

Why is a really  
**tall tripod**  
needed?

Examples from botany and zoology



La Concepcion, Chiquimulilla, Guatemala

Gitzo G1548GT



Why is a really tall tripod needed?

Sometimes a really tall tripod is essential. Yet if the tripod is a cheap brand, it will wobble. In the last two months I tested two brands of cheap tripods. Sorry, they were useless junk.

They wobbled even at less than 5 foot height. To do serious photography of architecture you often need a tripod up to 4 meters high! So it is crucial to have a sturdy tripod from a reputable brand name.

We do not show any of the bad tripods in this report (we will have a separate report on bad brands later). Here in the present report we show only the tripods we use ourselves, which are primarily from Gitzo. The tripod seen in this illustration has served for many many years.



Antigua Guatemala road from Pastores

FLAAR is dedicated to photographing all species of creatures (insects, spiders, fish, shellfish, animals, birds, reptiles) which were eaten, worshipped, revered, or utilized (for leather, colorants, food, tools, etc) by the Classic Maya civilization.

Crocodiles and alligators are tropical reptiles we are especially interested in studying since the Preclassic predecessors of the Maya had a concept of a "Crocodile tree" (or in theory, an alligator tree or caiman tree).

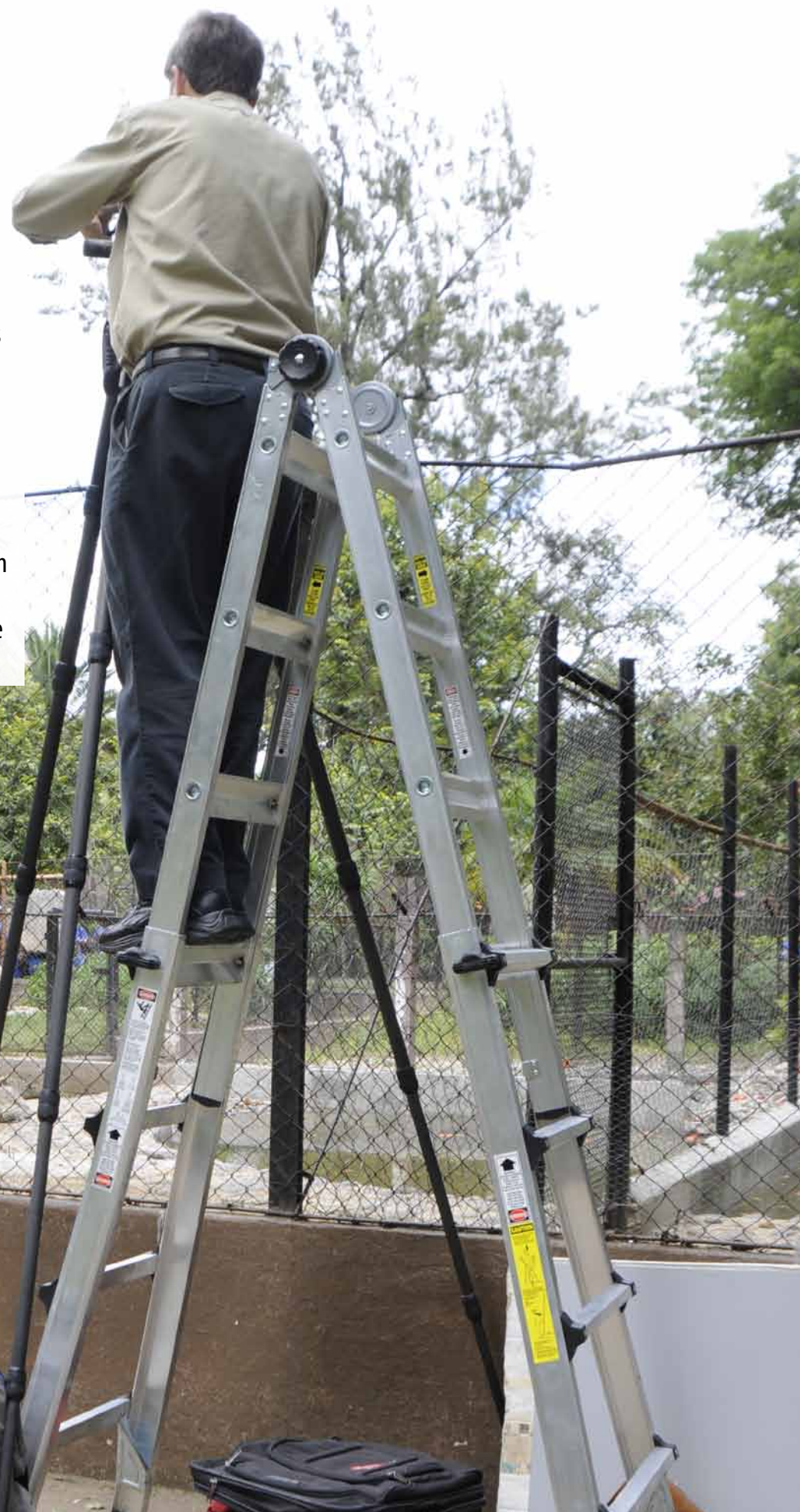
This is a tree (complete with branches and fruits) whose body is of a crocodile or caiman. This kind of tree is common in the Preclassic art of Izapa, Chiapas, Mexico (circa 100-300 BC) and the same kind of tree is known from Early Classic and Late Classic ceramics of Peten and related Lowland Maya styles (incised or painted funerary ceramics).

Example needing a  
tall tripod while  
photographing at a zoo

(this is a crocodile tree, so even at a "zoo" we also photograph trees)

The concept of a crocodile tree is very real: still today, in Guatemala, Mexico, Honduras, El Salvador, there are trees known locally as palo de lagarto. There are three species of crocodylians in Mesoamerica: two crocodiles and one alligator (a caiman). We are working to sort out which species was the primary model for this composite mythical tree.

We are also tracking down every single solitary tree which has spines or bark that mimic a crocodile's profile (many many trees of the Maya area have the same rough surface as a crocodile or caiman).



Crocodiles are among the most dangerous animals to photograph (pecary are even more dangerous). We have permission in most local zoos to enter the compound so we can do close-up photography. So we go inside the crocodile and caiman pens to do close-up photography of their spiny surface. But we start off by photographing from outside the pen (so the crocs get used to us being around; so the crocs realize we are not going to harm them).

Since a crocodile can jump or climb a surprising height, the fences at the La Aurora Zoo (Guatemala City) are quite high. So we need a tall tripod to be able to see over the fence.

Here you can see me safely outside the crocodile pen.

A crocodile weighs "a ton" and can charge at fast speed, and can also wipe you out with their tail. So we are very cautious. But after the crocs are at least a bit accustomed to our presence, we do go inside the pen so that we can get even better photographs.

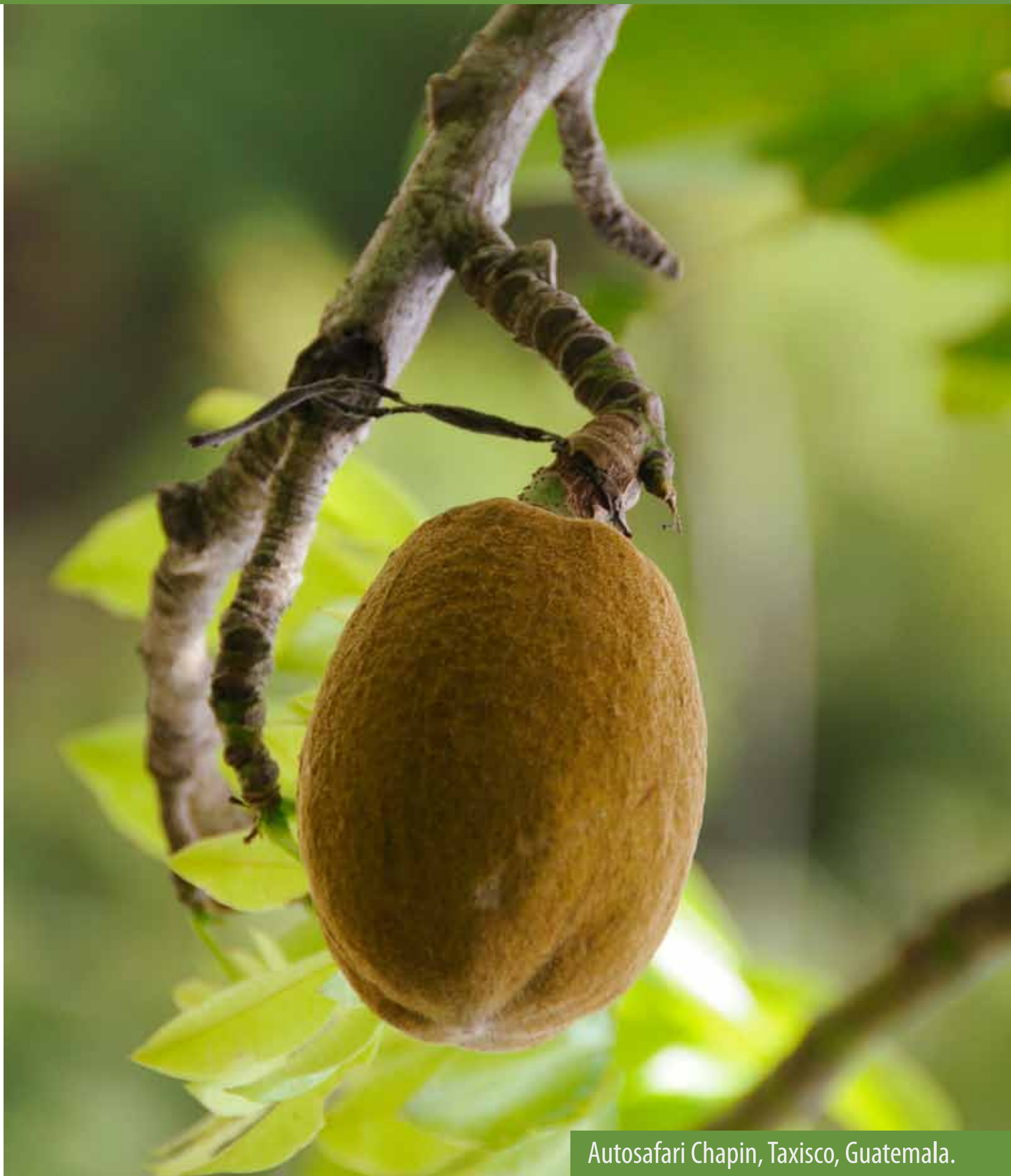


For trees a tall tripod is necessary so you can be at the same height as the flower. You need to photograph the flower in full profile. From the ground you see only the bottom of the flower high in the towering tree. So a minimum 4-meter high tripod is crucial.





Autosafari Chapin, Taxisco, Guatemala.







An item we are really keen on evaluating is the Gitzo Systematic ball head GH5380S with any Gitzo Systematic CF tripod (we are flexible with model, though we tend to photograph things high up in trees). We enjoy writing about innovative products that work together: such as the head and the tripod series for which it was made

Since we photograph tropical fruits and flowers that bloom only high up in trees, this tall tripod would help. We bring a ladder along with us on all field trips. We sure could publish remarkable photographic results if we had a tripod like one of the three below.

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If the the GS5510XLS Telescopic center column works with a Systematic tripod, such as the Series 3 Carbon 6X Systematic XL Tripod – 4 Section w/G-Lock, that would be perfect: item #:GT3541XLS

or

Gitzo GT5561SGT with GS5510XLS Telescopic center column

or

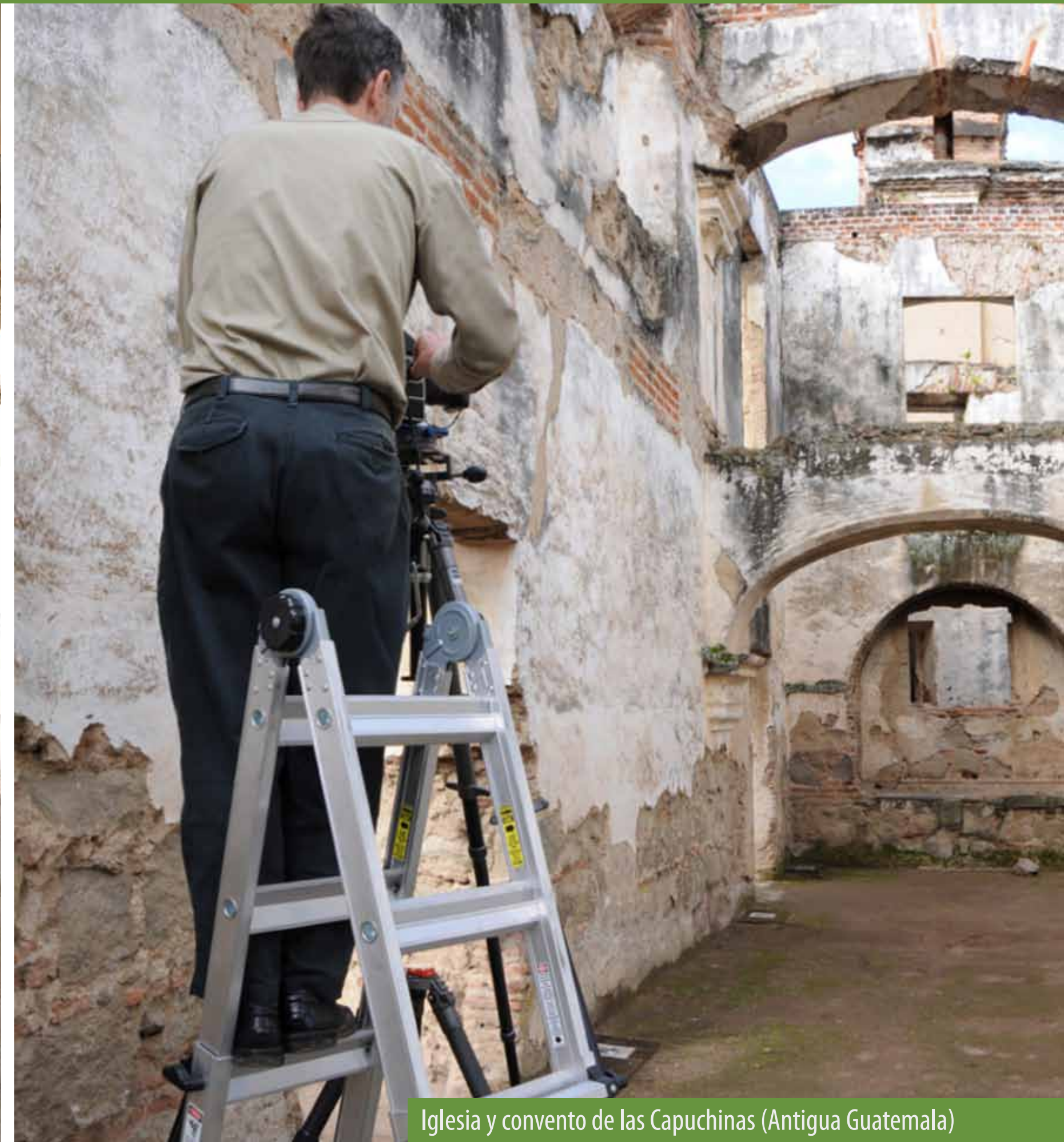
GT5561SGT, "Giant Tripod" with GS5510XLS Telescopic center column. Either/or of those above (not all three; one is plenty).

Either/or of those above (not all three; one is plenty) would be a perfect tripod for

- botanists
- zoologists
- architectural photographers
- archaeologists
- and anyone who needs to get their camera high in the air.



Gitzo G1504



Iglesia y convento de las Capuchinas (Antigua Guatemala)



Iglesia y convento de las Capuchinas (Antigua Guatemala)



Gitzo G1504

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