Maya Ethnobotany
Complete Inventory

Fruits, nuts, root crops, grains, construction materials, utilitarian uses, sacred plants, sacred flowers

Guatemala, Mexico, Belize, Honduras

Thirteenth edition, May 2014
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Introduction

This is a progress report on over thirty years of studying plants and agriculture of the present-day Maya with the goal of understanding plant usage by the Classic Maya. As a progress report it still has a long way to go before being finished. But even in its unfinished state, this report provides abundant listings of plants in a useful thematic arrangement. The only other publication that I am familiar with which lists even close to most of the plants utilized by the Maya is in an article by Cyrus Lundell (1938).

- Obviously books on Mayan agriculture should have informative lists of all Maya agricultural crops, but these do not tend to include plants used for house construction.
- There are monumental monographs, such as all the trees of Guatemala (Parker 2008) but they are botanical works, not ethnobotanical, and there is no cross-reference by kind of use. You have to go through one thousand pages and several thousand tree species to find what you are looking for.
- There are even important monographs on Maya ethnobotany, but they are usually limited to one country, or one theme, often medicinal plants.
- There are even nice monographs on edible plants of Central America (Chizmar 2009), but these do not include every local edible plant, and their focus is not utilitarian plants at all, nor sacred plants. La flora selváste de Guatemala, by Luis Villar Anleu (2008), is another helpful publication, but our goal was to list every category: wild and domesticated, edible and utilitarian, and sacred (even if not eaten or used for construction).

There are plenty of other lists of all Maya whatever else, but for one single resource, which lists all plants: food, construction, sacred flowers, etc; such a list is not widely available (or if available is kept well hidden). The most inspirational list I have found is over seventy years ago, namely that already of Cyrus Lundell. It has at most several hundred plants; I have not counted all the plants I have found, but I estimate the quantity in this report by FLAAR is over 400 plants.

I wrote this entire opus without access to Brücher’s 1989. Useful Plants of Neotropical Origin and Their Wild Relatives. I found another list after I had finished my work; that of Legner, “American Plants of Economic Importance” where he cites Brücher and others. Another list that I found after I finished mine was a “Crop List of Latin America.” I did not cross-check my list with that of Plantas Comestibles CentroAmerica (Chizmar 2009) until I had finished my first and second editions. I found the list of the Maya Mountain Research Farm only after I had finished the present second edition. FLAAR is open to cooperation with these other entities and their lists. Just as we credit their work, we appreciate the help of the more experienced Guatemalan biologists who have worked for FLAAR: Eduardo Sacayon for many years; Mirtha Cano for about two years; then Daniela da’Costa (Universidad del Valle) and presently Ilena Garcia. It is also helpful to have the publications of Ana Lucrecia MacVean, Elfriede Pöll, and Armando Caceres are good examples.

But as a work-in-progress I am constantly adding obscure edible or utilitarian plants to my list. But to keep the list within reason, I focus exclusively on the plants related to Maya culture: southern Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, and portions of Honduras and El Salvador.

This present version by FLAAR Reports has only a few illustrations ironically in part because the FLAAR Photo Archive has so many thousands of photos of ethnobotany and ethnozoology that it is time-consuming and expensive for a small research institute to go into this large an archive and pull out photos of each species. In a single 5-day period in early June 2011 we took over 42 GB of photographs (and these are compressed files; the actual total once in TIF format would be more than 80 GB). During November and December 2012 we took probably 23 Gigabytes of additional photographs. Presently (in early 2014) we have about 78,000 high-resolution photographs. We hope to find a university or botanical garden which would like to acquire this unequalled research so that there is funding to finish finding and photographing the plants which are still missing.

Yes, obviously of course the archive should be coded and cataloged: but it has cost thousands of dollars to do the field work to bring in the photographs. It would cost even more to catalog them.

So we have a simple decision: spend money on field work: resulting in a larger and more informative archive; or spend money on cataloging what we have photographed in past years (result is no money for any more field work). Sorry, but I prefer field work, since a capable student or scholar can catalog the archive in the future. But travel in Latin America gets progressively more dangerous. In other words, in the next decade not many people will wish to venture into rural areas to do the needed photography. Plus many of the species will have been bulldozed by commercial companies or burnt by milpa agriculture or for cattle pastures. So the time to do photography of plants out in the field is now, not later.

The list you see below is the work of many years, including my research in the Archivo General de Indias (Sevilla) in 1971, and my ethnohistory work in the Archivo General de Centroamerica (Guatemala City) before then (Hellmuth 1971; 1977). In other words my current publications on Maya ethnobotany are based on research initiated 40 years ago.

The thematic categories that I have selected are based on common sense and are categories that I have found easy to understand as a general practitioner (I rather obviously do not have a university background in biology or botany). My interest in botany comes from living 12 months in Tikal at age 19 (1965); and five seasons at Yaxha, Peten at age 35+ (1970-1975), plus twenty years of field trips through Campeche, Chiapas, Yucatan, Quintana Roo, Tabasco, Belize, and Honduras (1970’s-1990’s).

I am entirely self-taught in botany, and I appreciate the help of the more experienced Guatemalan biologists who have worked for FLAAR: Eduardo Sacayon for many years; Mirthe Cano for about two years; then Daniela da’Costa (Universidad del Valle) and presently Liena Garcia. It is also helpful to have the publications of the many capable Guatemalan botanists at the universities and government institutes. The publications of Ana Lucrecia MacVean, Elfriede Pöll, and Armando Caceres are good examples.

It would be helpful to compare my themes with how the Maya themselves organize their plant world. This is a job of a linguist and ethnographer. I would expect the Maya to organize things very differently. But in order to do all my research, and to present the findings to an audience worldwide in a manner we can understand, it is more effective to keep the present listings in basic thematic groups. A linguist can in the future do a thesis on how a Mayan language group would classify their plant universe.
One of many reasons I work on these Maya ethnobotanical listings is to assist and encourage students to do thesis and dissertation work on the plants of the Maya area (before these plants are burned out or bulldozed to extinction). But if you do intend to do a thesis, consider limiting yourself to one topic: fruits and nuts, or basketry, rope, and thread materials, or perhaps construction materials. Topics such as vegetables can fill an entire thesis. Sacred flowers would encompass botany, ethnobotany, and iconography, etc. My mania to list “everything” is a constant stumbling block to getting things finished.

There are thousands of plants and to cover even all the utilitarian plants in a single thesis is not realistic. I am crazy for even attempting to list them all. But again, the list that follows are only notes; a progress report. But even in rough form, even unfinished, this PDF represents endless hours at my desk, and months out in the Peten rain forests and savannas, as well as field trips throughout other areas of Guatemala, Belize, Mexico, and Honduras. I first came to Mexico when I was 16; and was first in Guatemala when I was 17 years old. I am now precisely half a century in Mesoamerica and still working with plants and animals. I intend to continue ethnobotanical research for several more decades!

I apologize in advance to botanists that I do not list all the botanist’s names at the end of a species name. I want to get this work finished in a realistic time framework, and whether I list Lundell or Linnaeus or Standley or Morelet will not make or break the benefit of my thematic concept of listing. Standley’s scholarly tradition of listing all antiquated botanical names is great, but that is not my goal. I seek to provide practical assistance to students, scholars, and interested lay people in today’s world of 2014. But I do follow botanical tradition in capitalization and italics. And I do my best to keep track of which books I have used or referenced by others in the bibliography.

If you know of a plant in any category which I should include, please let me know at ReaderService@FLAAR.org.
This report was an Annual Report for 2010-2011

and then for 2012

This report was originally a form of “Annual Report” for 2010. Actually you could consider it an annual report for the decade from 2000 through 2010. Normally we are so full-time occupied doing research that we don’t stop research to write lists of what we have done previously. We are eager to do more research rather than cogitate on what we already did. But every once in a while we do need to stop long enough to get out reports on what we have amassed so far.

Three years ago Mirtha Cano was working with FLAAR and she put together our initial lists in a nice tabulated layout. This was issued as a FLAAR Report with basic illustrations. Compared with our list today, and in thematic groupings, you can see how much labor and library time and hours (and weeks and months) on the Internet has been dedicated and invested in this long range project even since 2008. As a note, we still cooperated with Mirtha Cano though she now worked for the Parque Nacional Tikal, appropriately as a biologist, up through the end of 2013 and first month of 2014. At that point she moved to a new area of Guatemala.

I hope the thematic groupings can assist scholars who are interested in one specific theme.

This report can be considered a Chapter Outline for further research

Rather obviously our long-range goal is to have a “chapter” on each plant or flower. We already have “chapters” on some of the species, such as cacao, ceiba, etc. These are PDFs on our www.maya-archaeology.org web site. But the long range first step is to list all the plants.

Second step is to receive feedback from botanists, ethnographers, iconographers, epigraphers, and archaeologists on what species we should add (or comments from botanists on what species we should place in a different theme group).

Third step is to create a digital photographic reference archive of top quality photographs. We have been testing camera equipment the entire decade from 2000-2010 and recently in 2011 we received another $5000 in Canon camera equipment from a benefactor, Parrot Digigraphic (close-up lenses, close-up accessories, flash, and tilt-shift lens for wide-angle). Parrot Digigraphic earlier provided a complete Canon EOS-1Ds Mark III system to FLAAR. We thank Greg Lamb, Global Imaging, for providing the photos we will be providing are a significant asset to scholarly research. Plus the photographs in the FLAAR Photo Archive are often of higher resolution than available elsewhere. The Canon EOS-1Ds Mark III is 21 megapixels as is our Hasselblad with a Phase One P25+ digital back.

As soon as donations or funding allow it, we hope to improve our photographic equipment even more, up to 60 megapixels minimum. The 80 megapixel option is a price we can’t even dream of (unless a financial angel would assist). And yes, these cameras do exist: Phase One even invited me to the pre-launch of the 80 megapixel IQ180 model in Dubai earlier in 2011 (I was asked to be the head of the Dubai committee for printing and graphic design excellence so was flown to the United Arab Emirates by the committee). By coincidence the Phase One camera had its pre-launch event the same days in Dubai. However we do not have the $40K that this better camera would cost, so we continue to use the several-year-old P25+ It wore out by the end of 2012.

The urgent need for better photographs to aid scholarly research

There are several botanical photo archives with really nice photographs. The photographs in the Plant Guides of The Field Museum (Chicago) web site would be a good example. Photographs on the web sites of Jim Conrad are also of recommended quality. But too many photographs in older books are not professional quality or have other inadequacies:

- Over-exposed so the whites are burned out;
- darks too dark to see details;
- images out of focus;
- too much clutter distracting you from the flower or fruit.

And on the Internet today, and even in recent publications on plants, gardening, and botany, too many of the photographs are not of professional quality.

Ours are not always perfect, but we definitely get them better-than-average, and in many cases the photos we will be providing are a significant asset to scholarly research. Plus the photographs in the FLAAR Photo Archive are often of higher resolution than available elsewhere. The Canon EOS-1Ds Mark III is 21 megapixels as is our Hasselblad with a Phase One P25+ digital back.

This list is a work-in-progress

It is ironic that after working for so many years, just a few weeks ago I was in Antigua Guatemala, in the local market. I found two food plants in this market that I had not noticed elsewhere previously. Probably they are listed in crop lists and probably listed by Lundell as well, but I had not noticed them. Yet the Guatemala assistants who were working with me, especially Sofia Monzon, knew the Spanish names and said they eat these plants regularly.

And every time I read a book or visit a web site I find another plant or flower that needs to be studied. For example, the informative book by MacVean on useful plants of Peten is long ago sold out, so I do not have any copy in my library. I did all my years of listing plants without referencing her three monographs (Peten plus two on the Highlands). I wanted to learn to find the plants by myself. But now that my list is comprehensive, I and research assistants are going to all “listing sources” and comparing their lists with our list. Any utilitarian plant that I missed we cite with the author’s name of the monograph where we found the plant that we are adding. I expect that other scholars and hopefully botanists and ethnographers will let me know what other edible or useful or sacred plants that I have not yet noticed.

Now, several months after our third edition, I have found so many more edible or useful plants that we are issuing a fourth edition. Season by season we have found more plants during field trips; and long hours of research with monographs and peer-reviewed journal articles. So now, as we enter 2014, this is our umteenth edition.

For medicinal plants, however, there are so many hundreds that we do not yet realistically have funding to handle them. Our primarily goal is to list edible, utilitarian and sacred plants.
This list is the thirteenth edition

The eventul umteenth edition will include tabulations by scientific species name, alphabetical tabulation by English name, and alphabetical tabulation by Spanish name. In the meantime we are still working at getting “all” the useful plants included. Where we are missing many would be in wood used for house construction, since local people use about everything.

But I also find edible plants every month. Every time we add ten more things we have read and every time we add five more plants, we reissue this as a new edition.

Plus we are preparing to add several new appendices, with special plant lists for specific categories. This week in November we are adding a list of plants for colorants from the PDF, on-line, Capacitación de Tintes Naturales, Solola, published in association with jica, FGT, and AGUABEJA. This was the eighth edition.

So now we are issuing this thirteenth edition. It has more entries in the bibliography, a few new theme sections (including a section on blood-sap trees), and various corrections, especially in the list of flavorings for cacao, which is a section I am focused on finding each species, one by one.

During December 2011 I worked to create the tenth edition, our Christmas present to Maya-nists and botanists. This tenth edition has the results of our visit to the Lake Atitlan area where the local Maya women’s associations and cooperatives have revived the use of organic colorants primarily from local plants. In one of these facilities we were able to buy the book of Manuel Méndez, which improves our list of colorants. Plus now we have alphabetized the helpful list from Arellano Rodríguez et al. 2003 and compare their contributions with those of Hideo Kojima and the comprehensive book on ancient Maya color by Houston et al (2009).

The ninth edition included an improved bibliography on medicinal plants and improvements in listing of several species.

The fifth and sixth editions included additional plants and dozens of additional monographs in the bibliography. The seventh edition had the colorants added as Appendix C.

The full bibliography is still out into the future, as the world financial crunch puts some realistic limits on the number of staff we can assign to this project. We have no outside grants, donations, or funding specifically for this project; funding could really be a help. Nonetheless, the bibliography even at its present stage is pretty good.

Some e-mail systems at large corporations will not accept an attachment over 5 megabytes, so we are moving the bibliography to become a separate PDF of its own.

Be aware that some “edible plants” are toxic

The list of “edible plants” is not a suggestion to actually eat these plants. Some are toxic unless cooked or heated: cashew nuts are a good example (my favorite nut). Others have one part of the plant that is toxic, but another part that can be eaten. A few plants are seriously toxic in all aspects.

For the list of medicinal plants, these are intended to be an inventory of plants but not a medical treatise. Do not attempt to use these plants to cure yourself.

Citations for each plant are in the plant-by-plant descriptions, which are separate PDFs in preparation.
Already by the third edition (two years ago) this list of plants was longer than that of Lundell “Plants probably used by the Maya...”. Today in 2013 the list has continued to grow as I find more plants on field trips, and during botanical research in libraries. The list is now so long that it will need to eventually be reorganized by alphabetical order and an index will be needed. Presently I have been adding so many plants that the original concept is in need of reorganization. I may opt to have a version with tabulations by use-theme. In the meantime, however, I wanted to get this year 2013 version out so that students could have this available for the current semester.

Any professor who wishes to use FLAAR Reports in their curriculum are allowed to have their students download the reports at no cost, either from www.maya-archaeology.org or www.maya-ethnobotany.org.
Edible plants

**Grains**
- **Maize**, *Zea mays*, corn
- **Teosinte**, *Zea luxurians*
- **Grain amaranth**, *Amaranthus cruentus*, is primarily known for non-Maya Mexico but in fact is used by Highland Maya also.

**Vegetables**

We discuss the botanical distinctions between what is a vegetable and what is a fruit in the upcoming detailed “chapters” on each theme.

- **Beans** of many different varieties and colors.
  - **Tree tomato** *Cyphomandra betacea* (Stross, course outline), tamarillo. However this plant is not (yet) documented as pre-Columbian in Mesoamerica, so should not be in the list of preHispanic Maya foods until it is better documented. Tree tomato is common at altitudes in Guatemala higher than that of Lake Atitlan (Lake Atitlan itself is not high enough).
  - **Tomato**, *Lycopersicum lycopersicum*
  - **Chayote**, dark green güisquil, *Sechium edule*; *Sechium compositum*
  - **Chile peppers, sweet**
  - **Chile peppers, picante**
  - **Perulero**, smaller, smoother surface, another kind of güisquil. Also name of a town in Guatemala.

- **Squash** of dozens of species
  - Ayote
  - Calabaza
  - Calabazita
  - Chilacayote, *Cucurbita ficifolia*
  - calabaza mélon (Mexico), melo-cotón (Guatemala), *Sicana odorifera*. However this is from South America and not yet convincingly documented to be prehispanic in the Maya area (but it is cultivated as food and as an ornamental today).
Sometimes it is only the seed of a squash that is eaten (pepitoria) other times the flesh; other species both.

**Maracuya Chino** (the name in Panama, Chizmar 2009:153-154), *Cionosicys macranthus*. Some botanical web sites list this for only lower Central America; others say “Mexico south to...” Is not a passion flower but a member of the Cucurbitaceae plant family.


*Phytolacca rivinoides* Kunth & Bouche (Standley and Steyermark 1946).


**Tomato**, *Lycopersicum lycopersicum*

**Tomatillo**, tomate verde, mitomati, *Physalis ixocarpa*

**Tree tomato** *Cyphomandra betacea* (Stross, course outline), tamarillo. However this plant is not (yet) documented as pre-Columbian in Mesoamerica, so should not be in the list of preHispanic Maya foods until it is better documented. Tree tomo is common at altitudes in Guatemala higher than that of Lake Atitlan (Lake Atitlan itself is not high enough).
Often it is easier to have a plant included in several theme-sections if different parts of the plant have different uses. Edible leaves is a category in a brief discussion of ethnobotany by Ana Lucrecia de MacVean and Elfriede Pöll (Chapter 8, Table 2). Many leaves are primarily for seasoning, rather than eating per se.


*Capsicum frutescens*, Chile pepper, (Elevitch 1998:3)

*Cestrum racemosum* (Chizmar 2009:302-303).


Chiranthodendron pentadactylon, Canak, arbol de las manitas,

Clerodendrum ligustrinum (Jaqc.); moste, ikimte’, itsinte’ (Barrera 1976), leaves to flavor fish (Gibson in Standley, Williams and Gibson 1973: 193). Family Lamiaceae

*Cnidosculus aconitifolius*, Chaya.

*Crotalaria longirostrata*, Chipilin.

*Cucurbita moschata*, Calabash,


*Ipomoea batatasm* Sweet potato (Elevitch 1998:3)

*Lippia graveolens* HBK., leaves as a flavoring (Gibson in Standley, Williams and Gibson 1973: 211).

*Lycianthes synanthera* B., Chomtee (K’ekchi), chilete dulce (Chiapas), (Cotto 1999:2-3). Family Solanaceae.


*Manihot escuelenta*, Manioc, (Elevitch 1998:3)


*Pimenta dioica*, Allspice, pimenta gorda, leaves are used for tea.

*Sechium edule*, Chayote, (root, flowers, AND leaves are edible).

*Sinclairia sublobata* (Chizmar 2009:113-116).

*Solanum americanum* Mill., Macuy.
The plants below are primarily seeds of trees, or vines (Pepitorio). Seeds of grains are already listed previously, in a separate category, namely grains.

**Amapola blanca**, *Bernoullia flammea*, Uacut, chunte’, Cante, Bombacaceae (Parker 2008:100-101).


**Cerasuree**, Sorosi vine, *Momordica charantia*, pods orange or yellow; Izabal.

**Jicara**, morro (two different plants, but not many people use only one name) *Crescintia alata*

**Pepitorio**, Pumpkin seeds, squash seeds, various species are grown more for their seeds than for the vegetable portion.

*Pseudobombax ellipticum*, shaving brush tree (flower is shaped like a shaving brush). I doubt many people eat the seeds, and I would not wish to try (considering that the tree is also known as amapol-la).

**Sterculia apetala**, castaña, ground seeds to make a drink (Parker 2008:890).

**Provision Tree**, *Zapaton*, zapote bobo, *Pachira aquatica* The flower of this tree is similar to flowers favored in scenes on Maya pottery (Zidar 2009). This tree produces a supposedly edible nut, but I doubt many people eat it today, a shame, as this tree is fast growing and is quite common in its tropical habitat.

We will be adding more seeds from trees of the Bombacaceae family as we complete our research on this important plant family.
Edible Seed pulp

I added this category after learning how many species and relatives there are of Inga that are edible. But it is the pulp around the seed that you eat: not the seed itself. Our categories are deliberately informal, because obviously with some fruits you eat everything; with others you eat only the pulp, with others you eat only the seeds.

**Bri Bri, Inga edulis**, (when it is mainly the seed pulp that is eaten, we have separate section on seeds).

**Xelel, Inga thibaudiana**, (Chizmar 2009:191-192)

**Inga vera**, (Chizmar 2009:193-194)

**Paterna, Inga paterna**, seed pods; common in Guatemala

Plus there are other fruits whose pulp (and in some cases also seeds) are edible.

**Cacao, Theobroma cacao**, seed pulp is also eaten (has no chocolate taste whatsoever, but is delicious). However does not survive shipping, so you can taste it only if you pick the fruit from the tree in the orchard and eat it on the spot. Yummy. I have not tried pulp of pataxte because these pods are so high in the tree you can’t harvest them yourself.

**Theobroma angustifolium, monkey cacao.**

**Vallesia glabra Cav.** (Martin et al. 1987:82).

Berries

This list will depend on how you define what is a “berry.”

**Acai berry**, acai palm tree, *Euterpe oleracea* (don’t blame me; it’s called a berry, but you can also consider it as a nut).

**White Maya Tree, Miconia argentea**

**Allspice berry, Pimenta racemosa**, I list this also under seasoning.

**Vaccinium confertum**, Tio’Chaj a berry from the Tajumulco region.

**Vaccinium consanguineum** (Chizmar 2009:174-175).

**White Maya Tree, Miconia argentea**

There are hundreds of secondary web sites that quote each other, thus spreading slight misinformation. These sites all say that the Maya diet included “fruits and berries”; or whatever. Yes, dozens of fruits: but actually not many berries are pre-Columbian in the core lowland Maya area. I have never heard of berries being a common food of the Maya, past or present.
Fruits
(primarily trees, lots of annona first)

Annona cherimola, Anona, cherimoya, Annona glabra, Anonillo,
Annona diversifolia, Anona Blanca, papauce, llama,
Annona muricata, Guanábana, custard apple, soursop,
Annona prímigenia, Anonillo
Annona purpurea, Soncoya, matacuy, Covered with conical spines.
Annona reticulata, Custard apple,
Annona squamosa, Sugar apple,

Each area of Mesoamerica shares some species of Annona but several areas have another species that is not as common elsewhere. We will track them all down sooner or later.

As is so typical of Spanish nomenclature, there are fruits that are not botanically related yet which are stuck with names that sound like anona.

Cymbopetalum penduliflorum, orejuela, anona de Montaña
Cymbopetalum mayanumm Tulche
Malmea depressa, anona (Parker 2008:49-50; MacVean 2003:24-25).
Other Fruits (primarily fruits from trees)

I would be impressed to find a list of fruits potentially used by the Maya which is even 50% of the fruits listed below. Yet every month I find another edible fruit. A good example is the book, Perennial Edible Fruits of the Tropics: An Inventory, USDA, 1967, available at no cost on-line http://naldc.nal.usda.gov/download/CAT87886130/PDF.

In mid-April 2014 I found an excellent book on the edible fruits of Veracruz, Mexico (Lascurain 2010). Unfortunately it does not tell the reader which of the plants are native and which have been introduced from Asia, Africa or South America.

As time allows trying to sort out which of these edible fruits is pre-Columbian in the Maya area of Mesoamerica we will be expanding our already surprisingly long list of Maya fruits later during 2014.

Lagartillo, *Albertia edulis*. Flower potentially sacred (my estimate)

Ardisia compressa (Lascurain 2010).


Arbol de manzana, *Belluccia grossularioides*, (Chízmar 2009:235-236)

Breadnut, ramon, *Brosimum alicastrum*

nance, craboo, *Byronima crassinodis*, favorite food of mythical deity 7 Macaw

Papaya, *Carica caudata* Jacq. (Parker 2008:145), but this species has probably been moved to another genus since then. Parker gives no local names. She takes her information from Bolivia and Nicaragua, which for a book titled “Trees of GUATEMALA” is not adequate.


Guarumo, trumpet tree, *Cecropia peltata*

Celtis iguanae (Jacq.) Sarg, Family Ulmaceae, uña de gato

Ilcaco, *Chrysobalanus icaco*

Sea grape, *Coccoloba uvifera*

Cordia dentata Poir, *Boraginaceae* (Lascurain 2010:39)

Ciricote, Cordia dodecandra

Baboon Cap, *Couepia dodecandra*

manzanilla, tropical hawthorn, *Crataegus pubescens* var. stipulata (Popenoe 1921)


**Complete Inventory of plants**

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**Complete Inventory of plants**
**Papaya orejona, K’uun che’** (Yucatec Maya), bonete, *Jacaratia mexicana* A. DC. (Martin et al. 1987:91). Also called wild papaya in Parker (2008:146) (but is not the tree which in Guatemala is called wild papaya and has plum-sized fruits and otherwise the tree looks just like a normal papaya; that tree is probably *Carica pétala* which now has a totally different name. The fruit looks a tad like a cacao fruit. Good photos on www.yucatanadventure.com.mx/Papaya_fruit_trees.htm

**Jarilla chocola** Standl., No species of Jarilla is listed in Trees of Guatemala (Parker 2008) but most botany web sites include it for Mexico and Guatemala (www.ars-grin.gov). Elsewhere it is not listed for Guatemala whatsoever! I give up for the moment.

**Lantana camara** L., Chiligua nigrita (Jalapa); cinco negritos (Guatemala, Retalhuleu, Sacatepe’quez); ek-cuayak (Alta Verapaz); mora de muerto (Alta Verapaz); sincuria (Izabal); vivarana (Guatemala). Fruit occasionally eaten by children, and birds (Gibson in Standley, Williams and Gibson 1973: 202-204).

**Leucaena leucocephala**

Cherry, Barbados cherry, acerola, *Malpighia emarginata*


**Capulin, Muntingia calabura** L. (Chizmar 2009:244-246)

**shaving brush tree, Pachira aquatica** (also listed under sapoton in zapote list)

**Wild Cucumber Tree,** Candle Tree, *Cuajilote,* Caiba, Pepino de Arbol Silvestre, *Parmentiera edulis.* This is a close relative of calabash trees.

**Avocado,** *Persea Americana,* used for much more than just a meal. Avocado is the most common tree in house gardens in the Lake Atitlan area and adjacent Highlands.

wild avocado, aguacatillo, *Persea donnell-smithii,*

Coyo, *Persea schiedeana* (Popenoe), Family: Lauraceae

Guarumo de montana, *Pourouma bicolor,* Pourouma aspera

*Posoqueria latifolia* (Chizmar 2009:278-280).


**manax:** wild cherry *Pseudolmedia spuria*

**Guava, Guayaba,** Guayava, *Psidium guava,*

*Psidium guineense* (Chizmar 2009:249-251).

**mora,** Rubus glauca, Rubus adenotrichus. *Morus celtidifolia* Kunth. is also called mora.

**Guano,** *Sabal Mexicana;* thatch palm, also used for weaving baskets.

**Sauco,** *Sambucus mexicana.* A lay person might consider the spherical fruits as a “berry.”


**Zapatero** (Peten), **Negrito** (Belize), *Simarouba glauca,* Paradise Tree, *Bitterwood*
Hog Plum, ciruela cochino, jocote jobo, *Spondias mombin* or *S. purpura*.

**Jocote**, *Spondias purpurea*; a suburb of Antigua Guatemala is named after this fruit.

*Syzgium cuminii* (L.) Skeels, Java plum. Need to double-check to see if native in pre-Columbian times.

manzana, *Syzgium jambos* (L) Alston, eaten by children

Guaya, *Talisia olivaeformis* (MacVean 2003:122)

Guaya, *Talisia oliviformis* (Kunth) Radlk. Note difference in spelling of the species.


**Pataxte**, *Theobroma bicolor*.

**Cacao**, *Theobroma cacao* (monkey) cacao, *Theobroma angustifolium*


Mountain **papaya**, *Vasconcellea cauliflora*, is clearly listed for Mesoamerica (Mexico through Central America) into northern South America (www.ars-grin.gov). Formerly this was *Carica cauliflora*. It is worth noting that the otherwise comprehensive TREES OF GUATEMALA still has the old name, *Carica cauliflora* (Parker 2008:145), listed for Izabal, Montañas del Mico.

Bejuco de agua, *Vitis tilifolia* Humb. & Bonpl. (MacVean 2003:134-135)
Sapote or Zapote is not really a word for one tree or fruit, it is a generic word. It is typical in Spanish nomenclature for pre-Columbian things to use a similar word for things which in the scientific designation are not related (other than superficially). Spanish can be a very imprecise language for tagging plants and animals!

**Black zapote**, *Diospyros digyna*, or *Diospyros ebenaster* Retz. Also note that *Diospyros nicaraguensis* Standl., also has a fruit. But this has no zapote or sapote related name. All *Diospyros* species should be checked, since most seem to have edible fruits (www.wdt.qc.ca/treesna2list.asp?start=2701).

**Chico Zapote**, sapodilla, sap produces chicle, *Manilkara zapota*

**Green zapote**, *Pouteria viridis*, called *Achradelpha viridis* by Pope noe

**Mamey sapote**, *Pouteria sapota*

**Canistel**, *Pouteria campechiana*, a yellow-looking sapote

**sansapote, sonzapote**, monkey apple *Licania platypus*

**red zapote**, *Mammea americana*, zapote mamey

**white zapote**, matasano, *Casimiroa edulis*

**Zapote bobo**, sapoton, *Pachira aquatica*

Fruits on Vines

Fruits on vines is by no means limited to passionflowers, but there are definitely more of this genus than any other. All the passionflower fruits we saw one day in Chichicastenango were not native (they were introduced from South America). Four different passionflower vines which produce flowers in the FLAAR gardens are all also from South America. But gradually we are locating other species which are more likely pre-Columbian. We appreciate the assistance of passionflower expert John MacDougal. He is in the same city as the FLAAR office, St Louis.

The passionflowers of Belize are not all resident in Guatemala; some species in Guatemala grow only in the cool Highlands; others grow only in the hot Lowlands. So we have a lot more research and field trips to track down each species one-by-one.

**Monstera deliciosa**, Split leaf philodendron, ceriman, Piña anona, Not a fruit but is on a vine.

**Passiflora adenopoda**, (Chizmar 2009:252-254)

**Passiflora edulis**, Maracuya, another passion flower vine fruit,

**Passiflora foetida** (Wikipedia)

**Passiflora ligularis**, Granadilla, fruit of passion flower vine,

**Passiflora quadrangularis** L. This has a giant fruit; many times larger than all other passionflower fruits.

**Passiflora seemannii** (Chizmar 2009:254-256)

**Passiflora suberosa**, Corky Stem Passionvine,

**Punica granatum**, Granada (pomegranate), is totally different than granadilla.
Edible fruits from cactus or cactus-like vines

*Mammillaria* species have edible pulp (Martin et al. 1987:88). Since there are so many species, further research would be required. (Craig, several editions).

*nopal* and tuna, cactus, *Opuntia ficus indica*.

**Pitaya**, *Pitahaya*, *Hylocereus undatus*.

Arias (2010) lists nine cacti from Mexico that have edible fruits. Most if not all of these are outside the Mayan area. However there are plenty of cactus species in the upstream valley of Rio Motagua, Guatemala. So hopefully this list of Mexican cacti will encourage Guatemalan botanists to make comparable lists of edible cactus and cactus-like vines for Guatemala (they may exist already).

Pochas, *Ferocactus latispinus*
Chilitos de biznaga, *Mammillaria* spp.
Junco espinoso, *Aporocactus flagelliformis*
Limón de biznaga, *Ferocactus pilosus*
Tuna de biznaga, *Echinocereus* spp.
Alicoche, *Echinocereus* spp.
Garambullos, *Myrtillocactus geometrizans*
Pitayo, pitayo de mayo, *Stenocereus pruinosus*
Pitayo xoconostle, *Stenocereus stellatus*

**Pineapple**, a terrestrial bromeliad, *Ananas comosus*.

Piñuela, *Bromelia pinguin*, motate (produces rubber-like sap, Rochin 1986)

Piñuela, *Bromelia alsodes*, (Chizmar 2009: 130-132)
Nuts and food that is considered a “nut”

**Acorns** (present in Highlands but not often eaten by local people)
*Anacardium occidentale* L., *cashew*, marañon.


*Arachis hypoga*, *Peanut*; first in Peru but got to Mesoamerica also.

*Brosimum alicastrum*, *Breadnut*, *ramon nut*.

Coconut is a rather substantial “nut” but we discuss palm products in a section on palms. There are many palm oil nuts that are edible.
Nuts, specifically on Palm trees


**coconut** (potentially arrived before Spaniards)

**corozo palm**: plentiful and still eaten in Peten today

**coyol**, *Acrocomia aculeata*

*Brahea aculeata*, palmilla

*Brahea dulcis*, capulin

*Ractrisbarronis major*

Rosengarten, in his excellent book on nuts of the world, does not mention corozo palm nuts.

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Palm trees with edible parts

Capuca, *Calyptrogyne ghiesbreghtiana* (Chizmar 2009:87-88)

*Chamaedorea pinnatifrons* (Chizmar 2009:89-91)

**Chocho** palm, chapay, *Astrocaryum mexicanum*, shoots, heart, and flowers edible (Haynes and McLaughlin 2000).

**Cohune** palm, oil palm, *Astrocaryum cohune*, in addition to the edible nut, the heart is also edible.

*Gonolobus taylorianus*, some parts toxic (Chizmar 2009:107-109)

**Huiscocoyol**, *Bactris major* (Chizmar 2009:84-86)

**Manaco**, *Manicaria sacifera* (Chizmar 2009:103-104)

**Palmito**, *ternera*, *Euterpe precatoria* (Chizmar 2009:100-102)

**Piva**, peach palm, *Guilielma utilis*, edible fruits

Mexican Sabal palm,
Cooking oil

We may have one theme for cooking oil and another for lubricant; and another theme for varnish.

**Acrocomia aculeate**

**Corozo (cohune) palm oil**

**Chamadorea elegans**

**Gonolobus taylorianus** (Chízmar 2009:107-110)

**Jatropha curcas**, physic nut, oil for soap and other uses. Toxic as food.

**Zapatero**, (Peten), **Negrito** (Belize), **Simarouba glauca**, Paradise Tree, Bitterwood. Also used for medicine, and the oil also for soap.

Several other palm tree parts can be used to produce oil.

You could also make a list of “oil” used as a lotion (we would consider that “medicinal”). I would assume that the ancient Maya could obtain cooking oil from wild boar and other animals. It is also logical to look for vegetable oils too.

Other plants which have edible parts

**Mangrove fern, Acrostichum aureum** (from pollen at Copan; Fedick 2010)

**Fern, Microgramma lycopodioides** (from pollen at Copan; Fedick 2010)

**Cattail, reed**, Typha latifolia [www.rook.org/earl/bwca/nature/aquatics/typhalat.html](http://www.rook.org/earl/bwca/nature/aquatics/typhalat.html)

**Sorosi Vine, Momordica charantia**, common in Izabal area.

**white milkwood**, lechoso, Tabernaemontana alba; chewing gum substitute

**Spathiphyllum friedrichsthalii**

**Spathiphyllum phryniifolium** (Chízmar 2009:60-62)

**Yuc, Spathiphyllum blandum** (Chízmar 2009:58-59)

**Root crops**

**Sweet potato, camote** *Ipomoea batatas*

**Jicama, yam bean, Pachyrhizus erosus**. Flower is distinctive shape and beautiful lavender colors.

**Cassava, sweet manioc, yuca**, *Manihot esculenta*

**Malanga**, *Xanthosoma species* (these four featured by Bronson 1966:63-65)

Kaqiox, Marac, Quequescamote, *Xanthosoma sagittifolium* Booth lists *Xanthosoma violaceum* as eaten by the K’ekchi Maya, osh, macal, and surprisingly says “the only species in this genus that is used as food.” (1992:295). She does not indicate on this page what part of the plant she is speaking about.

**Chayote, Sechium edule** (root, flowers, and leaves are edible).

**Iron cross plant**, *Oxalis deppei* (Stross, UTexas course outline)

**Maranta arundinacea**, (Chízmar 2009:233-234)

**Mexican Shell flower, Tigridia pavonia** (Stross ethnobotany course outline)

**Smilax spinosa** (Chízmar 2009:295-296) Web sites list Sarsaparilla (*Smilax officinalis*) as an aphrodisiac.

**Tubers of Solanum cardiophyllum** and **S. ehrenbergii** are eaten in Jalisco, Mexico (Cuevas-Arias et al. 2008 :77).

**Dioscorea convolvulacea Schltdl. & Cham.**, barbasquillo, madre de maiz, could be considered either a root crop or a vegetable. *Dioscorea composita* Hemsl. is medicinal as is *D. floribunda* (Martin 1969:373). Many other species of *Dioscorea* are present in Guatemala and adjacent Mexico such as *D. bartlettii* and *D. spiculiflora* (http://fm1.fieldmuseum.org). Just be careful that the species you eat is not toxic.
Since I have been studying the water lily for years, I am always curious why, out of all the many other plants that grow in the rivers and lakes, why only the water lily is so important to the Classic Maya. I have discovered several aspects of why the Maya selected the water lily (more than just the fact that the water lily seed pod could potentially have been the cheapest and most readily available source of tasty chemicals for Maya rituals).

*Brasenia schreberi*

**Waterlily. Nymphaea ampla**, is edible, and parts are eaten in many other parts of the world.

Surely there must be other water plants that were harvested and eaten. Tule is primarily for making baskets and mats.
Flavoring, herbs, and spices

See also all the flavorings (in the next section) for cacao drinks.

*Bixa orellana, Achiote, Annatto.*

*Chenopodium ambrosioides, Wormseed, Epazote.*

*Chili pepper, Capsicum species*

*Crotalaria longirostrata Hook & Am., Chipilin, Unique flower; Parts edible, part toxic (Morton 1994)*

*Cucurbita spp, Pumpkin seed*

*Dipteryx panamensis seed is listed in a Tico ethnobotanical dictionary as flavoring tobacco (on-line).*

*Dorstenia contrajerva, roots flavor tobacco; Tico ethnobotanical dictionary as flavoring tobacco (on-line). Also (MacVean 2003:90)*

*Enterolobium cyclocarpon, Guanacaste*

*Eryngium foetidum, Culantro, cilantro, samat, (Standley and Williams 1966; Chizmar 2008:40-41). Coriandrum sativum L. comes from Europe. Guarumo, leaves also used for tobacco*

*Litsea glaucescens Kunth, bay-leaves, laurel silvestri.*


*Philodendron pseudoradiatum (Duran 1994:244)*

*Pimenta racemosa, Allspice, Pimenta gorda.*

*Piper auritum, Hoja Santa; Piper amalagho also has interesting properties (Ratsch 2005:451). Be aware that *Piper auritum* may have carcinogenic chemicals as well (Atlas de las Plantas de la Medicina Tradicional Mexicana).*

*Polianthes tuberosa, Flor de nardo, (Schoenhal 1988:206). Also an additive to balche drink of Lacandon. Over the past 30 years I have noticed that most flowers and plants of the Lacandon area of Chiapas are misidentified by ethnographers. The first botanist who is trying to get things done correctly is Duran (1999). The first ethnographer who is working to correct past errors is Suzanne Cook. Once I have a copy of Duran’s thesis and the monograph of Cook, I will be better able to translate Lacandon more clearly.*

*Poliminthia longiflora (Lamiaceae), "oregano" or "marjoram" in the cookbooks, but I suspect that local herbs are meant in the first place. At least two different herbs are known as "Mexican oregano": Poliminthia longiflora (Lamiaceae) and Lippia graveolens (Gernot Katzer, Geographic Spice Index)*

*Porophyllum ruderalae, Coriander.*

*Porophyllum tagetoides*

*Renealma aromaic, MacVean gives local words as tzi or chucho (Alta Verapaz), nabay (Peten), and rat plantain for Belize. She says pulp of the fruit is used to flavor tea. (MacVean 2003:136).*

*Salvia Hispanica, Chia; seeds used; in juice; sprouts, etc*

*Smilax regelli, Sarsaparilla, is used for root beer after sassafras (root of tree of that name) was found to have bad side effects.*

*Tagetes lucida Cav., Pericon, one of several species of marigold whose flowers are edible.*

*Tagetes minuta and Tagetes elliptica, Marigold.*

*Talauma Mexicana (Gomez 2008:84)*

*Tridax coronpifolia, Castilleja lanam, hierba de conejo.*

*Probably another dozen spices could easily be added, though most modern spices come from India, Asia, Africa, or Europe. For example, coriandum sativum, is not indigenous.*
Flavorings for cacao drinks

Flavorings for cacao are nicely listed by Sophie Coe (1994) and then also by Sophie and Michael Coe (2007) but you can find additional spices for cacao drinks listed elsewhere. In upcoming FLAAR Reports on cacao flavoring I will cite all the flavoring that Sophic Coe and Michael Coe carefully include and compare with ingredients that I have found during the past three years of ethnobotanical research. Below is just the basic list of the most commonly known ingredients, which are included in most of the better discussions of cacao and chocolate.

As a side comment I raise cacao in and around my house (literally) and the seeds I planted about four years ago have grown enough they have their first flowers this year. As the first rains of the rainy season hit, the tree trunks burst into producing actual cacao pods (through self-polination I assume, as at 1500 meters above sea level, in the middle of Guatemala City, I doubt I have any or many of the appropriate species of midges to pollinate the flowers).

I also raise pataxte, though this grows much more slowly. To be an archaeologist, and iconographer, and with a personal interest in plants and animals, to actually live surrounded by cacao trees and a host of other Maya-related plants gives me an experience that I was not able to achieve associated with a university campus with snow surrounding my apartment. However there are definite advantages of a university campus as well: best is to have both: access to a campus and access to an ethnobotany garden.

Flowers & seeds (mostly to flavor cacao)

- **Bixa orellana**, **Achiote**.
- **Bourreria huanita**, **Popcorn flower**, palo de rosa, rosa Blanca, Esquinuchuca, esquinsuchil (Guatemala); oreja de leon (Quezaltenango) (Standley and Williams (Gibson) 1970:132).
- **Calliandra anomala**, cabeza de angel, lacoxochitl, lacoxiloxochitl (Sahagun and Ratsch 2005:119, 501).
- **Calocarpum mammosum**, piztle (the seeds of **Pouteria sapota**, mamey sapote)
- **chile**, chilchote, Capsicum frutescens or chiltipiquin, or tonalchiles or chili maguey, chilpaelagua or chile that is widely sold in Guatemalan markets and called “chile chocolate”
- **Chirantodendron pentadactylon**, flor de manitas, Canek, teonacaztli.
- **Cymbopetalum penduliflorum**, Guanacaste, ear flower, orejuela, Muc in K,ekchi Mayan, uei nacaztli in Nahuatl,
- **Magnolia mexicana** flowers, yolloxochitl, heart flower; possibly **Talauma mexicana** (Parker 2008:486).
- **Nicotiana** species, Tobacco juice (Ritual of the Bacabs, 35-37).
- **Pimenta dioica**, allspice, pimenta gorda.
- **Piper amalago**, Mecaxochitl, mecasuchiles, Higuillo de limón. String flower.
- **Piper auritum**, Hoja santa, root beer plant
- **Quararibea funebris**, Molinillo, Rosita de cacao, cacahuaxochitl
- **Tagetes lucida**, Marigold, flor de muerto
- **Vanilla planifolia**, Vanilla
The following are listed as flavorings by Ratsch, but are not widely listed in most books on cacao.


We experiment raising cacao and pataxte. Here are pataxte seeds sprouting in our garden. Pataxte pods harvested from the Costa Sur area of Guatemala.
Plants for drinks, beverages (not alcoholic)

While on the subject of cacao drinks, I add now a new selection on indigenous plants of Mesoamerica for drinks in general. Although the present research is not (yet) on recipes, it is worthwhile to begin to think about the Maya kitchen of thousands of years ago.

Plus, tea in particular and non-alcoholic drinks in general are healthy. If you have read-between-the-lines you will have noticed that one gist of the entire FLAAR interest in native plants is to improve the diet and health of the populations of southern Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador, and Honduras.

For tea the plants I know the best are pimenta gorda. I drank this team (from leaves of the beautiful white-barked tree), for five years in Yaxha.

- Marañon, tea of leaves
- Marañon, drink from the soft fruit above the "nut"

We will be expanding this section as time and budget allows.

There is also a section on alcoholic beverages in preparation.

Flowers, sacred Pictured in Maya art, or featured in Myths

**Lagartillo**, *Alibertia edulis*. Flower potentially sacred (my estimate).

*nikte’ kisin*, *Bouvardia longiflora* (Suzanne Cook, personal communication 2013, provided the Lacandon Maya name for this plant. The iconography I worked out already several years ago).

Flower of *ceiba* tree, various species

**Aak’ alyoom** “night flower from which Kisin was born” http://home.planet.nl/~roeli049/gloseng.pdf, perhaps *Cestrum nocturnum* L (Suzanne Cook, personal communication).

Commelina elegans*, suggested by Bolles as *pach dza*, or *pac dza*, dayflower, Hierba del Pollo (Jim Conradiad, www.backyardnature.net).)

**Chipilin** flowers: white petaled, red petaled, yellow petaled (*Popol Vuh*), *Crotalaria longirostrata*, *Crotalaria guatemalensis*. This translation in the *Popol Vuh* needs to be rethought, as the ants were most likely carrying other flowers besides Chipilin (whose color range is not as wide as claimed in the translation).

**Waterlily**, *Nymphaea ampla*

**Flower of zapote bobo**, *Pachira aquatica*

*Plumeria species*, flor de Mayo, bak nikte’.

flores del nardo, *Polianthes tuberosa*, bāk-nikte’ (Boot, after Bruce).

*Amapola*, *Pseudobombax ellipticum* (shares some features with *Pachira aquatica*).

flowers that attract hummingbirds

flowers on Maya bowls, vases, plates (that have not yet been identified)

**Squash** flower(s), related to baligame

Probably another ten species, plus or minus, will be added as we continue our research.

I would like to point out, as politely as is possible, that many if not most of the identifications by J. Eric S. Thompson of sacred flowers which he mistakenly “identified” for various hieroglyphs are incorrect.

There are also other errors repeated all over the Internet (because 80% of the web sites simply copy-and-paste plagiarize what they find elsewhere). The most common mistakes are with Flor de Mayo, Nikte, flor de nardo, and four-petaled flowers (for the Kin hieroglyph). Flor de Mayo is neither nardo nor the model for the Kin calendrical glyph!

The identifications by Charles Zidar, Missouri Botanical Garden, St Louis, Missouri, tend to be more reliable than most epigraphers, iconographers, or field archaeologists (his background as a botanist helps).

I can recognize which identifications in the literature are hopeless, which are correct, and which are close but perhaps need more clarification since already in the 1960’s and 1970’s I lived in Peten and in the 1970’s through into the early 1990’s I lectured on Maya civilization for tour groups to Maya sites throughout Mesoamerica. It is this 40+ year experience, in-situ, which allows me to write the present opus.

Another reason for the success of putting together the present opus is because I have a deep interest in flora and fauna, and even more, I enjoy sharing my findings with scholars, students, and the interested lay public.

Plus I enjoy letting the world know what a beautiful place is Guatemala, Honduras and other adjacent parts of Mesoamerica.
Many flowers are used for medicine, such as manitas. Several other flowers are used for colorants. Other flowers are used as flavor, condiments, seasoning. Some flowers may have been used as drugs, though it was often the seed pod, leaf, or other part of the plant which was narcotic. You can see flowers in each of these theme groups. Below we list primarily flowers which are eaten as food.

Chocho palm, chapay, Astrocaryum mexicanum, shoots, heart, and flowers edible (Haynes and McLaughlin 2000).

Cecropia obtusifolia, guarumo, edible and nutritious

Pacaya, palm, Chamaedorea pacaya

Cucurbita pepo (http://ourgardengang.tripod.com/edibleflowers2.htm).

Dahlia, Tzoloj, Dahlia imperialis (Nash and Williams 1976; Chízmar 2009:111-112)

Pito extranjero, Erythrina fusca.

Panho pito, Erythrina species. Be aware that the seeds are toxic.

Biznaga colorada, Cactus flowers, Ferocactus pilosus, (Arias 2010)

Loroco, Fernaldia pandurata

Guazuma ulmifolia

Chayote, Sechium edule (root, flowers, and fresh young leaves are edible).

Izote tree (also spelled izote), spineless yucca, Yucca elephantipe

Pericon, one of several species of marigold (Tagetes) which is edible.

Many parts of the waterlily, Nymphaea ampla, are edible, but may have chemicals which are not recommended.

This list will grow, but realize that most flowers are poisonous to eat (http://ourgardengang.tripod.com/edibleflowers2.htm). Others which are “edible” may be poisonous if eaten in large quantities.

The recognition that Mayan earrings are flower shaped is all over the Internet. One web site even sells “5-petal bloodwood Mayan Flower Plugs.” Although the tree is South America the earrings look just like those of the Maya. That earrings were flowers was also noticed by Mary Butler, Piedras Negras Pottery, Pottery Vessels (1935:128).

Botanist Charles Zidar has also recognized the flower origin of Mayan earrings (personal communication 2009). The advantage of his contributions are double: first, he is an experienced botanist. Second, he is familiar with Mayan culture.

If you peruse books of flowers of Mesoamerica you quickly find flowers that should be checked to see if they are similar to earrings. One is Cricote, Cordia dodecandra.

Lundell lists flowers which are “strung as necklaces and bracelets.” I would guess these are in Yucatan, Campeche, and Quintana Roo.

• black seed of Canna edulis Ker. (chankala, platanillo),
• the scarlet and black seed of Abrus precatorius L. (xocoak)
• Rhynchosia pyramidalis (Lam.) Urban,
• and the fruits of Acrocomia mexicana Karw. (cocoyol)

This is a list of flowers that attract my attention when I see them. Thus it is worth checking to see if any of these was edible, was a scared flower, or was a model for an earring or other aspect of jewelry.

Alamanda species

Annatto flower is quite showy, Bixa orellana

Acnistus arborescens (Chízmar 2009:297-298)

Balsa flower, Ochroma pyramidale

Bucut, Cassia grandis (OFI-CATIE: 439), impressive mass of white-pink flowers on a tree.

Flor de tigre, tigrillo, Tigridia pavonia, oceloxochitl (in murals of Malinalco).

Guajilote, Candle tree, caiba, Parmentiera edulis, ribbed fruit looks vaguely like a thin cacao. Tree is related to morro or jicaro (calabash tree).

Cestrum racemosum (Chízmar 2009:302-303).
Clavellina, *Pseudobombax ellipticum*

Clavellina, *Bombax palmeri* Clavellina is another typical Spanish misnomer in that five (or more) flowers absolutely unrelated to each other have the identical name, Clavellina. One is a cactus!

*Coralillo, Russelia equisetiformis*

*Ipomoea pes-caprae*, beach morning glory.

*Lacmellea standleyi,*

**Mexican Butterfly weed, Blood Flower, Asclepias curassavica**

**Mexican primrose willow, Ludwigia octovalvis**

**Peacock Flower or chaparral in Spanish, Caesalpinia gaumeri**

**Pentalinon andrieuxii**

**Tobacco flowers, Nicotiana tabacum and Nicotiana rustica**

**Zinnia: it always helps to let people in North America understand how much of what they have originated in Mexico or Central America.**

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**Additional plants which need to be studied**

Many species of Solanum and their relatives need to be studied to see which were utilized and in what manner.

**Plants which are associated with myths**

I would not rule out that some of the flowers of the plants listed below may also be sacred. Some are mentioned in myths, such as the Popol Vuh. (see appendix on plants of the Popol Vuh).

**Beans**

**Bromelas**

**Chile-seeds**

**Coral tree, seeds of tzite, arbol de pito, (divination), Erythrina corallodendron, Erythrina berteroana; Parts edible, part toxic** (Morton 1994)

**Jicaro, Crescentia cujete**

**Morro, Crescentia apetala, Villar p. 45, 87 (Popol Vuh)**

**Jocote de jobo: Spondias**

**Jocote de mico: Simarouba**

**Jocote montero: Spondias**

Oak trees, encinos, growing on the ballcourt area

Ocote, pitch pine, as torches, to light caves, etc

Rushes, tule

**Sauco, Sambucus Mexicana**

**Squash, planted near the ballcourt, (Popol Vuh)**

Squash seeds fall from head suspended over ballcourt, (Popol Vuh)
Trees with spines that are replicated on incense burners and cache vessels

Bombax quinatum Jacq, Bombacopsis quinata, and Pachira quinata. Not listed for Guatemala, but have spectacular conical spines.

Ceiba aesculifolia, palo de lagarto, lots of conical spines.

Ceiba, Ceiba pentandra, Sacred Maya tree, national tree of Guatemala

Ceiba schottii, but primarily in Yucatan (not in Guatemala).

Pochote, Cochlospermum vitifolium (Willd.) Spreng., synonym Bombax vitifolium, for Sayaxche area of Peten.

Pochote, typical Spanish imprecise designation: can stand for many different trees with spines, Bombacopsis quinata (not listed for Guatemala), or Ceiba aesculifolia (listed as palo de lagarto). Pochote could also be Bombax vitifolium, for Sayaxche area of Peten.

Palo de lagarto, Limoncillo, Naranjillo, Zanthoxylum procerum

Palo de Lagarto, Chanté, Zanthoxylum microcarpum.


CR means Costa Rica, since there are more complete publications on the plants and animals of Costa Rica than the incomplete monographs on the other Central American countries. I do not yet know the species which goes with each Spanish name. We will update this list as we have more information. At the end of this list of trees-with-spines I re-list all Zanthoxylum in alphabetical order

Lagarto: Abelmoschus (C); Zanthoxylum (CR)

Lagarto amarillo: Zanthoxylum (CR)

Lagarto negro: Lacmellia (CR); Zanthoxylum (CR)

Pito, palo de pito. Most pito trees also have spines. These spines are not as perfectly conical as those of Ceiba, but these trees are nonetheless very spiny. There are dozens of species in Guatemala, all with beautiful red flowers.
Ceiba

flower

Complete Inventory of plants

Maya Ethnobotany

Ceiba pentandra

Complete Inventory of plants

Maya Ethnobotany

Ceiba flower
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Erythrina berteroana, Erythrina</strong></th>
<th>Pito; Miche; Machetillos</th>
<th>Alta Verapaz, Chimaltenango,</th>
<th>Trees are armed with</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>corallodendron</strong> (flowers); Coralillo; Tzinte (Coban)</td>
<td>Chiquimula, Escuintla, Guatemala, Huehuetenango, Jutiapa, Peten, Quetzaltenango, Retalhuleu, Santa Rosa, Sololá, Zacapa.</td>
<td>many stout spines.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Erythrina folkersii</strong></td>
<td>Coral Tree or Tiger Tree</td>
<td>Alta Verapaz, Izabal</td>
<td>Trunk and branches with stout spines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Erythrina fusca</strong></td>
<td>Pito extranjero</td>
<td>Escuintla, Izabal, Jutiapa, Suchitepéquez</td>
<td>Trunk with spines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Erythrina guatemalensis</strong></td>
<td>Pito; Tzintej</td>
<td>Alta Verapaz, Baja Verapaz</td>
<td>With short stout spines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Erythrina hondurensis</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Izabal</td>
<td>Spines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Erythrina macrophylla</strong></td>
<td>Pito, Machetillos (flowers); Miche; Ucun (Huehuetenango)</td>
<td>Alta Verapaz, Chimaltenango, El Progreso, Guatemala, Huehuetenango, Quetzaltenango, Quiche, San Marcos, Sololá, Sacatepéquez, Totonicapán y Zacapa</td>
<td>Yes, stout spines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Erythrina poeppigiana</strong></td>
<td>Pito extranjero</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Erythrina standleyana</strong></td>
<td>Pito, Coama Wood, Tiger Wood</td>
<td>Huehuetenango, Petén</td>
<td>Yes, stout spines</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Zanthoxylum caribaeum
Zanthoxylum culantrillo
Zanthoxylum elefantiasis (see naranjillo)
Zanthoxylum fagara
Zanthoxylum flavum
Zanthoxylum gentlei
Zanthoxylum gilletii
Zanthoxylum juniperinum
Zanthoxylum microcarpum (see palo de lagarto)
Zanthoxylum petenense Lundell
Zanthoxylum procerum
Zanthoxylum rhoifolium (see pochote Amarillo)

Most pito trees also have spines. These spines are not as perfectly conical as those of Ceiba, but these trees are nonetheless very spiny. There are dozens of species in Guatemala, all with beautiful red flowers.

Plants mentioned in myths
(see appendix on plants of the Popol Vuh)
- bromeliad
- oak trees, encinos, growing on the ballcourt area
- ocote, pitch pine, as torches, to light caves, etc
- rushes, tule
- sauco, Sambucus mexicana

Plants to produce Alcohol
- Acrocomia Mexicana, Coyol (Standley and Record 1936:79)
- Acrocomia aculeata (Balick 1990 and separately Chízmar 2009:66-70), Coyol,
- Agave Sisal, Agave fourcroydes, agave.
- Anacardium occidentale Cashew nut wine (Standley and Record 1936:43)
- Arcacia angustifolia, flavoring for pulque (Ratsch 2005:28).
- Lonchocarpus violaceusm Balche, or Lonchocarpus longistylus, Pitter
- Miconia argentea (ambergriscaye.com), White Maya Tree.
- Sambucus mexicana, sauco, I suggest checking whether this was used to make an alcoholic beverage in pre-columbian times. Sauco alcoholic beverages are available today in specialty markets.
- Smilax domingensis as an ingredient for a fermented beverage was indicated by Suzanne Cook (personal communication 2013, citing Duran 1999).
- Theobroma cacao, Cacao

Chicha, fermented drink from maize. Chilate is used in the Achi Mayan area http://licoresbaranano.blogspot.com/search/label/LICORES%20DE%20GUATEMALA). Relacion de Merida (11:49) indicates that the roots of a maguey agave were used with balche in northern Yucatan (LucidConsciousness.com).

This list will be expanded as I hope that books such as Alcohol in Ancient Mexico (Bruman 2000) and the PhD dissertation by Litzinger (1983) and Marino Ambrosio (1966) will list additional plants.

To be valid as a list of all utilitarian plants of the Classic Maya, it is silly not to list plants commonly used for alcohol and drugs. However these are not our focus; there are already plenty of books on these subjects, especially Ratsch for the latter.
There is a separate category for plants used for smoking. Some of the drugs listed below are smoked; others are ingested in other manners. We have a much longer list of plants used for medicine.

- **Banisteriopsis muricata**, a vine (Ratsch 2005:89).

- **Brugmansia species. Florifundia.** Although not listed as native to Guatemala (Wikipedia) in fact this flower is common today, including in public parks of Guatemala. Ratsch (2005:98) cites Brent Berlin (et al. 1974:280) as suggesting the plant reached Mexico in pre-Columbian times. Several other species are pictured by Ratsch.

- **Calea zacatechichi Schlechtendal, Aztec dream grass.** Manuel Flores thesis is one source of info: 1977.

- **Calliandra anomala** (Ratsch 2005:118-119)

- **Cecropia obtusifolia**, Guarumo, smoked in Alta Verapaz, (Standley and Steyermark 1946:22). MacVean indicates that Cecropia.peltata is smoked in Peten (2003:48), also known as Guarumo throughout Guatemala and trumpet tree in Belize.

- **Datura;** most claims for use are overstated; but I would still estimate that datura was known and used (just that most discussions mis-identify the flowers). Datura flowers stand up; Brugmansia flowers hang down.

- **Dorstenia contrajerva, roots flavor tobacco** Tico ethnobotanical dictionary as flavoring tobacco (on-line). Also (MacVean 2003:90),

- **Habin (Peten), Dogwood (Belize), Piscidia piscipula;** also fish poison.

- **Huevos de caballo** (horse’s testicles), Stemmadenia donnell-smithii. Not one single book or web site on Maya use of plant substances for enlightenment lists or mentions this plant (at least not one of the main monographs on psychoactive plants of Aztec and Maya areas). I only include this plant on the list because Walfred Romero Chi, an archeologist at Yaxha, lists the flower pollen as being mixed with other plant substances (from other plants; not specified by him) and inhaled (YouTube video).

- **Acacia cornigera, Subin,** Ratsch (2005:28-29) lists two species of Acacia: *Acacia cornigera* and *Acacia angustifolia*. Subin is very common throughout Lowland Guatemala; the other species is not as well documented in the literature.

- **Tobacco, Nicotiana tabacum**

- **Tree tobacco, Nicotiana glauca Graham.**

- **Tobaco de Montana, Solanum umbellatum**

- **Wild tobacco, Nicotiana rustica**

- **Wild tobacco, Solanum erianthum, Ucuch, uk’uch, Ukuch xiu**

- **Water lily, Nymphaea ampla.** probably more commonly used than given credit for. It is by no means necessarily only or exclusively the flower which was ingested, but since we do no experimentation with drug plants, we can’t yet say explain what effects the seeds have. But it is actually the seed pod area of the flower in which the Maya were most interested.

- **Morning glory** (used in Central Mexico; not yet as well known for Maya). *Turbina corymbosa, Ipomoea* species grow along the highways of Escuintla and elsewhere throughout Mesoamerica, including at altitudes at least to 2000 meters.

- fly agaric skins, Amanita muscaria

- **Ololuiquí, Turbina corymbosa** Ratsch (and probably others before him) suggest this is the vine on a world tree at Chichen Itza (2005:516).

- **Passiflora foetida, amapola** (many plants in Mesoamerica are informally called amapola).

- **Pernettya furens and/or Pernettya parvifolia** (http://shamanix.extra.hu/infected/schultes/book/g121-130.htm)


- **Quararibea funebris, Rosita de cacao**, also a major flavoring for cacao

- **Ipecac, raicilla, Cephaelis ipecacuanha**, induces vomiting.

- **Salvia divinorum**, known mainly for one area of Oaxaca. No evidence yet that this was used by the Maya.

- **Tanaecium octurnum** (Zidar, on-line). Does occur in Guatemala (Trees of Guatemala, Parker 2008: 86)
• *Typha latifolia*, cattail (Ratsch 2005:387) who gives a list of other tobacco substitutes.
• *Virola guatemalensis*, sangre (has a red sap). Synonym Virola koschnyi Warb.

It might be educational to check what chemicals amaranth flowers or roots may have. Ratsch notes that species elsewhere in the world are so used.

We do not focus on mushrooms since it is debated whether the appropriate mushroom was available to the Maya of the Peten lowlands in pre-Columbian times.

Also check *Almendro* (Peten), *Cabbage bark* (Belize), *Andira inermis*, as possible narcotic use (Parker 2008:450).

*Tanaecium nocturnum*, is a plant I have I am not familiar with, but it should be explored to see if it is also used as a chemical (http://psychotropia.co).

This list can be expanded by scholars interested in chemicals of plants, though hallucinogenic and narcotic drugs are not a focus of my research. However it is probable that the Maya took plant substances in about every orifice of their body except their ears. Every other tribe living in tropical America ingested about every tasty chemical they could get their hands, mouths, noses and body parts close to. Many Maya scholars have documented that the Maya even included enemas as a way of getting even more chemicals into their bodies.

The Aztecs and inhabitants of dry areas of Mexico were even more into using remarkable plant substances for spiritual journeys. There are so many books on this that there is not space to list them all. The number of plants is almost endless. Ratsch (2005) lists most of them. Many of these plants have not been noticed for Guatemala.

Trying to pretend the “peaceful” Maya spent their time raising maize, doing astronomy, writing hieroglyphic texts and building pyramid-temples completely and conveniently avoids seeing what life was really like in the palace acropoleis, plazas, and temple rooms for over a thousand years. The list above is more than a dozen plants specifically for the Maya area, which is actually more than most monographs on drugs list. Any student or scholar who really had an interest in tasty chemicals could surely discover twice this number of plants. So to ignore the rather obvious readily available drug plants in the Maya area in monographs is a tad unrealistic.

Note that we do not list plants used as drugs by the Aztec unless the plant could also grow in Guatemala, Belize, Honduras or the Maya portions of Mexico and El Salvador.

But chemicals are not our research focus. We are interested in the iconography of sacred flowers and plants, and in utilitarian plants, plus which flowers were featured as hieroglyphs. We list drugs and smoking only because a list of utilitarian plants would be rather incomplete without these two categories.

Plants believed by local tradition to increase libido

We do not espouse, recommend, or agree with any specific plant which is claimed to increase interest in athletic interaction between a male and female. But many foods have over a thousand years of association with increased personal pleasure.

Also realize that many plants, seeds, roots, saps, and leaves used by ancient civilizations were toxic. Many of the plant parts have some chemicals which give the desired high, but may have other chemicals which will cause more high than your body can handle safely. As but one example, it is remarkable how many plants used two thousand years ago to eat, were also used as insecticide! So rather obviously our list is not intended to be a menu.

But, to learn about what ancient cultures used to increase libido (or which they believed might work!), in addition to cacao, you can find:

**Acacia corinigera**, **Subin**, mixed with ants (Anderson and Medina 2005:190), **Acacia farnesiana** (L.) Willd., **Acacia pharnesiana** is even more active.

**Ananas conosus**, **pineapple**, piña.

**Carica papaya**, papaya

**Castilla elastica**, **Rubber**, and I do NOT mean as a prophylactic!

**Curcubita pepo**, **Squash**, pumpkin, should be checked as a possible supplement.

**Eryngium carline**, Chichicahaozton o hierba amarga de hojas aserradas.

**Erythrina species**, Coral tree,

**Justica pectorialis**

**Licaria peckii**, Sosni, Tz’otz ni, boil the bark; Tikal aguada.

**Passiflora edulis**, passion fruit, maracuya.

**Persea Americana**, **Avocado**, aguacate.

**Pimenta dioica**, allspice

**Piqueria trinervia** Cav., Family: Compositae

**Piper auritum**, hoja santa Mecaxchitl, acuyo (Rain 2004:47), Xmak’ulan

**Smilax officinalis**, also has side effects, Sarsaparilla,

**Smilax spinosa** (Chizmar 2009:295-296), Web sites list Sarsaparilla (**Smilax officinalis**) as an aphrodisiac. Suzanne Cook lists **Smilax domingensis** as an ingredient for a fermented beverage, citing Duran 1999.

**Tomato**, tomate, **Solanum lycopersicon**; or husk tomato, **Physalis ixocarpa**.

**Damiana**, **Turnera diffusa** or **Turnera aphrodisiaca**. Vanilla planifolia, Vanilla, if cacao is an aphrodisiac, then vanilla flavored cocoa should really get things going, especially with an avocado appetizer and papaya desert.
Honey (now you know why a marriage celebration is called a HONEYmoon).

I am naturally curious about these foods, but I think that if you need supplements to get things going that is perhaps a hint that the union is not realistic. However since the Aztec emperor had more females in his harem than most Middle East rulers I can perhaps understand that he needed a bit of chemical assistance.

Details and discussion you can find on www.mexconnect.com/articles/2132-food-for-valentine-s-day-mexican-native-aphrodisiacs

http://antorcha-op.org/images/ANTORCHA%20%20IV.-2.pdf Gregorio Martin lists all medicinal plants usable by females in pre-Columbian Aztec culture; not limited or even focused on aphrodisiac plants. Nonetheless plants to increase libido are itemized as Apetito venéreo

For other countries, a good list is on www.goddessherself.com/plants.htm. The spelling is off for most entries but as a list it is more accessible (on the Internet) than that of Ratsch.

We do not recommend trying anything on this list which is not a traditional plant available in urban supermarket vegetable area.

We are preparing a tabulated list to suggest which plants are inadequate to be true aphrodisiacs (such as cacao, avocado, tomato and pineapple) and which are really significant drugs (which we can estimate, as we do not try them ourselves, but we are pretty good at estimating results).

And yes, cacao by itself is NOT an aphrodisiac unless you and your partner already want to interact and you are using anything as an excuse. Cacao may be what the Aztec emperor used to provide stamina for his exercise, but by itself I am not convinced whatsoever that cacao is an aphrodisiac whatsoever.

In any event, in addition to side-effects from plants to increase libido, be wary of personal illnesses that you can get infected with from your partner!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FLAAR List</th>
<th>List from Ratsch</th>
<th>Aztec List (but for females only)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acacia cornigera</td>
<td>Acacia cornigera</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agave americana</td>
<td></td>
<td>Commeilina coelestis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ananas comosus</td>
<td>Ananas comosus</td>
<td>Cyperus articulatus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argefone mexicana</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Carica papaya</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cacalia cordifolia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Capsicum annuum</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castilla elastica</td>
<td>Castilla elastica</td>
<td>Castilla elastica</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FLAAR List List from Ratsch Aztec List (but for females only)

coconut
Squash (seeds),
Eryngium carline
Eryngium carline
Eryngium carline
Erythrina species.
.sunflower
Sweet potato, camote
Ipomoea violacea
Ipomoea violacea
Justice pectorials
Licaria peckii
Licaria peckii
Tres puntos
Neurolaena lobata
Passiflora edulis
avocado
Persea americana
Persea americana
Persea americana
Allspice, pimenta gorda
Pimento dioica
Pimento dioica
Piper amalago, mecaoxchitl
Piper auritum
Piper auritum
Piper sanctum
Piqueria trinervia
Rivea corymbosa
Smilax sp.
Smilax sp.
Solandra brevicalyx
Tomato
Unknown by this name today
Tonallae alumna
Tonallae alumna
Turnera diffusa
Turnera diffusa
Vanilla
Vanilla planifolia
Vanilla planifolia
Honey
Honey
Plants or trees that are used to produce incense

- **Artemisia Mexicana** (Ratsch 2005: 73)
- **Bursera microphylla**, Copal pom.
- **Bursera simaruba**, Palo-jiote, muliche, indio desnudo.

- **Castilla elastica**, Rubber, hule.
- **Crotan sanguifluus**, Croton (cochinal croton) red tree sap (Popol Vuh),
- **Dahlia variabilis**, 
- **Hymenaea courbaril** (Stross, UTexas course outline).
- **Liquidambar styraciflua**, Liquidambar, arbol de estoraque.
- **Manilkara achras**, chicle, chico zapote
- **Myroxylon** species, Balsam.
- **Pinus pseudostrobu**, Pinus oocarpa, pine resin as incense,
- **Protium** copal, pom, copal incense
- **Quercus** species, oak tree
- **Stevia eupatoria**; more often medicinal than incense
- **Tagetes erecta**, marigold, flor de muerte, pericón blanco, yerba anis,
- **Tagetes micrantha**, licorice marigold (Gernot Katzer spice pages).
- **Vanilla planifolia**

Bitumen was also used as an incense in some parts of Mexico, but this is not a plant product.

A latex of the stem of a plant, Tanaecium nocturnum, (hutkh in Lacandon Maya language) of the Bignonia Family is used as a vulcanizing agent for making rubber figures for the Lacandon Maya (Bruce 1974; Ratsch 1985:128; Psychotropia.com web site). I list this here as rubber is also used, to some degree, as an offering to the gods and could be considered a form of incense.
Plants used in divination (in addition to incense)

Muc ceh. An herb used in witchcraft. Standley, Bolles; but no identification of what species.

Bunchosia swartziana Griseb and Bunchosia glandulosa are used in ritual cleansing ceremonies by shamens in Yucatan (YucatanAdventure.com).

In addition to incense, alcohol is used in divination; see that category (alcohol).

Plants smoked

The Aztecs flavored their tobacco with

- Ear flower
- Bitumen
- Vanilla
- Piper amalago
- Mushrooms
- Fern or narcotic root
- Uacaxochitl, Xanathosom sp or Phyllodendron affine
- And other plants not yet identified by ethnobotanists

(Winter 2000: 301, citing Anderson and Dibble 1954:69)

Other sources suggest they flavored their tobacco also with Liquidambar, Liquidambar styraciflua L.

The list that I have harvested from a dozen sources is now available in this 11th edition. The citations will be in the eventual PDF; illustrations will be in our eventual web page on our www.Maya-ethnobotany.org. My interest in smoking is because at age 19, while a student at Harvard, I discovered a 9th century Maya vase showing a man smoking. He has a big smile on his face and is clearly very content. This vase is on exhibit in the archaeology museum of the Parque Nacional Tikal, El Peten, Guatemala.

Many plants have different parts which each have a different use. So a single species can be in several use groups in this FLAAR Report.

Also each use group can include multiple uses: so a “flavoring” can also be medicinal; other flavorings can be smoked with (or instead of) tobacco.

I am finding so many Guatemalan plants that are listed as being smoked by the local Maya, that for the 8th edition update of this report, I added a use-group for “plants smoked.” We are now at the 11th edition and by 2013 will have a further update.

I would not be surprised if some incense is as much for the participants to inhale as it is smoke for the gods. The large cigars sold in some local Maya markets for shamanic usage, are, to some degree, more “incense.”
Amapola (written as mapola by Parker, Trees of Guatemalan, p. 101), *Bermouillia flammea*, chunte’ (Itza), Yucatec Maya wakut (lucid consciousness web site) or uacut (Parker 2008). If the seed pod were found carried in anyone’s hand on a Maya vase, all iconographers would call it cacao (due to the flutes).

*Byrsonima crassifolia*, Nance tree leaves are used to wrap tobacco to make cigars.

*Guarumo*, *Cecropia obtusifolia*, Standley and Steyermark (1946:22). Guarumo is smoked in Alta Verapaz, MacVean indicates that *Cecropia peltata* is smoked in Peten (2003:48), also known as Guarumo throughout Guatemala and trumpet tree in Belize.

*Diphysea carthagenerensis* Jacq., wood being “possibly” used in Jocotan area (Chiquimula) for tobacco pipes (Parker 2008:455). Parker rarely cites a single statement directly (in her thousand pages). She only lists books and articles at the end of each chapter...

*Dipteryx panamensis* seed is listed in a Tico ethnobotanical dictionary as flavoring tobacco (on-line).

*Dipteryx odorata* (Aubl.) Willd. Is listed as an additive for tobacco and snuff (Ratsch 2005:828). If a tree has the name “odorata” you can understand why. Naturally the question is whether the Classic Maya used either of these *Dipteryx* species. Parker lists four species for Guatemala (2008:455-456).

*Dorstenia contrajerva*, Contra yerba, tusilla, roots flavor tobacco Tico ethnobotanical dictionary as flavoring tobacco (on-line).


*Liquidambar styraciflua* L., *Liquidamber*, is used to flavor tobacco (Trees in the Life of the Maya World, p. 145). However this was primarily among the Aztec of Central Mexico.

*balsamo*, *Myroxylon balsamum*, powder added to tobacco (Nations 2006:96)

*Tobacco*, *Nicotiana tabacum*

*Wild tobacco*, *Nicotiana rustica*

*Piper auritum Kunth*, hoja santa, a common spice in Guatemala

*zapote leaves*, probably *Pouteria sapote*, Maya History and Religion, Thompson p. 109

*guayaba fruit tree leaves* to wrap tobacco, *Psidium guajava*, Fuentes y Guzman as quoted by Thompson page 109.

*Quararibea funebris*, Rosita de cacao


*Pericon*, marigold, *Tagetes lucida*, flor de muerto (seller of cigars for Maximon said there were seven ingredients, one of which was pericon). Pericon is also used by the Huichol (Sierra, “Plantas, Ofrendas y Rituales en el Centro de México”)

*Turbina corymbosa*, Morning glory.

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Other plants associated with Tobacco Use

*Merremia umbellata* (L.) Hallier, family Convolvulaceae, the vine is used to hold tobacco to hang for drying (Standley and Williams 1970:75).
Mushrooms & Fungi
Morales, Bran, Caceres, and Flores, of the Proyecto Hongos Comestibles de Guatemala, Diversidad, Cultivo y Nomenclatura Vernácula studied in all the Highland departments of Guatemala. The resulting list is impressive. It would be nice to see comparable lists for the lowlands: Peten and Alta Verapaz.

Since their list is available on-line (just Google the title from our bibliography) there is no need to repeat their list here.

These biologists are from the Departamento de Microbiología, Escuela de Química Biológica, Instituto de investigaciones Químicas y Biológicas, Facultad de Ciencias Químicas y Farmacia, Dirección General de Investigación, Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala.

Trees that produce blood-red sap

At least one blood red sap is a major feature in the Popol Vuh. I thus suggest that all trees which produce a blood-red sap are worth further study, since fake blood could have been of interest during some ceremonies. Of course the Maya also had achiote available to make things look bloody.

Below are the "blood" trees listed in the indeed of Trees of Guatemala (Parker 2008: 1028).

Sangre
(Parker 2008: 576), *Compsoneura sprucei*

578, *Virola koschnyi*; other authors list as synymnom for *Virola guatemalensis*.

Sangre de chuco
692, *Bocconia arborea*.

Sangre de drago
271, *Croton draco* Schltdl. Other species of *Croton* also have red sap.

474, *Pterocarpus officinalis*. This is the most probable tree for the virgin’s heart sacrifice of the Popol Vuh.

*Pterocarpus hayesii* Hemsl I am estimating is a synnymnom for *Pterocarpus officinalis* (Jacq). Both arry the popular name palo de sangre or palo de drago. It is very common in Mesoamerica for many totally different species to have the same identical local name.

I am estimating these are not the same tree as *Virola koschnyi* Warb.

*Virola koschnyi* Warb., synonym for *Virola guatemalensis*. But not in Parker’s index under any sangre de drago (listed under sangre alone and drago alone!. Nonetheless, listed by other authors as sangre de drago. Seeds used to flavor cacao.

Sangre de perro
271, same as one of the plants known as sangre de drago, *Croton draco* Schltdl.

350, *Vismia camparaguey* Sangre de Toro
693, *Bocconia frutescens*

733, *Ruprechtia costata* llora sangre
271, *Croton draco* Schltdl, sangre de drago
274, *Croton xalapensis* Kunth, (Parker 2008:274); Uphof 1968 for cleaning teeth)

414, *Swartzia cubensis*.


692, *Bocconia arborea*,
Plants used for medicine

There are hundreds and hundreds of plants used for medicine in the Maya areas of Mesoamerica. Since there are already dozens of monographs on pre-Columbian medicinal plants, I do not try to keep up with the huge number of species used for medicine. Some of these informative monographs are by:

- Appel, M.
- Arvigo and co-authors
- Berlin E., and Brent Berlin
- Caceres, Armando
- Gonzales, Julio
- Lee, Sandra
- Martinez, Máximino
- Mendieta, R and S. del Amo
- Roys, Ralph
- Villatoro, Marina

Yes, I am interested in medicinal plants, but first we have hundreds of sacred and edible plants to photograph and then more hundreds of utilitarian plants. With funding we can achieve more, with no specific funding, we cover as much as we can with long hours at nights and on weekends.

Please realize that many plants are toxic, even if “edible” or “medicinal.” We do not recommend trying any plant for any purpose.

Some of the plants listed below I harvested from the book Campeche en Flor and Guatemala Arboles Magicos y Notables and lists of plants elsewhere. To complete the list of medicinal plants would take longer than all other categories put together, so should be a separate opus and separate project. We would really enjoy doing a project on medicinal plants of the Maya together with a medical-botanist.

For Guatemala there are two editions of an excellent monograph on medicinal plants authored and/or edited by medical-botanist Armando Caceres. He is also author and co-author of scores of helpful articles in peer-reviewed journals.

**Astillanthus viminalis** (Jardin ethnobotanico, Oaxaca)

**Bourreria huanita**, **Esquisuchil**

**Byroniana crassifolia** HBK., **nance**, edible fruit

**Caesalpinia pulcherrima**

**Calophyllum brasiliense** árbol de leche, Santa María

**Cassia alata**, **candle bush**.

**Cassia grandis**, pulp has purgative properties (Fieldiana botany, vol. 5 page 116).

**Cestrum nocturnum**, night-blooming

Jasmine, huele de noche

(very common in Guatemalan gardens).


**Cerantherodendron pentalactylon**, **Canak**, arbol de las manitas

**Cecropia aesculifolia**, **pochote**

**Dialium guianense**, **Wild Tamarind**

**Erythrina fusca**, Pito extraniero,

**Glycinea sepium**, **Madre de cacao**

**Guaiacum sanctum**, **Guayacan**

**Guazuma tomentosa**

**Guazuma ulmifolia**, **Cualote**

**Haematoxylum campechianum**, **Logwood**, palo de Campeche, also makes dye

**Hymenaea courbaril**, **Guapinol**.

**Liquidambar styraciflua L., Liquidambar**.

**Magnolia**, several species, but very limited in the eco-systems in Guatemala.

**Malmea depressa**, root

**Sea bean, Morenia discoidesperma** (www.beachbeans.com)

**Mimosa tenuiflora** and other species (Ratsch 2005:362-365)

**Momordica charantia** (may not be pre-Columbian), Sorosi, fruit of a vine, **Cerasee**, pods orange or yellow; Izabal.

**Nectandra** species, family Lauraceae, palo oloroso

**Passiflora foetida** (Wikipedia)

**Piper auritum** Kunth, hoja santa, a common spice in Guatemala

**Pithecolobium dulce** (Jardin ethnobotanico, Oaxaca)

**Psidium guajava**, **Guava**, **Guayaba**. Guayava; also spelled (or mispelled) **Psidium guayava**
**Rhoeo discolor**

*Sambucus Mexicana, Sauco,*

*Simarouba glauca, Zapatero (Peten), Negrito (Belize), Paradise Tree, Bitterwood*

*Stemmadenia donnel smithii (Rose) Woodson, Huevos de caballo, common in Izabal and Peten and elsewhere in Maya area of Mesoamerica. Flowers during late April.*

*Stevia eupatoria*

*Tradescantia spathacea*

*Urera baccifera, chichicaste*

**Plants to produce colorants (dye)**

The Maya used color for ceramics, murals, clothing material, and cosmetics. Color was also used as an ingredient in food, such as achioti to color cacao red. Below most of the colors are for dye for cotton for clothing. Two thousand years ago the dye would also have been used for fabrics from other plants such as maguey.

We spent eight days in the Lake Atitlan area studying plants for dye, so for this umpteenth edition we have been able to add many new plants. We cite other authors only when we have not found the plant ourselves, or when a citation would be helpful. But the goal of this list is not to collect citations; the goal of our project is to find, photograph, and make available high-resolution digital images of utilitarian plants of the Maya.

In a future edition we will do our best to divide colorants into colorants for food (sauco, *Sambucus* species), colorants for clothing (cotton, bark paper cloth, etc), and colorants for both food and clothing (achioti). In the meantime, for the 13th edition (May-June 2014) we list the plants as generic colorants. Some are also tannins.

By far the best book on colorants of the Maya is by Olga Reiche, 2014, “Plantas Tintoreas.” We will update our list when we do more comparisons with her many years of careful research.

**Achiote, Bixa orellana;** actually there are at least two species or variants in Alta Verapaz. Achiote is grown and used as a dye for cotton in San Juan de Laguna, Lake Atitlan.

**Aloe, sabila** is not an indigenous plant, so should not be included.

**Acacia farnesiana** (L.) Willd., widely elsewhere in Guatemala and common in lower Motagua Valley. Known in British Honduras as “cuntich” (Maya) and “cashaw”; “cankilizche,” “subinche” (Yucatan, Maya); “aroma,” “huizache” (Campeche); “quisache” (Chiapas); “espinho ruco” (Salvador). The shrub, usually called “espinho branco,” is abundant or dominant over large areas of Guatemala, particularly in the lower Motagua Valley, some parts of the Oriente, and in Quiche and Huehuetenango. It is more or less distinctive in habit, and conspicuous because of the abundant white spines. (Standley and Steyermark 1946:9).

**Ilamo bark, Alnus jorullensis or Alnus acuminata.** Used as a dye for cotton in San Juan de Laguna, Lake Atitlan.

**Malanga, Alocasa species** (Mendez 2008:75).

**Annona reticulata, custard apple,** leaves and branches produce blue or black dye.

**Apoplanesia paniculata** Presl., *Madre de flecha.* The Maya names of Yucatan are “kiik-che” and “chulul.” The latter signifies “bow,” and the wood is said to have been used commonly among the Mayas for making bows. The name given the tree in Zacapa evidently alludes to a similar use there. Apparently the same use was spread into remote regions, for in western Mexico the tree is often called “palo de arco.” The bark is reported to yield a yellow dye. The tree is abundant around Zacapa, where at the end of the rainy season the trees are conspicuous for a few days because of their dense masses of white flowers (Standley and Steyermark 1946:165).

**Arrabidaea species** (Standley & Dahlgren 1931:353)

**Chilca, Bacchalis salicifolia** (Mendez 2008:75).
**Achiote, Bixa orellana;** actually there are at least two species or variants in Alta Verapaz. Achiote is grown and used as a dye for cotton in San Juan de Laguna, Lake Atitlan.

**Nance, Byrsonima crassifolia,** occasionally grown and used as a dye for cotton in San Juan de Laguna, Lake Atitlan.

**Chipilin, Crotalaria longirostrata,** grown and used as a dye for cotton in San Juan de Laguna, Lake Atitlan.

**Caesalpinia coriaria** (Jacq.) Wild. (Standley and Steyermark 1946:99).

**Caesalpinia vesicaria** L. (Standley and Steyermark 1946:104).

**Caesalpinia violacea** (Mill.) Standl. (Standley and Steyermark 1946:104).

**Cassia Tora** L., frijolillo, seeds are used as a mordant to dye cloth blue (Standley and Steyermark 1946:129-130).

**Cedrela mexicana, Cedro** (Mendez 2008:75).

**Fustic, mora, Maclura tinctoria** (L.) D. Don ex Steud., synonym is Chlorophora tinctoria, dye; wood utilitarian.

**Diphyssa floribunda** Peyritsch, Palo Amarillo, Canquixte, Qu’ix-c’an-te (Standley and Steyermark 1946:245; Aujęx Itzep 2010). A caserio of Sacatepequez is named after this tree, Guachipilin.

**Palo de pito, coral tree, Tzite, Erythrina coralloidendron and/or Erythrina berteroaena.** Another species is *Erythrina Americana* (Ratsch 2005:234 and Mendez 2008:75). Pito is grown and used as a dye for cotton in San Juan de Laguna, Lake Atitlan. There are many many different species of *Erythrina* growing throughout much of Guatemala.

**Eupatorium albicaule** Schultz Bip. Old Woman’s Walking-stick, Soscha, Xoltexuc (Maya), Putunin. Tine-cordel (Honduras)...In Honduras the plant is employed for imparting a green dye to twine, cloth, etc. (Standley and Steyermark 1946:138).

**Eysenhardtia adenostylis** Baill. (Standley and Steyermark 1946:259).

**Dalea nutans** (Cav.) Willd. Called “escoba colorada” in Yucatan, and the Maya name is reported as “mucuyche.” The fruits exude a yellow juice when crushed between the fingers. The roots with lime are reported to yield a red dye, and a yellow coloring substance also is extracted from them. Bunches of the stems and branches are much used about the houses as rough brooms or brushes, hence the common name “escobilla” applied to this plant as well as to other members of the genus. *D. nutans* occurs in great abundance in central Guatemala, often forming a dense growth in cornfields (Standley and Steyermark 1946:214).  

**Diospyros digyna, Black zapote,**

**Genipa caruto,** Jagua (Standley & Dahlgren 1931:367). Another *Genipa* species is arayol.

**Genista tinctoria,** (Parker 2008: 447)

**Madre de cacao, Gliricidia sepium;** Ralph Roys (1967: 161) lists this as cante, yellow dye tree.

**Guazuma ulmifolia**

**Haematoxylon Brasiletto Karst., Palo de Brazil,** Dry rocky brushy hillsides, 200-1,200 meters; Zacapa; Chiquimula; El Progreso; Baja Verapaz; Guatemala (Fiscal); Huehuetenango (region of Santa Ana Huista), Western Mexico. Usually a shrub of 2-3 meters, sometimes a tree as much as 9 meters high, the stout branches often tortuous and armed with long hard spines as much as 2 cm. long, the trunk crooked and deeply fluted, branching from near the base, the bark grayish or medium brown. he shrub is abundant on the dry hills and plains through the lower Motagua Valley, especially in the region between El Rancho and Salama, where it is easy to recognize because of the deeply fluted trunk and the abundance of persistent characteristic pods, unlike those of any other member of the Leguminosae (Standley and Steyermark 1946:138).

**Haematoxylon campechianum, Palo de tinta, Palo de Campeche,** logwood. Common alongside rivers, lakes, and any moist area of Peten and elsewhere in the warm Lowlands.

**Indigo, Indigofera suffruticosa** (plus several other potential species).

**Indigofera Thibaudiana DC.**

**Indigofera tinctoria** L.

**Jacobiania spicigera, Añil, Anile** (Standley & Dahlgren 1931:360)

**Justicia tinctorea, Sacatinta,** grown and used as a dye for cotton in San Juan de Laguna, Lake Atitlan.

**Leonurus cardiaca, Cola de leon** (Mendez 2008:75).

**Lonchocarpus rugosus** Benth. Called “canasin” (Maya) and “black cabbage-bark” in British Honduras; “cantzin,” “canansin” (Yucatan, Maya); “masicaran,” “masicarón” (Honduras); “chapulaltapa” (Salvador) (Standley and Steyermark 1946:283).

**Mucuna argyrophylla** Standl. Ojo de venado; Ojo de toro; Ojo de caballo; Ojo de buey. A vine. This or one of the other species gives a very permanent and black dye. Combined with the scale insect called “aijshi” and alum, it affords a superior black gloss used by the Indians of Rabinal for decorating their famous jicaras or cups made from the fruits of Crescentia (Standley and Steyermark 1946:302).

**Mucuna Sloanei Fawc. & Rendle (Standley and Steyermark 1946:302).**

**Tobacco,** grown and used as a dye for cotton in San Juan de Laguna, Lake Atitlan.

**Persea Americana, Avocado,** grown and used as a dye for cotton in San Juan de Laguna, Lake Atitlan.
Phytolacca icosandra, Jaboncillo. Be aware that several unrelated plants are called jaboncillo.

Pouteria sapota, Mamey zapote, synonyms: Achras mammosa, Lucuma mammosa, and I estimate that what Mendez (2008:75) calls Pouteria mammosa should really be Pouteria sapota. This fruit tree has multiple uses for the Maya, past and present.


Punica granatum Granada (Mendez 2008:75).

Quercus species, Encino. This tree grows at altitudes above Lake Atitlan and is widely known locally to be used as a dye.

Rhizophora mangle, (Red) Mangrove, mangle, dye.

Simarouba glauca, Zapatero (Peten), Negrito (Belize), Paradise Tree, Bitterwood. Also used for medicine, and the oil also for soap. The comment on colorants is from Joshi and Joshi page 7.

Tagetes erecta, Flor de Muerto, marigold. This flower has multiple uses in Maya culture.

Lundell adds another six:

- Syckingia salvadorensis (standl.) Standl. Chacahuante, chacatemuch, palo colorado. Also spelled Sickingia (Standley and Record 1936:391).
- Indigofera suffruticosa Mill. Chob, añil
- Morinda yucatanensis Greenm. Xhoypoc, bejuco piñoncillo
- Caesalpinia platyloba Wats. Chacte
- Ditaxis tintoria (Millsp.) Pax & Hoffm. Tinta roja

Additional colorants are listed in the recent monograph by Houston et al. (2009:1003-1009) on ancient Maya color. Their list is helpful, but provides no photographs of the actual plants. Nonetheless the amount of weeks in a library and/or on the Internet to prepare their list is impressive.

Other colors are listed in reports related to projects of Hideo Kojima. We have also found more plants for colorants in the book by Manuel Mendez. So we put all these in Appendix D. An excellent source of knowledge of Maya plants which produce colorants is the new book in press by Olga Reiche.

What is worth noting is that no one single monograph lists all the colorants; for example, the informative book by Manuel Mendez, based on field work in San Juan la Laguna, misses nance, which we found being used by the oldest and largest of the eco-plant dye associations in the town. The founders of this association are pictured frequently in his booklet. Finally, in April 2014, a monograph on Maya area colorants finally appeared.

It would make a great dissertation for a student to go out, find each and every plant in the list of Houston et al., Mendez, Kojima, etc and record a recipe for each plant, and show actual color samples. Actually one person has done this already for colors for weaving (decades before the book on color was conceived) for scores of local plants but it has been over 40 years (literally) since I saw the original (one copy is all that exists) in a library in Na Bolom, San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico.
Plants used to make ink

This is a new category, for the January 2013 edition. We will add more plants as we distinguish between plant dye for textiles (for clothing) and plant colorants for ink.

*Acacia Farnesiana* (L.) Willd., (Standley and Steyermark 1946:9).

Plant substances for cosmetics

See also separate section on medicinal plants, and on colorants. We are developing an additional theme section on perfumes (below). Since I do not use cosmetics or perfumes I am not an expert in whether to list both in one theme, or separate them; so I will have them provisionally as two separate themes.

*Charcoal*, for black

*Cochneal*, for red colorant. These are insects but their host is a plant, *Opuntia* species.

Plants (usually flowers) used for perfume

This is a new category for the January 2013 edition. We have updated this for the June 2014 edition. We will add more flowers to this list as time and funding allows. For example, most of the saps and resins used for incense can sometimes be used as perfume. We are interested in natural perfumes (used or usable by Mayan people of Mesoamerica), not manufactured chemicals.

For the category I use the word perfume to start with, but I also mean any plant (usually the flower) which has a fragrant enough aroma so if you walk near the plant you can already notice the aroma. For example, if we are 10 to 15 meters from some magnolia trees in the forests of the Nebaj-Chajul-El-Quiche area (Finca La Perla) we can notice there are magnolia trees in flower (these are rare species of native magnolia; not the other magnolia species planted for their giant flowers).

*Brugmansia* and *huele de noche* are both plants whose aroma is easily noticed within 5 meters of the plant. If you put you nose up to the actual flower you may receive more chemicals that you really ought to be asking for. So we do not recommend trying this, especially not with most plants of the family Solanaceae.

I would also investigate most of the flavorings for cacao, flavorings for tobacco, such as *Quararibea funebris*, pericon (*Tagetes lucida*, a marigold but tiny flower and very different appearance than flor de Muerto kind of marigold), and other plants.

*Acacia Farnesiana* (L.) Willd., (Standley and Steyermark 1946:9), now known as *Vachellia farnesiana*.

*Hymenaea courbaril*, *Guapinol*, should be studied as a potential perfume.

Linaloe is unclear whether it is native or originally brought in, because today the main source is India. But it is potentially originally from Mexico.

*Magnolia*, several species. We are actively searching for *Magnolia* and *Talauma* species in Guatemala. These trees are near extinction and can be found only in extremely remote areas.

*Plumeria* species, flor de Mayo (and many other local names, such as fangipani); two are well known: *Plumeria rubra* and *Plumeria alba*.

*Polianthes tuberosa*, Flor de Nardo, one of the more fragrant flowers of Guatemala. We grow it in the FLAAR ethnobotanical garden. Main habitat in Guatemala is Costa Sur, where it is cultivated (not wild).

*Turbina corymbosa* and synonym *Rivea corymbosa*, known as ololiuqui among the Aztec; family Convolvulaceae, looks like a morning glory to some degree.

*Vanilla planifolia*


Plants for decoration (necklace beads and comparable)

*Erythrina*, various species.

*Ormosia*, various species.

*Macromeria guatemalensis* I. M. Johnston, Itamo real (San Marcos); te de monte (Huehuetenango) (Gibson in Standley and Williams 1970: 153-155).

*Rhynchosia pyramidalis*

nipple fruit, bright orange fruit which looks like cow’s udders, is sold as Christmas decoration in Guatemala.

Plants to make clothing

amate, Ficus species, bark paper was used as clothing in addition to as paper

cotton, Gossypium hirsutum, is native to Americas as other cotton was in India and other parts of the Old World also. More than 15 species of native cotton are listed for Mexico alone. Native cotton is also known for Peru.

agave, especially in areas where these plants grow.

Maguey, Furcraea species
Several other plants can also produce thread or cloth.

Plant material used for basketry, ropes, mats

The diversity of materials used for basketry is considerable. Each part of Guatemala has different materials (since their local eco-system is different). So this segment of the list will continue to grow.

Another dozen plants used for making baskets are in the FLAAR Report on Guatemalan basketry, available as a PDF from our www.maya-archaeology.org. In the meantime here is an introductory list of about two dozen plants used for making petates, baskets, and cordage.

Capulin, Trema micrantha; bark produces cordage (Parker 2008:928).

Capulin, Muntingia calabura, fiber from bark for baskets (MacVean 2003:62).

Carludovica palmate, can be used for making hats.

Cattail, Typha angustifolia (Lundell)

Cymbopetalum penduliflorum, the dried flowers are called Orejuelas and is major flavoring for cacao; bark is used to make rope (Parker 2008:887).

Desmoncus quasillarus, stalks used to make baskets (Palenque area)

Vogl et al. 2002: 637

Desmoncus orthocanthos Mart., bayal, baskets, even walls of buildings are made with this remarable palm vine plant.

Guano, Sabal Mexicana; thatch palm, but also for hats and mats (Lundell)

Guazuma ulmifolia, Pixoy (Lundell; Parker 2008:889).

Helicteres guazumifolia, fiber used for cordage (Parker 2008:889)

Wild cotton, Hibiscus pemambucensis,

Mano de leon, Hampea stipitata.

Mimbre, Monstera pertusa, peel the roots for material for baskets (MacVean 2003:32)

Nance, Byrsonima crassifolia, strong fiber (Bye and Linares 1990:158)

Philodendron, Philodendron sp., roots used for baskets; even in pre-Columbian times (Tikal, Early Classic burial; Moholy-Nagy 2001: 91).

Sisal, maguey, henequen, Agave sisal, Agave fourcroydes

Maguey, Furcraea species. There are many species.

Tule, Typha dominguensis

Lundell also mentions the following:

Aechmea magdalenae André. Cham, piñuela

Sida acuta Burm. Chichibe

Abutilon lignosum (Cav.) Don. Zackiu, yaxholche

Muntingia calabura L. Capulin (Chizmar 2009:244-246)

Heliocarpus spp.

Hibiscus tiliaeus L. Xtolol

Belotia campbelli Sprangue. Moho

Plants for other utilitarian use

Aceituno, wild pigeon plum Hirtella racemosa, H. americana, H. triandra

Bottle gourd, Lagenaria siceraria

Croton xalapensis Kunth, (Parker 2008:274); Uphof 1968 for cleaning teeth)

Curatella americana, leaves used for sandpaper (Lundell 1938)

Dalea nutans (Cav.) Willd. Called “escoba colorada” in Yucatan (Standley and Steyermark 1946:214).

Escoba palm, Crotophila argentea, common in Peten; easily to identify due to medium size and lower trunk covered in spines. Escoba is the Spanish name for broom.

Crotophila stauracantha, Belize (Ford 2008:Table 3).
Belolia Mexicana, bark to tie broom material together (Vogl et al. 2002: 637)

Mangifera indica, broomstick (Vogl et al. 2002: 637)

Ochroma lagopus to carry heavy loads (Vogl et al. 2002: 638)

Cotton-like fiber from Ceiba, for pillows

Ochroma pyramidale, balsa

Typha angustifolia

Thrinax (chit) are all mentioned by Lundell 1938.

Arthrostylidium pillieri and Arthrostylidium spinosum

are used for fish spears (Lundell 1938)

Utilitarian Use: Tanning

Four trees, whose bark is used for tanning

(Rhizophora mangle L. (tapche, red mangrove),
Curatella americana L. (cahe), also
(Pithecolobium abicans (Kunth) Berth. (chimay),
Albizia lundellii Standl.

I would add (for tanning)

Acacia Farnesiana (L.) Willd., (Standley and Steyermark 1946:9).
Caesalpinia coriaria (Jacq.) Willd. (Standley and Steyermark 1946:99).
Nance, Byrrsonima crassifolia (Bye and Linares 1990:158).
Bocconia arborea (Parker 2008:692)
Pithecolobium dulce (Roxb.) Benth. (Standley and Steyermark 1946:73).

Parker (2008:442) spells the genus Pithecolobium, and says P. londuzii is used to tan leather in Huehuetenango.

Utilitarian use: soap

I have seen comments on about four main plants that can produce soap: one is the Soap tree, *Sapindus saponaria*. As I did more research, I found additional plants which can be used by local people to produce soap.

Cassia grandis, ashes of the wood used for making soap (Fieldiana botany, vol. 5 page116). This statement copied by Parker 2008:401. Cassia is also used to flavor cacao.

Ceiba pentandra, seeds are edible; oil may be used to burn in lamps; seeds also may be used to make soap (Walter de Gruyter, encyclopedia of biology).

Chlorogalum species is another possible plant to produce soap.

*Sapindus saponaria* has more uses than I ever imagined. One use is as soap.

*Ipomoea murucoides* Roem. & Schult. Although in same genus as morning glory vines, this is a tree. It is common and conspicuous in the central region, especially about Antigua, where it is often planted for living fence posts or for hedges. It is more abundant in the west, and is conspicuous on the arid hills about Sacapulas in Quiche'. The trees are conspicuous because of their white trunks and branches, which look as if they had been used as roosting places by birds. The abundant large white flowers are very handsome (Standley and Williams 1970:43). They give the following local names: Siete camisas; tonche; tutumuzco; tutumuste; siete pellejos; tutumucuavo; palo bianco; siete capas; tutus-muscua; tutumucual.

*Jatropha curcas*, physic nut, oil for soap and other uses. Toxic as food. One of several hosts for the cochiniella insect which is used for varnish-like substance (MacVean 2003:66).

During Christmas week 2012, the weavers of San Juan la Laguna, Lake Atitlan, told me they used *jabanillo*, *Phytolacca icosandra*, as soap many decades ago. Today they use this large bush as a source of dye for coloring their cotton weaving.

*Sapindus saponaria*, Soap tree.

*Solanum mammosum*, Nipple fruit, Cow’s Udders; poisonous but has potential use as soap. The whole fruit is used as Christmas decoration in Guatemala City. A close relative of this plant, with no nipple fruit, is a weed in several parts of Guatemala, especially Peten.

*Sterculia apetala*, Castano. It is interesting that three of the plants used to make soap are also usable as a spice for cacao.

I will expand this section as time allows; presently our team is working on finding all the palo de la garito, sangre de drago trees, and all plants for condiments.

Utilitarian use: poisons

Lundell lists four plants used for fish poison

- Paulullina,
- Jacquinia,
- Serjania,
- Salmea
Plants to produce Insecticide

Annona species (Michael 2000:129)

Lonchocarpus castilloi (OFI-CATIE 668)

Magnolia should also be checked to see if any species in Guatemala can be used as an insecticide. Cano et al suggest Magnolia dealbata of Mexico has this potential.

Tobacco

The number of Mesoamerican plant species used for insecticide is quite large. We will provide more coverage of this in future editions.

Plant materials used in constructing houses, (Palm)

Asterogyne martiana

Lancetillo, Astrocaryum mexicanum

Copernicia argentata

Corozo, cohune, Attalea cohune, thatch palms. Also look at Orbignya cohune (MacVean 2003:106-107).

Corozo, Attalea butyracea

Guano Palm, Sabel mauritiformis, Sabal Mexicana; thatch palms,

Sabal pumos

Sabal uresana

Sabal yapa

Santa Maria, lemonwood, Calophyllum brasiliense

Bayal, palm, but a vine, Desmoncus schippii used for wall material not thatch.

Plus other palm tree species; but the above are the most common in the Peten area

Brahea aculeate, palmilla

Brahea dulcis, capulin

Gaussia maya

Roystonea regia

Thrinax radiata

Grass, Imperata contracta, occasionally used for thatch (Lundell 1938) (not often in Peten, where palm is used most often).

Plus other palm tree species; but several of the above (guano and corozo) are the most common in the Peten area.

Plant materials used in constructing houses, fences, etc (other than palms)

You could probably find scores and scores of trees used for construction of houses, furniture, and even more for building fences. I list here only a few (later updates will list more). The purpose of this first edition is primarily to show the plant categories and give a general idea of how the long-range project is being organized.

Andira inermis, Almendro (Peten), Cabbage bark (Belize).

Barba Jolote, Pithecellobium arboreum, Cojoba arborea

Bucut, Cassia grandis (OFI-CATIE: 439); also soap, and medicine.

Bullhop (Peten), Bullhoof (Belize), Drypetes brownii,

Spanish Cedar, Cedro Cedrela odorata, Cedrela Mexicana

Cedrillo, Guarea glabra

Chichipate (Peten), Billy Webb (Belize) Aicosmium panamensis, Sweetia panamensis.

craboo Byrsonima crassifolia

Fustic, Maclura tinctoria (L.) D. Don ex Steud. dye; wood utilitarian, synonym is Chlorophora tinctoria,

Guanacaste, Enterolobium cyclocarpum; large tree, useful for lumber.

Guayacan, is a typical Hispanic name used for many unrelated trees. Guaiacum sanctum is the one intended for this listing.

Habin (Peten), Dogwood (Belize), Piscidia piscipula, Lacandon area. Narcotic.

Haematoxylum campechianum L., palo de tinto, palo de Campeche. Local people speak of “tinto blanco” and “tinto rojo” trees. I am still trying to fully understand whether this is a different bark color or variety or local mishmash. Do not confuse with the tree of identical trunk form, palo de Brazil, Haematoxylum brasiletto H. Karst. The palo de Brazil grows in the absolute driest part of Guatemala (Rio Molagua, CA9, Km 45 through about 90-ish). Palo de Campeche grows in wet parts of the country and alongside streams and lakes.

Higuerrillo, Vitex gaumeri, yax nik (Ford 2008: Table 3).

Madre de cacao, Cante, Gliricidia sepium,
Plants with attractive flowers

Many native plants simply have attractive flowers. Although the FLAAR Report is primarily interested in helping local people improve their health by encouraging them to raise more local fruits, vegetables, nuts, edible leaves, and edible roots, as a professional photographer and also fine art photographer I will admit that I also like to see, and photograph, nice flowers. I bet the gardens of many Classic Maya had at least some of these flowers in their gardens.

Here are a few (a list by Ilena Garcia, staff biologist at FLAAR Reports):

- **Asclepias curassavica**, Hierba de cantil
- **Aristolochia grandiflora**, Matamoscas
- **Epiphyllum thomianum**, Reina de baile o galan de noche
- **Pachystachys lutea**, Camaron amarillo
- **Petrea volubilis**, Capitan lila
- **Tristerix tetrandus**, Quintral del alamo
- **Vochysia guatemalensis**, San Juan

Of course many of the flowers of utilitarian plants are also gorgeous, such as the flowers of Zapoton (**Pachira aquatica**) and scores more.

Plants which can produce Varnish

This is a new category which we hope to expand during the coming year. The best known varnish among the Maya comes from a scale insect which is grown (domesticated) in Rabinal.

Another source of varnish is **Hymenaea courbaril**, Guapinol (www.conabio.gob.mx web site).

Miscellaneous plants that need to be checked further

I list the following plants because they need to be checked to see if they are utilitarian or not.

- **Quararibea yunckeri** or **Quararibea parviflora** Lundell

The genus **Diphyza** seems extremely interesting. There are many species, with edible fruits and other utilitarian uses.

Plants with attractive flowers
Most common introduced plants (not native)

- Banana
- Citrus fruits
- Onion
- Grains (oats, wheat, barley, rye)
- Rubber tree from Brazil (there was a different species already in Mesoamerica, Castilla elastica, but that is not the rubber tree used for tires and other products today).

Acknowledgements

Capable photography has been contributed by Jaime Leonardo, Sofia Monzon, Jennifer Lara. Recently Daniela da’Costa has begun to work with our photo teams also. Capable work in Adobe Photoshop has been undertaken by all of them plus Juan Luis Sacayon. Presently (2012), Ana Lucia Armas and Alejandra del Valle are working with Sofia Monzon to prepare photographs of plants for a major photo exhibit at the Missouri Botanical Garden.

In our St Louis office Cami and Gustavo worked as a video team in 2011, so a total of six people are working on botanical and zoological studies at FLAAR (plus a support staff of office manager, office assistants, etc).

PDFs in past years have been put together by many of the above as well as biologist Priscila Sandoval and archaeology students Ana Cristina Guirola and Antonieta Cajas. The present edition in summer 2012, especially the layout of the photographs, is the graphic design work of Josue Daniel Mazariegos Ochoa. Ilena Garcia has also worked on the production of this summer 2012 edition of this PDF.

Biological research in past years has received help from Guatemalan biologists Eduardo Sacayon, Mirtha Cano, and Priscila Sandoval.

We appreciate the access to plants at the zoo in Guatemala City (yes, they also have nice ceiba and other trees in the La Aurora zoo). We thank the helpful people at the botanical garden in Guatemala City plus managers and guides at CECON in Monterrico (Centro de Estudios Conservacionistas, Universidad de San Carlos in Guatemala City). We thank the owner and managers and guides at AutoSafari Chapin for access to the plants and trees there (plus access to the animals and birds). We thank the managers of Estación Biológica “Las Guacamayas”, Parque Nacional Laguna del Tigre, Peten, Guatemala for access and hospitality while there.

We appreciate the hospitality provided at the Missouri Botanical Garden by Charles Zidar as well as sharing of his information with us.

Since most libraries in Guatemala are not open at night or on weekends, and as I prefer to avoid having to drive back-and-forth, I rarely use a library since they are not convenient. So I concentrate on the several hundred books on tropical flora and fauna which are in my own work room. Despite not having access to a major library, our list of utilitarian plants is relative complete compared with the helpful books and articles written on Maya plants in the past hundred years (keeping in mind we do not attempt to make a list of medicinal plants, since there are too many, and already a dozen monographs and significant articles already exist: for Mexico, for Peten, for Belize, etc).

We thank the Museo Popol Vuh for providing us access to the several hundred books of the flora and fauna section of the FLAAR Library in Guatemala. We had loaned this to the museum about 20 years ago. But since we are working full time on flora and fauna we needed these books available also weekends and nights during the week. Since no university library is open these hours, we felt it was more realistic to move this segment of the library back to our offices. Students have the biology library of Universidad del Valle and others, plus any student doing a dissertation could consult with us as well.
The FLAAR Library on Maya archaeology, epigraphy, iconography, and anthropology remains on loan to the Museo Popol Vuh at the Universidad Francisco Marroquin (as it has been on loan now for several decades). We do not intend to ask for this back at the present time since it is being used by the museum curator, staff, and visiting students and scholars.

Although this is now the 11th edition over two years, I am nowhere near finished: I find new plants every month. As soon as we can bring back home the flora and fauna portion of our library that has been on loan for a decade, we can improve our scholarship. But already our 10th edition is a milestone for Maya ethnobotany, and our photographs-per-plant-species are typical for what FLAAR is known for: extensive photography, high-res photography, and good lighting for the subjects.

Considering there is a recession and we have zero outside funding: no donations and no grants, we are doing the best we can under the circumstances.

The appendices and bibliography of this 11th edition is being put into a separate PDF since many e-mail systems are not able to receive PDFs over 5 MB in file size. So we are issuing two versions of this 11th edition:

- One as a single pdf (at full file size, over 5 MB in file size)
- Another version as two PDFs (to make each PDF more easy to send as an attachment).

Appendix A
Thematic division of plants: comparison of Lundell and Hellmuth

Lundell lived and worked in Campeche and Peten for decades. He was a botanist and write his lists from his experience.

I have lived in Peten many many years (started visiting in 1963) and have photographed Puuc, Chenes, and Rio Bec architecture of Maya sites of Campeche, Quintana Roo, and Yucatan over several decades. Plus I have visited the Maya sites of Tabasco and Chiapas during the 1960’s through 1990’s.

My thematic categories are based first on iconography and sacred plants; then on common-sense categories. My theme categories are intended to assist archaeologists, epigraphers, iconographers, and ethnographers (obviously ethnobotanists also). I assume that botanists will know the plants inside out from their own training in biology.

I have no formal university training in biology, zoology, or botany (other than what I have learned from decades in the Maya area, including many years living in the remote rain forests before population hit these areas).

A further reason for the categories I have selected is to help interested lay people and students to learn the interesting, useful, and sacred plants of the Maya peoples. By 2010 my theme categories were well established. The report was issued in May 2011 and put on the www.maya-archaeology.org web site in June.

During research to finalize the report I stumbled upon an article on edible mushrooms of Guatemala, and realized this was a kind of plant that was not in my list anywhere. So I felt that it should be added as a separate category, since there are 70 species of edible mushroom in Guatemala alone. I would calculate there would be a few different species in Belize, Honduras, El Salvador and lots of different species in Mexico. What is notable is that I do not remember seeing mushrooms in any other list of food plants for the Maya. Perhaps they were in front of me and I simply did not notice. I will have to look at Lundell to see if mushrooms are listed there. Surely mushrooms are listed in good lists, but I sure did not notice.

And another rational behind my theme groups is to assist dividing the huge mass of plants into topics that would fit on individual web pages. Web pages of excessive length are not always fruitful. If there is more material than can fit on a single web page, then that material should be put into a PDF as a download.

Presently, each theme will receive one page on our www.maya-archaeology.org web site. Later, as we can afford to hire botanists, we will expand coverage to every single solitary individual plant: one page per plant. This will be a separate new web site on Maya ethnobotany, since this many new pages would max out our Maya archaeology web site.
For all of the above reasons it is understandable that my grouping of plants will tend to differ from groupings of a botanist. Actually now that I am creating the tabulation below, I am pleasantly surprised how many of my categories are comparable to those of Lundell. The only category I missed was trees for dugout canoes. So this category I will add. It is worth commenting that Lundell was primarily interested in trees: he worked for the chicle company. I am interested in every plant, and especially in flowers.

I did not find the list of Anabel Ford until mid-2011, so did not have it available for my categories, nor did I have her list of over 400 plants when I made my list. I had used individual pages of El Pilar documents when I was searching for extra information plants that I had already found.

Both Lundell and Ford have a category for ornamentals: I do not have this category since my list is focused on utilitarian use: food, construction, or sacred. However utilitarian is a valid cultural category.

I do not include forage since the Classic Maya had no cattle.

Tannin, gum, latex, and poison I would include within other categories. “Production” is a category I would have to ask what it means. Fuel is a valid category but pine and other fuel plants tend to have other uses and thus would mostly be in my list under other uses.

Of all the thematic listings, I would like to add “for dugouts” from Lundell and fuel from Ford. These, plus my categories, cover all the thematic categories that will assist transmitting this information to the readers of our publications. I fully understand that we also need the original indigenous Mayan categories too. This would be a valid project for a linguist, ethnographer, or ethnobotanist that had time, funding, and expertise with linguistics. But in the meantime, the list of categories based on my research the last many years has resulted in a list of categories that should be of use to scholars and students for many years.

My list is not stagnant either: I have added new categories every year as I come face to face with new plants out in the field, or in a monograph or botanical article.

### Lundell, 1930’s  vs  Hellmuth 2010-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lundell 1930’s</th>
<th>Hellmuth 2010-2011</th>
<th>Ford, El Pilar, Belize</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>HUMAN FOODS:</strong></td>
<td>Edible plants</td>
<td>food</td>
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<tr>
<td>cereals and vegetables</td>
<td>Grains</td>
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<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>Edible leaves</td>
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<td>Berries</td>
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<td>Cultivated, semi-, fruits</td>
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<td>Fruits</td>
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<td>Fruits named “sapole”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fruits from vines or cacti</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other fruits (not in trees)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wild fruits</td>
<td>Nuts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seed pulp</td>
<td>Cooling oil</td>
<td>oil</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other plants</td>
<td>Root crops</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Seasoning, flavoring</td>
<td>Water plants</td>
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<td>Flavoring, herbs, spices</td>
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<td>Flavoring for cacao</td>
<td>Flowers, sacred</td>
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<td>Flowers, edible</td>
<td>Flowers for earrings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other plants</td>
<td>Additional flowers</td>
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<td>Medicinal plants</td>
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<td>Fiber plants</td>
<td>Plants for drugs</td>
<td>beverage</td>
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<td>Cordage</td>
<td>Colors</td>
<td>medicine</td>
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<td>Basketry, ropes</td>
<td>Clothing (fibers etc)</td>
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<td>Misc, useful plants</td>
<td>Other utilitarian use</td>
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<td>Construction: palms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Timbers</td>
<td>Construction: other plants</td>
<td>construction</td>
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<tr>
<td>For dugouts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decorations</td>
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<td>Shade trees, ornaments</td>
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<td>Other utilitarian use</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduced plants</td>
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</tbody>
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*Dr. Nicholas Hellmuth*
The book by Luis Villar Anleu is one of the better resources for a full-color photographic record of trees which had a sacred or other special value for the Quiche Maya. Most of these same species were revered or used by the Classic Maya of Peten in earlier times. Naturally some species are found only in the highlands, some mainly in the Peten and Verapaz lowlands, and a few are more common in the Pacific coast and piedmont.

The book of the Popol Vuh that is available to us today comes from the Quiche highlands. But the origin of these sacred myths is clearly in the Lowlands. The concept of a large sacred bird in a fruit tree is found two thousand years ago in the Pacific lowlands of Izapa (the Mexican side of the Guatemalan border, between Tapachula, Chiapas and the border).

Other representations of the specific features of Hunahpu using his blowgun to aim at 7 Macaw are found on the lids of Early Classic pottery from the Peten Lowlands. Indeed these representations are in full three-dimensional ceramic modeling. My point is that there were probably diverse regional versions of the Popol Vuh, with slightly different plant and animal species featured. Most of the animals featured in the Popol Vuh are more common in the Lowlands of Peten than in the Highlands of Quiche.

One feature of the book by Villar is that the photographs of the trees are excellent; frankly they are much better than other photos in other books.

A few major sacred trees are missing, such as frangipani (flor de Mayo), balche, nance, but for the trees that he does include, the book is attractively presented.

Ocote, p. 22 (Popol Vuh, as torches)
Encinos, p. 24, 81 (Popol Vuh, growing on ballcourt and in general)
Balsamo, p. 31, Pacific coastal plain
Copal, p. 31, Bursera excelsa,
Copal, p. 31, Protium copal
Liquidambar, arbol de estoraque, p. 31, 113, incense, Verapaces
Palo-jicote, muliche, indio desnudo, p. 31, 34, incense
Tzite, Palo de pito, pp. 43, 45, 66, seeds for divination; created men (Popol Vuh)
Zibak, p. 45, created women (Popol Vuh)
Jicaros, Crescentia cujete, p. 45, 87 (Popol Vuh)
Morros, Crescentia alata, p. 45, 87 (Popol Vuh)
Amate, p. 49, source of bark paper
ilamo, p. 54, several species, associated with sacrifice in Highlands
List of colorants from Japanese projects

The following list is buried in an informative report, Capacitacion de Tintes Naturales, Solola, published in association with jica, FGT, and AGUABEJA. Professor Hideo Kojima is associated with several Japanese projects in Guatemala related to colorants, especially cochinilla, but also for other colorants.

Since cochinilla is an insect, we cover that in our FLAAR Reports on zoology, on our web site www.maya-ethnozoology.org. So far we have found only the larger cochinilla, which lives on the jojote tree, and is used for varnish (not for red dye). As soon as we can find the smaller red dye insect in Guatemala, we will add a page on that species.

In the meantime, below is an extract of the list of colorants from the Japanese projects. Priscila Sandoval has corrected the spelling of some scientific names.

### Appendix C

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nombre popular</th>
<th>Parte que utiliza</th>
<th>Nombre Científico</th>
<th>Mordiente</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mozote Flor</td>
<td>Bidens bicolor</td>
<td>Al</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mozote Flor</td>
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<td>Sn</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cabello de ángel</td>
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<td>Al</td>
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<tr>
<td>Madre cacao</td>
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<tr>
<td>Palo de mora</td>
<td>Corazon de Tronco</td>
<td>Al</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flor de muerto</td>
<td>Tagetes erecta</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aliso o ilamo</td>
<td>Corteza</td>
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<tr>
<td>Con palo de mora</td>
<td>Corazon</td>
<td>Al</td>
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<td>Mangle con</td>
<td>Corteza</td>
<td>Al</td>
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<td>Coco con</td>
<td>Corteza</td>
<td>Al</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Indigofera guatimalensis o I. suffruticosa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ahil (muy pálido)</td>
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<tr>
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Complete Inventory of plants

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<td>Rhizophora mangle</td>
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<td>Cochinilla</td>
<td>Insecto</td>
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<td>Ahil (muy denso)</td>
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<td>Indigofera guatimalensis o I. suffruticosa</td>
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### Ethnobotany of the Maya

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**Maya Ethnobotany**

104 Complete Inventory of plants

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**Maya Ethnobotany**

105 Complete Inventory of plants
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**Complete Inventory of plants**

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<td>Hoja</td>
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<td>Coaba</td>
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<td>Mozote</td>
<td>Flor</td>
<td>Bidens bicolor</td>
<td>Cu</td>
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*M=Mordiete          Al=aluminio            Cu=Cobre                 Sn=Estaño
Fe = Hierro       Chi = Chilaneo    O = Hidrosulfito con Soda Caustica
Appendix D

A dozen or so colorants are so well known to Mayanists that no citation makes sense to show the source. Achiote would be an example. It grows everywhere and I would hope most Mayanists realize it is a common colorant for foods and cloth. However yes, a bibliography for each plant will appear in www.maya-ethnobotany.org as we add a dedicated page or PDF or PowerPoint for each individual plant. Since we have 400 plants to find, photograph, and document, we have a long way to go (unless a grant or funding becomes available, in which case we could produce the complete Maya utilitarian plant list, with impressive photographic illustrations, in two years.

We have been gathering information on Maya use of plants since the 1970’s and I first experienced Maya use of plants in the mid-1960’s onward. Then I worked on waterlily iconography and animals in Maya art for my PhD dissertation (1985, published in 1987 with abundant illustrations). Since then I have been working to improve my understanding of the waterlily flower, plant, seeds, and eco-system. Plus I have become interested in all the other flowers in Maya art. So I have been out in the forests, rivers, mangrove swamps, mountains, and both Atlantic and Pacific coastal areas for the last six or more years. So the present opus is already the result of many years, and countless field trips with a complete photographic crew and a botanist.

We add an additional appendix every several months. This opus is being updated and expanded the last nine or more months (and is now in its 12th edition).

Appendix B shows all the trees in Luis Villar Anleu’s book on Guatemalan magic and noble trees.

Appendix C shows all the natural plant dyes listed in a report on Japanese projects (Hideo Kojima and others).

Appendix D tabulates which color dyes are found in which major lists of colorants. The informative book by Stephen Houston, Claudia Brittenham, Cassandra Mesick, Alexandre Tokovinine, and Christina Warinner, 2009, on A History of Ancient Maya Color, University of Texas Press, has one of the most helpful summaries of colorants. I would estimate the authors worked weeks or months in a good library to harvest this list. This appendix of theirs is on their pages 103-109.

I felt it would be helpful to students and scholars, as well as to the Maya people who are still using Maya colorants today, to have this list in alphabetical order, So Mishelle Mis, general assistant at FLAAR Mesoamerica, put the list in A to Z order. Then Priscilia Sandoval, head botanist at FLAAR Mesoamerica, proofread the scientific names. We provide the alphabetical reordering as the second half of Appendix D.

We apologize if the Yucatec Maya or other Mayan language names have a spelling glitch. As soon as the world economy recuperates, we would like to provide a position for a capable Guatemalan student of linguistics.

Then it would be useful to have the list in alphabetical order in Yucatec Maya, and then in appropriate Lowland Mayan languages such as Chol, Chorti, and the many important Highland Mayan languages.

We are also updating our list of colorants based on the many years of work of Olga Reiche. Her book is now available (2014 onward).

Sources and Resources for Maya colorants:
Bibliographic citations

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Note that it would be useful in the future to provide a list of the mordants. But even with no recipes, the list by Houston and co-authors is really a nice reference. To learn more about mordants, Google about mordants and you will find helpful information. Kojima already lists mordants for the natural plant materials that he discusses. However are these modern mordants (?). It would be great to have a student or chemist or interested individual experiment to learn the possible natural mordants.
If the file size is too large it is hard to send this PDF as an attachment, so we have the bibliography as a separate PDF.

The bibliography can be downloaded, at no cost, from www.maya-ethnobotany.org.

The bibliography is in two sections: monographs, and articles. Articles often have no photographs. Monographs tend to have the most photographs. We will be issuing a new edition with the articles and monographs in merged alphabetical order later this year. But already you can download the full PDF with everything (but still in two sections within the PDF).