

COONTIE



The coontie (*Zamia integrifolia*) is the only cycad native to Florida, and as a gymnosperm produces seeds in seed cones instead of flowers or fruits. It can be found growing in the well-drained soils of pine flatwoods.



COONTIE:

HISTORY & USES

The Seminole people traditionally used the coontie plant as a source of flour. Parts of the plant contain central nervous system toxins so the plant had to be ground up, washed in water, left to ferment for around 7 days, and then dried up in the sun before it could be consumed. In addition to being used as flour for bread, the Seminole people also made a jelly-like dish called "sofkee" which contained a mix of honey and coontie flour



COONTIE:

ORIGIN & FUN FACT

The word "coontie" came from the Florida Seminole people who prepared a similar jelly called "conte" from the plant China breir, and after discovering the similar properties of what is now known as the coontie plant, distinguished between the two by giving the coontie plant its name.

In the late 19th and into the early 20th century, the starch from the coontie plant was harvested to make animal crackers!