

Yellow Flower Paradise, Yellow Flowers Covering the Tree Canopy Nakum, East of Savanna Bajo, PNYNN



Volume 10 for Series:
Flowers worth experiencing at Parque Nacional Yaxha, Nakum and Naranjo, PNYNN
Reserva de la Biosfera Maya, RBM, Peten, Guatemala

Nicholas Hellmuth, FLAAR Reports, FLAAR (USA) and FLAAR Mesoamerica (Guatemala), October 2025

Introduction to Masses of Yellow Flowers of *Tabebuia donnell-smithii*

Local name in Guatemala is Palo Blanco, due to the color of its trunk. I would prefer to rename it “Yellow Flower Paradise” or “Yellow Flower Sky” or “Yellow Flower Umbrella” or “Yellow Trumpet Flower.” That’s because I am not interested in commercial lumber (for which the tree is important). I prefer to study ethnobotany, botany and ecology—what each area of Guatemala looks like, especially when lots of local native plants are in full bloom and in full color.

Genus *Tabebuia* is in plant family BIGNONIACEAE. Bignonia Family. Standley, Williams and Gibson (1974: 218-220) show *Tabebuia donnell-smithii* as a synonym of *Roseodendron donnell-smithii* and do not list either for Peten or anywhere nearby. But for Peten they list *Tabebuia rosea* (ibid.: 225-226). But *Tabebuia rosea* has millions of rose-red colored flowers, so definitely not the yellow-flowered tree we found in PNYNN.

So, does all this mean that the FLAAR and FLAAR Mesoamerica team has documented more *Tabebuia donnell-smithii* for Peten than any previous botanical project?



When you are hiking along trails in Parque Nacional Yaxha, Nakum and Naranjo, you see the blue sky covered with masses of yellow flowers.

Balick, Nee and Atha (2000) do not list either *Tabebuia donnell-smithii* or *Roseodendron donnell-smithii*. But they do list dozens of other plants with the species name *donnell-smithii*. But since we have found so many *Tabebuia donnell-smithii* in Peten, surely, they are present in adjacent Belize.

So far we have not yet found either plant name listed for Peten, but surely other botanists have noticed in in this large area. But in the meantime, the team of FLAAR (USA) and FLAAR Mesoamerica (Guatemala) has documented this tree during our 2018-2019 project with the IDAEH co-administrator of PNYNN and we hope to find more during our project in the same areas for CONAP.



But actually, when you are deep into the rain forest, you first notice the yellow trumpet-shaped flowers on the ground.

While hiking through the forests you need to keep your eyes focused on the ground so that you don't trip over stubs of plants that were cut with a machete to create the trail. If you hike through the forests looking UP at the treetops you will trip and fall, especially because lots of thin, narrow vines wander across the trails. The front of your shoe goes under the vine but your ankle catches on the vine and you fall flat-on-the-ground.







This is what you see while hiking along the trail—fallen yellow trumpet flowers, here fallen onto a palm frond.





Flowers
and
leaves
blown
down
during
storms.



But since our goal is to find flowering trees, we do look up, as you can see from this photo. The yellow flowers are so high up in the tree canopy that you can barely see them from the ground.



But with an extreme telephoto lens you can see the clumps of yellow flowers more easily.

All these photos are east of the savanna bajo in the Nakum sector of the PNYNN. But we estimate that there are lots of these *Tabebuia donnell-smithii* trees elsewhere in this park and other areas of the Reserva de la Biosfera Maya, RBM, Peten.







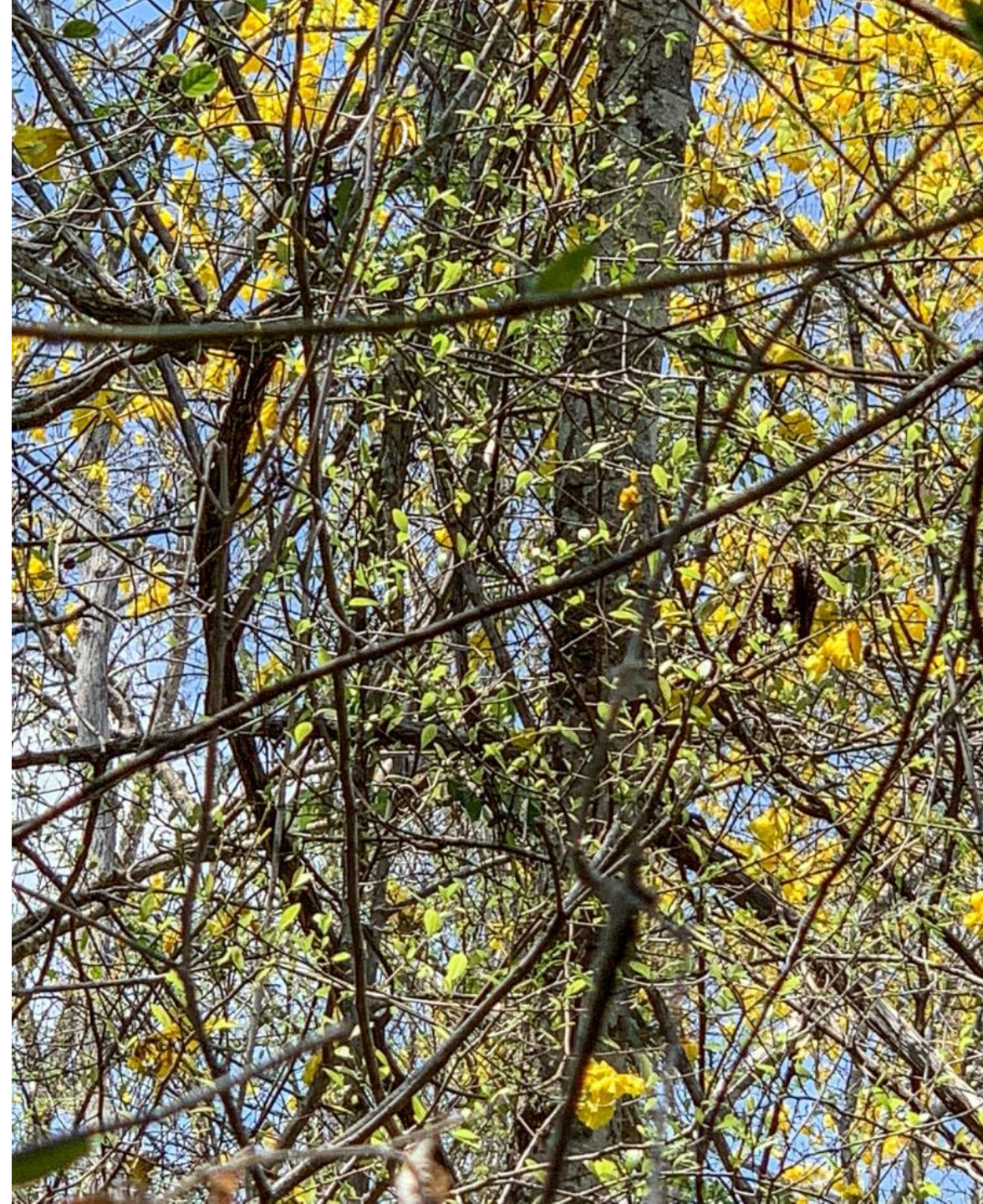
Trumpet-shaped when blooming, but then the flowers collapse when it's time for them to wilt.





If you are hiking for many kilometers, then you may also see these flowers at eye level. During our research field trips we hike all morning to see how far we can reach, then after lunch from our backpacks, we turn around and return to the base camp (if possible on a different trail than we used in the morning).

It is not recommended to hike by yourselves, unless you want to make the pumas and jaguars very happy. Be sure you have a local guide with you. Also helps to have a compass (no WiFi to use your phone).



So, if you are visiting PNYNN during early May, look for the yellow flowers on the ground, then look up into the tree tops to see where they have fallen from.



All the previous photos were from east of the Savanna East of Nakum. The photo on the present page, and following pages, are above the trails hiking from the Nakum base camp towards the savanna—but the hilltop trail. The route through the bajo has totally different vegetation but has no hills to hike up and down.

These photos are by Maria Alejandra Gutierrez with a Canon camera.









Nombre científico y notas taxonómicas *Tabebuia donnell-smithii* Rose

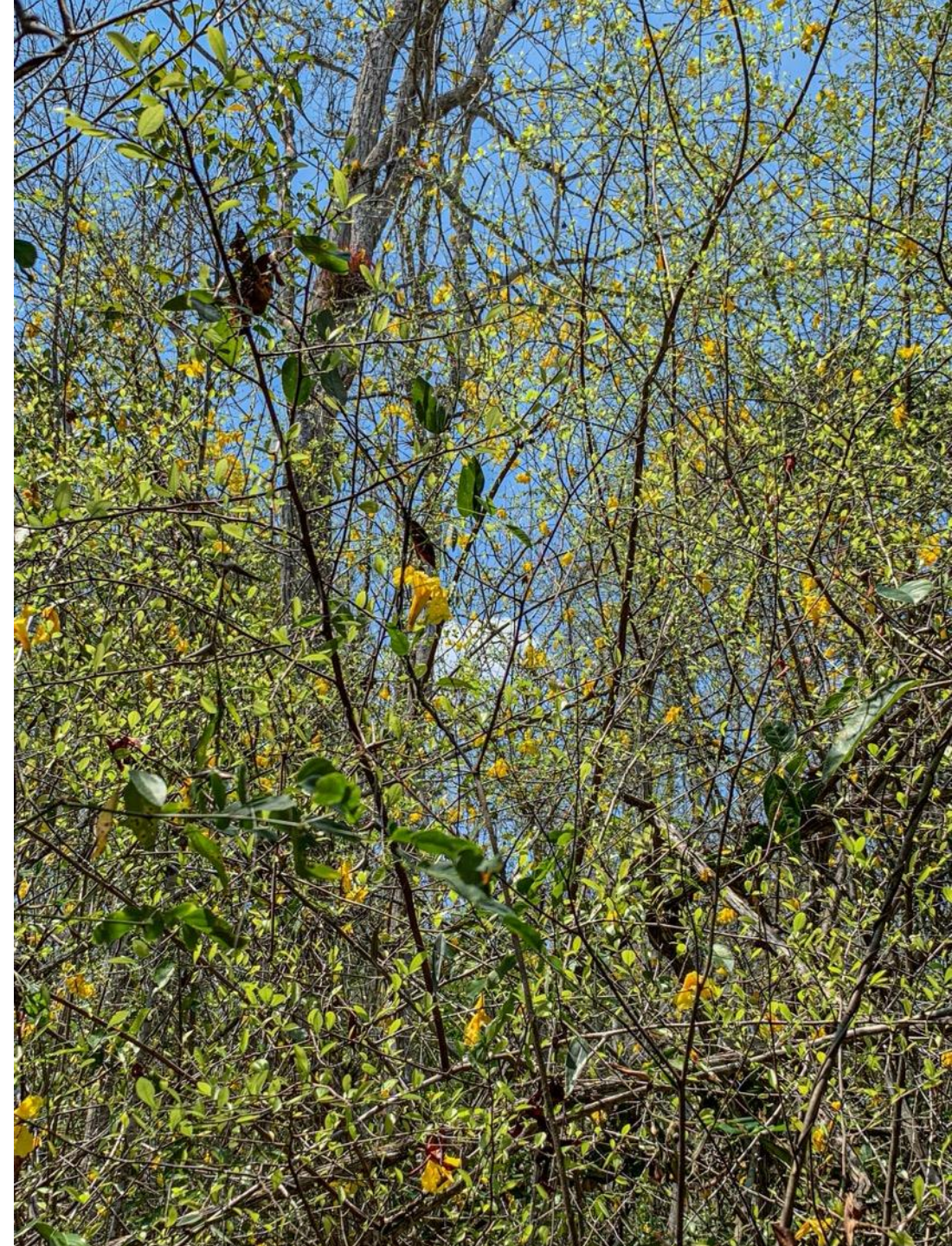
SINÓNIMOS: *Cybistax donnell-smithii* (Rose) Seibert, *Cybistax millsii* Miranda, *Roseodendron donnell-smithii* (Rose) Miranda, *Roseodendron millsii* (Miranda) Miranda, *Tabebuia millsii* (Miranda) A.H. Gentry.

NOTA. La jerarquía anterior se basa en Tropicos.org. Sin embargo, para ITIS-World Plants , el nombre actualmente válido es *Roseodendron donnell-smithii* (Rose) Miranda, y *Tabebuia donnell-smithii* Rose un sinónimo. (INAB 2017: 1).

Curiously, there is not one Genus or name *Roseodendron* in *Checklist of the Vascular Plants of Belize*. Surely this tree grows wild in Belize, since we have found it across the border in Peten. Balick, Nee and Atha have three species of Genus *Tabebuia* for Belize but no *Tabebuia donnell-smithii*.

Portal de Biodiversidad de Guatemala lists *Tabebuia rosea* for: Alta Verapaz, Baja Verapaz, Chimultenango, Chiquimula, El Quiche, Escuintla, Guatemala, Huehuetenango, Izabal, Jutiapa, Peten, San Marcos, Santa Rosa, Solola, Suchitepéquez, Zacapa.

For Reserva de la Biosfera Maya, RBM, *Tabebuia rosea* is listed for PNLT, Uaxactun, and frequently for other areas of Peten. Curiously NO other species of genus *Tabebuia* is shown on that database. Yet *Tabebuia chrysantha* and *Tabebuia guayacan* are listed for Belize.



References Cited and Additional Suggested Reading on genus *Tabebuia*

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INITIATION AND COORDINATION OF THE PROJECT OF COOPERATION FOR 2021-2026

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all the helpful and knowledgeable guides of IDAEH CONAP at PNYNN who accompanied us each day. It is essential to have either an IDAEH and/or CONAP guardabosque or comparable when doing flora and fauna research in a national park. Plus we appreciate the assistance of the military at the Yaxha park entrance to help us on field trips to find and document the far-away Savanna of 3 Fern Species at the west end of PNYNN.

ASSISTANCE FOR KNOWLEDGE OF PLANTS AND ANIMALS OF PNYNN

Teco, Moises Daniel Perez Diaz, park ranger, PNYNN

We sincerely thank Juan Manuel Segovia of Lonas Segovia for donating several giant tarps that are essential for our field trips to remote areas.

TENTS AND COOKING EQUIPMENT AT NAKUM CAMP, PNYNN

Manola Margot Lima Diaz owner of Restaurante El Portal de Yaxha, La Maquina

FLAAR was formed in 1969 to map Yaxha (and nearby Topoxte Island and Nakum) and we worked with the then president of Guatemala and the head of FYDEP to initiate protection of this area as a national park. Other conservationists added the Naranjo segment. Recently we were asked to return for flora, fauna, and biosphere field work from August 2018 to July 2019. This project was successful and as a result we were asked by CONAP to return for five more years, 2021-2026, of coordination and cooperation with them, both in the Yaxha, Nakum and Naranjo national park plus all the rest of the Reserva de la Biosfera Maya (RBM), Peten, Guatemala.

Base Camp Assistance at Naranjo-Sa'al

We thank Arqueologa Vilma Fialko and Arquitecto. Raul Noriega for hospitality and place to stay and kitchen while doing field work in flora, fauna and wetlands ecosystems in the Naranjo-Sa'al area of PNYNN. We thank Horacio Palacios who assisted as a guide for how to reach the amazing Savanna West of Naranjo-Sa'al.

Base Camp Assistance at Yaxha

We thank Biologist Lorena Lobos and both co-administrators of PNYNN (Arq. Jose Leonel Ziesse (IDAEH) and Lic. Jorge Mario Vazquez (CONAP) for providing a place to stay for the photographers, biologists, and assistants of the FLAAR Mesoamerica team of flora and fauna during the 1-week-a-month field trips August 2018 through July 2019.

In turn FLAAR purchased and donated a cooking stove when the original one no longer functioned, plus we have photographed and documented many tree and insect species that we found around this camp.

Ecolodge El Sombrero

I thank Gabriella Moretti, owner of Ecolodge El Sombrero, for providing hotel room and meals while we have been doing field work at Parque Nacional Yaxha Nakum Naranjo. We also appreciate the hospitality of her sons Sebastian de la Hoz and Juan Carlo de la Hoz. Every workday is exhausting because we are carrying and then using very heavy cameras, super-telephoto lenses, sturdy tripods, large gimbals or ball tripod heads. Thus it is crucial for my health to be able to rest and totally recuperate every night in order to be ready for the following day of botanical and zoological adventures in Parque Nacional Yaxha, Nakum and Naranjo.

Equally crucial is having a place to charge the batteries of the computers, or all the cameras, and of the cell phones. Solar power is great, but it lasts only an hour, or less, if you plug in multiple computers and cameras and flash batteries to charge. So a place with enough electricity to charge the entire mass of essential field work equipment is essential and thus very much appreciated.

In order to post photographs on botanical and zoological websites, you can't do this if there is either no Internet or weak Internet. Thus it is very helpful that when we are provided rooms and meals, that Internet is also provided by the Ecolodge El Sombrero.

Contact Info: +502 5460 2934, VentasElSombrero@gmail.com or WhatsApp.

Donations make our Field Trips and Research and Publications Possible

We appreciate a donation during November 2021 to help cover the costs of FLAAR research projects specifically to assist and support the current FLAAR project of flora and fauna in the Reserva de la Biosfera Maya (RBM). This donation also assisted the FLAAR (USA) and FLAAR Mesoamerica (Guatemala) research project in the Municipio de Livingston area of the departamento of Izabal, Guatemala.

In a subsequent year we received an additional helpful donation from this family to help fund the field work and research and publications on flora, fauna and biodiverse ecosystems of PNYNN and surrounding RBM of Peten, Guatemala.

These donations are from a family in Chicago in honor and memory of botanist Dr John D. Dwyer, who worked in many areas of Mesoamerica, including in the Yaxha area in the 1970's while the site was being mapped by FLAAR.

These donations are also in recognition of the urgency and need for conservation of both wildlife and rare plants in the bio-diverse ecosystems of the Reserva de la Biosfera Maya (RBM) of Guatemala. Parque Nacional Yaxha, Nakum and Naranjo (PNYNN) is one part of the over 5 million acres of the RBM.

FLAAR is a non-profit research institute, tax exempt in USA.



HOW TO GET TO YAXHA?

MAP SYMBOLS



Archaeological sites



Airports



Dirt or gravel road



Road with deep ruts & mud



Highway





Go to the Mundo Maya airport in Santa Elena and then you will find a services of tourist vehicles to go to the archaeological site. If you want to go by car from Guatemala City, take the following route: Río Dulce - Poptún-Flores. At the junction further on you will find on the left the route to Tikal. Go straight on to the right towards Yaxha (towards Melchor de Mencos). In km. 521 at the village La Maquina, turn left to the site. Ecolodge El Sombrero is 50 meters before the entrance to National Park Yaxha - Nakum - Naranjo.

The following four pages Show the Front Covers of the first fifteen FLAAR Reports on Flowers of PNYNN worth Seeing and Learning About

The front covers are not yet hot links because we are still finishing these reports. But by end of October 2025, all fifteen will be on-line on www.Maya-ethnobotany.org and on other of our web sites.

We are also preparing FLAAR Reports on orchids and bromeliads of PNYNN.

FLAAR Reports on "How to Recognize which Tree Genus and Species by the Pattern, Color, or other Features of the Bark on their Trunk"

FLAAR Reports on edible insects of PNYNN. There are over 500 edible insects across Mexico, so we are looking for samples at PNYNN.

FLAAR Reports on waterbirds of PNYNN, published as part of a project of coordination and cooperation with FUNDAECO.

Bright Orange Flowers of *Cordia dodecandra*, Nakum Area of PNYNN, Peten, Guatemala



Volume 1 for Series:
Flowers worth experiencing at Parque Nacional Yaxha, Nakum and Naranjo, PNYNN
Reserva de la Biosfera Maya, RBM, Peten, Guatemala

Nicholas Hellmuth, FLAAR Reports, FLAAR (USA) and FLAAR Mesoamerica (Guatemala)
October 2025

4-Petalled Flowers of River Banks, Lake Shores, and Seasonally inundated Savannas

Ludwigia octovalvis



Volume 2 for Series:
Flowers worth experiencing at Parque Nacional Yaxha, Nakum and Naranjo, PNYNN
Reserva de la Biosfera Maya, RBM, Peten, Guatemala

Masses of Yellow Flowers, Genus *Combretum*, along road between Yaxha and Nakum, PNYNN



Volume 3 for Series:
Flowers worth experiencing at Parque Nacional Yaxha, Nakum and Naranjo, PNYNN
Reserva de la Biosfera Maya, RBM, Peten, Guatemala

Text and Photographs: Nicholas Hellmuth, FLAAR Reports, FLAAR (USA) and FLAAR Mesoamerica (Guatemala)
October 2025

Flowers and bizarre Bracts of *Calathea lutea*,
relative of *Heliconia* and of Banana
Naranjo-Sa'al and Savanna of 3 Fern Species
areas of Parque Nacional Yaxha, Nakum and
Naranjo (PNYNN)

Fresh Green Leaves of *Calathea lutea*
are a great Alternative to Plastic

Volume 4 for Series:
Flowers worth experiencing at Parque
Nacional Yaxha, Nakum and Naranjo,
PNYNN
Reserva de la Biosfera Maya, RBM, Peten,
Guatemala

Nicholas Hellmuth, FLAAR Reports, FLAAR (USA)
and FLAAR Mesoamerica (Guatemala),
October 2025



Costus pictus, Medicinal Flowers,
Yaxha and Naranjo-Sa'al Areas of PNYNN



Volume 5 for Series:
Flowers worth experiencing at Parque
Nacional Yaxha, Nakum and Naranjo,
PNYNN
Reserva de la Biosfera Maya, RBM,
Peten, Guatemala

Nicholas Hellmuth, FLAAR Reports,
FLAAR (USA) and FLAAR Mesoamerica
(Guatemala), October 2025

Piscidia piscipula, Jabin, Dogwood, with Hummingbird Pollinator
Yaxha and Nakum areas of Parque Nacional Yaxha, Nakum and Naranjo



Volume 6 for Series:
Flowers worth experiencing at Parque Nacional Yaxha, Nakum and Naranjo, PNYNN
Reserva de la Biosfera Maya, RBM, Peten, Guatemala

Nicholas Hellmuth, FLAAR Reports, FLAAR (USA) and FLAAR Mesoamerica (Guatemala), October 2025

A beautiful Red Flower, a Hibiscus Relative, but the Petals and Sepals never open
Malvaviscus arboreus, Sleeping Hibiscus



Volume 7 for Series:
Flowers worth experiencing at Parque Nacional Yaxha, Nakum and Naranjo, PNYNN
Reserva de la Biosfera Maya, RBM, Peten, Guatemala

Nicholas Hellmuth, FLAAR Reports, FLAAR (USA) and FLAAR Mesoamerica (Guatemala), October 2025

Photogenic wild Morning Glory Flowers of Nakum and Yaxha areas of PNYNN



Volume 8 for Series:
Flowers worth experiencing at Parque Nacional Yaxha, Nakum and Naranjo, PNYNN
Reserva de la Biosfera Maya, RBM, Peten, Guatemala

Nicholas Hellmuth, FLAAR Reports, FLAAR (USA) and FLAAR Mesoamerica (Guatemala), October 2025

Photogenic Bright Yellow Morning Glory Flowers of Genus *Merremia*

Nakum and Yaxha areas of PNYNN



Volume 9 for Series:

Flowers worth experiencing at Parque Nacional Yaxha, Nakum and Naranjo, PNYNN
Reserva de la Biosfera Maya, RBM, Peten, Guatemala

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Yellow Flower Paradise, Yellow Flowers Covering the Tree Canopy

Nakum, East of Savanna Bajo, PNYNN



Volume 10 for Series:

Flowers worth experiencing at Parque Nacional Yaxha, Nakum and Naranjo, PNYNN
Reserva de la Biosfera Maya, RBM, Peten, Guatemala

Nicholas Hellmuth, FLAAR Reports, FLAAR (USA) and FLAAR Mesoamerica (Guatemala), October 2025

Yellow Flowers & Fruits of Wild Undomesticated Squash Vines,

Cucurbita lundelliana

Along the Shores of Lakes and Rivers in Parque Nacional Yaxha, Nakum and Naranjo



Volume 11 for Series:

Flowers worth experiencing at
Parque Nacional Yaxha,
Nakum and Naranjo, PNYNN
Reserva de la Biosfera Maya,
RBM, Peten, Guatemala



Nicholas Hellmuth, FLAAR Reports, FLAAR (USA) and FLAAR Mesoamerica (Guatemala)
October 2025

Orange Masses of Flowers of Parasitic Vine (but does not kill the host)
Genus *Psittacanthus*, Yaxha, Blom Sacbe and adjacent Grupo Maler



Volume 12 for Series:

Flowers worth experiencing at Parque Nacional Yaxha, Nakum and Naranjo, PNYNN
Reserva de la Biosfera Maya, RBM, Peten, Guatemala

Text and Photographs: Nicholas Hellmuth
FLAAR Reports, FLAAR (USA) and FLAAR Mesoamerica (Guatemala)
October 2025

**Yellow-Orange Flowers of Trees of the *Caesalpinia* species,
Fabaceae family**

Bajo La Justa, between Yaxha and Nakum, PNYNN



Volume 13 for Series:

Flowers worth experiencing at Parque Nacional Yaxha, Nakum and Naranjo, PNYNN
Reserva de la Biosfera Maya, RBM, Peten, Guatemala

Nicholas Hellmuth, FLAAR Reports, FLAAR (USA) and FLAAR Mesoamerica (Guatemala), October 2025

**Gorgeous Yellow Masses of Flowers of
Haematoxylum campechianum
at Parque Nacional Yaxha, Nakum and Naranjo**

Volume 14 for Series:

**Flowers worth experiencing at Parque Nacional Yaxha,
Nakum and Naranjo, PNYNN**
Reserva de la Biosfera Maya, RBM, Peten, Guatemala

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FLAAR Reports,
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October 2025



**Flowers of
Orchids on Trees**
surrounding the Maya Ruins
of Yaxha, PNYNN

Vol 15 for Series:

**Flowers worth experiencing
at Parque Nacional
Yaxha, Nakum and Naranjo
(PNYNN)**

Reserva de la Biosfera Maya
RBM
Peten, Guatemala

Nicholas Hellmuth

October 2025



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