

## **Plant Materials Information**

1. silver buttonwood (*Conocarpus erectus*)
2. morning glory (*Ipomoea purpurea*)
3. thatch palm (*Thrinax radiata*)

## **Conservation message**

The Seminoles used the fronds of the thatch palm (*Thrinax radiata*) for roofing and brooms.

## 500-word Rationale for Plant Selections

This wreath project was somewhat difficult because, finding native plants to the Florida Keys only leaves you with a smaller portion to choose from. While making the wreath my group and I chose to use silver buttonwood, morning glory, and thatch palm.

My first plant the *Conocarpus erectus*, also known as the silver buttonwood was used as the base for our wreath because, it is not only easy to bend into a circular shape, but it's also soft so it's not irritating. In the past the buttonwood was traditionally used for cooking oil, and smoking fish and meat because, it is very hard and burns slowly and releases generous quantities of heat which adds flavor, and the wood was used for fire wood, cabinets, and making charcoal. When researching silver buttonwood I learned that it cannot grow on pure salt water but, can grow in brackish mangroves and wet lands. Silver buttonwood is now often used for landscaping, because it can grow up to forty feet tall with a thirty foot spread.

My second plant the *Ipomoea purpurea*, also known as the morning glory. Morning glory was used to add color to our wreath. In ancient Mesopotamia, morning glory juice was used in combinations with other substances from the Castilla elastica tree to make a rubber bouncing ball over three-thousand years ago. The morning glory seeds contain LSD and LSA, LSD and invasive weed that is categorized as a federal noxious weed, and to be grown for personal consumption. LSA is a poison that is dangerous to other plants surrounding the morning glory. The morning glory flower itself only blooms once but the next morning there will be more. You can find morning glories either in bunches on the ground or growing all the way around a tree, twisting itself around a fence, or making its way up a building.

My third plant the *Thrinax radiata* also known as the thatch palm was a life saver for us because, it is long, thin, and durable, so we used it to tie our two silver buttonwood branches together. While researching the thatch palm I learned that they grew along Higgs and Rest Beach and were used for tiki hut roofs. Even before they were used for tiki hut roofs the Seminoles used the palm fronds for roofing, and brooms. The thatch palm is very slow growing but with proper care they could get anywhere from ten feet to thirty feet tall. Thatch palms can also grow indoors with right care and partial shade to full sunlight. Thatch palms could also be known as the silk top, or sea thatch palm. You can recognize a thatch palm by looking for a slender grey trunk, dark fan leaves on top that are usually three feet long with drooping tips at the end. Thatch palms can produce white flowers that grow on yellow stems that are three to four feet long.

In conclusion I hope you understand why my group and I picked buttonwood for the base of our wreath, morning glory to add some color, and thatch palm to help secure the two buttonwood plants together. I also hope you learned just as much as I did while researching these plants.