

Seed pods & Kapok

(cotton-like Silk floss)



ASOCIACION
FLAAR
MESOAMERICA

◆ *Ceibillo* of Guatemala
Ceiba aesculifolia

PHOTOGRAPHS BY SOFIA MONZON

TEXT BY NICHOLAS HELLMUTH

Introduction to seed pods of *Ceiba aesculifolia*

I am fascinated by the life cycle of plants and animals. A focus of my interest is on those plants, flowers, trees, insects, reptiles, birds, and anything that was featured in Classic Maya culture; therefore I tend to concentrate my studies on sacred trees, and flowers that appear in Maya art, fauna which is mentioned in the Popol Vuh or pictured in art, etc.

All ceiba trees are of special interest because their spines are the models for the conical spine-like decorations on thousands of Maya incense burners and some urns.

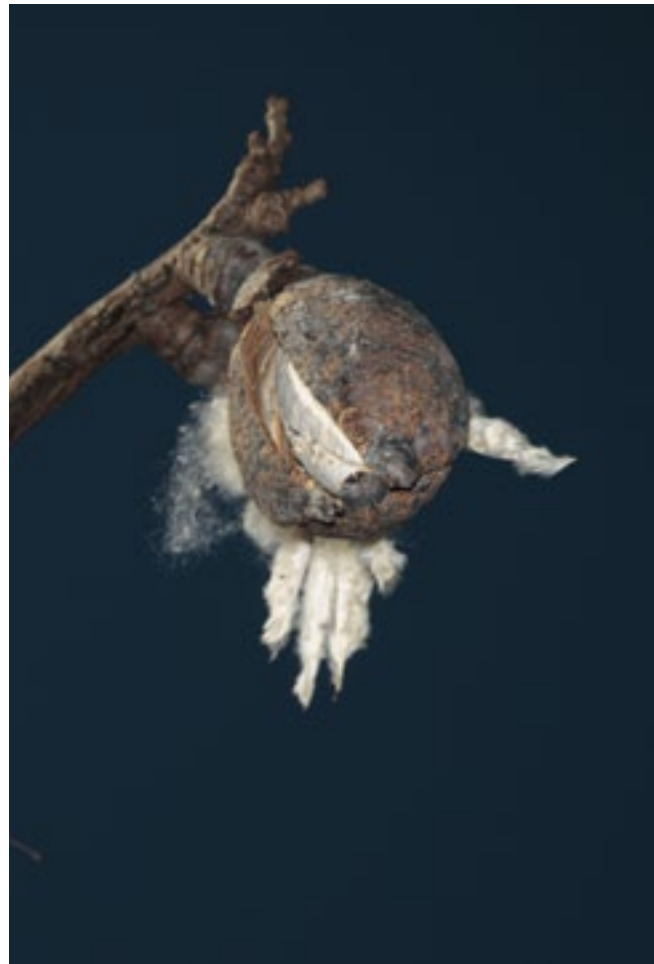
Over recent years, the FLAAR Photo Archive has photographed as many *Ceiba pentandra* and *Ceiba aesculifolia* trees as we find. We are also seeking all other species which have spines (there are a dozen other species *Ceiba* trees) and we photograph them as we can.

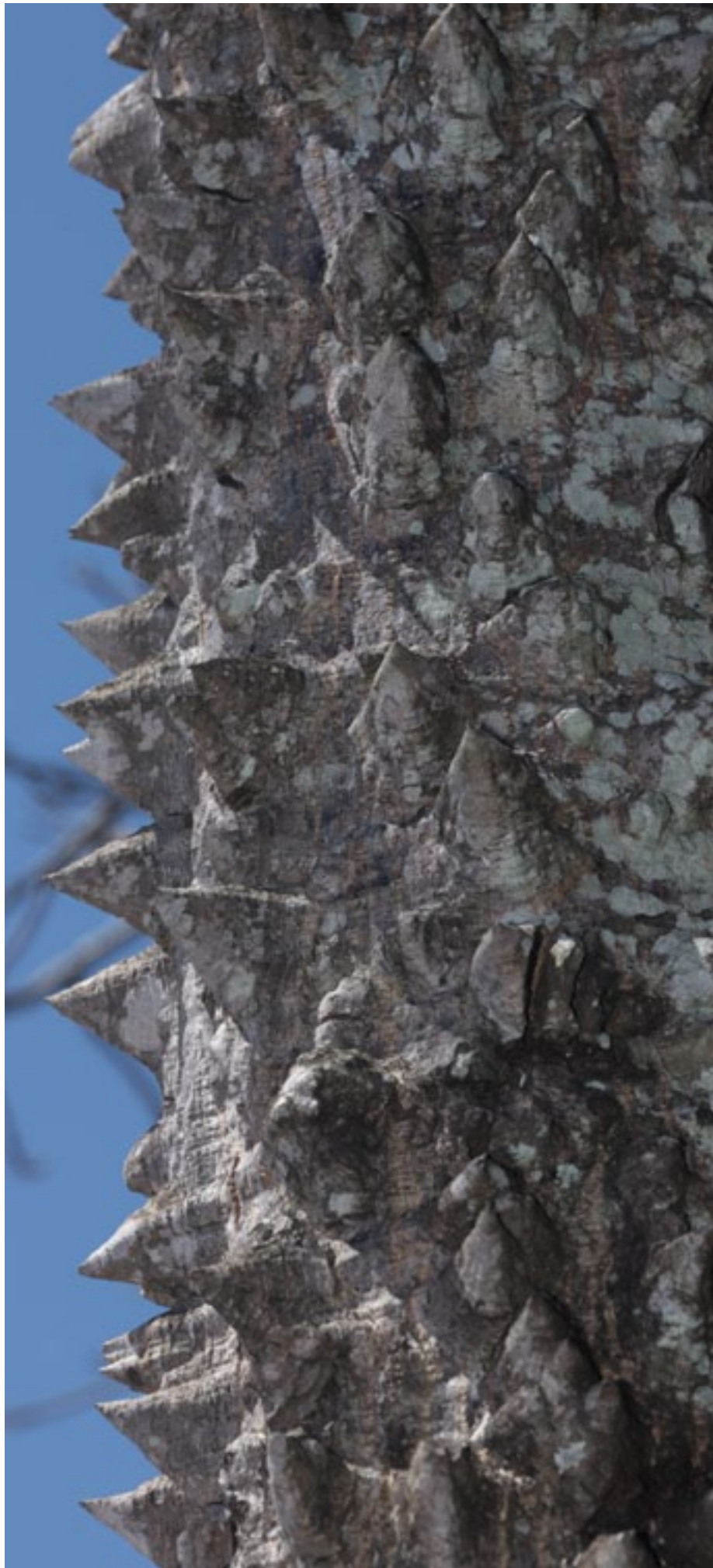
In addition to the spines, the *Ceiba* (and other trees in the Maya area) produce a cotton-like fluff in their seed pods., which is sometimes called silk floss and has considerable economic potential for people in rural areas. FLAAR Meso-america is not a commercial company (we are a non-profit institute) but we hope that our studies can assist people in rural areas of Guatemala and adjacent countries.

My background also includes fine art photography: this means doing photography which is more than just an image to show a subject. This interest in a fine art style has been recognized by several of the university students who work at FLAAR. The present FLAAR Report features photographs in a comparable fine art style by Sofia Monzón, about to graduate (in Graphic Design) from Universidad Galileo in Guatemala City.

We hope you enjoy this FLAAR Report with our fine art giclee style of photography and fine art layout style, in this case by Josue Daniel Mazariegos Ochoa.

We are organizing these photographs into exhibits, for botanical gardens at first. We feel it will help preserve the tropical rain forest if people realize how much beauty can be found in nature (especially if you use studio lighting to bring out the forms and textures of the natural material).







Ceibillo

Ceiba aesculifolia





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Ceibillo

Ceiba aesculifolia

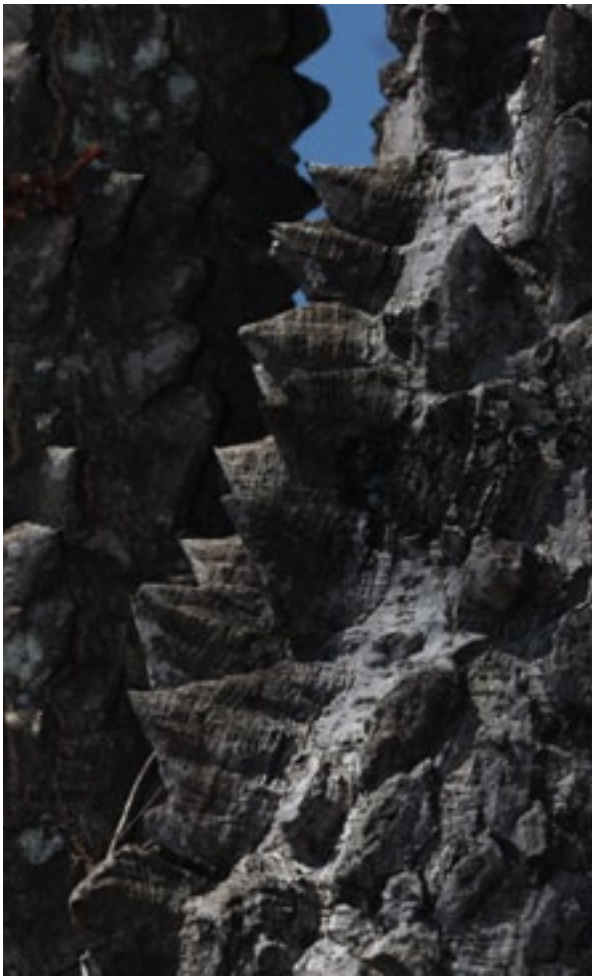




Ceibillo

Ceiba aesculifolia





Acknowledgements

We thank Parrot Digigraphic for providing Canon camera and lens equipment.

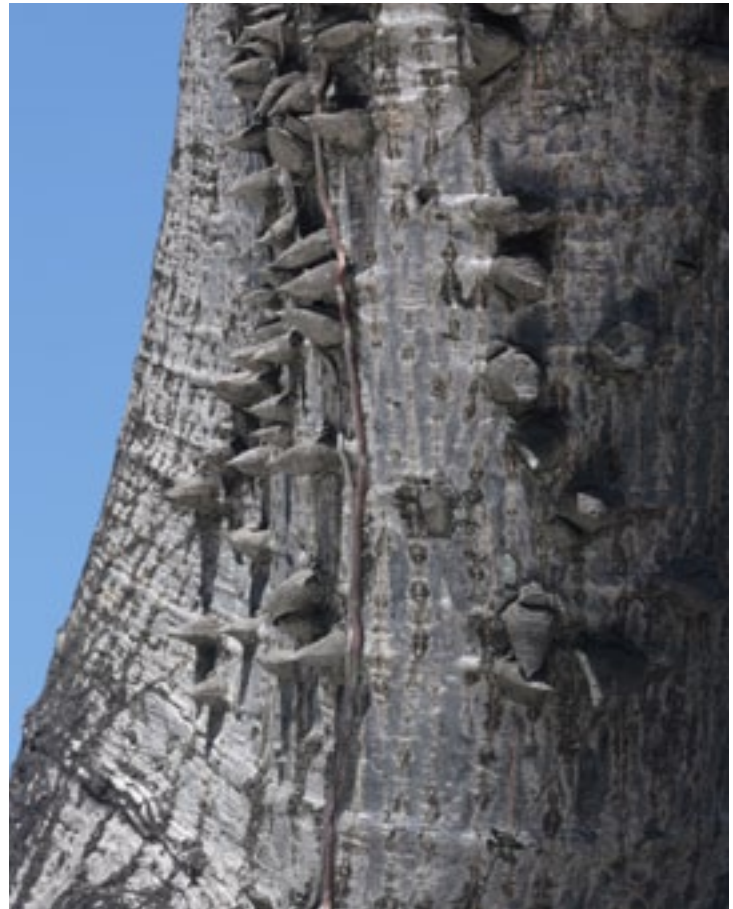
We thank F.J. Westcott for providing the digital fluorescent lighting used in our studio. You can't melt your flowers and plants with hot-lights; to do botanical photography we recommend using fluorescent lighting: soft and low temperature. We use the original Spiderlite TD3 system, with Soft-box Kit.

We look forward to moving up to the Spiderlite TD5 and TD6 systems, both for botanical photography and also for photographing insects, reptiles, and other creatures of the Maya world.

We thank Bogen Imaging, now Manfrotto Distribution, for providing the tripods and tripod heads which are essential both out in the field and in our studio.



Ceibillo
Ceiba aesculifolia



Appendix A

Here are some photographs of the tree itself.



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