

species, which are adapted to survive the very harsh conditions- scorching sun, rainfall which quickly evaporates and small pockets of soil.

Typical endemic shrubs are Café Marron Grande Feuille (*Paragenipa wrightii*), with its oval pointed leaves (often tinted dark red), the small leaved Bois Calou (*Memecylon eleagni*), and Bois Dur (*Canthium bibracteatum*) other endemic plants are the Latanier Millepatte palm (*Nephrosperma vanhoutteanum*), the screw pine Vacoa Marron (*Pandanus sechellarum*) with its long prop roots, and Bois Chandelle (*Dracaena reflexa*). Certain creeping plants also do well, such as the tangles narrow stemmed Dodder (*Liane Sans Fin*, *Cassytha filiformis*), and the endemic Seychelles Vanilla (*Vanilla phalaenopsis*) which has leafless fleshy green stems. It is often draped across brushes of Bois du Lait (*Euphorbia pyrifolia*) which has an irritant white sap. Exotic plants of interest along this trail are Cashew (*Anacardium occidentale*), the medicinal Madagascar Periwinkle (*Catharanthus roseus*), and Sisal (*Agave sisalana*) from which string is made.

You may see or hear birds, particularly when trees are flowering or fruiting, for example Seychelles Blue Pigeon (*Alectroenas pulcherrima*), Seychelles Bulbul (*Hypsipetes crassirostris*), Ground dove (*Geopelia striata*), Indian mynah (*Acridotheres tristis*). But other noises are likely to be singing of cicadas or crickets, or Seychelles Skinks (*Mabuya sechellensis*) scuffling through the dry undergrowth.



Seychelles Skink (*M. Sechellensis*)

## HISTORY OF THE AREA

Anse Major was once important for the production of cultivated vanilla, cinnamon oil, copra, citrus fruit and patchouli (from which an essential oil is extracted for use in perfumes). Produce was transported mainly by local wooden pirogue boats but a good path was also built from Danzil to Anse Major during the 19th century. This path is the one you have followed. It is reputed to have been possible to ride a bicycle along it at one time.

**ATTENTION: Parts of the trails are exposed to the sun.**



Café marron Grande Feuille (*P. wrightii*)

### CHARACTERISTICS OF TRAIL.

length :2.4 KM. Change in altitude: 70m.

Time to go and come back:2 hours.

Main interest: rocky landscape and ecology, coastal views and beach.

Physical difficulty : low

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## ANSE MAJOR NATURE TRAIL



MORNE SEYCHELLOIS  
NATIONAL PARK  
MAHE



This trail allows you to combine walking with relaxation on a secluded beach. The coastal path is situated about 50 m above sea level, and passes through "glacis" country where boulders and large expanses of granite rock predominate. These glacis are a characteristic feature of Seychelles geology and have a specialised vegetation. The "anse" (which means beach in Creole) is situated at the mouth of a stream called Rivière Major, hence the name Anse Major.

## HOW TO GET THERE

Take the road which goes from Beau Vallon, through Bel Ombre to Danzil, or take SPTC bus route 21 (Victoria- Bel-Ombre), alighting at the Danzil terminus. Follow the road up the hill for about 200m. Your car can be left here. Take the right fork in the road, passing through the small but expanding settlement of Danzil following the yellow route markers.

## THE ROUTE

The early part of the trail winds through patches of woodland, open areas, small river valleys and over exposed rocky ridges. A short climb brings you to the first main glacis.

The path now passes alternately across slopes of granite rock, stretching massively above and below the path, and through areas of rocky land where there is some deeper soil.

Look out for the occasional strange rock formation and for the special plants which adorn the rocks (described below).



Across the sea on your right, Silhouette island and North island are your constant distant companions. The sparkling variety of turquoise and azure colours of the shallow coral reef patches may catch your eye.

About three quarters of the way along the trail you reach a "cave" formed by huge boulders which have tumbled together in the distant past. Look for the small nests built by mud dauber wasps, attached to the sheltered underside of the boulders. A little further on, from the shelter, you can admire your destination, Anse Major a beautiful bay, surrounded by forest-covered mountains and the remnants of a once more extensive settlement. After the viewpoint the path branches off to the right and winds its way downwards along the coast to two small bays (one rocky, one sandy) before you reach the main beach of Anse Major. Follow the yellow trail markers but feel free to explore other paths too.



To get to the main beach you must cross a small river outlet, which emerges from a brackish water marsh behind it. The beach sand is unusual for Seychelles as it has a large proportion of fine quartz, giving it a coarser texture and slightly brownish colour compared with the typical coral sand. At the far end of the beach is a shelter.

Enjoy the sparkling waters of the bay and snorkel over the patches of coral reef, but note that during the North West monsoon season the sea can become quite rough. Your return journey is by the same route.

## ECOLOGY OF THE TRAIL

The ancient granite rock of the glacis is exposed and worn smooth by aeons of weathering. It may be coloured black by blue-green algae (cyanobacteria), patterned by patches of pale lichen or bleached by rainwater rushing across the surface. The vegetation is dominated by endemic and indigenous