






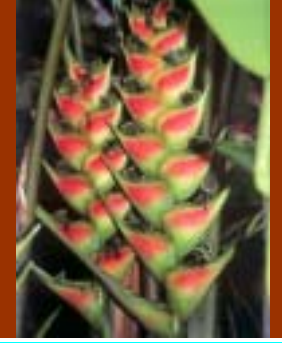



# Rio Blanco National Park: Floristic Guide

	<p><i>Astrocaryum mexicanum</i> <i>Warree Cohune</i></p>	<p>In spite of its nasty, flattened spines, this is an attractive palm of the forest understory. Only found in relatively undisturbed areas, never in secondary growth. In the Rio Blanco National Park mostly along the small creeks in the southern half of the park</p>
	<p><i>Pachyra aquatica</i> <i>Provision Bark</i></p>	<p>A common tree of riversides and swamps. The spectacular flowers and huge fruits always attract attention.</p>
	<p><i>Pitcairnia punicea</i></p>	<p>This bromeliad is common in rocky riverbeds in the Toledo district.</p>
	<p><i>Costus</i> <i>(pulverulentus ?)</i></p>	<p>This relative of the ginger is very common throughout Belize and does best in disturbed forest. The flowers are very attractive to hummingbirds.</p>
	<p><i>Heliconia mariae</i></p>	<p>This massive, banana-like plant is a common weed in many parts of the Toledo districts. The plant thrives with disturbance and is thus common in fields but very rare inside the forest.</p>

## Rio Blanco National Park: Floristic Guide

	<p><i>Heliconia collinsiana</i> This native member of the Heliconiaceae family is found in the Stann Creek and Toledo districts. The underside of the large leaves have a coating of white wax. In disturbed forest but never as weedy as <i>Heliconia mariae</i>.</p>
	<p><i>Heliconia champneiana</i> Another very attractive Heliconiaceae. The floral bracts of the erect flower always contain water. These little ponds are an ecosystem on their own with many aquatic insect larvae finding a safe haven in them.</p>
	<p><i>Heliconia latispatha</i> This is the most common <i>Heliconia</i> of Belize. Found mostly in the lowlands in open, disturbed sites.</p>
	<p><i>Heliconia wagneriana</i> One of the more uncommon <i>Heliconia</i>'s of Belize. Found only in the Toledo district.</p>
	<p><i>Heliconia vaginalis mathisiae</i> Compared with its relatives, this Heliconiaceae has relatively small and unspectacular flowers. The plant is found mostly inside the forest and never in heavily disturbed locations.</p>

## Rio Blanco National Park: Floristic Guide

	<p><i>Swietenia macrophylla</i> Mahogany</p>	<p>The tropical family Meliaceae has many valuable timber species. This is the famous broadleaf Mahogany. The national tree of Belize. Now rare in Rio Blanco.</p>
	<p><i>Pleiostachya pruinosa</i></p>	<p>One of the many maranthaceae in the Rio Blanco National Park. The plants are relatively small. Rarely more than 3 ft high.</p>
	<p><i>Siparuna thecaphora</i></p>	<p>This shrub is very common in disturbed locations throughout the Rio Blanco National Park. The leaves smell unpleasant. The small, pink, fig-like fruits burst open when ripe, revealing the seeds inside.</p>
	<p><i>Oeceoclada maculata</i></p>	<p>The maculated leaves make this terrestrial orchid easy to recognize. It is from African Origin and was first found in Belize in 1994. The first plant inside the Rio Blanco National Park was discovered in 2001.</p>
	<p><i>Liparis elata</i></p>	<p>Another terrestrial orchid. Distinctive only when in flower.</p>

## Rio Blanco National Park: Floristic Guide



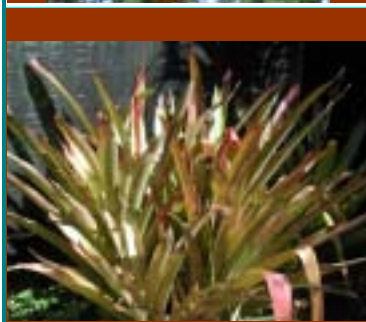
***Mucuna agyrophylla*** This vine is very common in disturbed areas. The clump of pendant flowers is most unusual. The brown seedpods are covered with a brown “fur” which is easily dislodged and becomes an unbearable irritant when it comes in contact with your sweaty skin.



***Passiflora coriacea*** Of the many Passionflowers in the Rio Blanco National Park, this one has the most unusual “batwing” like leaves.



***Bourreria oxyphylla***  
Roble blanco This unimposing member of the Boraginaceae family is common in disturbed forest and attractive when it is covered in small orange fruits.



***Androlepis skinneri*** This large Bromeliaceae is usually found as an epiphyte, but sometimes, the plants fall to the ground and continue growing. Be careful with the spiny leaves!



***Piper peltatum*** There are many members of the Pepper family in Rio Blanco National Park. This species is easy to recognize by its peltate leaves (leave stalk arising from the center of the leaves) and the multiple, rat-tail like flower stalks.

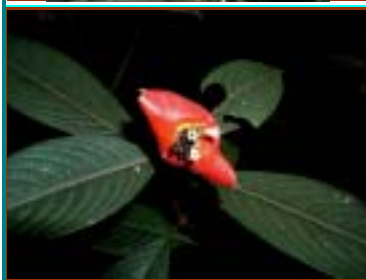
## Rio Blanco National Park: Floristic Guide



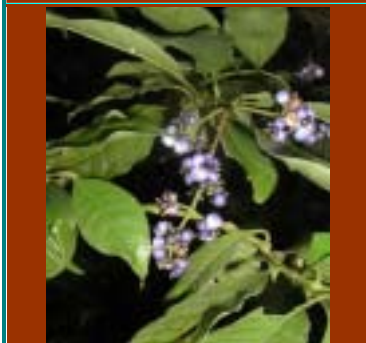
*Genipa americana?* This member of the coffee family becomes a fairly large tree. The large green fruits are distinctive. Mostly found along the river.



*Lindenia rivalis* This plant is typical for fast flowing streams. It is growing just above the normal water level and seems unperturbed even after heavy flooding. The long, white flowers are pollinated by Hawkmoths.



*Psychotria poeppigiana*  
*Hotlips* The hotlips is a very distinctive plant. Usually found on poor soils in open forest. The small white flowers (inside the red "lips") are very attractive to butterflies. And places with hotlips are thus good places to see butterflies.



*Psychotria brachiata* There are many, many Psychotria species. Most are found inside the forest. Some have attractive flowers while others are inconspicuous. This species is most notable for the unusual blue fruits.



*Hamelia patens*  
Firebush  
Ixcanal This relative of Coffee (Rubiaceae) grows in abundance on disturbed land. The flowers attract both hummingbirds and butterflies. The leaves have medicinal properties.

## Rio Blanco National Park: Floristic Guide



*Trichospermum grewiifolium*

A common tree in secondary forest. The tree is attractive when in Bloom during the dry season. The bark of the tree is used to make rope.



*Vochysia hondurensis*  
*San Juan, Yemeri*  
This timber tree is common in Southern Belize, but only few are left inside the Rio Blanco National Park. The tree is spectacular when in flower during the end of the dry season.



*Zamia picta*

This rare Cycad is found only in the Toledo district. Very often the plant has only a single, feather shaped leaf which has serrated edges and many spines along the stem. The leaves have yellowish spots and look as if affected by some disease.



*Renealmia alpinia*

This member of the Ginger family is attractive both in flower and in fruit. Common in disturbed forest.



*Lasianthaea fruticosa*

One of the many "marigold" type flowers that can be found in the Rio Blanco National Park. This species is actually a shrub and typical for secondary forest.

## Rio Blanco National Park: Floristic Guide

	<p><i>Attalea cohune</i> Cohune</p>	<p>This giant palm (Arecaceae) is very common in Belize. The small fruits contain an edible and aromatic oil. The leaves are used for thatching.</p>
	<p><i>Miconia sp.</i></p>	<p>The Melastomataceae to which the Miconia belongs are easy to recognize as a family. The unusual, parallel veins of the leaves are a distinctive field mark. Most species are trees and shrubs of poor soils.</p>
	<p><i>Selaginella sp.</i></p>	<p>This mossy or fernlike plant covers the forest floor in shady conditions throughout the Rio Blanco National Park.</p>
	<p><i>Arrabidaea sp</i></p>	<p>Vines of the Bignoniaceae family are very common, especially in disturbed forests. Many species are spectacular when in full bloom. The flowering period, however is very brief. Most are difficult to identify.</p>
	<p><i>Echandia sp.</i></p>	<p>One of the many herbs growing on the forest floor. This "Iris" like plant is particularly common in the Rio Blanco National Park.</p>

## Rio Blanco National Park: Floristic Guide



*Thevetia ahouai*

This shrub has a sticky white sap which is very poisonous. Very common in disturbed areas.



*Hippobroma longiflora*

Another small forest floor herb. The long, white flowers are pollinated by hawkmoths.



*Cecropia peltata*  
Trumpet Tree  
Guarumu

Female plants of this Cecropiaceae have “finger” shaped fruits which are a favorite food of many birds, bats and mammals. A very common and fast growing tree in disturbed areas.



*Bursera simaruba*  
Gumbo Limbo

With its red, flaky bark, one of the most distinctive native trees (Burseraceae). Popular as the antidote for the poison of the Black Poisonwood.



*Cedrela odorata*  
Cedar

The Spanish Cedar (Meliaceae) is related to the Mahogany and has equally valuable timber. Common on hills throughout Belize. The small fruits open in April and release a multitude of winged seeds.