Cutting patterns
Made by Leaf-cutting Ants
Zompoppos
at Parque Nacional Tikal

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Tikal also offers Learning about remarkable trees & their flowers
Sometimes my eye catches the pattern created by nature. One pattern that my eye tends to notice are the chew marks left by leaf-cutting ants. Locally these ants are known as zompopos.
This is a flower which was recently harvested by the ants. The ants were not chewing this plant the day I photographed it. Keep in mind that some colonies of these ants work only at night.

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Here are chewed-leaf patterns from a bush in Raxruja. We had stopped the vehicle to speak with a person who harvested sangre de drago sap (for medicinal purposes). In front of his house we found these very stiff leaves all chewed by zompopos.
Often we see the chew marks from previous harvesting, but at Tikal it was possible to witness the ants actually harvesting, in this case flowers of *Pachira aquatica* (zapoton; also called pumpo).

There are separate FLAAR Reports on these zompopos carrying the flowers. And there are several separate FLAAR Reports on *Pachira aquatica* flowers and seed pods.
If photography is your hobby or your desire to learn more,
then visiting Tikat is a great place to improve your photography.
You can return home, and show your own awesome photos of leaf-cutting ant patterns to your family, friends, colleagues, co-workers in your company.
So consider visiting Tikal on your next vacation. The capable and hospitable local guides at Tikal, Yaxha, Seibal, Cancuen and all archaeological sites can show you the leaf-cut patterns of the zompopos.
Your guides can also take you to the zomopo nests and show you the trails. Remember, some zompopos harvest during the day (all day long, except when it rains). Other zompopos harvest during the night, from about 7 pm onward.
To see more about the enviable natural beauty of Guatemala and general and Parque Nacional Tikal in particular, enjoy experiencing www.maya-ethnobotany.org and www.maya-ethnozoology.org
Acknowledgements

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These FLAAR Reports are donated by FLAAR Mesoamerica because we have experienced the inherent natural beauty of Tikal since first visiting in 1963. We would like to share, though our style of fine art giclée photography, this natural beauty.

We thank biologist Licda. Mirtha Cano for arranging for local park rangers to accompany us. These rangers are very knowledgeable.