

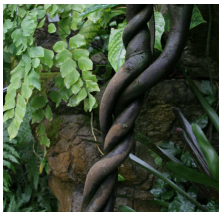


DINOQUEST: A TROPICAL TREK THROUGH TIME Plants with a Past

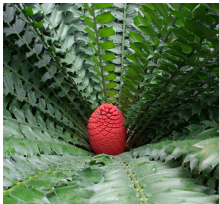
Humans are like dinosaurs...we both depend on plants for life! In fact, all life on Earth depends on plants. Plants take the energy of the sun and convert it through photosynthesis into food. Herbivores (plant-eaters) eat the plants. Carnivores (meat-eaters) eat the herbivores. Here are some plants with ancient roots that you can see in the Climatron® and outside during the “DinoQuest: A Tropical Trek Through Time” exhibition:



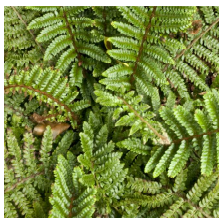
Mosses: The most diverse plant group after angiosperms (flowering plants), mosses are small plants that grow close together in clumps or mats in damp, shady areas. They have neither flower nor seeds!



Gnetophytes (NEE-toe-fights): These seed-bearing plants can grow as shrubs, trees, or vines and share similarities with both gymnosperms (like the conifers) and angiosperms. Fossils of gnetophytes date to the Late Triassic, about 200 million years ago. Today, there are three surviving genera: *Ephedra*, *Gnetum*, and *Welwitschia*.



Cycads: Cone-bearing plants that look like palms, cycads reached their peak in the Mesozoic Era some 150 million years ago. Today, cycads are found in tropical, subtropical, and warm temperate regions. They have a slow-growing trunk (up to 1,000 years). See eight of the nine known genera inside the Climatron.



Ferns: These perennial plants bear no flowers, but instead reproduce by spore and range in size from a few inches to 50 feet tall. Eons ago, ferns lived beneath the shady canopies of giant club mosses and horsetails, and dinosaurs ate their soft fronds.



Selaginella (SELL-uh-gin-ELL-uh): Spike moss, as it is commonly known, is a low creeping plant with roots and tiny cones. They are widely distributed all over the world, particularly in the tropics, with more than 700 species of moss-like, or sometimes fern-like, perennials.

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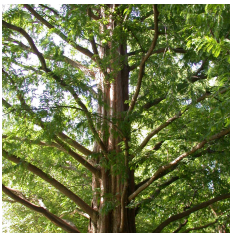




Horsetail: Also called scouring rush, horsetails (*Equisetum*) have rings of thin leaves and spore-bearing cones at the end of their branches. Before the dinosaurs, these plants grew to giant size. They survived the age of the dinosaurs, though they became smaller as the climate became drier. Horsetails grow in moist, rich soils in almost all parts of the world. Look for them near the bog in the English Woodland Garden.



Ginkgo: A modern-day survivor of an ancient evolutionary line extending back 150 million years, the ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba*) appears to have undergone very little change from its ancient ancestors. In the Garden, ginkgo trees can be found across from the main entrance to the Climatron.



Dawn Redwood: A coniferous, deciduous tree native to remote valleys of Central China, the dawn redwood is the only living species of the genus *Metasequoia*. In the Garden, these trees can be found near the Lehmann Building.

For more information, contact the Public Relations Department at (314) 577-0254 or (314) 577-5141 or check the Garden's Web site at www.mobot.org. Media materials may be downloaded at www.mobot.org/press. For 24-hour recorded visitor information, call (314) 577-9400 or 1 (800) 642-8842 toll-free.

The Missouri Botanical Garden's mission is "to discover and share knowledge about plants and their environment in order to preserve and enrich life." Today, 151 years after opening, the Missouri Botanical Garden is a National Historic Landmark and a center for science and conservation, education and horticultural display.