

At the Trig Point (667m), which is marked by a small metal disc set into the rock, you can see the forested slopes of Morne Seychellois (905 m) to your right and over towards Ste Anne Marine National Park continue along the ridge, again being careful to keep to the path, to the viewing platform, from which there are magnificent views to the south and west of Mahé and 600m below to Port Glaud. Return is by the same route. Take extra care on the steep parts as they can be slippery .

### ECOLOGY OF THE TRAIL

Although much of the forest is secondary in nature, due to earlier exploitation followed by regrowth of introduced trees such as cinnamon (*Cinnamomum verum*), the main elements of a tropical forest are intact and native plants are scattered throughout. In this habitat numerous native animals survive, for example frogs, small snails ,large flat slugs, insects such as crickets, stick insect (*Carausius* spp.) and a slow-flying butterfly. Birds such as the Seychelles Bulbul (*Hypsipetes crassirostris*), Seychelles Sunbird (*Nectarinia tristis*) are present, and the tiniest frogs in the world (*Sooglossus gardineri*), which, considering its size (about 1cm), gives a surprisingly loud "peep" .

Cloud or mist forest occurs at a surprisingly low altitude in Seychelles, compared with mainland mist forest. Clouds form as a result of the rapid upward flow of very moist air , which cools quickly. Moisture loving plants thrive and there is a rich endemic flora at these higher altitudes, including many

altitudes, including many smaller plants which are restricted to this habitat such as herbs, ferns, mosses, liverworts and lichens. Unfortunately, even here invasive alien plants such as Cinnamon and Chinese guava (*Psidium cattleianum*) threaten the native species.



**Black Snail (*Pachnodus niger*)**

**ATTENTION: Cloud may obscure views; an early start may be an advantage.**

### CHARACTERISTICS OF TRAIL.

Length: 1km

Change in altitude: 270m

Time to go and come back: 1h30m

Main interest: Panoramic view, cloud forest ecology.

Physical difficulty: Medium

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**Seychelles  
National Parks  
Authority**

**MORNE BLANC**

**NATURE TRAIL**



**MORNE SEYCHELLOIS**

**NATIONAL PARK**

**MAHE**



This trail is basically a continuous climb from a high starting point in the Mome Seychellois National Park, to the top of a prominent mountain in the west of Mahe, characterised by cloud forest but affording splendid views on a good day.

**HOW TO GET THERE**

Follow the Sans Souci road between Victoria and Port Claud or take SPTC bus route 14 (Victoria -Sans Souci -Port Launay). Stop at the Tea Factory, where there is parking opposite the Tea Tavern. Follow the main road up the hill for about 200m. The trail sign board is on the left.

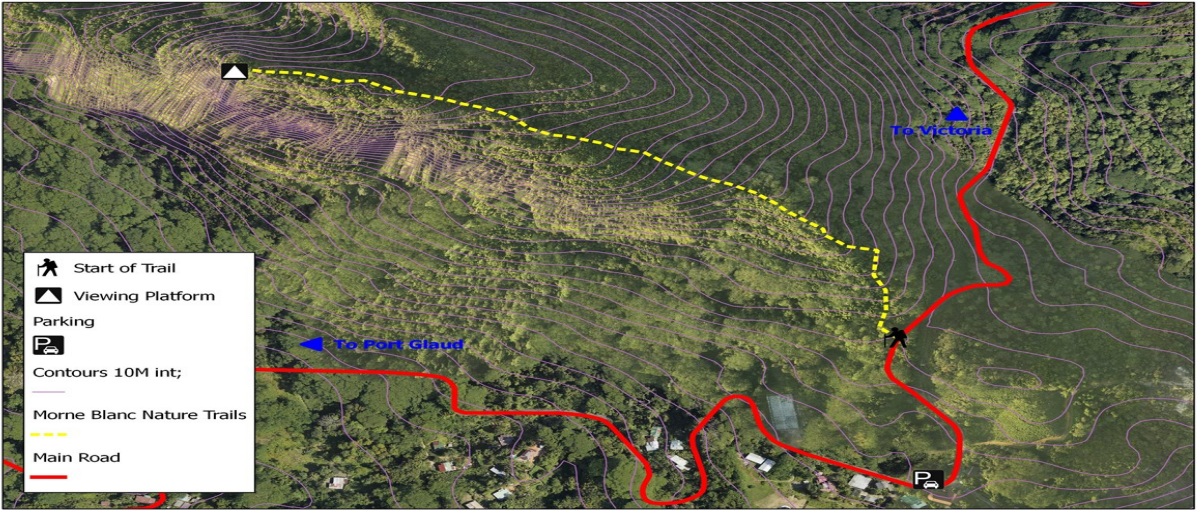
**THE ROUTE**

The initial part of the trail passes through an old tea plantation where Lemon Grass (Citronelle) also grows. Tea production in Seychelles started in 1966 and continues to be of minor commercial importance. There are brief views over the surrounding hills and towards the sea and nearby islands. Low forest provides welcome shade and there is an interesting patch of endemic plants, including Vacoa Parasol (Pandanus hornei), Vacoa Marron (Pandanus sechellarum), Latanier Hauban (Roscheria melanochaetes) and Capucin (Northea hornei) (the leaves of which have a dark reddish-brown underside). Most of these plants are encountered higher up the trail.



Capucin (N.hornei)

Taller cinnamon forest is soon reached, where there is an understorey of endemic palms and tea plants which have grown



into trees. As you climb higher there are Jack-fruit trees (Artocarpus heterophyllus), with their huge knobby fruits arising directly from the trunks. The ripe fruit has a strong smell and the seeds readily germinate to produce numerous seedlings. They compete with Jambrosa (Syzygium jambos) seedlings, which are also present here, with their elongated dark green leaves.

The seedlings remain small until a taller tree falls and allows in more light. Jambrosa has cream coloured flowers with many stamens and sweet, delicately scented fruits. Both these species were introduced and subsequently have naturalized. In this area you may notice that the rocks that you are walking over are rust-coloured and smoother than granite. The path follows as a dyke, where long ago molten lava found its way to the surface through cracks in the granite crust.

The higher you go, the more moist the forest becomes, with mosses covering the rocks and tree trunks, and ferns increasingly dominant on the forest floor. At around 620m altitude the mist forest is more evident with a

luxuriant growth of epiphytes, including the Bird Nest fern (Asplenium nidus). You are now about to make the final climb through the cloud forest to the summit. The terrain becomes more rugged, the forest more stunted and the undergrowth more luxuriant, with greenery festooning the ground and all larger plants. Handholds and footbridges help you on your way.

Be careful not to leave the path as there are many unseen holes and steep drops on either side.



Stick Insect (Carausius sp.)