



Tallest Wasp Nest ever documented so far for Peten, Guatemala

Posada Ecologica Caribe,
Arroyo Petexbatun, Municipio de Sayaxche, Peten

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

June 2025

The research teams of FLAAR (USA) and FLAAR Mesoamerica (Guatemala) have been finding and photographing wasp nests for over 10 years, including in our 1-year project with PNYNN, 18-month project with Municipio de Livingston (Caribbean area of Izabal) and currently the 5-year project of coordination and cooperation with CONAP for the Reserva de la Biosfera Maya (RBM), Peten.

A few years ago we learned that there are wasps in Guatemala that make honey and during 2025 we have initiated two field trips to Senahu area, one field trip to Huehuetenango area, and a May 2025 field trip to the bosque seco area of Zacapa—LOTS of wasps that make edible honey.

We are preparing FLAAR Reports on all these wasps but also wanted to make available to entomologists and students our photos of wasp nests during the recent ten years. Today we show what I estimate may be the tallest wasp nest ever documented for Guatemala. Obviously I did not want to put my hand up to measure the actual nest but I would estimate that it may be a meter tall.

As soon as a wasp entomologist can provide an identification for genus and species we will update this report, but first we wanted to make it available.

We will also be publishing separate FLAAR Reports on columnar (tubular) wasp nests of Guatemala.



Fig. 1.

Fig. 2. This nest reminds me of the tall wasp nests that are columnar in shape. But the present nest gets wider as it grows down, plus has a narrower top.

I would not be surprised if the upper 80% is “one nest” and the lower 20% is an add-on. Most wasp nests last only one single year. Reportedly the queen is the only one that does not die out at the end of the year. She flies away to start building another nest. In other words, this nest that we photographed in January 23, 2020 no longer exists.

All photos by Nicholas Hellmuth in the rain forest that surrounds the Posada ecological Caribe, facing the shore of the Arroyo Petexbatun. This is a tributary of Rio La Pasion, that flows by Sayaxche.



Fig. 3. I estimate these wasps are closing the bottom, so that this is the last layer of honeycombs of this nest.



Fig. 4, a and b. Here you can see the undulating upper part, as though it started out as a globular nest and then turned into a more columnar shape.

Later in June 2025 we will have additional separate FLAAR Reports on the columnar (tubular shaped) wasp nests—these are not meandering and have almost same diameter their entire height.

So far I have not yet found a series of drawings that show ALL sizes and shapes of wasp nests of Guatemala with the Genus and species names for each panal.

That would be a helpful MA thesis or PhD dissertation.





Fig. 5.

Much more field work is needed and "Wasp Nests of Guatemala" would be a great MA thesis or PhD dissertation.