

# The Orchids of the Yavita-Maroa Road

## April 2002 Expedition

### Report

Thanks to an Orchid Conservation Grant from the San Diego County Orchid Society and additional funding from the Orchid Society of Arizona, I was able to visit one more time the Yavita-Maroa road in Venezuela's Amazonas state. Background and details on this project can be found at:

[www.huh.harvard.edu/research/staff/romero/maroa.html](http://www.huh.harvard.edu/research/staff/romero/maroa.html)

The field trip started in Boston, Massachusetts, from where I flew to Caracas, Venezuela, on April 18, 2002. Three days later I flew to Puerto Ayacucho, the capital of the state of Amazonas, where I spent a few days getting **all** the appropriate permits properly signed, making reservation to fly to Maroa (my final destination), buying supplies, and getting field equipment ready. Particular sites around Puerto Ayacucho were scrutinized in the early mornings or evenings trying to locate any orchids in flower.

I flew to Maroa April 24 in a Cessna 206, accompanied by my faithful guide Carlos Gómez. It took us about two hours to reach our destination, Maroa, along the Colombian-Venezuelan border. We stayed, again, with the Sandalio Family. They had completed, by the time we got there, an addition to their house: a second floor above the area where we had stayed and worked previously. There were no walls, but it did have plenty of ventilation and places to work and hang our hammocks (in appendix 1, I have called our dormitory and work area the "Baniba Hotel"; although comfortable, it was by any mean a hotel facility!). We had a few insects pests, particularly 2-3 species of mosquitoes in the early and late evening. Besides the bothersome welts their many bites caused, particularly when at night any part of our bodies was right next to the protective netting, we were not worried about malaria since none of the existing mosquito species in the area is known to transmit this dreaded disease. Appendix 1 includes both the temperature and the relative humidity fluctuations registered in our sleeping quarters while we stayed in Maroa.

We spent the next six days (April 24-29) collecting and documenting orchids along the Yavita-Maroa road; we flew back to Puerto Ayacucho April 29, and I flew to Caracas May 2.

We sighted a total of 21 orchid species in flower and many more without flowers that we could recognize based on their vegetative features. We added two new species to our checklist:

*Maxillaria loretoensis* C. Schweinf.

*Brassia* sp.

Of the 21 species in flower, four had never been photographed before (and not only in the context of this project):

*Catasetum ferox* Kraenzl.

*Maxillaria tenuis* C. Schweinf.

*Peristeria aff. pendula* Hook.

*Wulfschlaegelia calcarata* Benth.

Drawings of the following species, never or poorly illustrated before, were based on collections made during this trip (see catalogue in [www.huh.harvard.edu/research/staff/romero/maroa.html](http://www.huh.harvard.edu/research/staff/romero/maroa.html)):

*Acacallis fimbriata* (Rchb.f.) Schltr.

*Catasetum ferox* Kraenzl.

*Peristeria aff. pendula* Hook.

One species had never been collected in flower before (but it flowered before I could see it!):

*Coryanthes* sp.

The latter is most likely a new species and its importance justifies delaying the publication of the field guide.

In Puerto Ayacucho, I managed to photograph and collect a rare species of *Epistephium*, for an ongoing study of this interesting genus, and the following two additional species, the first of which had never been photographed before:

*Sarcoglottis simplex* (Griseb.) Schltr.

*Otostylis brachystalix* (Rchb.f.) Schltr.

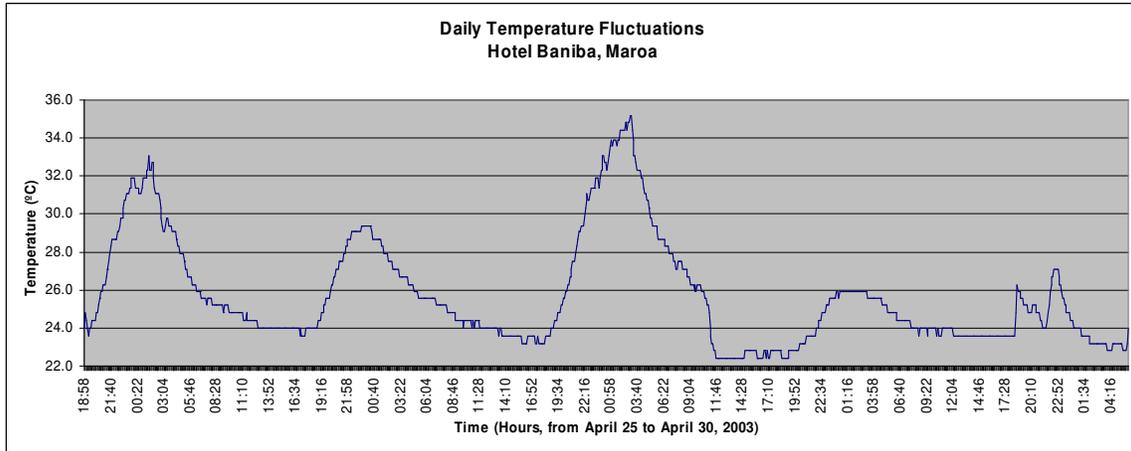
In Caracas, I was able to document a species of *Cyrtopodium* in the high, dry slopes of the Botanical Garden of Caracas (Jardín Botánico de Caracas) again, for an ongoing revision of this genus. I am planning to go back to Venezuela sometime in June or July, to retrieve flowers of the unidentified *Coryanthes* and, if this species does turn out to be new, it would be published in December, together with the announced field guide.

Other biological specimens collected during this trip are listed in appendix 2.

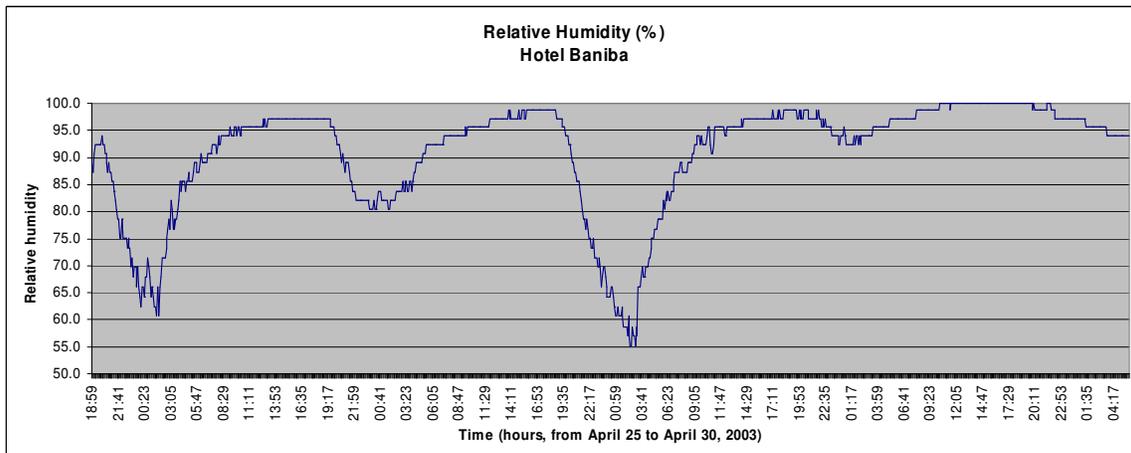
Gustavo A. Romero  
Orchid Herbarium of Oakes Ames  
Harvard University Herbaria  
22 Divinity Avenue  
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138  
617-495-2360, [romero@oeb.harvard.edu](mailto:romero@oeb.harvard.edu)

**APPENDIX I**  
Climatic data  
(data sets available upon request)

**Daily temperature fluctuations**  
Maroa, April 25-30, 2003



**Daily relative humidity fluctuations**  
Maroa, April 25-30, 2003



## APPENDIX II

### BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL COLLECTED

#### **Arecaceae (Palmae)**

*Lepidocaryum tenue* var. *casiquiarensis* (Spruce) A.Henderson  
Herbarium material

#### **Bromeliaceae**

*Pitcairnia juncooides* L. B. Smith  
Photograph of flower;  
Herbarium material;  
Pickled collection;

#### **Orchidaceae**

*Acacallis fimbriata* (Rchb.f.) Schltr.  
Photograph of plant habit (*in situ*) and flowers;  
Herbarium collection;  
Pickled collection (flower buds, flowers);

*Bifrenaria venezuelana* C. Schweinf.  
Herbarium collection;  
Pickled collection (flower);

*Brassia* sp. I  
Herbarium collection;  
Pickled collection (flowers);

*Catasetum ferox* Kraenzl.  
Photographs of flower;  
Pickled collection (flowers);

*Caularthron bicornutum* (Hook.) Raf.

Photographs of flowers;  
Herbarium material (flowers);  
Pickled flower;

*Cyrtopodium* sp. (Caracas Botanical Garden)

Pickled collection (flowers);

*Duckeella pauciflora* Garay

Pickled collection (flower buds, flowers, fruits);

*Epidendrum dichaeoides* Carnevali & G. Romero

Herbarium collection;  
Pickled collection (flower);

*Epistephium parviflorum* Lindl.

Herbarium collection (leaves);  
Pickled collection (flower buds, flowers, and fruits);

*Epistephium* sp. I

Herbarium collection (leaves);  
Pickled collection (flower buds, flowers, and fruits);

*Epistephium* sp. II

Herbarium collection (leaves);

*Epistephium* sp. III (Puerto Ayacucho)

Herbarium collection (leaves);  
Pickled collection (flower buds, flowers, and fruits);

*Macroclinium mirabilis* (C. Schweinf.) Dodson;

Pickled collection (miniature plant, flower buds);

*Maxillaria superflua* Rchb.f.;

Photographs of flower;  
Herbarium collection;  
Separate pickled collection (flowers);

*Maxillaria tenuis* C. Schweinf.

Photographs of flowers;  
Herbarium collection;  
Pickled collection (flowers);

*Otostylis brachystalix* (Rchb.f.) Schltr. (Puerto Ayacucho)

Plant habit (*in situ*)  
Pickled collection (flowers);

*Peristeria aff. pendula* Hook.

Photographs of plant habit (*in situ*), flowers, labellum;  
Herbarium collection;  
Pickled collection (inflorescence);  
Dry pollinarium & anther in gelatine capsule;

*Pleurothallis miqueliana* (Focke) Lindl.

Pickled collection (leaves with flowers);

*Pleurothallis Sandaliorum* G. Romero & Carnevali

Photographs of plant habit (*in situ*), flowers, fruit;  
Herbarium collection;  
Pickled collection (leaf with flower);

*Sarcoglottis simplex* (Griseb.) Schltr. (Puerto Ayacucho)

Photographs of plant habit (*in situ*), flowers;  
Herbarium collection;  
Pickled collection (plant with flowers);

*Wulfschlaegelia calcarata* Benth.

Pickled collection (plants including roots, flowers, fruits);

## **Rapataceae**

*Schenocephalium teretifolium* Maguire

## **Xyridaceae**

### *Abolboda* sp. I

Photograph of flowers;

Pickle collection (flowers);

### *Abolboda* sp. II

Photograph of plant habit (*in situ*);

Pickle collection (plants with flowers)

### *Abolboda* sp. III

Photograph of plant habit (*in situ*);

Pickle collection (plants with flowers);

### *Xyris* sp.

Pickle collection (plants with flowers)

## **Other biological material collected**

### *Eulaema cingulata* Fabr. (Apidae, Euglossini)

One bee attracted to p-di-methoxy-benzene carrying three *Catasetum* sp. pollinaria on its ventrum (*Catasetum* subgenus *Pseudocatasetum*).