

Syndicate Nature Trail

Morne Diablotin National Park
DOMINICA

Nestled on the foothills of Dominica's tallest mountain – Morne Diablotin – and close to the edge of the Picard River Gorge is the Syndicate Nature Trail. This is the easier and more popular of the two nature trails in the Morne Diablotin National Park.

Most of the trail is on forest land that was previously earmarked for logging, but was later acquired by RARE Centre of the USA on behalf of the Government of Dominica, with contributions coming from Dominica's school children and the former estate owners, Dominica Fruit Syndicate.

The 205 acres of land, which is known as the "Syndicate Preserve", was incorporated into the national park when the latter was established in January 2000. The trail was designed and constructed in 1993 by the Forestry, Wildlife & Parks Division, with funding from Special Expeditions Inc., through RARE Centre.

The main access to the trail and the National Park is from the secondary road north of the village of Dublanc, or south of Morne Espagnol. The 5-mile route goes past farms of banana, citrus, coffee and other cash crops, to an elevation of about 1,750 ft above sea level.

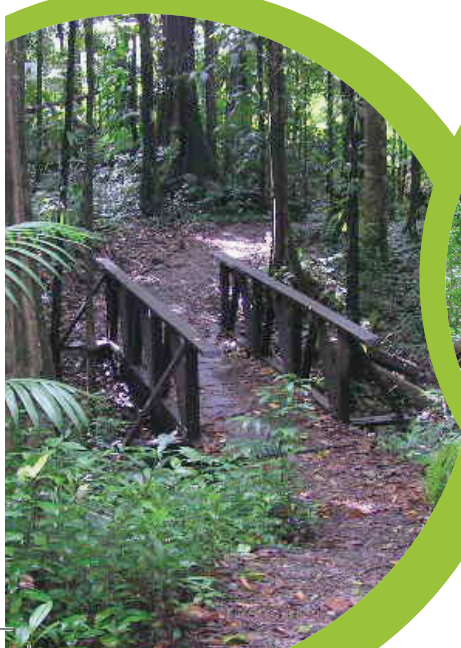
The entrance to the trail and this impressive tract of tropical rain forest is from the Syndicate Visitor Centre, and a casual walk along the 1.1 mile (1.77 km), lasso-shaped (loop) trail presents a sample of the variety of plants which occur in Dominica's rain forests.

Note the high density of pillar-like *Gommier* (*Dacryodes excelsa*) trees along the trail. Together with other tree species such as *Karapit* (*Amanoa caribaea*) and *Chatanyé Gwan-fèy* (*Sloanea dentata*), they are responsible for the dense canopy of tree crowns overhead, which has resulted in very sparse vegetation on the forest floor. The elaborate, spreading buttresses and impressive prop roots provide support for the trees and anchor them in the ground.

The common plants which are attached to or climbing the larger trees include Bird's Nest Anthurium (*Anthurium acaule*), Elephant Ears (*Anthurium grandifolium*), Giant Bromeliad (*Glomeropitcairnia penduliflora*), Philodendrons (*Philodendron spp.*) and *Zèl Mouch* (*Asplundia rigida*). Look out for the Blue Wax Flower along the trail, and the pink-flowered *Spathoglottis* or "David's Orchid" near the visitor's center.

Part of the trail meanders along the rim of the Picard River Gorge, and from the viewpoints one can see the surrounding landscape and hear the rumbling waters of the river below. This is one of the many rivers that originate on Morne Diablotin, and is the main source of water for the town of Portsmouth and surrounding communities, as well as for several West Coast villages.

Listen and look out for some of the 51 species of local and migrant birds that may be found in the Park. The Syndicate area is popular for bird-watching, because of the presence of the Sisserou Parrot (*Amazona imperialis*) – Dominica's National Bird – and the Jaco Parrot (*Amazona arausiaca*); these two birds are only found on Dominica and are specially protected birds under our laws.



Dominica's largest wild mammal – the feral or wild pig – is now extremely rare in the area. However, you may catch an occasional glimpse of an agouti near the trail.

Some of the other wild fauna in the Park include:

24 species of butterfly and many other insects

14 species of mammal (11 bat species)

9 species of reptile (5 lizards, 4 snakes)

2 species of frog ("*Gounouj*")

1 species of crab ("*siwik*")

Spiders, molluscs

Shrimp, crayfish and freshwater fish

Other activities that are conducted in the Syndicate area include research on Dominica's flora and fauna, hiking and educational tours.



So, for a tropical rain forest experience of a lifetime, the Syndicate Nature Trail is the place to be.

Morne Diablotin National Park has been set aside by the Government of Dominica for the enjoyment of all Dominicans and visitors alike. Let's all play our part in preserving our natural heritage.

Everything within the Park is protected by law.

Take lots of Pictures, But leave nothing but footprints. Please bring out your trash and dispose of it properly.



For further information, contact:

Forestry, Wildlife & Parks Division

Roseau, DOMINICA

Tel: (767) 266-5852/5856

Email: forestry@dominica.gov.dm

Website: agriculture.gov.dm



This Edition produced by
Forestry, Wildlife & Parks Division
DOMINICA, 2014
with financial assistance from
the Tourism Site Enhancement Program
of the Ministry of Tourism
Website: www.tourism.gov.dm



Syndicate Nature Trail

Morne Diablotin National Park
DOMINICA