

# Please pass the Salt!!

**M**angroves are a very unique type of tree found along the banks of Biscayne Bay and all over South Florida's shores. Mangroves are special in that they are the only type of tree that grows in large groves so close to saltwater. The type of mangroves most easily seen from the water is the red mangrove. Red mangroves have special roots called rhizophores or "prop roots" that dangle down into the water and look like a tangled mass of long fingers protruding from the tree trunk and branches.

These prop roots are special because they exclude salt from the seawater and allow the mangrove to absorb only the fresh water. Other mangroves such as the Black mangrove actually absorb saltwater through their roots, but have specially designed leaves with salt glands that collect salt from the tree and then dump it onto the leaf's surface where it dries as glittering salt crystals.

