

The Silhouette native plant trail:

An easy way to discover the pristine flora and fauna of the Seychelles

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Island Conservation Society (ICS) has developed a native plant trail on Silhouette as an easy way to discover some of the endemic plants of Seychelles for which Silhouette is famous.

This will give the opportunity to observe some of the unique species of Seychelles to both tourists and Seychellois. ICS in partnership with the Islands Development Company (IDC), Hilton Labriz Resort & Spa, Seychelles National Parks Authority (SNPA), and the Plant Conservation Action Group started in 2015 the creation of the new 'Silhouette Native Plant Trail' (NPT), just behind the La Passe village. The trail allows visitors to view a wide variety of native plants within the vicinity of La Passe. It winds through a mixed natural ecosystem and botanical garden. Invasive exotic plant species like cinnamon are regularly removed so that native plants can recolonise the area. The forest restoration is expected to benefit native fauna including land birds, reptiles, invertebrates, and the critically endangered Seychelles Sheath-tailed Bats.

Thanks to this new and easy trail, visitors from children to adults are now able to see what the original forest of Seychelles looked like and learn more about its unique wildlife. Indigenous (occurring naturally in Seychelles and in other parts of the world) or endemic (found only in Seychelles) plant specimens are labelled with their Creole and scientific names.

Silhouette is considered as one of the most important biodiversity hotspots in the Indian Ocean, where endemic palms and trees, rare flowers, reptiles, amphibians and other vertebrates unique to Seychelles can be observed.

In addition to being a very good educational tool for guests and researchers, the NPT is an example of the forest restoration being done by different non-governmental organisations in Seychelles to recreate the original ecosystem of the islands. Before humans settled on Silhouette to cultivate exotic species like cinnamon, coconut palms, ylang-ylang, vanilla and other spices, the island was home to a unique flora and fauna. Today, the original lowland and coastal forest has mainly been replaced by coconuts palms and the old plantations that spread out all over. Many species became extinct and the range of others became severely reduced to very small areas so that they became critically endangered. By clearing key areas, planting endemic palms and trees, and controlling some of the most invasive species, ICS is doing its best to preserve the forest of Silhouette and some of its most threatened inhabitants.

For more information, the ICS office, located next to Gran Kaz in front of the La Passe jetty, is open every day of the week and the team will be delighted to welcome you and answer all your questions.

The following photos show the trail and some of the plants visitors can see.



