

Gopher Tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*) Native Forage Species List*

KEY	
VH	Very High
H	High
M	Moderate
L	Low

VH=Very High These are species that are very highly selected and foraged by gopher tortoises. Within the appropriate temperature ranges, in the proper soils and with the appropriate levels of moisture they produce sufficient biomass to be very important to the tortoises as a component of overall forage usually year-round or in multiple seasons. Within a given plant association these species represent a very important component of the available forage.

H=High These are species that, like the VH level, are highly selected and foraged by gopher tortoises. They may not be as abundant or robust in a given plant association or habitat and that generally represents the distinction between very high and high importance levels of usage as forage. These species are generally available year-round or in more than one season, though the seasonal production of the parts generally foraged may also limit their overall importance.

M=Moderate These are species that may be highly selected for or specifically sought out and foraged but only in one season or the plant may be of such limited biomass that the overall importance is not high. This does not negate the importance of the plant in the overall association of forage species. Plants that are selected even on an irregular basis may provide important micronutrients or chemicals which we are not yet able to identify.

L=Low Low level forage species are important for forage; they just represent a lower level of importance in comparison to the other species. Usually low level forage is limited by having a very low level of biomass productivity or by being very seasonal in production of the parts that are often eaten. Low level species are not unimportant! There are some species that get a low level rating for other reason.

Ground Covers/Grasses

Common Name	Latin Name	Level of Usage
Dropseed	<i>Sporobolus virginicus</i>	H
Elliot's Love Grass	<i>Eragrostis elliottii</i>	VH
Hairy Gramma Grass	<i>Bouteloua hirsuta</i>	VH
Lopsided Indian Grass	<i>Sorghastrum secundum</i>	H
Purple Love Grass	<i>Eragrostis spectabilis</i>	VH
Panic Grass	<i>Panicum amarum</i>	VH
Sea Oats	<i>Uniola paniculata</i>	M
Seashore Paspalum	<i>Paspalum vaginatum</i>	VH
Vasey Grass/Gulf Dune Paspalum	<i>Paspalum monostachyum</i>	VH

Ground Covers/Flowers

Common Name	Latin Name	Level of Usage
Ambrosia	<i>Ambrosia hispida</i>	M
Black Eyed Susan	<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	H
Blanket Flower/Fire Wheel	<i>Gaillardia pulchella</i>	M
Blue Porterweed	<i>Stachytarpheta jamaicensis</i>	M
Blue Eyed Grass	<i>Sisyrinchium angustifolium</i>	L
Camphor Weed	<i>Heterotheeca subaxillaris</i>	L
Dune Sunflower	<i>Helianthus debilis</i>	L
Florida Greeneyes	<i>Berlandiera subacaulis</i>	H
Golden Creeper	<i>Ernodea littoralis</i>	H
Gopher Apple	<i>Licania michauxii</i>	H
Iron Weed	<i>Vernonia blodgettii</i>	M
Lyreleaf Sage	<i>Salvia lyrata</i>	L
Matchweed	<i>Phyla nodiflora</i>	H
Mimosa	<i>Mimosa strigillosa</i>	M
Narrowleaf Silkgrass	<i>Pityopsis graminifolia</i>	H
Rhexia	<i>Rhexia spp.</i>	L
Scorpion's Tail	<i>Heliotropium angiospermum</i>	L
Sea Purslane	<i>Sesuvium portulacastrum</i>	M
Spanish Needle	<i>Bidens alba</i>	VH
Spiderwort/Blue Jacket	<i>Tradescantia ohiensis</i>	M
Tampa/Beach Verbena	<i>Glandularia tampensis/maritima</i>	M
Tickseed	<i>Coreopsis leavenworthii</i>	H

Ground Covers/Ferns Fern Allies

Common Name	Latin Name	Level of Usage
Bracken Fern	<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	M
Swamp/Blechnum Fern	<i>Blechnum serrulatum</i>	M

Ground Covers/Vines

Common Name	Latin Name	Level of Usage
Bay Bean	<i>Canavalia maritima</i>	H
Beach Morning Glory	<i>Ipomoea imperati</i>	M
Corky-stemmed Passion Flower	<i>Passiflora suberosa</i>	L
Railroad Vine	<i>Ipomoea pes-caprae</i>	M
Virginia Creeper	<i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i>	H

Ground Covers/Cactus

Common Name	Latin Name	Level of Usage
Prickly Pear	<i>Opuntia humifusa</i>	VH

Aquatic Plants

Common Name	Latin Name	Level of Usage
Soft Rush	<i>Juncus effusus</i>	L

Small Shrubs 6' at Maturity†

Common Name	Latin Name	Level of Usage
Lantana/Buttonsage	<i>Lantana involucrata</i>	M

Medium Shrubs 6' to 12' at Maturity†

Common Name	Latin Name	Level of Usage
Coco Plum	<i>Chrysobalanus icaco</i>	M
Dwarf Palmetto	<i>Sabal minor</i>	L
Saw Palmetto	<i>Serenoa repens</i>	H
Scrub Palmetto	<i>Sabal etonia</i>	L
Snowberry	<i>Chiococca alba</i>	M
Varnish Leaf	<i>Dodonaea viscosa</i>	L

Small Trees 12' to 25' at Maturity†

Common Name	Latin Name	Level of Usage
Buckthorn/Saffron Plum	<i>Sideroxylon celastrinum</i>	M
Cat's Claw	<i>Pithecellobium unguis-cati</i>	L
Coral Bean	<i>Erthrina herbacea</i>	M
Spanish Stopper	<i>Eugenia foetida</i>	L
White Stopper	<i>Eugenia axillaris</i>	L

Medium Trees 25' to 40' at Maturity†

Common Name	Latin Name	Level of Usage
Cabbage Palm	<i>Sabal palmetto</i>	L
Live Oak	<i>Quercus virginiana</i>	M
Pigeon Plum	<i>Coccoloba diversifolia</i>	L
Sand Live Oak	<i>Quercus geminata</i>	M
Sea Grape	<i>Coccoloba uvifera</i>	L

Large Trees 35' to 60' at Maturity†

Common Name	Latin Name	Level of Usage
Longleaf Pine	<i>Pinus palustris</i>	L
Laurel Oak	<i>Quercus laurifolia</i>	M
Sand Pine	<i>Pinus clausa</i>	L
Slash Pine	<i>Pinus elliottii</i>	L

*Based on Appendix A of Ashton & Ashton 2008

†Not recommended for temporary enclosures; 7gal. size or smaller recommended