

Cutting patterns

Made by Leaf-cutting Ants

Zompopos

at Parque Nacional Tikal



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Sometimes my eye catches the pattern created by nature. One pattern that my eye tends to notice are the the chew marks left by leaf-cutting ants. Locally these ants are known as zompopos.



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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.

We bring professional quality flash with us. The flash helps reveal the patterns of nature.



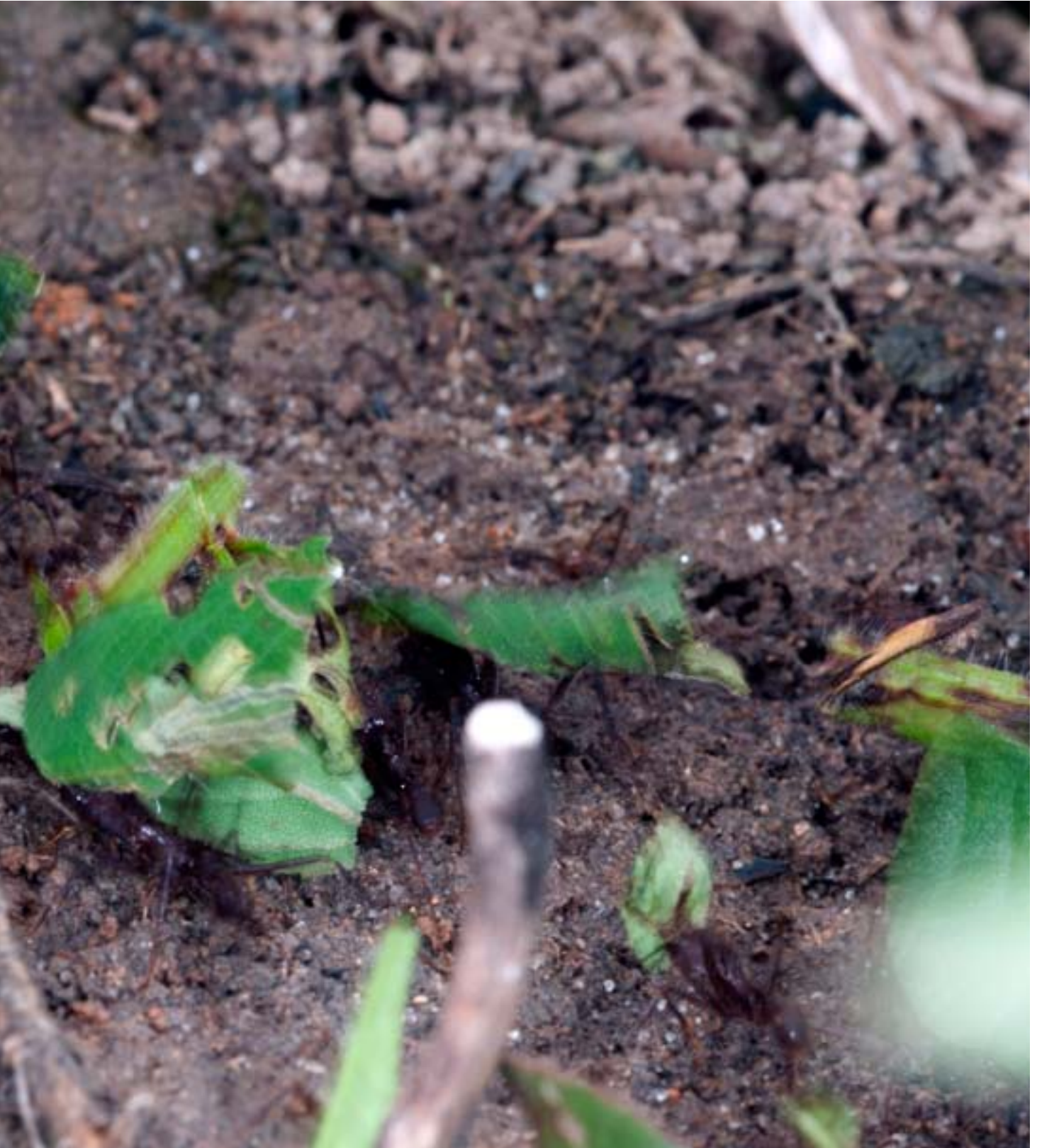


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Here are chewed-leaf patterns from a bush in Raxruja. We had stopped the vehicle to speak with a person who harvested sangre de drago sap (for medicinal purposes). In front of his house we found these very stiff leaves all chewed by zompopos.











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.







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**If photography is your hobby or your desire to learn more,**

then visiting Tikat is a great place to improve your photography

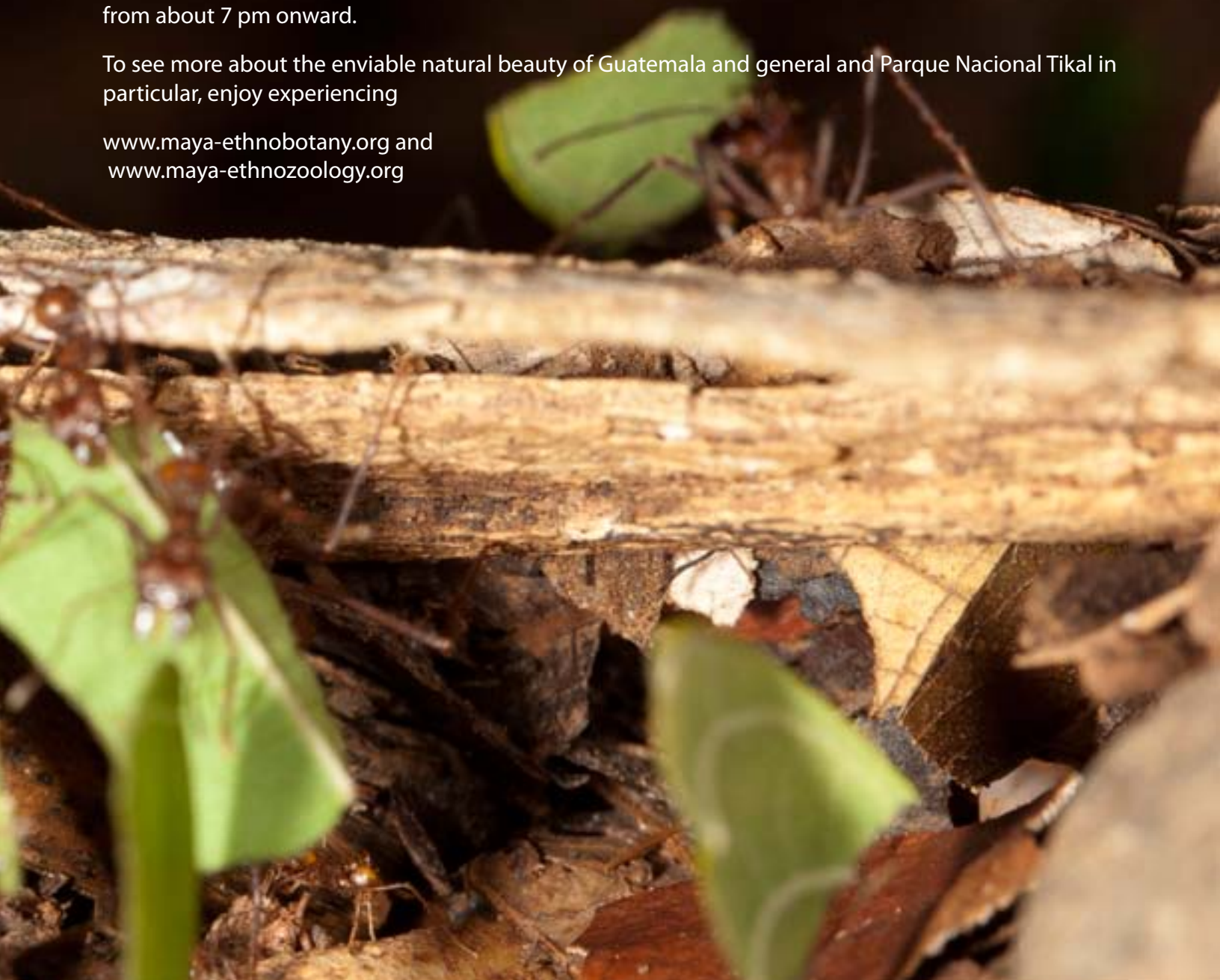
You can return home, and show your own awesome photos of leaf-cutting ant patterns to your family, friends, colleagues, co-workers in your company.

So consider visiting Tikat 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 zompopo 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](http://www.maya-ethnobotany.org) and  
[www.maya-ethnozoology.org](http://www.maya-ethnozoology.org)



A close-up photograph of a forest floor, showing dark brown soil, scattered dry leaves, and a piece of weathered wood in the foreground. A solid pink horizontal bar is positioned across the upper portion of the image, partially overlapping the text area.

## Acknowledgements

We appreciate the hospitality of the administrators and staff at Parque Nacional Tikal.

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, through our style of fine art giclee photography, this natural beauty.

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





