

climb with due caution .

There should be no more than three people on the top layer at one time. Even without climbing to the top of the fire tower, there are good views of the island of La Digue and other smaller islands nearby. From the top, it is possible to see across to Mahé, Silhouette and North Island on a good day.

### ECOLOGY OF THE TRAIL

Along the first part of the trail, considering the devastating effects fire can have, it is surprising how many native species survive amongst the secondary vegetation. Bracken fern (*Dicranopteris linearis*) is a typical species in fire-prone areas, but in spite of the predominance of introduced plants such as Calice du pape (*Tabebuia pallida*) and Cocoplum (*Chrysobalanus icaco*). Endemic species such as Café marron grande Feuille (*Paragenipa wrightii*) and Pandanus multi-spicatus also flourish.

In the forested section of the trail ,it is possible to see all six of the endemic palms of Seychelles Palmiste (*Deckenia nobilis*) ,Latanier Feuille (*Phoenixophorium borsigianum*), Latanier Millepatte vanhoutteanum) and Coco de mer (*Lodoicea maldivica*) are found in the lower forest. In the upper reaches of the trail where there has been less human disturbance, Latanier latte (*Verschaffeltia spendida*) and Latanier Hauban (*Roscheria melanochaetes*) are also present, the latter being the smallest and most slender of the endemic palms. Other native trees and shrubs are scattered throughout, creating a rich and diverse vegetation. An unusual feature near the shelter is the presence of Veloutier (*Scaevola sericea*), a shrub normally found on the beach-crest.



Bois rouge flowers

Native species planted in this area include Bois de reinette (*Dodonaea viscosa*), a medicinal plant. Around the fire tower native species are well adapted to the rocky terrain, amongst them Bois Banane (*Gastonia crassa*).

A variety of endemic birds can be seen along the trail, reflecting the ecological diversity, for example Sunbirds (*Nectarinia dussumieri* ), Blue pigeons (*Alectroenas pulcherrima*), Bulbuls (*Hypsipetes crassirostris*) and also Praslin's special bird the Black parrot (*Coracopsis nigra barklyi*). From the fire tower, Swiftlets (*Aerodramus elaphrus*) can sometimes be seen and maybe a Kestrel (*Falco araea*). Watch out for beautiful bright green Day Geckos resting on trunks and branches .



Seychelles blue pigeon

### CHARACTERISTICS OF TRAIL.

length : 1.4 km. Change in  
altitude:190m

Time to go and come back: 2 hours.

Main interest: panoramic view,  
landscape

Physical difficulty : low

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Seychelles  
National Parks  
Authority

**GLACIS NOIR**

**NATURE TRAIL**



**PRASLIN**

**NATIONAL PARK**



This trail leads to a fire tower built on a hilltop overlooking the East coast of Praslin, with a fine view of La Digue and surrounding smaller islands. The trail follows an unsealed road through scrub and woodland before narrowing to a shaded forest footpath.



**The Forestry road**

## HOW TO GET THERE

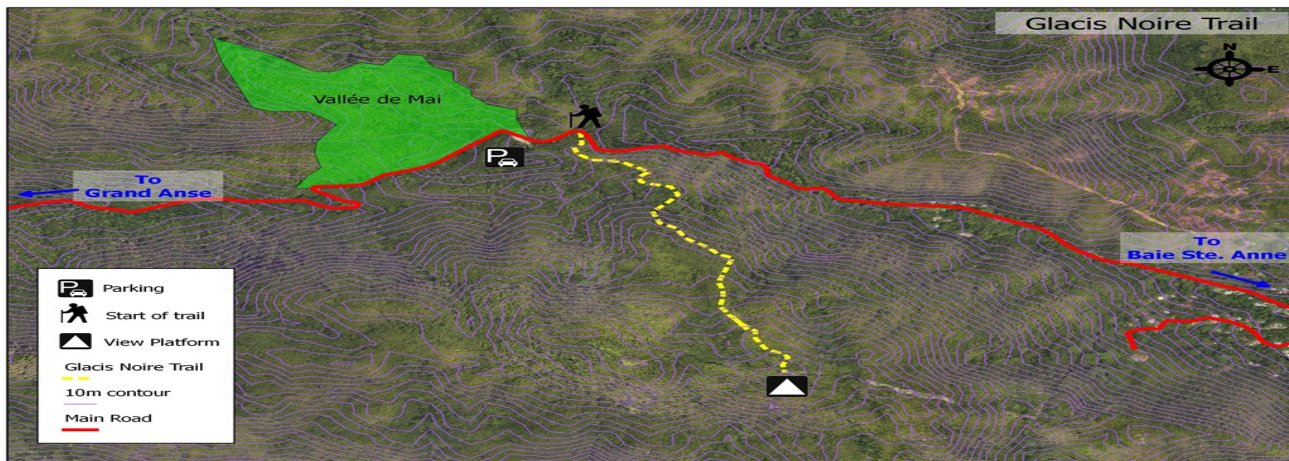
Take the cross-island road between Grand' Anse and Baie Ste Anne. The trail starts about 150m from the Vallée de Mai entrance, on the Baie Ste Anne side. There is a small parking area near the main road opposite the start of the trail. If travelling by bus, take SPTC bus route 61 (Mont Plaisir-Anse Boudin) or bus route 63 (Mont Plaisir-Anse La Blague) (Note that both bus routes go via Grande ' Anse , Vallée de Mai and Baie Ste Anne). Get off the bus at Vallée de Mai and walk up hill towards Baie Ste Anne for about 150 metres to the start of the trail.

## THE ROUTE

The first part of the trail is relatively open, following a forestry road that was built in the early 1980s. Near the start are two Coco de Mer palms, the first one male and further up the road a female. Coco de Mer palms (*Lodoicea maldivica*) grow naturally only on the island of Praslin and Curieuse and can be seen in abundance at Vallée de Mai World Heritage Site and Fond Ferdinand. The surrounding countryside has been much influenced by fire and subsequent soil erosion, resulting in rather scrubby vegetation with scattered native plants.



**Path through palm forest**



Situated about 150m from the start, on the left of the trail, is a strange and conspicuous 'palm' with a small building at the base. This Cable & Wireless transmitter has been camouflaged to blend in with the beautiful Praslin environment. Be cautious of slippery gravel on the road as the trail becomes steeper.

You may notice a change as the trail passes through a shaded forest area, where tall trees grow in deeper soil unaffected by fire. There are many Takamaka trees (*Calophyllum Inophyllum*), Santol (*Sandoricum indicum*) and native palms, including Coco de Mer. In the past there used to be tea plantations extending on either side of the trail and tall unpruned tea plants can be seen at the edge of the road. The area to the right, known as Fond Peper, is part of the Vallée de Mai reserve.

After another stretch of more open vegetation, with mahogany trees and a scattering of native trees such as Bois rouge (*Dillenia ferruginea*), the road comes to an end and you reach a wooden shelter. A number of native species have been planted in the area.



**Praslin snail ( *P. praslinus* )**

**Palmiste (*Deckenia nobilis*)**

**Bois de reinette (*D. viscosa*)**

**Liane sans fin (*C. filiformis*)**

The trail narrows to a path and there is a fairly leisurely climb through mahogany forest, followed by a steeper section through native palm forest. Your climb ends at the fire tower on top of the hill. It was built in 1996 and gives a wide-ranging view of the surrounding hills.

It is permissible for small numbers of people to climb to the top of the tower but please