Hugh Taylor Birch was one of the first to recognize the value of mangroves, a type of tree that grows in coastal saltwater flat areas. He wrote, “If all the Florida mangroves were cut down, it would create the largest of swamps, for they seclude the water and soak up the rain. We would lose much of our country... We must preserve our mangroves.”

Mangroves are called “Blue Carbon” because they store fifty times more carbon in their soil per square meter than the same amount of Amazon rainforest. Hugh Taylor Birch State Park has 45 acres of salt tolerant trees called mangroves. White mangroves have light rounded leaves, and red mangroves have dark pointed leaves. Mangroves grow along coastlines in subtropical and tropical waters storing fifty times more carbon in their soil per square meter than the same amount of Amazon rainforest.

Mangroves contain a complex salt filtration system and complex root system to cope with salt water immersion and wave action. They are also adapted to the low oxygen (anoxic) conditions of waterlogged mud. Blue carbon is a term used to describe the carbon captured by the world’s oceans and coastal ecosystems. comprised of mangroves, salt marshes, and seagrasses.

You’re Invited on Starbucks Friday Morning Field Trips to Hugh Taylor Birch State Park for the Park’s 10:30 a.m. Ranger Tour Board Our Bus Here Before 9:00 a.m. on the 3rd Friday of each month!

Park Admission Fee: $2 per person (Park donations are also accepted) Your trip returns to this location around lunch time.

(Start Date: December 16, 2017)
Hugh Taylor Birch State Park at 3109 E. Sunrise Blvd, Fort Lauderdale, FL

Ficus Trees are 60 to 80 Million Years Old
Strangler fig is the common name for a number of tropical and subtropical plant species, including some banyans and unrelated vines. Banyans share a common “strangling” growth habit that is found in many tropical forest species, particularly of the genus Ficus. Current DNA molecular clock estimates indicate that Ficus is at least 60 million years old, and possibly as old as 80 million years.

Seagrape Trees are in the Buckwheat Family
The Seagrape Tree (Coccoloba uvifera) is in the buckwheat family (buckwheat is not related to wheat because it is not a grass).

Seagrape Trees are known for their large, almost circular, leathery leaves that have distinctive red veins. In late summer, Seagrape Trees bear fruit in large grape-like clusters that gradually ripen to a purplish color. Coccoloba uvifera is a dioecious species; that is, male and female flowers are borne on separate plants, and cross-pollination is necessary for fruit to develop. Honey bees and other insects help pollinate these plants.