

Except during the nine months  
before he draws breath, no man  
manages his affairs as well as a  
tree does.

George Bernard Shaw

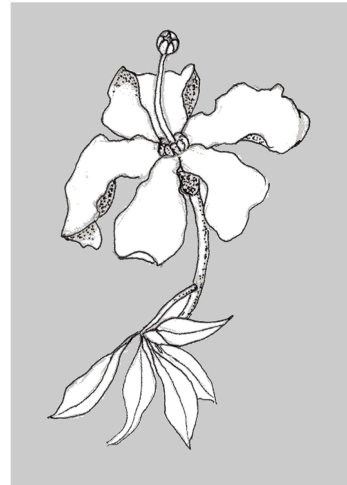
## Aviary and Treetops Terrace

AS YOU ARRIVE AT THE PATH leading up to the Aviary, look to your left to see a stand of floss silk trees, *Chorisia speciosa*. They are recognizable by their bright green thorny trunks.

Native to Brazil, floss silk trees bloom in October and November when they are covered with large pink and white flowers. Their fruits are large green avocado-shaped pods containing both seeds and a downy white fluff that gently covers the area when the pod splits open. The seeds are favorites of many species of parrots. **Continue uphill to reach the gardens in front of the Aviary.**

There is a Montezuma cypress, *Taxodium mucronatum*, on the downslope near the bamboo palm. The cypress, called *ahuehuate* by the Aztecs and considered sacred, is the national tree of Mexico. Even so, its conservation status is "threatened."

Visit the dawn redwood, *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*, **to the right of the rest room by the Aviary.** This tree was widely distributed in the Northern Hemisphere from the Cretaceous period down to about 26 million years ago when it vanished from the fossil record and was believed to be extinct. Then during World War Two, a living dawn redwood was discovered in a remote area of Sichuan Province by a Chinese forester. After the war, an expedition led by paleobotanist Dr. Ralph Chaney of UC Berkeley located a small forest of these trees in a valley 30 miles from where the first tree was found. Today, dawn redwoods are growing all over the world, serving as ambassadors from the Age of Dinosaurs. Like the bald cypress, the dawn redwood is deciduous and so is bare during winter.



21. Floss Silk Tree