Did you know...

...strangler fig is the common name for a number of tropical and subtropical plant species, including some banyans and unrelated vines? They all share a common “strangling” growth habit that is found in many tropical forest species, particularly of the genus *Ficus*.

**History**

Current DNA molecular clock estimates indicate that *Ficus* is at least 60 million years old, and possibly as old as 80 million years.

*Ficus* is a genus of about 850 species of woody trees, shrubs, vines, epiphytes and hemiepiphytes in the family Moraceae. Collectively known as fig trees or figs, they are native throughout the tropics with a few species extending into the semi-warm temperate zone.

*Notes:* An epiphyte is a plant that grows on another plant for physical support. They have no attachment to the ground. They obtain water and minerals from rain and from debris on the supporting plants. A hemiepiphyte is a plant that spends part of its life cycle as an epiphyte. The seeds of hemiepiphytes germinate in the canopy and initially live epiphytically. They send roots downward, and these roots eventually make contact with the ground.

**Characteristics**

The wood of fig trees is often soft and a milky liquid separate from plant sap. The wood was used to make mummy caskets in Ancient Egypt.

All the native fig trees of the American continent are hermaphrodites, as well as species like Indian Banyan (*F. benghalensis]*).

**Web Site (and E-Group)**

For more details about wildlife on the Bay Colony Club property (as well as Fern Forest and Anne Kolb Nature Centers), see:

http://southfloridawildlife.weebly.com