

Orchids of Guatemala

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Guatemala is a relatively small country in term of size, but its geographical and biological diversity is enormous. It is estimated that about 10,804 species of vascular plants can be found there, many of them are endemic. Its orchid richness is impressive and for many years poorly studied. It ranges from a little more than 100 species mentioned by Bateman (*The Orchidaceae of Mexico and Guatemala*, 1843), 527 species mentioned by Ames & Correll (*Orchids of Guatemala and Belize*, 1952-1953), 800 species proposed by Archila (1992) and 1237 proposed also by him in 2014. To understand the existence of orchid megadiversity in Guatemala it is important to consider the integration of edaphoclimatic factors as latitude, topographic relief, plate movement, volcanic chain and rain systems. About 20% of the orchid diversity in Guatemala can be found in the Department of Alta Verapaz, where c.a. 242 species, representing 60 genera, have been reported. The main aim of our study was to catalog and update the knowledge about orchids of Guatemala. The last comprehensive work about Guatemalan orchid flora has been published in 1952, where 89 genera has been reported. As our research revealed, more than 220 orchid genera occur in Guatemala.