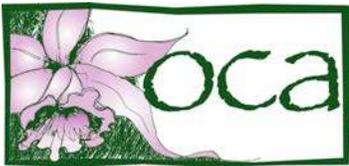


Orchid Conservation Alliance



Orchids in the Wild Tour Announcement



ORCHID CONSERVATION ALLIANCE

Ecuador is one of the smallest countries of South America, straddling the equator on the west coast of this continent. The diverse landscapes of Ecuador encompass the foothills and highlands of the Andes (Cordillera Oriental and Cordillera Occidental), a southern mountain range (Cordillera del Condor), the Amazon jungle, a coastal dry forest region, and a large, deep central valley down the middle of the country. While small in size, it is incredibly rich in orchids (over 4000 different species), tropical plants, birds, insects and almost every other aspect of nature. In recent years the infrastructure of Ecuador has greatly improved, with modern highways, bridges and tourist facilities in almost every part of the country.

Our Tour Guide: Gilberto Merino

Gilberto, a native Ecuadorian, has devoted most of his adult life to the orchids of Ecuador. For over 20 years he worked with Ecuagenera, both in the nursery (plant identification) and as a guide for visitors who wanted to see orchids in the wild. He now has his own nursery and tour guide business, and loves to share his love for the incomparable beauty, hospitable people and fascinating history of Ecuador. Gilberto is fluent

Post-World Orchid Conference Tour of Ecuador

November 13-28, 2017



in English, and is knowledgeable about the plants (not just the orchids), the culture and the history of his native country. The tour will also include one of the OCA directors as liaison.

Price of the 16 day tour (includes guide, transportation, entrance to parks and reserves, food, water and hotels, and transfers to the airport but NOT airfare).

Single \$3960

Double \$3400

Dates of the World Orchid Conference

November 8-12, 2017.

Tour participants should make their own arrangements for air travel, hotel accommodations in Guayaquil for the WOC, registration etc.



We have planned an exciting itinerary, with a mix of botany and culture. You will enjoy the beautiful scenery of the Ecuadoran countryside, learn about the many different habitats where orchids grow in this amazing country, and experience the richness of the culture, the

handicrafts, the indigenous peoples, and all in the company of a group of like minded orchid enthusiasts! Our tour size is limited to 14, and this tour is likely to fill up quickly, so if you are interested in participating, submit your registration and tour deposit of \$500 as soon as possible to (Check payable to the Orchid Conservation Alliance):

Peter Tobias
Orchid Conservation Alliance
564 Arden Drive
Encinitas, CA 92024

ITINERARY

November 13

8:30 am. Pick up tour participants at the Hilton Colon Hotel in Guayaquil

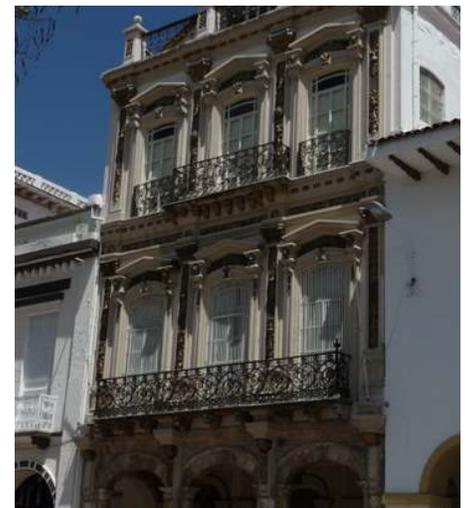
Heading to Cuenca, we will travel through the spectacular Cajas National Park, where the



highest point is 4300m. There are about 270 lakes and lagoons in the páramo of Cajas, and here one can find terrestrial orchid species, pinguiculas, and other tiny alpine plants. On the approach to the park we will travel through a dry tropical forest and then into a wet montane forest. In this region many species of orchids can be found including telipogon, stelis, maxillaria, sobralia, lepanthes, cyrtochilum, odontoglossum, masdevallias and many others. We will stay overnight in the city of Cuenca, a beautiful colonial city in the highlands of Ecuador, and capital of the province of Azuay.



November 14



City tour of Cuenca

We will begin the morning with a city tour of Cuenca, visiting the scenic colonial center of the city with its many historic buildings. The center is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Trust site. We plan to visit the Panama Hat factory, the markets and plazas, look at a few churches including one with stained glass images of orchids, and even do a little shopping. There is a wonderful central market here where the locals bring their produce to

sell, and you can purchase raw chocolate and local handicrafts. In the afternoon we will visit Equaflor-A, a nursery in the mountains above Cuenca. We will stay overnight in Cuenca.



November 15



In the morning we will visit the greenhouses of Ecuagenera, located in nearby Gualaceo. Arrangements for purchases (for US participants) will be made such that plants selected at either Equaflor-A or Ecuagenera can be picked up (or mailed to participants) at or after the Pacific Orchid Exposition in San Francisco (late February 2018). In the afternoon we will head towards Vilcabamba, passing through the city of Loja and a number of different habitats. We will learn about the Saraguros, an ethnic group

that inhabits this area. It is possible to see pleurothallis, stelis, telipogon, odontoglossum, lepanthes, oncidium, andinia, cyrtochilum, ponthieva and other orchid species in this region. We will stay overnight in Vilcabamba.

November 16

We head south towards Valladolid, passing through Podocarpus National Park. Here we should see various andinia, brachyonidium, cyrtochilum, dryadella, epidendrum, eria, sfernandezia, lepanthes, masdevallia, maxillaria, pleurothallis, sobralia, stelis, telipogon species. Some species can be seen right next to the road, while others will require a short hike. We will spend the night in Vilcabamba.





elevations of about 2000 m, and we should find *Masdevallia hirtzii*, *Lepanthes gargoyle*, *pleurothallis*, *zootrophion*,



dryadella, *stelis* and many other species. We spend the night in El Pangui.



November 19



November 17

We head east and north, through Zamora, passing through the other side of Podocarpus National Park. The scenery here is beautiful, and we expect to find *Masdevallia rosea*, *M. deformis*, *M. picturata* and *M. strobilii* in bloom. We should also find *Pleurothallis portillae*, *P. nypterophylla*, *lepanthes*, *maxillaria*, *cyrtochilum*, *odontoglossum* and *lycaste* species. We will stay overnight in Zamora.

November 18

We will travel north from Zamora to El Pangui, visiting the Cordillera del Condor, a



mountain range rich in many orchid species. We can reach

From El Pangui we will head to San Juan Bosco, observing the flora on the Amazon side of the Andes. We will find a great variety of *pleurothallis*, *lepanthes*, *stelis*, *trisetella*, *dryadella*, *maxillaria*, *cyrtochilum*, *masdevallia*, and *phragmipedium*. Overnight in San Juan Bosco.

November 20

Today we will travel towards Macas, into the Amazon river basin. As we travel through the different habitats we will see different orchid species, including *Phragmipedium besseae*, *Sobralia*, *Epidendrum*, *Lepanthes*, *Masdevallia*, *Sudamerlycaste*, and *Maxillaria*. We will overnight in Macas.



November 21

From Macas we will head west towards the town of Baños, exploring the area around Macas in the morning, and the mountains near Baños in the afternoon. This area is incredibly rich in orchids and we will be able to see vanilla, *pleurothallis*, *masdevallia*, *dryadella*, *prostechea*, *maxillaria*, *rodriguezia*, *lepanthes*, *epidendrum* and other interesting species. We will overnight in Baños.



November 22

We will spend the day in the mountains around Baños, enjoying the beautiful scenery, waterfalls, and orchid rich areas. We will visit one of the first OCA funded reserves, Rio Anzu, where we will see amazing displays of *Phragmipedium pearcei*. Other orchids we may find will include *sudamerlycastes*, *pleurothallis*, *epidendrums*, *maxillarias*, *phragmipediums*, *bulbophyllum*, *trichopilias*, *lepanthes*, and many others. There are interesting shops in Baños to visit in the evening. Overnight in Baños.



November 23

Today we will head north to the town of Otavalo, famous for its Saturday market. On the way to Quito we will see the Salasacas ethnic group (in the town of Salasaca). While in Quito we will visit the colonial part, viewing the historic buildings and the rich traditional culture of the capital city. We will spend the night in Otavalo.



November 24

Botanizing all day in the area around Selva alegre, an area with many diverse orchids. We may also look for orchids and a little culture around the Lagos de Mojanda.

November 25

We spend the morning in Otavalo. The indigenous Otavaleños are famous for weaving textiles, usually made of wool (that is sometimes as black as a raven), which are sold at the famous Saturday market. During the market's peak, almost one third of the town becomes full of stalls selling textiles, tagua nut jewelry, musical instruments, dream catchers, leather goods, fake shrunken heads, indigenous costumes, hand-painted platters and trays, purses, clothing, spices, raw foods and spools of wool. More artisan products can be purchased in neighboring communities or at the Museo Viviente Otavalango. In the afternoon we head towards Tulcan, botanizing en route. We should see phragmipediums, lepanthes, pleurothallis, maxillarias, and cyrtochilum. Overnight in Tulcan.



November 26

Today we head to Maldonado where we will visit the rich flora of the Choco mountain range. This area is extremely biodiverse, and we can see draculas, lepanthes, pleurothallis, sobralias, epidendrums, maxillarias, cyrtochilums, telipogons and many other species. Overnight in Tulcan.



November 28

End of the tour, with transfers to the airport to head back home. For those with late flights, we may plan a visit to the botanical garden or other site of interest in Quito. Plans for this day will be firmed up once we have a better idea of flight schedules



November 27

From Tulcan we head back Otavalo and Quito, looking for orchids on the way back. We will visit the Equator monument near Cayambe, an interesting historical and educational stop. Overnight in Quito.



Frequently asked questions:

Q. How strenuous are the orchid treks? Will I be able to do them?

A. Many of the orchids we find and photograph are near the roads, and others are just a

short hike into the habitat. There are few if any long hikes planned on the trip. If you are comfortable climbing up a few road banks or over fallen trees and rocks, you should have no problems.

Q. What kind of equipment do I need for these trips?

A. A detailed list of suggested items to bring will be sent out to all participants. Ponchos, umbrellas, cameras, binoculars, a backpack and walking sticks are probably the most specialized type of equipment you will need.

Q. How many people go on these trips? I will be traveling by myself, will the others be friendly?

A. The OCA Ecuador trip is limited to 14 participants, plus 1 OCA liaison, the guide and bus driver. Often we have several people on our trips who are traveling by themselves. If you like we can try to arrange a room mate to reduce expenses. Many of our tour participants have made life long friends on our trips.



The Ecuador Itinerary (Overnight Stays)

1. Guayquil
2. Cuenca
3. Vilcabamba
4. Zamora
5. El Panguí
6. San Juan Bosco
7. Macas
8. Baños
9. Otavalo
10. Tulcan
11. Quito