Yellow-Orange instead of Deep Orange Flowers of Manzanote Cactus Tree *Leuenbergeria lychnidiflora*, synonym *Pereskia lychnidiflora*

Why are these flowers such a different tone? Is this a variant?

Photographs by Nicholas Hellmuth, FLAAR Mesoamerica, June 4 and 28, 2023

FLAAR Reports, FLAAR (USA) and FLAAR Mesoamerica (Guatemala), June 2025

Introduction to documenting the yellow-tones orange flowers of *Leuenbergeria lychnidiflora*

During June 2023 we began focused photography on flowers of manzanote tree flowers of the bosque seco areas of Zacapa and El Progreso. 99.99% of the trees have orange flowers. Of the thousands of manzanote trees with orange flowers, on June 21, 2023, the FLAAR team found two manzanote trees with white flowers—same species as orange-flowered—but a mutant.

Now, while sorting through the hundreds of photos of manzanote trees from June and July 2023, I was surprised to see one tree in June and one tree in July that had flowers that were a yellow-ish orange rather than the traditional deep-orange of most manzanote trees.

So I now publish all these photos to ask the question of whether this is another variant? Or, out of thousands of manzanote trees, there are many different tones of orange.

When you Google flores, *Pereskia lychnidiflora*, *Leuenbergeria lychnidiflora*, manzanote, Guatemala you get both deep orange flowers but also the flowers with yellow-orange tints. So the yellowish-orange flowers that we photographed are unlikely to be unique.

Is it the local soil or geology? Or the time of day? Or whether it rained recently or not? Or more likely an in-species variation?

Fig. 1.

These field trip of June 28, 2023 was mostly in rutal areas of the Municipio de Cabañas, Departamento de Zacapa.

The June 4, 2023 photos were also most likely in Zacapa or adjacent El Progreso.

All photos by Nicholas Hellmuth, with an iPhone 14 Pro Max, in June 2023.

All photos are in the FLAAR Digital Photo Archive of Flora, Fauna and Biodiverse Eco-systems of Guatemala.

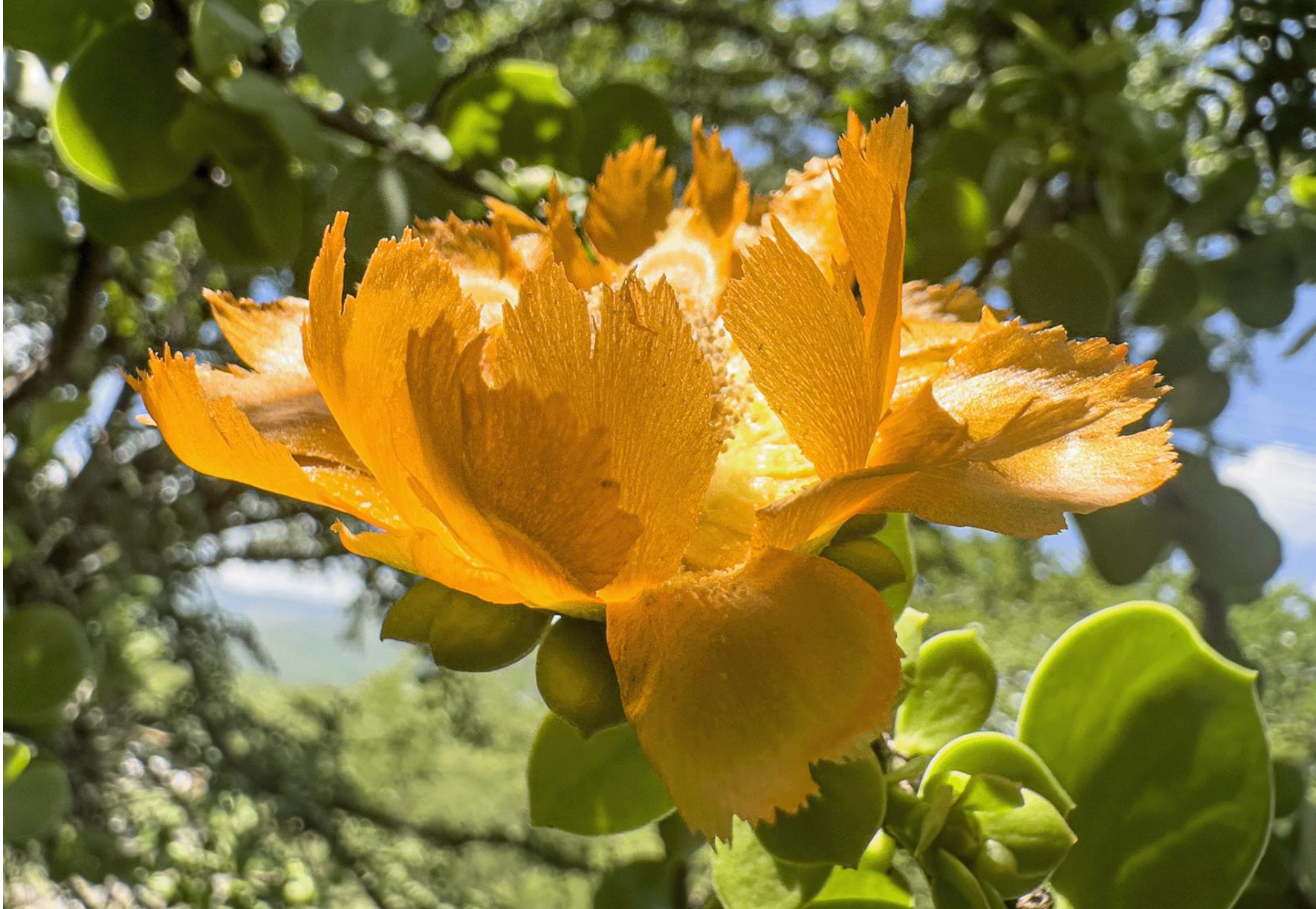


Fig. 2.

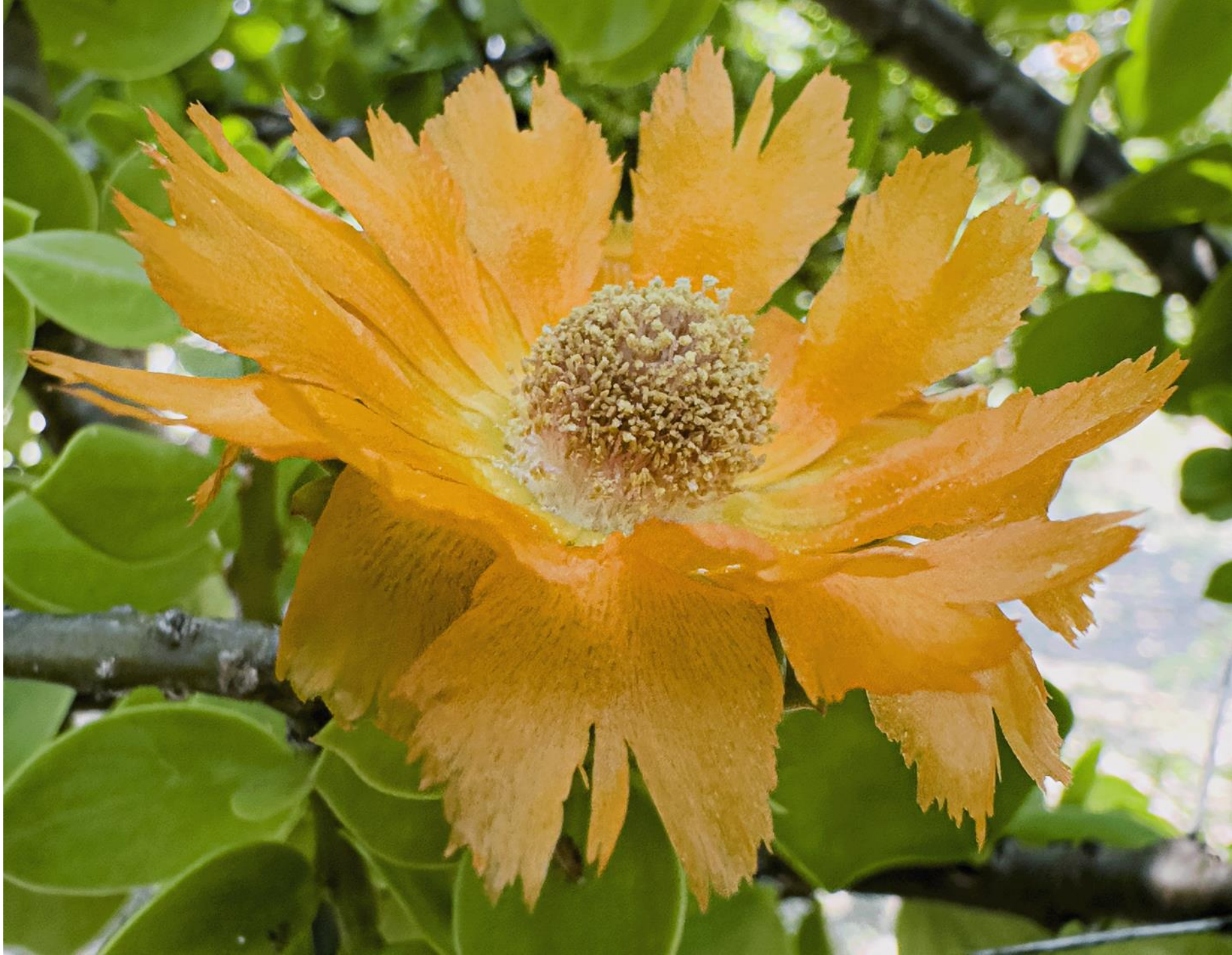
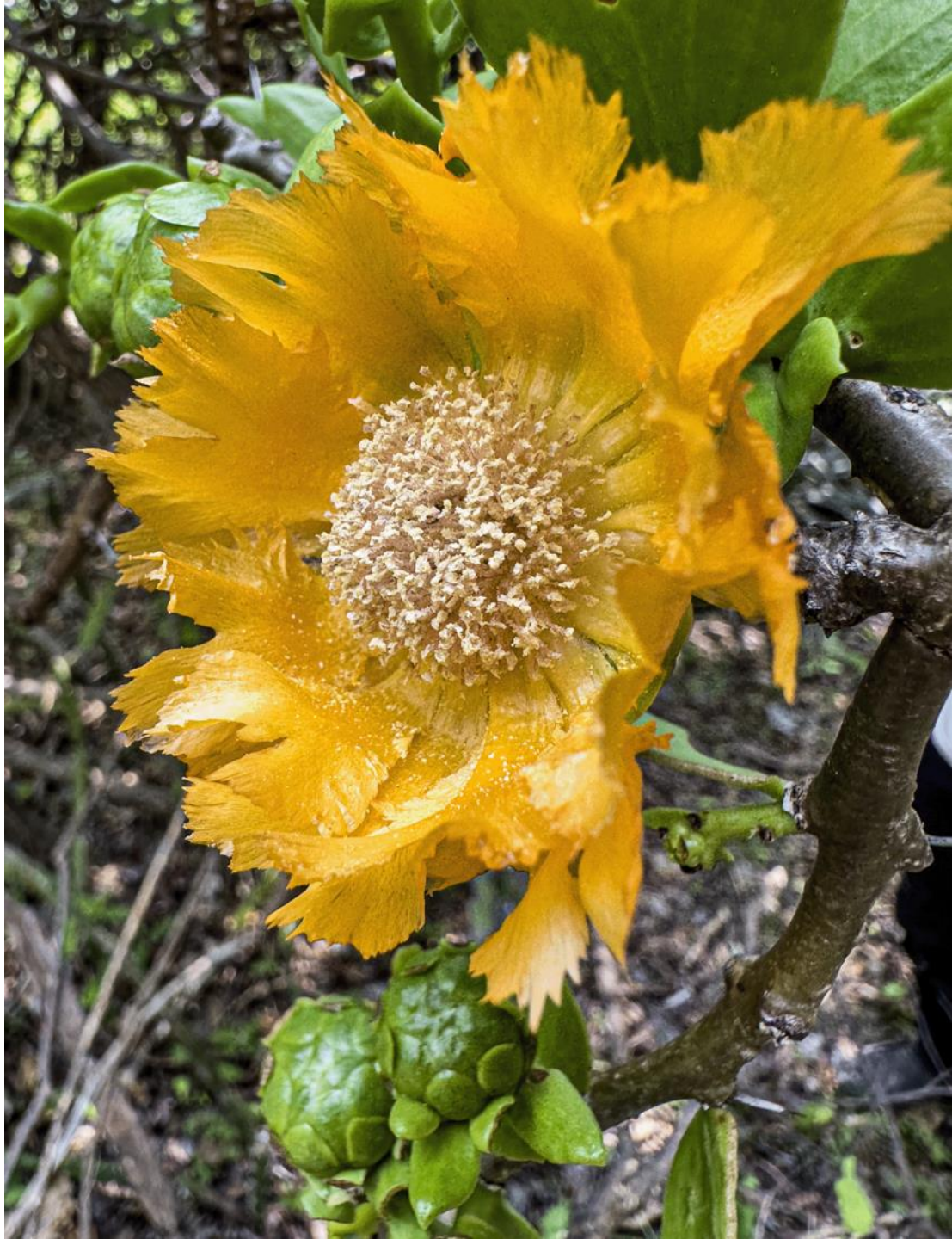


Fig. 3,
a and b.



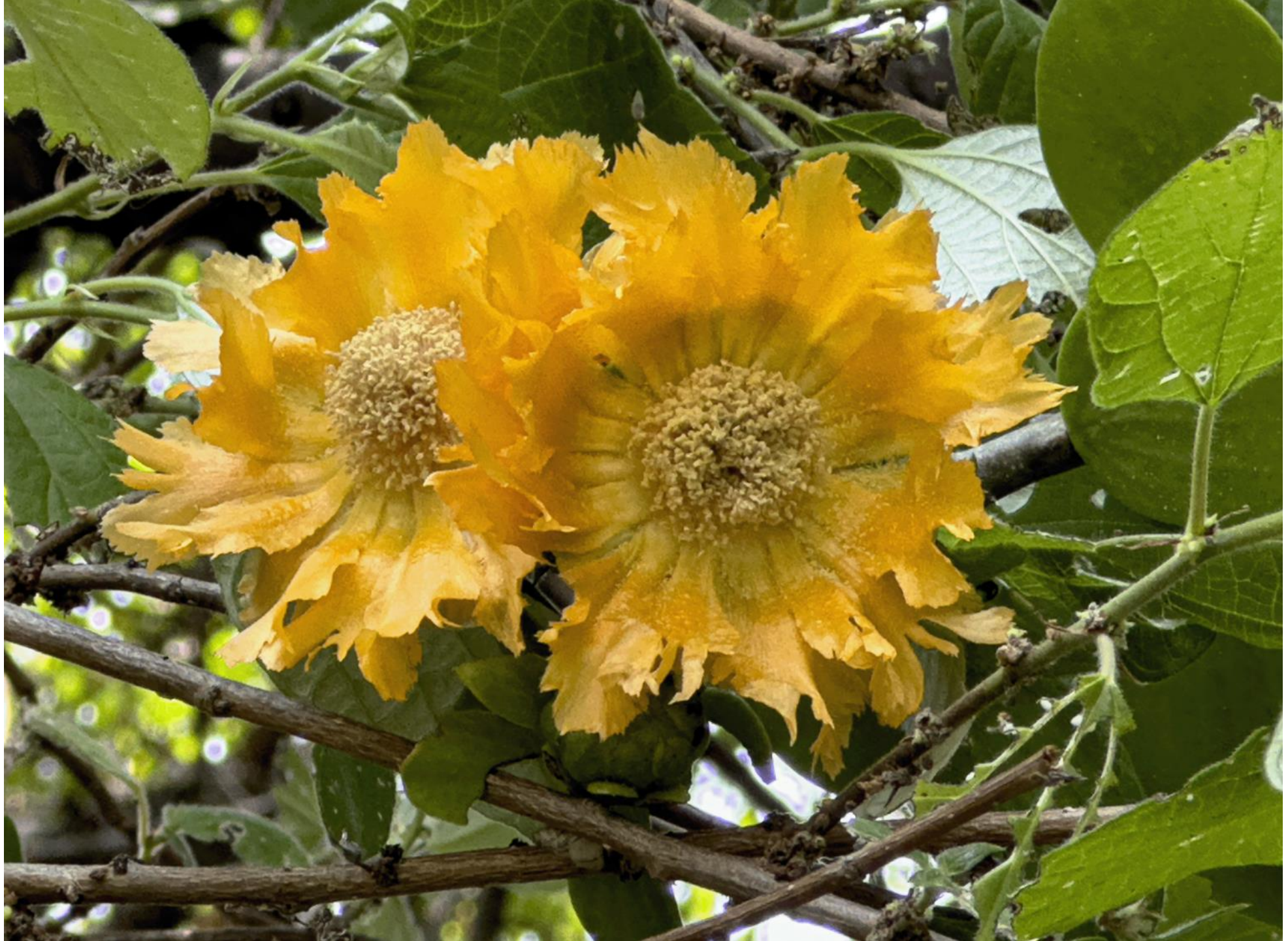


Fig. 4.

Fig. 5.

Bunkenburg and Haurie documented that each tree is either male or female. Both of the white variant trees are male. Most of the orange flowers are also male but obviously there are female trees as well. The best way to see how many are female is to drive to this area when the manzanote cactus trees have lost a lot of their leaves and have lots of fruits. The male trees will have no fruits, so you can very clearly see what percent are female and what larger percent are male.

BUNKENBURG, Alexander and Laia HAURIE
2025 The discovery of dioecious *Leuenbergeria lychnidiflora* (DC.) Lodé (Cactaceae) in Guatemala. Bradleya 43/2025, pages 54-60.

Very important botanical report. Sadly, not yet available as a free and easy download.

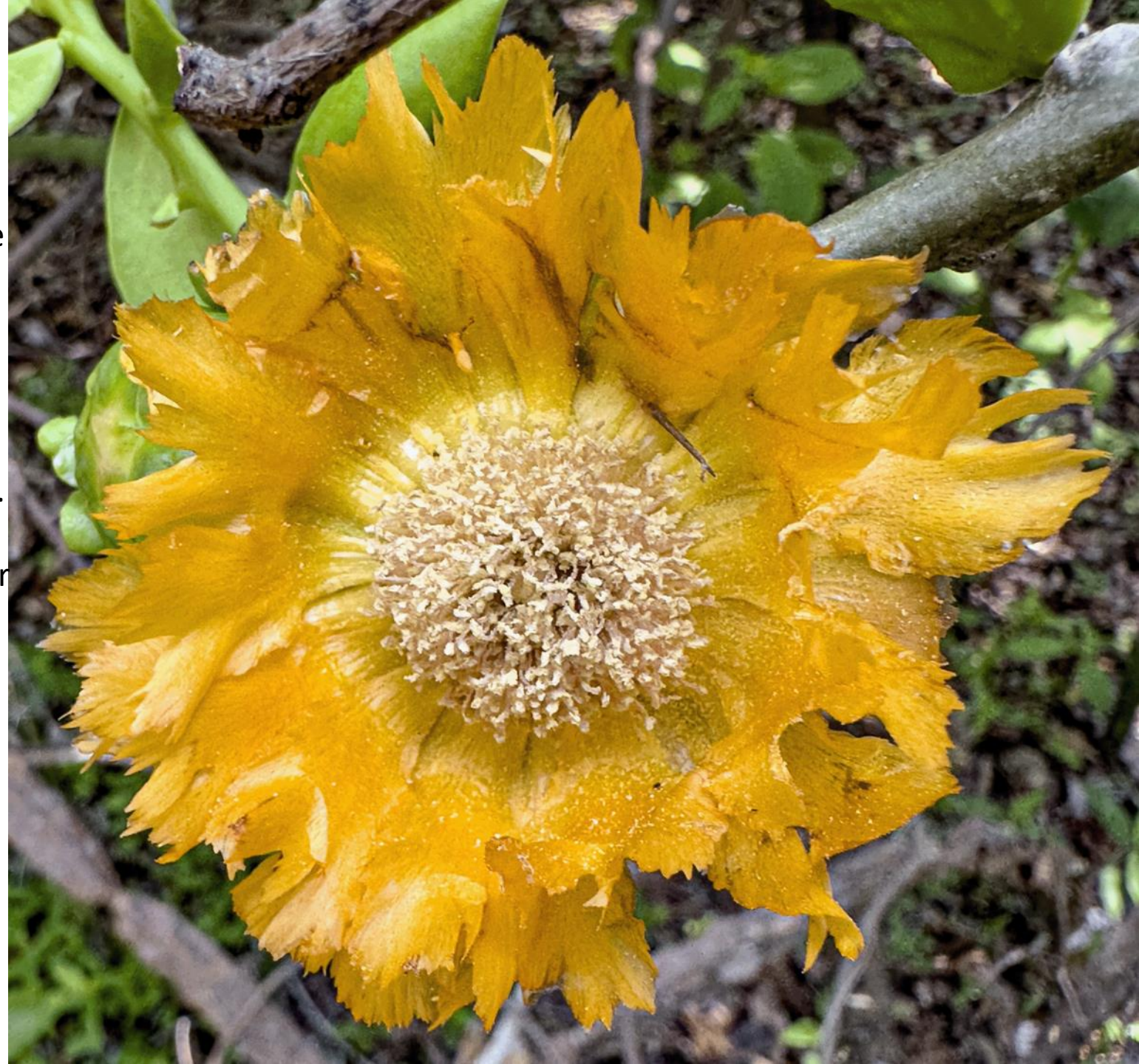


Fig. 6.

Lots more flowers will bloom in June and into July.

Fig. 7, a and b.

At the left that looks like lots of pollen has fallen down onto the petals.

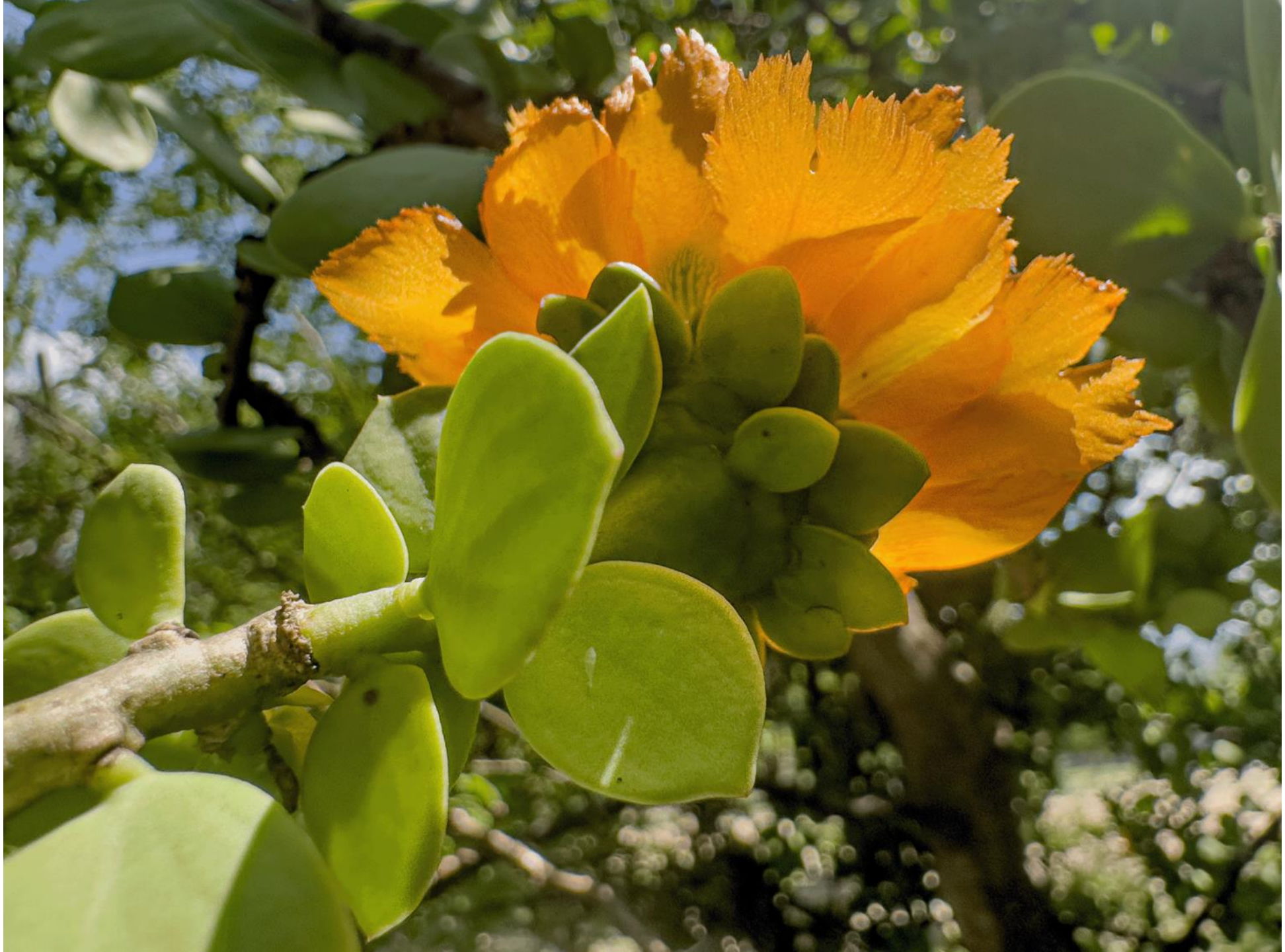


Fig. 8.

Fig. 9. The bosque seco of Guatemala is literally a dry FOREST—so not an open desert area with only cacti sticking up. You see open areas with cacti in cattle fields—when the rest of the surrounding forest has been chopped down to make a cattle field.

So in this area the manzanote trees are growing with lots of other trees around them. Lots of wild native Plumeria trees are in these same areas.

That said, in May 2025 we found an area of almost solid manzanote trees that ran for several kilometers. Obviously there were other trees present as well, but what we saw was a true area of many hundreds of manzanote trees. So whereas manzanote trees may be isolated in other areas, they are en-masse in one place that we saw—so clearly also en-masse elsewhere.

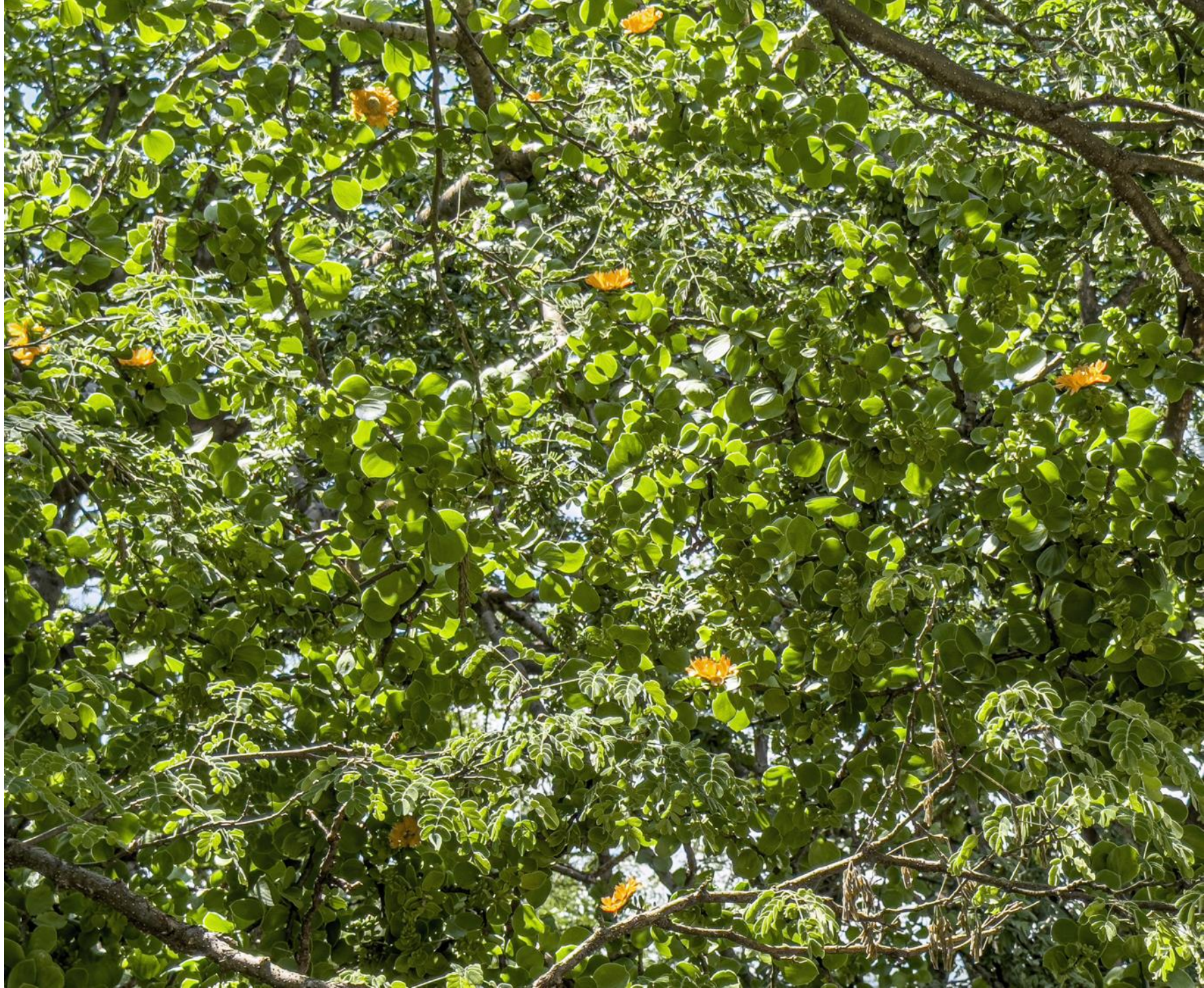


Fig. 10.

Manzanote trees are shrub-sized when young but then they grow to tall tree-sized height.

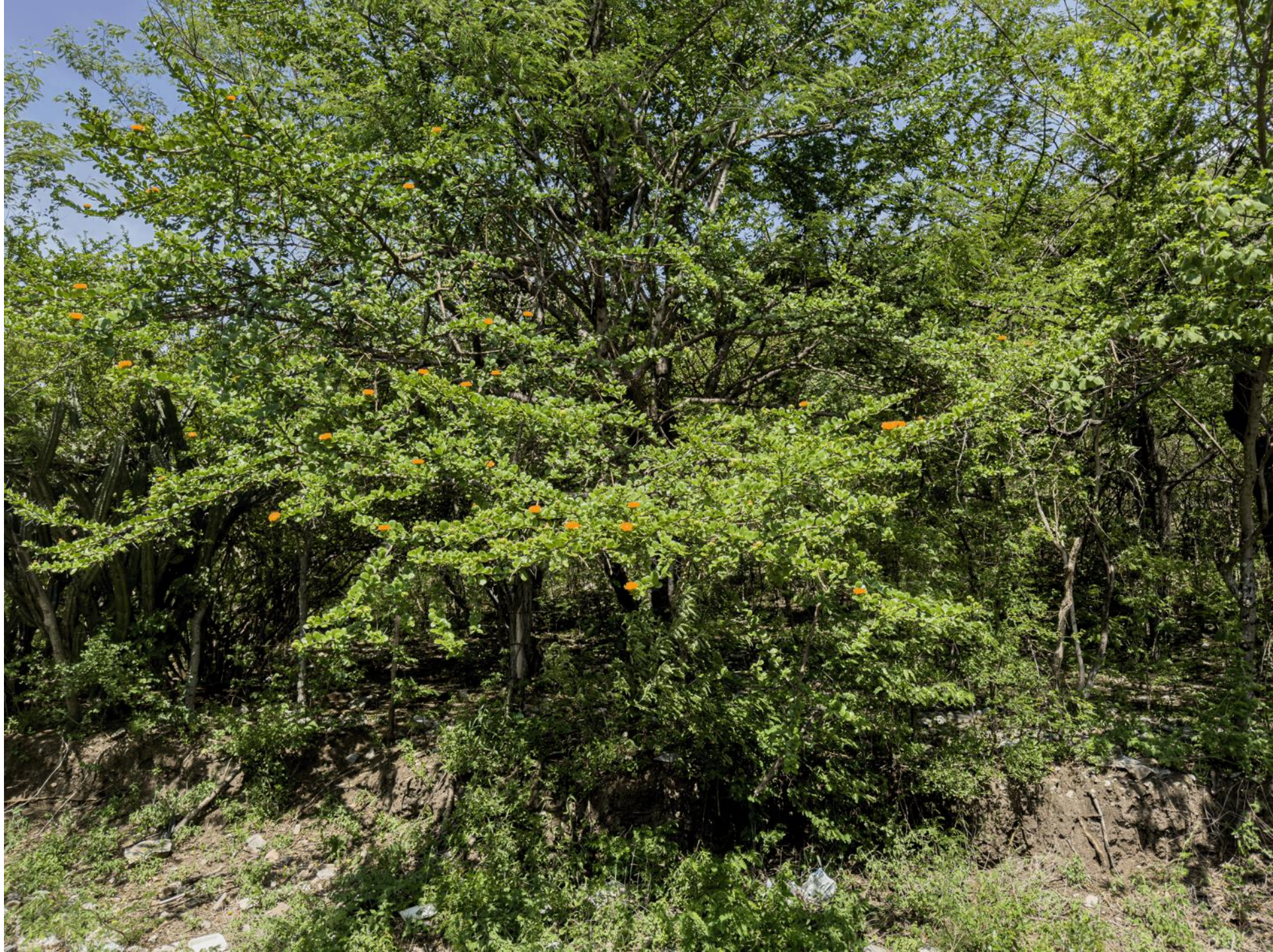


Fig. 11.

Manzanote flowers bloom starting in May and then the trees fill with flowers during June and July. Then fewer flowers into August.

These flowers look more typically orange (rather than yellow).

Fig. 12, a. This is the more common color for a manzanote flower.

Fig. 12,b. This is the yellow-toned orange variety.