

Masdevallia attenuata BY PELIN KARACA

COSTA RICA | Gardens, Forests, Wildlife & The Sea

13 DAYS from \$3,295 | Choose your dates | Best season to travel: OCT–MAY

THE LUSH AND VARIED ecosystems of Costa Rica are abundant with tropical plants, diverse wildlife, and colorful birds. For serious garden lovers, this 13-day itinerary is the perfect opportunity to sample the best of the country's biodiversity. Become immersed in the vibrant flora of different types of forests, including cloud forest, rainforest, premontane forest, and tropical dry forest. Walk beneath towering 700-year-old trees and learn about innovative conservation projects. From visits to world-renowned tropical research institutions and behind-the-scenes tours at botanical gardens, to guided trail hikes and boating excursions, this program takes a multifaceted look at the country's floristic heritage.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Explore the impressive collections of palms, gingers, cycads, bromeliads, and more at Else Kientzler and Wilson Botanical Gardens.
- Examine some of the country's 1,300-plus orchid species at an orchid project in Sarchí and at SACRO, a non-profit orchid conservation organization.
- Learn about the research underway at the Organization for Tropical Studies Las Cruces Biological Station during a site lecture by the director.
- Hike amid ancient trees and watch for Scarlet Macaws in the transitional forest at Carara National Park.
- Embark on a twilight boat safari, stopping at a local farm for a typical Costa Rican snack.

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

- Specialist guide
- Private transportation
- Accommodations
- Activities
- Meals
- Beverages with meals
- Carbon offsetting



RAINFOREST AT SELVA VERDE BY JOANNA LIVINGSTONE



ITINERARY

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER

Day 1 | **Santo Domingo**

Upon arrival at San José International Airport, after clearing customs and collecting your luggage, you will be met and transferred to Hotel Bougainvillea, located in a suburb of the capital. After settling into your room, enjoy the beautiful gardens. The hotel's owner, an advocate for the flora of Costa Rica, designed the garden's 10 acres of tropical plants, crops, frog ponds, and walkways. This evening, gather at the hotel restaurant for a welcome dinner. *Overnight at Hotel Bougainvillea – Garden View Rooms. (D)*

Day 2 | **Arenal**

After breakfast, check out and travel to Arenal, stopping at Else Kientzler Botanical Garden en route. This private garden features collections of palms, orchids, gingers, fruit trees, succulents, and a children's garden. Continue to Sarchí, a mountainous town famous for its crafts, where you'll visit an orchid project and enjoy lunch at a typical "tico" restaurant. After check-in at Arenal Observatory Lodge, you will have a bit of time to explore the trails. Surrounded by jungle, the lodge's rooms offer excellent views of Arenal Volcano and of the public areas, including the welcoming swimming pool. *Overnight at Arenal Observatory Lodge – Smithsonian Rooms. (BLD)*

Day 3 | **Arenal**

This morning take a guided hike at Arenal Hanging Bridges. Trails along the mountainside and over suspension bridges give amazing views of the forest canopy and, on clear days, the volcano. Enjoy lunch at

the hotel and then have some free time before a twilight safari float. As you meander down Río Peñas Blancas in your raft, your guide will point out the nocturnal fauna. After approximately two hours, stop at a local farm to enjoy a typical Costa Rican snack, including yuca bread, fried sweet plantains, homemade cheeses, coffee, and juices. Return to the lodge. Dinner tonight is on own. *Overnight at Arenal Observatory Lodge – Smithsonian Rooms. (BL)*



Day 4 | **Sarapiquí**

Meet with your guide early this morning to walk the trails around the lodge. After breakfast, travel east to Sarapiquí Valley, home of Selva Verde Lodge & Rainforest Reserve. The property protects more than 500 acres of primary and secondary tropical rainforest. After lunch, receive an orientation to the lodge and meet the director of the Sarapiquí Conservation Learning Center (SCLC), a non-profit organization that provides services for nearby communities. Learn about their current projects and how they assist local residents, and then

visit the on-site botanical garden. Continue to a nearby farm for a chocolate tour. Learn about the cacao plant and its historical importance, and see firsthand the step-by-step process of transforming cacao beans into the delicious finished product. Return to Selva Verde and enjoy the remainder of your evening on your own. *Overnight at Selva Verde Lodge – Sarapiquí Rooms. (BLD)*

Day 5 | **Sarapiquí**

Start the day early with an optional guided bird walk. After breakfast, cross the suspension bridge above the Río Sarapiquí and enter Selva Verde's private reserve for a guided hike. This afternoon, choose between whitewater rafting or a relaxing boat ride on the Río Sarapiquí. After dinner, join your guide for an optional walk through the property to look for nocturnal wildlife. *Overnight at Selva Verde Lodge – Sarapiquí Rooms. (BLD)*

Day 6 | **Tárcoles/Pacific**

After breakfast, travel to Hotel Punta Leona, located on the Pacific Ocean, with lunch en route. After arrival at the hotel and settling into your room, you will have time to explore your new surroundings with your guide or on your own. *Overnight at Hotel Punta Leona – Selvamare Standard. (BL)*

Day 7 | **Tárcoles/Pacific**

This morning, take a guided walk in nearby Carara National Park, a transitional zone where northwest tropical dry forest and southern tropical rainforest intersect. Trails through Carara feature thick, ancestral forest that has remained unchanged for thousands of years. Keep your eyes open for flocks of Scarlet Macaws swarming the palm trees in search of fruit. After lunch at a typical restaurant, the remainder of your day is free to enjoy the beach and water activities offered at Punta Leona. Dinner is on your own this evening. *Overnight at Hotel Punta Leona – Selvamare Standard. (BL)*

Day 8 | **San Vito**

If you wish, wake up early for a walk with your guide as the wildlife start their day. After breakfast, travel to the Organization for Tropical Studies Las Cruces Biological Station, a mid-elevation site located close to the Panamanian border that protects more than 740 acres of premontane wet forest habitat. Stop in San Vito for lunch at a typical tico restaurant. This afternoon,

participate in a site discussion with the director of the station. *Overnight at Las Cruces – Standard Rooms. (BLD)*

Day 9 | **San Vito**

Have an early breakfast, followed by a guided walk through the on-site Wilson Botanical Garden, one of the most famous botanical gardens in Central America. The garden features diverse tropical and subtropical ornamentals and rare and endangered plants, including an impressive collection of cycads. Other well-represented groups include ferns, aroids, bromeliads, gingers, heliconias, and marantas. The afternoon is at leisure to explore the gardens, greenhouses, and trails on

your own or with your guide.

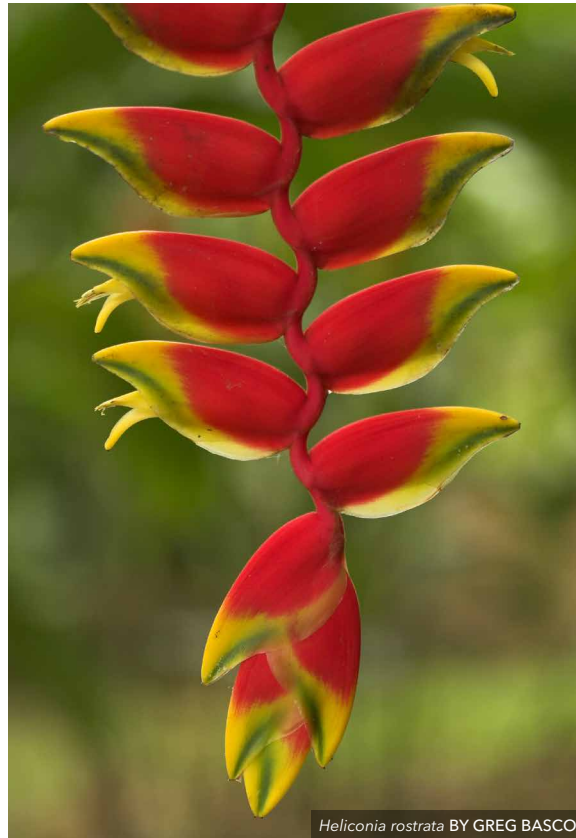
Overnight at Las Cruces – Standard Rooms. (BLD)

Day 10 | **San Gerardo de Dota**

This morning you will be transferred to San Gerardo de Dota, with lunch en route. After check-in, learn the history of Savegre Hotel and the Chacón family and visit the on-site research station. The property has nearly 1,000 acres of trails, both in virgin and secondary forests. You will have time for self-exploration later this afternoon and evening. Your guide will be available for those who wish to take a night walk on the grounds. *Overnight at Savegre Hotel, Natural Reserve & Spa – Jr. Suites. (BLD)*

Day 11 | **San Gerardo de Dota**

Should you wish, start your day with an early morning guided bird walk. After breakfast, take a guided hike on the Los Robles Trail to see trees that are more than 700 years old and up to 197 feet tall. The varying degrees of incline are not particularly strenuous, apart from the effort needed for the mountainous 2.8 mile stretch. Stop for a photo opportunity next to the magnificent Centenary Oak, which in 2010 received the Exceptional Tree Award from the Costa Rican National Biodiversity Institute (INBio). After lunch, there is an optional afternoon hike available on the Las Cataratas Trail to see two waterfalls and the lush vegetation found along the trail. If you prefer, take advantage of the wonderful spa at the hotel (extra cost; suggested arrangement upon check-in). *Overnight at Savegre Hotel, Natural Reserve & Spa – Jr. Suites. (BLD)*



Day 12 | **Santo Domingo**

After breakfast, depart for Santo Domingo and Hotel Bougainvillea. En route, your first stop will be to meet Ileana Terán, president of SACRO (Save Costa Rican Orchids), a private, non-profit organization created to assist in the conservation of orchids in Costa Rica. They believe that the most effective means of conservation is through education. After your discussion with Señora Terán, continue your day with lunch at a local restaurant in Cartago. Continue to the hotel, where you can take a leisurely stroll in the tropical gardens before this evening's farewell dinner. *Overnight at Hotel Bougainvillea – Garden View Rooms. (BLD)*

Day 13 | **Depart**

This morning you will be transferred to the airport in San José for your flight home. (B)



MORE FROM HOLBROOK

Holbrook was founded on the principle that travel fosters a greater understanding of our world's cultural and natural treasures and that these experiences allow individuals to become agents for global change. Whether you are seeking a tried-and-true experience or a garden expedition customized to your needs, Holbrook is adept at combining your specific interest in gardens with a multitude of cultural, environmental, or adventure-based activities.



LAND PRICING

\$3,295 (15 participants + 1 leader)

\$3,695 (10 participants + 1 leader)

Prices are per person in double occupancy.
Single supplement: \$550.

Cost includes accommodations, meals as indicated, naturalist flora guide, private transportation, tips to driver and guide, activities and tours as indicated, and carbon offset.

Cost does not include items of a personal nature, international airfare, or gratuities not mentioned.

Valid for travel through 2021.

TRAVEL PROTECTION

Holbrook Travel purchases Travel Protection on behalf of all participants. These plans help provide coverage once the trip has departed and offer benefits for Baggage/Personal Effects, Accident & Sickness Medical Expenses, Emergency Evacuation and more. Refer to the Plan Document for more details.

Optional additional coverage is available in the form of the Group Deluxe Plan, which offers benefits for Trip Cancellation/Interruption, in addition to many other insurance benefits and non-insurance assistance services. If interested in this optional plan, we can provide you with rates and plan details.

THE FINE PRINT

A \$200 per person deposit and enrollment form are required to secure your reservation. This deposit is refundable until 95 days prior to departure excluding a \$100 cancellation fee. Non-refundable final payment is due at 95 days prior to departure.



This program includes optional carbon offsetting with ClimateSafe. Learn more at holbrooktravel.com/climatesafe