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What is an epiphyte? 'Epi' means 'on' and 'phyte' means 'plant,' so an epiphyte is a plant that grows on another plant. They do not usually harm the host plant as they are not in competition with it for food and water. Epiphytes get their nutrients from plant and animal waste that is dissolved in rain and dew. See if you can spot these from the walkway!

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**Cardinal Air Plant** *Tillandsia fasciculata*  
 Stiff curled leaves, 18" long, tapering gradually, not scaly. Flowers are bright red stalks with small violet flowers at the tips. Can grow large protuberances, if growing on a tree trunk, that give its host a knobby appearance.

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**Resurrection Fern** *Pleopeltis polypodioides*  
 Uncurled fronds 3-6' long, oddly pinnate divided. Shriveled to appear dead during dry periods, lush and green after rainfall. Spot them along tree branches



**Butterfly Orchid** *Encyclia tampensis*  
 Smooth elongated leaves, three to twelve inches, longer in shaded areas. Mauve and yellow blooms attract butterflies. Most common wild orchid in Florida, but it is still protected so do not collect it!

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**Ball Moss** *Tillandsia recurvata*  
 Leaves scurfy with curled tips. Violet flower. Similar to Spanish moss but plants more compact with densely clustered leaves. Prefer trees but will also grow on telephone wires or other such supports as long as it is sunny.



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**Spanish Moss *Tillandsia usneoides***

Not really a moss at all, but instead is a relative of the pineapple. Hangs from trees in long, gray strands. Harmless to its host tree, beneficial for insect life and birds—especially redbugs, which can cause severe itching from their bites, so don't touch!

**Shoestring fern *Vittaria lineate***

Also called beard fern. Native to the pine flatwoods and hammocks and moist, swampy sites throughout peninsular Florida. Look for it on cabbage palms and oak trees in particular.



**Pineapple Air Plant *Tillandsia utriculata***

The largest air plant. Wide leaves that taper to points, up to 24 inches long. Get so heavy sometimes that they fall to ground, but will continue to flourish. Blooms are cream colored and emerge from a very tall stalk.

**Grassy Leaf Air Plant *Tillandsia setacea***

Thin leaves, four to twelve inches long, resemble blades of grass or pine needles. Grow in large clumps containing up to fifty individuals. In shady areas leaves are green, but in sunny areas are bronze or copper.



**Cabbage Palm Fern *Phlebodium aureum***

Grows mainly on palm and oak trees. Long and pendulous fronds incompletely divided and widely lobed. Can occasionally be found growing on the ground in well drained soil.