs are blooming there are many insects that are attracted to the flowers and the Gnatcatcher takes full advantage of the bounty.



American Redstart

This striking bird can be found in native trees and on the ground hunting for bugs.



This male is black and orange, the female is grey and yellow.

Palm Warbler

Frequently
found in
native trees
snapping up
insects.



White-eyed Vireo



This insect eater loves native trees like Pisonia and Blackbead for the abundance of insects they attract.

White-crowned Pigeon



Although Poisonwood is not liked by many people for its irritating sap. This is one of the most important food trees in the Keys. It is a beautiful tree and must be protected for our wildlife.

Cedar Waxwing



A true reminder of the north, these magnificent birds will gorge on native fruit especially native Fig, before the long flight home.

**Black-whiskered Vireo feeding a
nest robbing Cowbird baby.**

A photograph showing two birds on a branch. The upper bird is a Black-whiskered Vireo, which is olive-green with a white breast and a thin, pointed beak. The lower bird is a Cowbird baby, which is brownish with a bright red gape. The vireo is holding a small insect in its beak, which is being passed to the cowbird. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting a natural habitat with trees and foliage.

**Poisonwood is an
important food for
migratory birds as well
as local species. This tree
also attracts insects
for Warblers and other
insect eating birds.**

Baltimore Oriole

You may be surprised to know that this common bird of the north can be observed in the Keys during migration. They can be seen in Shortleaf Fig trees and other fruiting native trees fueling up for their long journey.



Cape May Warbler



The Cape May Warbler can be found hunting for insects on native trees such as Pisonia, Pigeon Plum, Blackbead, Buttonwood and other insect attracting trees.

White-crowned Pigeon

When native food is scarce, White-crowns will sometimes come to feeders for seed.



White-crowned Pigeon

Feeding on native Locust-berry



Blackpoll Warbler

Many species of Warblers visit the Keys. They hide in dense native vegetation searching for insects.



Black-throated Blue Warbler

This handsome fellow searches for fruits, berries and insects. Often you may see several species of Warblers feeding among the same trees.



Ovenbird

This little Wood-Warbler forages on the ground within shaded, wooded areas. They will eat fruits and insects.



Northern Parula



This beauty searches for insects in a favorite Blackbead tree.

Scarlet Tanager

one of our most striking migratory birds. This beautiful male is feeding on native Shortleaf Fig fruit.



White-crowned Pigeon
Feeding on Poisonwood fruit.



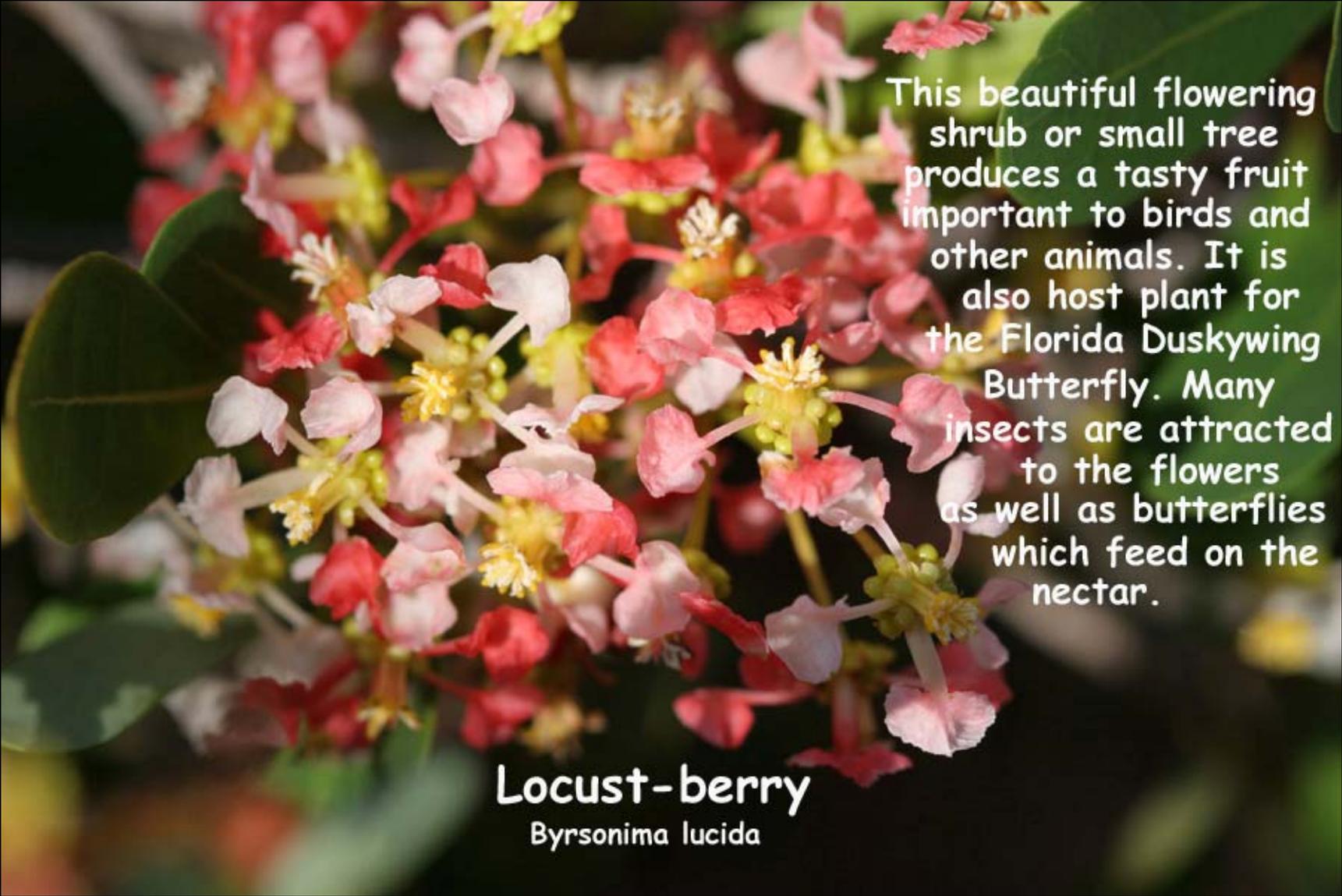
Native Plants

While all native plants are important in making up our habitat, here are a few of the most common food providers for wildlife.....

A close-up photograph of a Morinda royoc plant. The image shows several large, vibrant green, glossy leaves with prominent veins. A small, white, five-petaled flower is in bloom, surrounded by several small, green, unopened buds. The background is softly blurred, showing more of the plant's structure.

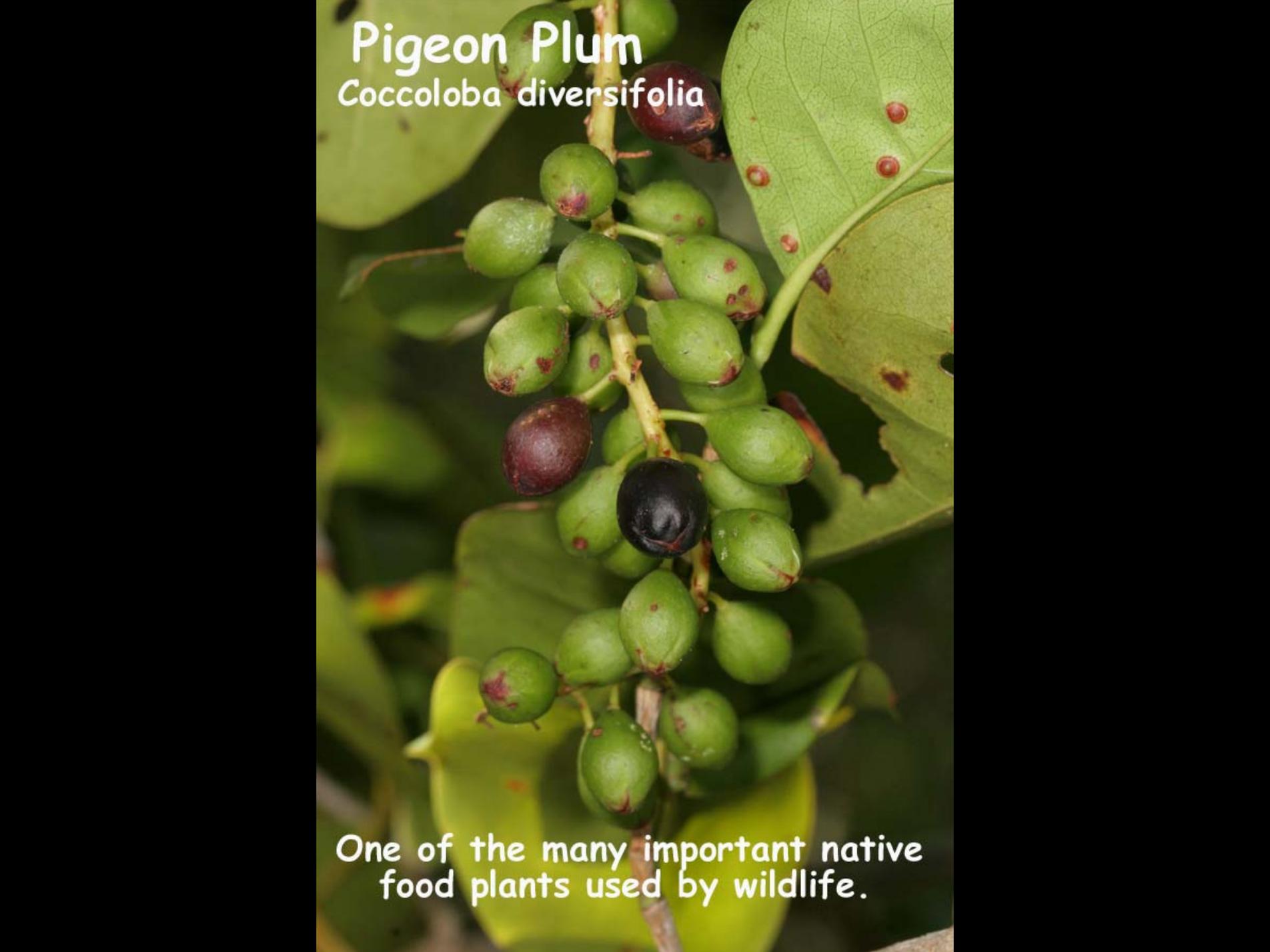
Morinda
Morinda royoc

This vinelike woody shrub is also called cheese Shrub. The round yellow fruit have a stinky smell much like Limberger cheese. The flowers are a big nectar source for many butterflies and the fruit is a very important food for Box Turtles.



This beautiful flowering shrub or small tree produces a tasty fruit important to birds and other animals. It is also host plant for the Florida Duskywing Butterfly. Many insects are attracted to the flowers as well as butterflies which feed on the nectar.

Locust-berry
Byrsonima lucida



Pigeon Plum
Coccoloba diversifolia

One of the many important native
food plants used by wildlife.

Blackbead

Pithecellobium guadalupense

Blackbead flowers can be white to pink. The profusion of flowers attracts every kind of insect and all kinds of butterflies.

This is the host plant for the Large Orange Sulphur and Miami blue butterflies.

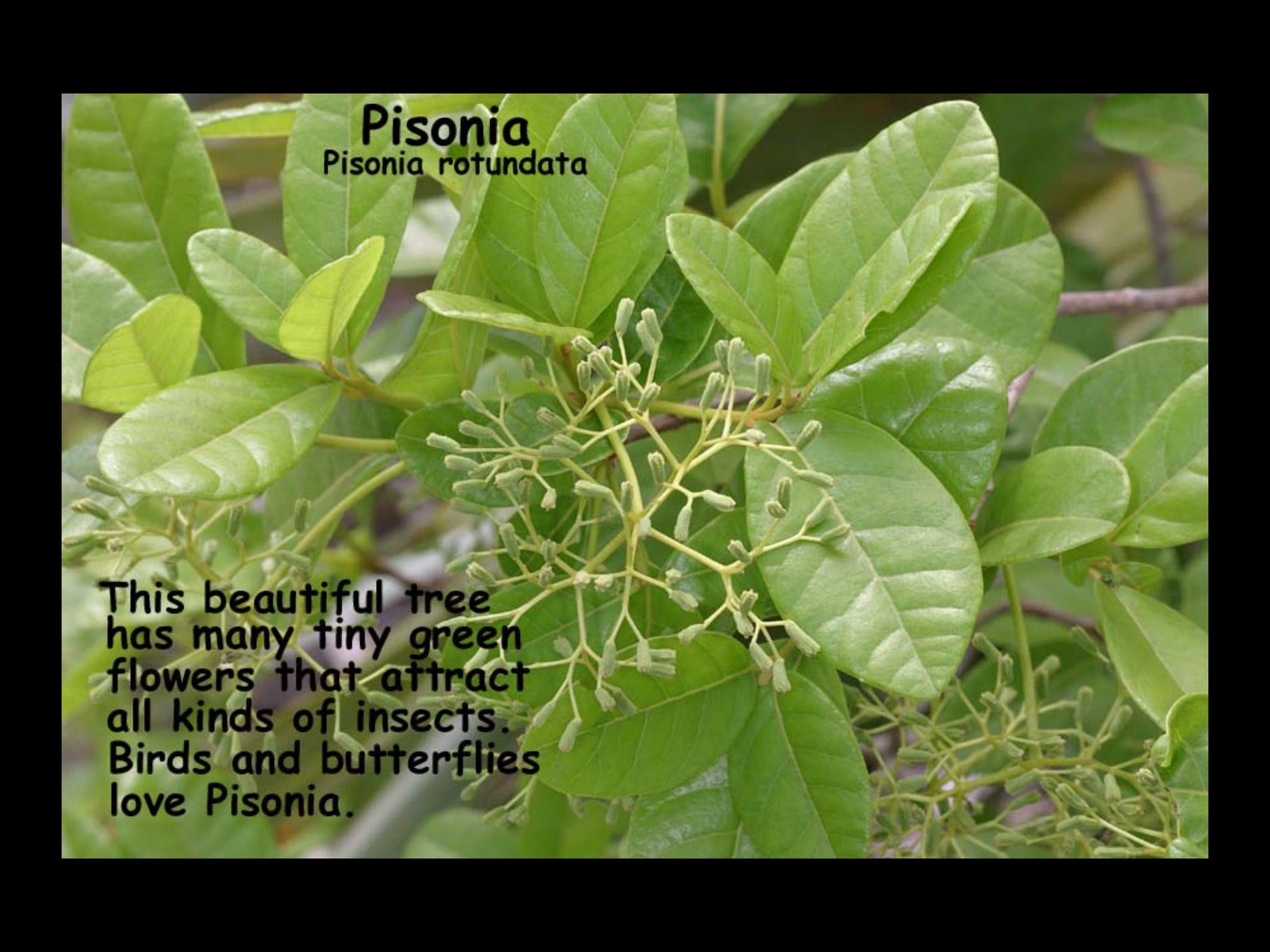


Strangler Fig

Ficus aurea

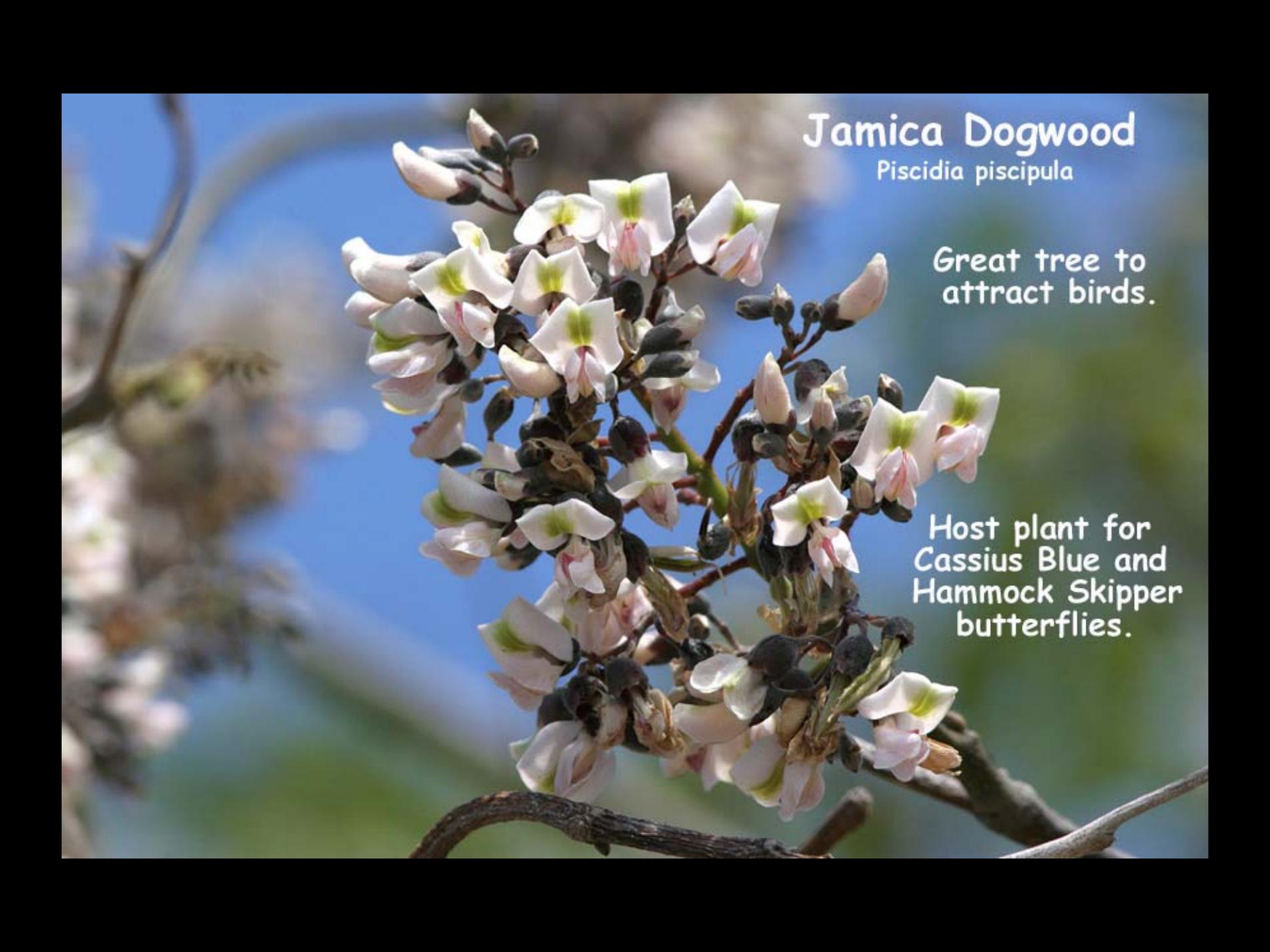
The native Strangler Fig and Shortleaf Fig are two of the best food plants for migratory birds and local wildlife.





Pisonia
Pisonia rotundata

**This beautiful tree
has many tiny green
flowers that attract
all kinds of insects.
Birds and butterflies
love Pisonia.**



Jamica Dogwood

Piscidia piscipula

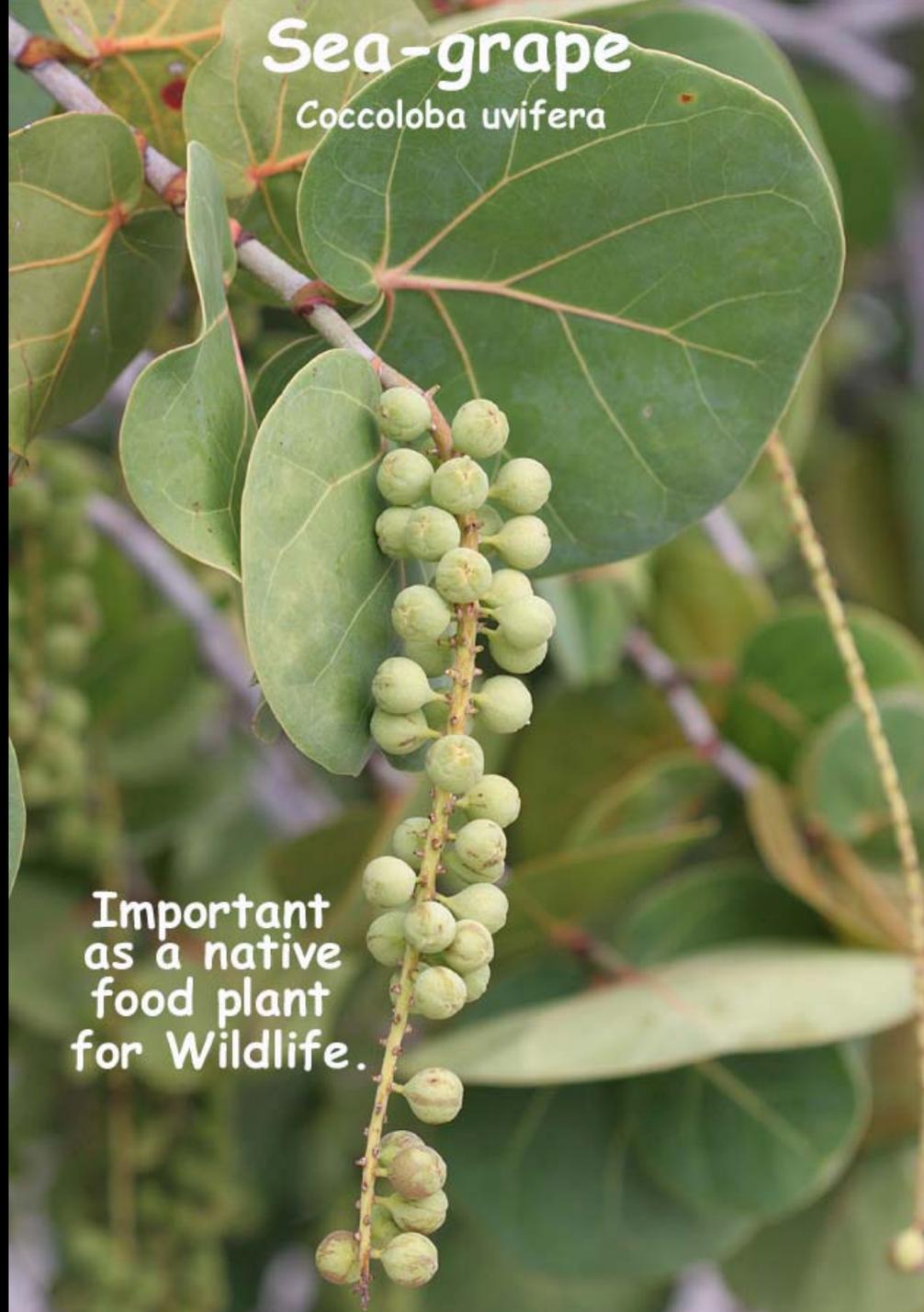
Great tree to
attract birds.

Host plant for
Cassius Blue and
Hammock Skipper
butterflies.

Sea-grape

Coccoloba uvifera

Important
as a native
food plant
for Wildlife.



Habitat Loss

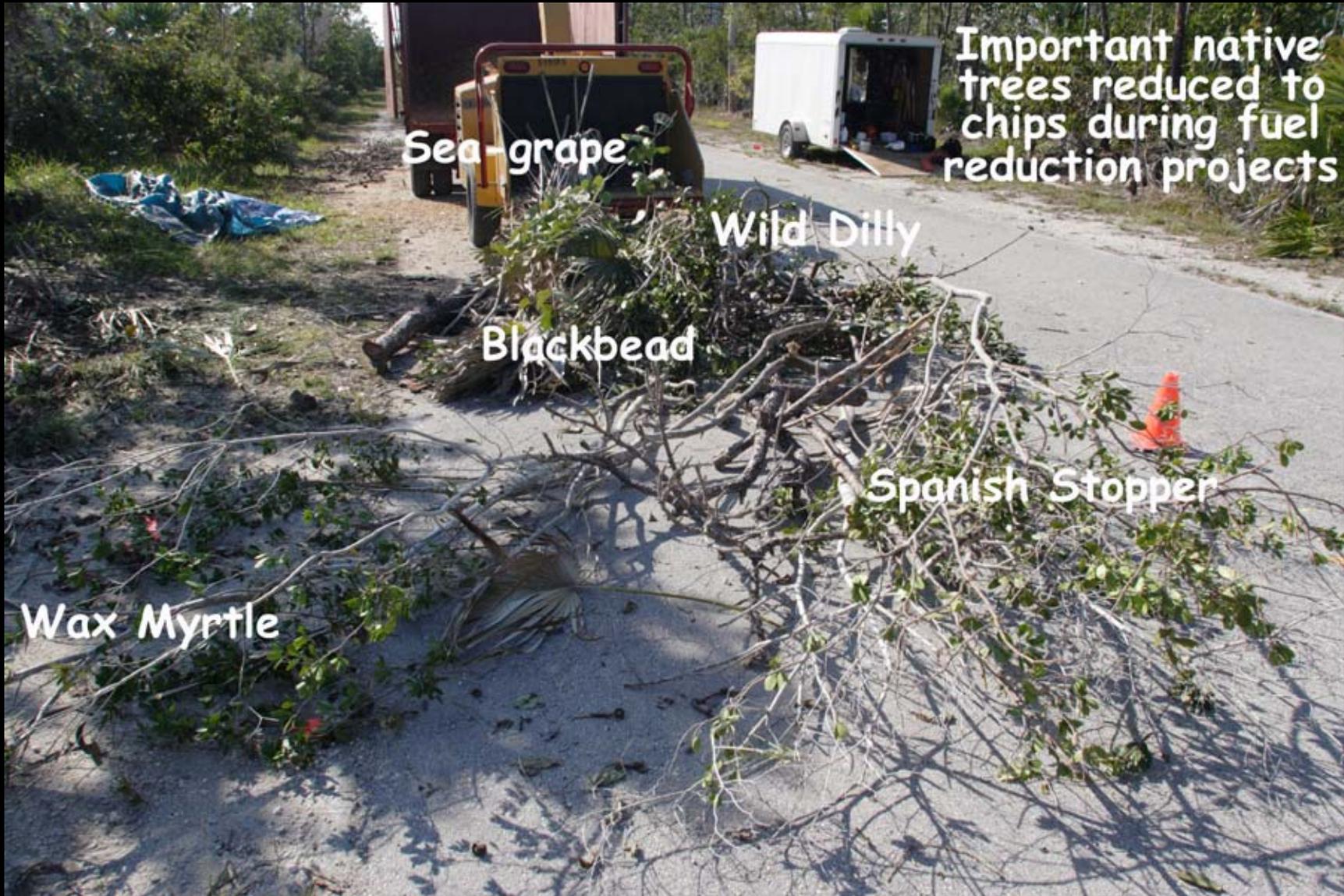
After hurricane Wilma much of our habitat was heavily impacted from storm surge. Projects carried out to remove fuel loads of dead vegetation and create fire breaks have caused further impact and more loss of native habitat.



Large clearing projects have eliminated many acres of native habitat.



Thinning for fire fuel reduction
can be done without destroying
habitat. Important native trees
can be trimmed without removal.



Sea-grape

Wild Dilly

Blackbead

Spanish Stopper

Wax Myrtle

Important native trees reduced to chips during fuel reduction projects

After fuel reduction clearing, only palms remain while other important native trees are unnecessarily removed.





Native trees are reduced to a pile of mulch left on site.
Removing dead vegetation from around homes is important.
Live trees should be trimmed not removed.



A photograph showing a cut tree trunk lying on the ground. The trunk is roughly cylindrical and has been cut at an angle. The outer bark is dark and peeling, revealing a lighter, fibrous inner wood. A person's hand is visible in the lower-left corner, held flat against the trunk to provide a sense of scale. The surrounding ground is covered with dry pine needles and some green vegetation. In the upper right, there is white text overlaid on the image.

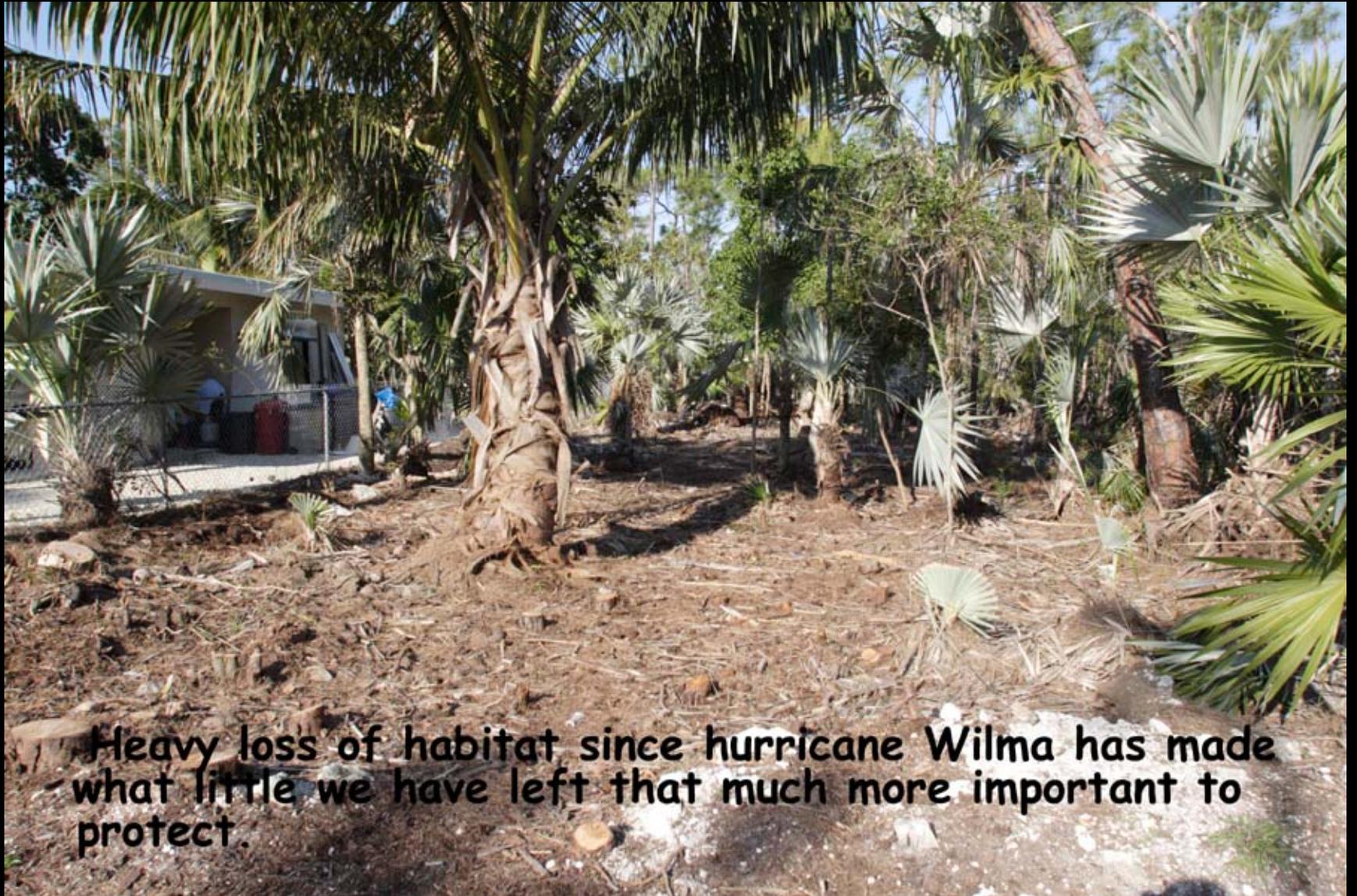
Unnecessary clearing
of trees like this
native Poisonwood
impacts wildlife
by eliminating
an important
food source.



Important native plants like Hog Plum should be protected. Unnecessary clearing has resulted in loss of wildlife food plants and habitat.



In an effort to reduce fuel loads by clearing, sometimes more fuel is created. Piles of brush left behind has been an all too common problem.



Heavy loss of habitat since hurricane Wilma has made what little we have left that much more important to protect.