

DISCOVERING THE LOST WORLD

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Abstract: Mount Roraima is one of the most famous tepuis, high plateaus located mainly in the Venezuelan Guayana and known for their isolated terrain, pronounced climatic contrasts, and high number of endemic species. Mount Roraima has fascinated many adventurers and natural history enthusiasts since its first ascent in 1884, and even today, only a relatively small number of individuals have had the opportunity to explore it. This article is an excerpt from the author's travel journal recounting a botanical expedition to this legendary mountain in January–February 2025.

Saturday, January 25

I left France the day before and arrived in Boa Vista, Brazil, at 4 a.m. today. I spent most of the day sleeping to recover. I finally got up in the evening and strolled through the nearby shopping center. First impressions of South America and Brazil. Tomorrow, I have a meeting with my friend Stewart McPherson and his entire team. We will then leave Brazil for the town of Santa Elena de Uairén in Venezuela.

This is the beginning of the adventure!

Sunday, January 26

This is officially the first day of the expedition. After leaving Brazil and crossing the border (where I witnessed the sad spectacle of refugees leaving Venezuela in search of work—20% of the population has left in recent decades), we arrive, after an hour and a half drive, in Santa Elena de Uairén, the Venezuelan town closest to the border. Santa Elena is a town in steep economic decline. There used to be hotels, restaurants, and tourists here. Helicopters even went to visit the surrounding mountains and now almost everything is closed, to the point that many residents are shopping in Brazil. The economic crisis and Covid have struck hard.

There remain a few pockets of economic life, like the ecolodge we arrive at, the Yakoo Hotel. The welcome is warm, and splendid orchids and other flowers adorn the garden and surrounding area. Excited, I spot my first two toucans, and as soon as I put down my things and check into the room, I set off to observe the flora and fauna. I never stay still, and since we're in a natural setting away from the city, staying in my room or in one of the hammocks in the lobby is out of the question.

The stay at the Yakoo Hotel is pleasant. I don't necessarily feel like I'm discovering Venezuela yet, but the feeling of travel is there. I've been speaking English non-stop for two days now with my team members, and I'm doing my best to form sentences in Spanish with the Venezuelans I meet (just as I tried my hand at Portuguese with great difficulty during my day in Brazil). A third language reaches my ears: some of the employees are of Pemón origin, and thanks to them, I'm having my first contact with a culture entirely unknown to me. The Pemón are an indigenous people living in Venezuela, Guyana, and Brazil.

I've traveled extensively, but South America is a first for me. I'm truly intrigued by these new sights, smells, and sounds. I also love observing the looks, gestures, and bodies. What a change of scenery.

On the next day, we'll leave for the Pemón village of Paratepui¹ to begin our journey to "Roroimö." This is how the Pemón call Mount Roraima, a sacred mountain for them. The road will be long.

I left from Orly Airport in France late Thursday, January 23rd, and it won't be until Wednesday, January 29th, in the afternoon that I'll reach the summit of Roraima.

Monday, January 27

Early in the morning, we left the Yakoo Hotel in Santa Elena de Uairén to head to Canaima National Park. We had to pass through several checkpoints (a common practice in this country—I'll get used to it eventually). At one of them, I discovered a sort of fresco depicting the silhouettes of the tepuis and saw the name "Roroimö" written in large white paint on a slope of the roadside. I realized that while for me these mountains are synonymous with mysterious and inaccessible places, as if they were the end of the world, here they are part of people's daily lives. I had even been able to observe a few tepuis from afar from the area around the Yakoo Hotel the day before.

We hit the road again. We have a few hours before arriving at the Pemón village of Paratepui. We were, in a four-wheel drive on an uneven road, crossing the Gran Sabana ("the great savannah"), an immense expanse of plain of more than 10,000 km², when, at one point, Tensing, our guide with dual Brazilian and Venezuelan nationality, points out a field of *Brocchinia hechtii* in the distance, a few hundred meters away. I see some sort of yellow patches. I know that these are the first carnivorous plants of the trip. The urge is strong to rush to this field. I know that I can cover the few hundred meters in two minutes, but I don't want this break to turn into a real stop, so I hesitate to delay the group. Tensing points out that the area is also marshy (he doesn't know me; I could have been waist-deep in water and it wouldn't have stopped me). Stewart, our expedition leader and my friend for 20 years, assures me that we'll see hundreds of these plants in the coming days. I'm resigned. We still take a few photos of the landscapes and the *Brocchinia* field in the distance, as well as a strange clump-shaped plant growing by the roadside, *Bulbostylis pardoza*. I've never seen anything like this small plant before. This expedition will definitely be full of new experiences.

We arrive at the village of Paratepui (Fig. 1). It's the closest village to Roraima. From there, we begin our hike, covering more than 25 km on foot to the mountain under an equatorial sun. In Paratepui, the change of scenery is complete. We're not in one of those European villages where houses are often side by side. Here, the dwellings, of basic construction, are far apart, and only a few community buildings are gathered in what more or less resembles a public square. All the roads are dirt.

I observe a lot. I try to understand too, but it's difficult. While my middle and high school years allowed me to roughly understand conversations in Spanish, I understand nothing of the Pemón language. Visitors aren't numerous in the village, especially since Covid, and we're objects of curiosity. I love seeing the eyes of children or old women clumsily hidden—or not—behind a crack in a wall.

¹ Paratepui: there are several spelling variations of this name, another common one being "Paraitepuy". The original spelling is actually "Tarai-Tüpü": "tarai" is the Pemón name for the local passerine birds of the genus *Procnias* (neotropical bellbirds) and "Tüpü" is the Pemón word referring to table mountain.



Figure 1. The team with the Paratepui mayor and some of the village children after the welcoming ceremony. Photo by Tensing Rodríguez.

We meet the local team who will be looking after us during our 9-day expedition (from Monday, January 27th to Tuesday, February 4th). The team will be made up of a total of 33 people! This may seem like a lot, but there are 8 participants, the porters, two guides, and staff to set up the camp. We need to provide food for 9 days and provide food for those who carry it. A “tasty” anecdote: organic waste is banned in Roraima. We will have toilets available near the camp: basically, a toilet bowl installed on a folding stool. Everyone will have solid biodegradable plastics that they will fill and close after adding a powder to accelerate decomposition. There will be more than 65 kilos of this waste, nicknamed “*El chocolate*” (!) by the Pemón. So, we will also have to provide porters for this dirty work. We spend more than an hour in Paratepui getting organized, registering with the park authorities (the rangers, not very popular with the villagers, who give us instructions to follow scrupulously). We meet our porters. Mine is a young man with a serious and pensive air named Angel (pronounced in Spanish, of course). To our surprise, devoid of any sexism, several of the porters are women, 1.50 m or 1.60 m at most, to whom several of my colleagues embarrassedly entrust 15 kg backpacks. Stewart points out to me that there is no need to be embarrassed: these women do this job and they are used to it. All the same, there is a hesitation in the air. I will never cease to be amazed throughout my stay by the strength and speed of the porters. I walked quickly and managed to keep up with them, but I only had a 5–10 kg bag on my back.

Before our departure for Roraima, the village mayor insisted that we attend a welcoming ceremony. Several children from the village choir had planned a song and dance in our honor. They also gave us a lucky necklace because, while Roraima is a sacred mountain, it has also claimed a tribute on several occasions: lives taken through carelessness or bad luck. I was deeply moved by this welcoming ceremony and kept this necklace throughout my journey and even afterward.

We finally began our walk under a blazing sun. It was around 1 p.m. when we started. Mount Roraima and other tepuis were already visible, but they seemed so far away. We have 15 km to go before arriving at the Kamaiwa-ken camp on the banks of the Río (river) Kukenán where we

will spend our first night away from civilization. The ascent of Mount Roraima will be completed in 3 days. This first day is not complicated. The terrain is relatively flat but it is hot. Sometimes the ascent is completed in two days (with a 25 km walk in two days including 10 km of incline) but we opted for the more comfortable three-day option, which really leaves time to enjoy the magnificent landscapes as well as the fauna and flora. Speaking of fauna, I had every intention of observing hummingbirds during my trip since I knew that the region was home to several species. Since childhood, I have always loved these unlikely descendants of the dinosaurs. My dear friend Michal Golos, a regular in this region of the world, had advised me to wear a bright red cap to attract them. The birds would mistake my headgear for a flower! It turns out it would work as I would later discover.

The long road was an opportunity to admire some strange plants whose existence I was unaware of (that exquisite, yet rather rare, sensation of being faced with the unknown), and I scrutinized practically every meter in search of something new. And I found it: sometimes an unidentified pink orchid (*Sacoila lanceolata*) emerging from land freshly burned by the Pemón, or colonies of leaf-cutter ants that I had only previously seen in documentaries—a little childhood dream come true.

The landscapes are magnificent. I feel carried away. France is far away. I often have this obsessive thought: I look at the time and imagine what my loved ones are doing at the same time, far away in old Europe, and I sometimes feel a little dizzy thinking about these two very different worlds in which they and I are evolving at the same time. This type of thought will occupy me a lot during this trip, and the long walk will also give me the opportunity to meditate and travel internally. We crossed two rivers almost consecutively: Rio Tek and Rio Kukenán. As a precaution, we were advised to cross in socks. The water was up to our knees, and the rocks were slippery. I hated getting my feet wet, and even more so my socks, and tried to see if there was a way to cross using exposed rocks, but to no avail. The water level was too high, and I finally had to resort to getting my feet wet. In too much of a hurry, I took the wrong section of the second river, and one of the guides who joined me explained that I had to come back to cross elsewhere. Me and my impatience.

We finally arrived towards the end of the afternoon at the Rio Kukenán camp (called Kamaiwaken, a name of Pemón origin, of course). What a surprise to see the tents already set up! I had never experienced this in my many travels. I've always had to set up and take down my tent myself, sometimes in difficult weather conditions. So much comfort ("So Gucci!" as Stewart says): coffee, tea, and fruit juice were already waiting for us on a small table surrounded by camper chairs: a real living room in the middle of nowhere! The space between the tents, the proximity of the river, the famous toilets; all of this combined to make this first camp a very pleasant place. The only downside: the *puri-puri*, small flies attracted by our scent and who regularly came to harass us. They left many irritating bites for some of us. Fortunately, I had repellent, but I still had to pay a small price. It's all part of the experience.

The night, the first of a series of eight nights, was peaceful. What a pleasure to fall asleep listening to my favorite music and knowing I was far from everything. I was obviously thinking of the wonders that awaited me not far away on this mystical mountain.

Tuesday, January 28

Early wake-up call. We leave at 8:00 a.m. Since I've been ready for a while and have already had breakfast, I decide to explore the area around the camp. What a joy to discover magnificent orchids of the genus *Epidendrum* (*E. × gransabanense*)! They grow as lithophytes and produce long flower spikes at the ends of which the wind sways elegant pink to magenta flowers. I hadn't seen these the



Figure 2. View of Kukenán-tepui (left) and Mount Roraima. Photo by Hongying Teh.

day before, even though they were only a few meters from my tent. I was probably too focused on discovering the camp itself. I spent a long time photographing this find.

I continued my little morning excursion and strolled along the river: a romantic vision of a forgotten Pemón boat, crystal-clear water, singing rocks, and especially the tepuis towering above us, getting closer. They're immense. I feel drawn in. Eager to leave (but why do my colleagues spend so much time at breakfast?), eager to discover, eager to feel.

We finally set off. About ten kilometers await us. It's significantly less than the day before (15 km), but it will still be just as hot, between 25 and 30°C, even though we're at a rather high elevation. The elevation gain will be much greater as we approach the mountains. The goal is to reach Roraima Base Camp, which is located right at the foot of the immense cliffs, spend the night there before beginning the ascent of the mountain, and reach the summit on Wednesday afternoon.

I'm curious to observe the organization of the expedition. It's no small task to manage a group of more than 30 people. If Stewart McPherson, our expedition leader and guide, is the one who shows us the places, the culture, the fauna and flora of Venezuela, it is Tensing Rodríguez, our guide with dual Venezuelan and Brazilian nationality, who is the conductor of the expedition. Tensing is an affable, attentive, and very rigorous man. I watch him give instructions to the porters, the camp aides, I hear him in Spanish taking stock of the food, the equipment, all with a mixture of authority and benevolence. Some porters will leave for example in advance (or after us, but they will end up overtaking us) and when we arrive at the base camp, the tents will already be set up and we will only have to settle in and enjoy the drinks that will have already been made available to us. I have a lingering feeling of unease because I've always traveled in much more spartan conditions and I feel



like an explorer in a suit, but I tell myself that, after all, we have to know how to take advantage of this comfort since it's offered to us. Let me remind that I'm leaving for a 9-day trip far from everything: no shower, no bed. We'll wash with wipes or, for the more adventurous (of which I will be one), in the torrents or basins (of cold water!) we encounter during our wanderings.

This Tuesday morning, I'm really eager to get started, and when we set off, I quickly distance myself from the group. For about two hours, I wander through this savannah environment with the plants I'd already seen the day before. Sometimes we cross a few islands of much denser vegetation composed of shrubs and tall trees, remnants of the forest that once covered these lands and which has been replaced by these savannahs. It should be noted that the Pemón very often burn plots of land. We tried to understand the reason for this practice but did not receive a satisfactory answer. It seems to be an ancestral habit used, among other things, to maintain trails. I point out that this does not explain the decrease in forested land, but I do not receive a clear answer. I did not insist.

After about two hours, the terrain becomes noticeably steeper, even uneven, and it takes a much greater effort to make progress. Six months earlier, I was on an expedition to the mountains of Peninsular Malaysia, where I had covered more than 150 km in mountains that were particularly difficult to access. These gentle slopes are not going to scare me, especially since I am impatient to get closer to Roraima. As the environment changes, and despite my bravado, the efforts are clearly felt, I realize that the landscape and the vegetation have changed: to my left, the spectacular Kukenántepeui with its steep cliffs, and in front of me, the immense Roraima. These visions hit me like a wall (Fig. 2). Although I hadn't initially found them so large when I left the village of Paratepeui, I am



Figure 3. Group of *Brocchinia hechtii* growing on the lower slopes of Mount Roraima.

now impressed, almost intimidated, by the immensity and majesty of these two tepuis. Do I need to say, that it's even more beautiful than in all the books and documentaries that I've devoured?

It's here that the first botanical wonders of the trip appear, as if by magic: extravagantly shaped bromeliads, some of which have toothed leaves (*Dyckia* and *Puya*), as beautiful to look at as they are fearsome to touch; strange-looking plants, small chlorophyll anemones, can be observed, nestled in the hollows of the grass: these are *Eriocaulon*. Over there, a few meters away, slender, snake-like ferns (*Lindsaea cristata*) rise towards the sky. To my right, bell-shaped flowers vaguely remind me of our European bellflowers. Suddenly, a cry: I discover the first carnivorous plants of the trip: *Drosera rorimae*, small plants that look like sparkling red jewels. They grow along a stream—they prefer to have their feet in the water (and their heads in the sun). I discover several dozen, then a few hundred. I note the presence of other carnivorous plants: *Utricularia* with beautiful bright yellow flowers that I can't identify. The group joins me and we witness this spectacle that I will never tire of: a group of enthusiastic, passionate adults begin to marvel at plants, contorting themselves into improbable positions, often with their backsides pointing skyward to observe and immortalize these plant beauties. As we approach Roraima, the discoveries continue: other carnivorous plants: *Brocchinia hechtii*, a kind of extraterrestrial plant shaped like luminescent leeks that grow in groups and seem to illuminate the meadows of these slopes like torches (Fig. 3). I see, incredulous, *Utricularia humboldtii* flowers, lilac butterflies fluttering at the end of flower stems over 1.70 m tall among the *Brocchinia* (Fig. 4). I rush into this marshy environment and find myself immersed among these plants that I had only seen in books and which have cradled my imagination for more than two decades. Admiring these singular plants with the dramatic cliffs of Roraima in the background, is more than enough for my sensitive little heart. I'm in a trance and it will last for the entire trip and even after. We continue to explore this botanical El Dorado and the gallery of plants with improbable names: *Orectanthe sceptum*, *Stegolepis guianensis*, *Epidendrum*

secundum. “We are geeking our hearts out.” An appropriate expression to express our immense joy as enthusiasts faced with wonders to which ordinary mortals would only give a very limited amount of attention.

We arrive at the camp in the middle of the afternoon. I discover the spectacular site (Fig. 5). We are at the foot of Mount Roraima. After a late and quick meal, I set off again to explore the meadows below. The rest of the day passed like a sweet dream: a chilly but invigorating swim in a stream near the camp, visions of the setting sun over the golden cliffs, an encounter with clouds of fireflies after a pleasant dinner, then a sleep to the sound of the gentle croaking of the local frogs. Tomorrow, Roraima will claim us.

Wednesday, January 29

In some ways, it was the day I was most looking forward to. When I took off from Paris late Friday morning, January 24th, I knew I would have to wait more than five days before reaching the summit of Mount Roraima. It seemed a long way off. I remember looking at the different stages of the journey and telling myself that I had to be patient and take each one at a time. It’s what you would have told a child. That morning, Wednesday, January 29th,

I thought back on the long journey I had made since France. Yet it was nothing compared to what the explorers of the past had experienced. The German Robert Schomburgk was the first, outside of the Pemón, to see Roraima in 1838. It took him more than nine weeks (!) to reach the foot of the mountain. It took me less than three days of walking from the village of Paratepui, which I reached by four-wheel drive, since these days there are roads, albeit sometimes rudimentary. When Schomburgk found himself in front of Roraima, he realized that it was impossible to reach the summit because of the mountain’s appearance and its 500-meter-high cliffs. He therefore had to turn back. He was running out of supplies anyway. The German explorer was unaware that there was a natural ramp, largely hidden by the forest, which would make it possible, decades later, to tame Roraima. The Pemón themselves were apparently unaware of this. It was not until 1884 that the British Everard im Thurn and Harry Perkins, accompanied by Pemón, reached the summit. The ramp had been located, and after several arduous attempts, it was possible to create a trail from the base of the mountain, through the dense forest, to the start of the ramp. Of the hundred or so tepuis that exist (mainly in Venezuela, Brazil, and Guyana), only five or six can be visited on foot. The others necessarily require a helicopter. Of all these tepuis, Roraima is arguably the most emblematic. It was its ascent that fired the imagination of the great Arthur Conan Doyle, which led to the writing of a memorable book: *The Lost World*. An important work for



Figure 4. *Utricularia humboldtii* with Mount Roraima in the background.



Figure 5. Base of Mount Roraima (right), photographed with a drone from the campsite by Hongying Teh.

me, as I will later explain, even though it had been eclipsed in popular culture by the adventures of the legendary Sherlock Holmes, born from the imagination of the same author.

I had all these stories in my head, real and imaginary, as I ate breakfast. The lost world was within reach. I wasn't talkative and I had little appetite, but I knew it was necessary to build up some energy. And then I was really starting to appreciate *arepas*, those yellow (sometimes white) cornbreads that I had had the opportunity to taste several times already since my arrival in South America. Technically, physically, crossing the tropical forest that covers the base of Mount Roraima and then climbing the "*rampa*" had to be the most difficult moment of the trip. There were only a handful of kilometers this time, but the elevation gain was significant. We were about to discover a world radically different from the prairies and savannahs we had traveled below. Once again, I couldn't hold back. Once again, I was ready first and waiting for the others. No acrimony, however; after only a few days, I was already appreciating my travel companions (whom I will introduce later), unique and interesting people. We were off. Finally.

We follow a path and very quickly find ourselves in the undergrowth. This wasn't new to me, however, because the day before, curiosity had driven me to explore this passage. I quickly stopped because I came face to face with a slope of over 45 degrees made up of large boulders. Nothing insurmountable, but after a tiring day, I preferred to rest after taking a bath (so freezing but invigorating) in a stream that crossed this path. I then noticed very interesting plants such as *Tillandsia*, various epiphytes, as well as intriguing orchids. So, we cross this stream. To my dismay, we have to take off our shoes because the water level has risen significantly following rains during the night. You have to accept water and humidity when traveling in the tropics, and my grumbling won't change that.

I quicken my pace and find myself facing the steep slope from the day before. My guide Tensing and Stewart told me that the path would be quite steep for about 20 minutes and that after that the slope would become gentler until we reached the ramp. After crossing this first slope,

I continued at a fairly steady pace and climbed slopes and other ledges. Nothing too difficult in the end. I think the expedition I did 6 months earlier in Peninsular Malaysia, where I covered about 150 km in three weeks in difficult mountains, is still fresh in my mind. It gives me strength. I know that the difficulty—when you have no physical problems—in this kind of situation is mainly psychological. The mind is key. I don't have the time or the desire to worry about the efforts made or to listen to the few pains in my body. I want to move forward and see and feel as much as possible. In a few moments, I am as if caught up in the tropical forest, surrounded by lush vegetation that draws me into the strangest of dances. I don't know where to start. Perhaps this could be called *ce-nesthopathy*, but the connotation of this term is negative, and I prefer to qualify it as *Stendhal syndrome*, like the French teacher that I also am. Familiar and desired plants, but also unknown plants, follow one another: bromeliads, tree ferns, countless orchids. It's a multicolored kiosk with a frenetic pace. I follow the path that sometimes merges with the bed of a small stream enjoying the feeling that I'm walking on water. I pass the overloaded porters, who yet walk at such a brisk pace. I am often alone, and I am happy like that. It gives me the leisure to observe and explore. Sometimes I stop because I know that I must not be isolated from the group for too long. I'm not worried, however, because the trail is very clear—impossible to get lost—and I pass a few porters from time to time.

I emerge into a view where three of these porters are resting (Fig. 6). The mountain seems to belong to them. I give them a warm smile. I'm a little embarrassed that I don't really speak Spanish, much less be able to communicate in the Pemón language. I still utter a few tentative words in Spanish, then quickly fall silent. The spectacle is grandiose (Fig. 7); the words are superfluous, parasitic. The porters resume their journey. I stay there to explore this plant-filled promontory: *Brocchinia tatei*, *Epidendrum holstii*, *Utricularia campbelliana*, *Tillandsia turneri*. Another string of names that are esoteric to the layman but true sources of epiphany for the initiated. I wander through this temple of nature and solitude. I feel as if I have the world to myself. It's so romantic, I thought (in the literary sense of the word, that is). My eyes delight in this panorama that I unfortunately cannot paint with words. Perhaps the few photos that accompany this story will help me in this task.

I get back on the trail. After about twenty minutes, I arrive at another terrace in the undergrowth bordered by a lively torrent. I meet up with other porters. One has a message for me from Tensing (they communicate by walkie-talkie): "*Tell François to wait before starting the ascent of the ramp.*" I manage to understand the words spoken in Spanish and I smile. Tensing is afraid that my enthusiasm will overflow and that I will take the tricky path of the ramp alone. I know what it's



Figure 6. Pemón porter resting in the tropical forest on the way to the ramp.



Figure 7. View over Kukenán-tepui from the tropical forest leading to the ramp.

like to manage a group and I don't want to be a source of trouble, so I decide to wait for the rest of the group next to this torrent. I wait 45 minutes, which allows me to indulge in daydreaming and a form of meditation (my mind will wander a lot during this stay). A few footsteps and here arrive Stewart and my travel companions in single file: Michal and Miroslav, two friendly Slovaks; Hongying, a Singaporean living in Switzerland; Kok, a retired botany professor from the Netherlands; and Simon and his son Eliot, two Londoners on their first major trip. We exchange impressions. Smiles and laughter circulate. What an adventure. I then discover (even though I'd been there for 45 minutes!) a population of iridescent ferns growing at the foot of the immense rock face behind me. It's *Elaphoglossum metallicum*. I'm amused to realize that this magnificent plant was there all along, but I was too busy daydreaming to notice. I'm happy with this alternation between explorer's adrenaline rush and walker's reveries. We fill the bottles and flasks. Ah, that delicious taste of chlorinated water! Obviously, I put chlorine tablets in the mountain water I drink: it's best not to take any risks in this kind of adventure. After a fairly short walk, we arrive at a small clearing from which we can see the famous ramp we're going to take. So here it is, this famous *rampa*. It's very high. It's impressive. It didn't seem so dizzying to me from base camp. It's waiting for us. This is the big moment. In less than two hours, apparently, we'll be at the summit. I see porters in the distance, tiny spots of color wandering along this narrow corridor lined with small streams and large waterfalls. I tell myself that it will soon be our turn. Emotion from the little boy in me who, after a long queue, is about to have his turn on the merry-go-round. Suddenly, another splash of color: a hummingbird (*Colibri coruscans*) swoops down among our small flock and stops dead to drink from some splendid pink flowers (*Symbolanthus elisabethae*). I had spotted a handful of these magnificent flying creatures in the previous days, but it was impossible to photograph them because they are so vivacious. Determined, I whip out my camera this time (no point trying with my phone) and manage to get a few satisfying shots. A magical but fleeting distraction. The ramp awaits us. A quick group photo to immortalize this moment (Fig. 8), and off we go on another adventure within the adventure.



Figure 8. Group photo with the highly anticipated ramp in the background. Photo by Stewart McPherson.

Up.

This is the title of an animated film from Pixar Studios released in 2009. The film won the Golden Globe and the Oscar for Best Animated Feature the following year. *Up* was one of the three reasons that prompted me to go to Venezuela. The other two reasons were the *Heliamphora*, carnivorous plants endemic to the tepuis, and *The Lost World*, the novel by Arthur Conan Doyle, which I will discuss below.

I really liked *Up* at the time, as did my children. The film is set in South America, Venezuela, and Mount Roraima, although the latter is never explicitly mentioned. How surprising for me at the time, having been cultivating carnivorous plants for about five years and having known about Mount Roraima since adolescence, to discover a children's story set in these Venezuelan highlands. I was really struck by this animation. The first half hour of *Up* is very moving: it traces the life of a couple, Carl and Ellie. As a child, Carl dreams of being an explorer and he wants above all to go to one of the tepuis of the Venezuelan Guayana to see Paradise Falls (inspired by Angel Falls, the highest waterfall in the world, located on Auyán-tepui). He meets Ellie, a cheeky little girl who shares the same dream. They imagine themselves as explorers together, fall in love, get married, but life is not kind to them: they cannot have children and the vagaries of existence mean that their South American dream does not come true. Ironically, Ellie is suffering from an incurable disease when Carl finally manages to buy plane tickets to make their lifelong dream come true. Ellie dies without her and Carl ever being able to go to Paradise Falls. Carl will remain alone, bitter, before an improbable series of events manages to take him to Venezuela aboard a house lifted into the air by a cloud of balloons. What left a lasting impression on me at the time was the first half-hour of the film, with its blend of visual poetry and absolute childlike joy, draped in boundless dreams but gradually, irremediably, eroded by the bittersweet symphony of life.

My children knew how much I wanted to go to the tepuis. For a botany enthusiast like me, and particularly for a lover of carnivorous plants, the table mountains of the Venezuelan Guayana represent the Holy Grail. They are home to a unique, endemic flora and are therefore the territory, in particular, of plants of the genus *Heliamphora* (the "marsh pitcher plants"), elegant and charismatic insectivorous plants that are particularly delicate to cultivate and the subject of much fantasizing in horticultural circles. There is still a real aura around these plants, perhaps a bit like the Edelweiss of old. For decades, it was practically impossible to cultivate *Heliamphora* satisfactorily. It must be said that it is particularly difficult to reproduce the climatic conditions of their native environment: Mount Roraima (and the other tepuis) has a very significant diurnal temperature range (roughly from 5 to 30°C over 24 hours) and sometimes more if we take into account the dark rock that absorbs heat); the rate of sunshine is very high (we are 3 degrees from the equator); the humidity is very high and to this is added regular winds, sometimes violent. Imagine trying to reproduce this in a greenhouse in our temperate regions.

The geographical distance, the inaccessibility of the tepuis, the cost of the trip. All this and a few other reasons made me end up telling myself, like Carl in *Up*, that I would never go to Mount Roraima. I had accepted it. I had resigned myself and I was not to be pitied anyway. On this Wednesday, January 29th, I already had many trips and expeditions under my belt and I had even made some very nice botanical discoveries over the last two decades. I would not become the bitter old man in the cartoon. Despite everything, when it was around 1 p.m. and my group was about to set off to climb the famous ramp (which would only take an hour if it was quick), I was overcome with emotion. I had forgotten. Forgotten that I had dreamed of Mount Roraima as a teenager because of Doyle, forgotten that I had been moved by *Up*, also forgotten how much

I had hoped to one day go to these heights. Of course, I had been in South America for several days. My brain had integrated it, but my heart hadn't yet realized it. Troubled and moved, I had some difficulty moving forward, even though I had been almost as lively as a goat until then. In a daze, I put on my raincoat before crossing "El Paso de las Lágrimas," the path of tears, a passage of the ramp that passes under two waterfalls located side by side. Without saying a word, my gaze a little lost, I was cautious when, for 15 minutes, we had to walk on the wet rocks of a torrent that ran alongside the path. I thought about all that: childhood, adolescence, my children, my old life. Several times, buckets poured over me and my companions as we passed near the falls. We were surrounded by a suspended cloud. The drops seemed to fall in slow motion. I felt like I was holding my breath, busy disentangling myself from my memories and making progress on this shifting rock. We finally reached the cover of the forest. Gradually, the sound of the water faded. I quickly took off my raincoat and contemplated the path, which became steeper before seeming, like a launching pad, to soar vertically towards the summit. A smile. A pounding heart. I ask permission now that the trickiest part is over to progress at my own pace. Tensing, my guide, gives me his blessing, and off I go. I walk quickly, stop often, observe, admire, photograph, take notes. My heart feels light. Below, the group seems to be struggling to make progress: perhaps my colleagues are feeling the steepness of the slope or perhaps they are simply taking photos.

I often look back. It must be said that the view is superb and these cliffs are overwhelmingly beautiful. I have the urge to wait for the group, but my desire to reach the summit and see my first *Heliampora* overwhelms everything. Tensing and Stewart had told me that the first marsh pitcher plants were even a hundred meters below the summit, and that I would see other plants just as I exit the ramp on the summit. The group lingers, and to my surprise, Tensing joins me. I understand that he knows that despite the steep slope, my companions are safe, that they would make their way to the top of the plateau without difficulty, more slowly no doubt, but surely. I then suspect that Tensing, the caring man that he is, wants to accompany me to the summit.

So, we walk together. We observe the bromeliads together; we take turns spotting orchids. Sometimes Tensing points out the sudden presence of a hummingbird, sometimes he invites me to turn around to contemplate this mountain he loves so much (he climbed it for the first time when he was about 10 years old!). At one point, I notice a slight smile on my guide's lips: the *Heliampora* are close and he then points out, rising above the surrounding vegetation, stems punctuated with pale pink flowers and fuchsia bells: my first *Heliampora* plants. Deep breath. Slow steps. Fixed gaze. Trembling hand. A botanist in the field always has the amusing air of a man in love. Stewart joins us and introduces me to this species of *Heliampora*, one of the two present on Mount Roraima: *Heliampora nutans* (Fig. 9). I take the time to study the plants, to admire them. I try to establish the correspondences between the descriptions in the books and what I see there on the ground: the dazzling sun, the daytime heat, the damp substrate, the strong winds, the mist. All of this is true and more. Once again, words have failed to live up to reality. And it's nothing compared to what awaits me at the summit in the days to come. I linger over these elegant urns: they are topped with a small spoon of nectar shaped like a half cherry with flared edges.

After a few timeless moments, I decide, now that my companions have joined me, to get back on the path and cover the hundred meters that separate me from the summit. My step is hesitant. The rocks in front of me gradually disappear. A horizon seems to reveal itself. As Tensing walks just ahead, he stops, lets me pass. He has the elegance to let me feel a little of what im Thurn and Perkins must have felt in 1884. They were, along with the Pemón porters who accompanied them, the very first human beings to set foot on the summit of Mount Roraima. Suddenly, I find myself thrust into



Figure 9. *Heliamphora nutans*, the first named *Heliamphora* species.

a land virtually unknown to me. All I knew of it were a few chapters I'd read; a few visions gleaned during my motionless travels behind a screen.

The emotion is immense.

Tensing congratulates me; Stewart joins us. We embrace. I glimpse plants of improbable shapes and colors (Fig. 10). I recognize these familiar unknowns. We will sleep five nights on Mount Roraima and will have four full days to explore its folds and meanders.

Thursday, January 30

"Some strange country of nightmares"

These were the words spoken by Everard im Thurn, one of the two explorers who first set eyes on the summit of Mount Roraima. I had this singular description in mind when I discovered and walked the rocks of the plateau the day before. I felt as if I had landed on another planet. This worn-down expression seemed to me the most apt to describe this extraordinary assemblage of gravity-defying rocks, a horizon jagged by countless ridges, cracks, and crevices. Then there were the plants I had come to see, these green, red, orange, and coppery patches that formed carpets or belts around pools with golden reflections. The sky and the sun were languidly reflected in them. Everything seemed to vibrate with strange undulations. There was also that wind, which often murmured, blew suddenly in gusts, and sometimes fell silent just as abruptly. The cerulean color of the sky, however, prevented me from fully adhering to the words chosen by im Thurn. I was in complete rapture. The new, the strange, the unknown, the hustle and bustle were, after all, commodities far too rare for my taste in my daily life. What I didn't know was that one night after this glorious arrival, on Thursday,



Figure 10. Landscape on the summit plateau of Mount Roraima as seen from the ramp top.

January 30th, I would experience a rainy day (the only one of the entire expedition) during which the English botanist's description would take on its full meaning.

That morning, we woke up in what our Pemón and Venezuelan guides called a “*hoteles*” (see p. 79). Ours was called *Hoteles Balvina*. There are several dozen places of this kind on Mount Roraima. These are caves or rocky overhangs in which travelers camp. The presence of these *hoteles* makes a stay on Roraima much easier than one might first imagine because of course, we camp sheltered from the rain and wind, which is absolutely not the case on the other tepuis. I discovered with some excitement our first camp the day before. It must be said that I like this way of traveling (don't worry, I also fancy classy hotels): washing with wipes or in the cold water of a mountain stream, wearing the same clothes for several days in a row (impossible to avoid unless you have another porter dedicated to your wardrobe), sleeping in a tent, enjoying group life with its exchanges (in English exclusively with some attempts in Spanish). I feel like a butterfly in a field of flowers. The only moments where the French language resonates during this trip are the voice recordings that I have made daily since my departure. This electronic journal, I told myself, would be invaluable when I had to write reports on my expedition.

Four full days. That's how long we'll spend exploring El Monte Roraima. It's unusual for me to spend so much time on a mountaintop. I usually never stay more than a handful of hours on a summit because the topography of traditional mountains limits exploration, and often, it's the climb itself that offers the greatest floral interest. Four days on Roraima therefore seems like an incredible opportunity to explore the plateau in all its glory. Today's agenda includes discovering the endemic flora, long walks through picturesque landscapes, hiking to the Triple Point, a three-sided



Figure 11. Two of countless improbable rock formations on the summit of Mount Roraima.



Figure 12. Assemblage of tepui plants.

marker marking the convergence point between the three countries that share Roraima (Venezuela, Brazil, and Guyana), exploring the Crystal Valley, and then arriving at the second *hoteles* in the second half of the afternoon. Throughout the day, we'll gradually head to the northern part of the plateau, which will serve as our exploration site on Friday. That Thursday morning, when our excursion begins, I no longer recognize the mountain. The splendid blue of the day before has given way to a milky white tinged at times with a timeless gray. It rains lightly, then more heavily, then gently again. The day will be characterized by these alternating weather patterns: we will be treated to a few short showers but also to a few moments of respite punctuated by blue skies. Tensing and Alex explain to us that we should consider ourselves lucky because for them it is only a drizzle; real rain on the tepuis is more like what we would call a storm in our more northern climes. Our small team then consists of the eight participants and our two guides. The porters will go separately and directly to the next camp. We set off through the mist. I am surprised to note that, more than 10 meters away from the group, I have the greatest difficulty in the world making out the group. So, we stay together. This strange country of nightmares is here (Fig. 11). We are moving in an environment that has remained frozen since the dawn of time. More precisely, we are treading on ground that is more than almost two billion years old. Dark rocks with crazy shapes surround us. But how can some of them stay balanced? We imagine them falling incessantly, but nothing happens. The lunar landscape stretches to the horizon. Everywhere, we see plants that vie with each other in beauty and strangeness. One of our companions, Kok, a retired Dutch botanist and lichen specialist, improvises a lesson for us on these organisms, which I know little about, a mixture of fungi and algae. How sweet and exhilarating it is to constantly learn from others. This kind of expedition has always been a crash course for me in many fields. That's also why I want to experience these moments. The morning, a carnival of astonishing colors and shapes, will be a dream out of time: a striking encounter with *Oreophrynella quelchii*, a dark black toad endemic to Mount Roraima which has the particularity of not jumping but of curling up into a ball and letting itself roll down the slopes when it wants to escape; interviews with numerous carnivorous plants in fuchsia pink, scarlet, lilac or canary yellow (*Drosera roraimae* (Fig. 12, 13), *D. hirticalyx*, *U. pubescens*, *Utricularia quelchii* (Fig. 14), *Genlisea roraimensis*); interviews with small trees which have decided to grow flat on the rocks (*Cyrilla racemiflora*) rather than fight against the powerful winds of Roraima; fascinating conversations with *Orectanthe sceptum*, plants with the appearance of mandalas that I already observed at the bottom of the mountain but much more beautiful and vibrant here on the summit. The wonderful encounters (I feel like the famous Alice in this other land) were numerous during this morning.

We stop early in the afternoon at a splendid viewpoint and discover with pleasure that we will take a long break there to eat fruit and biscuits and enjoy the panorama. The landscapes, although always made up of the same rocky and plant elements, are never the same. As always in the days that follow, these lunch breaks will also be an opportunity to prospect, photograph, fly drones, or simply dream. After about an hour, we head towards the famous triple point where we will be treated to a nice downpour. This will not prevent us from savoring the place. It is not every day that we have the opportunity to "travel" three countries in a handful of seconds, I tell myself then, running around the marker like a child that I am no longer supposed to be. I am far from home; I am far from everything. I observe the marker: each side is supposed to have a country name: Brazil, Venezuela, but nothing on the Guyana side, whose name has been erased because a part of its territory is claimed by the Venezuelan authorities. See how the adult world always ends up emerging even when we have decided to immerse ourselves in our younger years. Stewart takes advantage of a respite from the rain to shoot drone videos of the triple point and invites us to go without him to the Crystal Valley,



Figure 13. A group of old *Drosera roraimae* on the summit of Mount Roraima.

which he knows well. A twenty-minute walk away, we discover a hollow about two hundred meters deep (valley is a bit of an exaggeration) crossed by a small stream and filled with quartz. The riverbed itself is full of it. What an incredible sight. I enjoy observing the plants in this unique environment. Fantastic images of crimson *Drosera roraimae* against a pristine background of quartz at an elevation of 2,700 meters. I then remember that while I came for the plants, Mount Roraima has much more to offer: it's a place of geological wonders. We enjoy this highly magical place. We speak little. We look at each other and exchange many smiles. Once again, words are superfluous.

We finally reach Stewart and begin the walk toward the second *hotele*, which will be located on the Brazilian side. The mist thickens again, the sky grayer, and we wander through a landscape similar to that of the morning. I see myself walking in a grotesque, gigantic chess game, watched by pawns of improbable and disturbing shapes. I feel tiny. We cross a small bridge that creaks beneath our feet; we walk across rippled, blackened plains. As we approach the second camp and the fog clears somewhat, we make our last plant discovery: a magnificent *Heliampora glabra* plant, the other marsh pitcher plant species from Mount Roraima: the largest, the most beautiful (Fig. 15). And how beautiful it is! And how it doesn't disappoint! I'm on cloud 9. This *Heliampora glabra* plant is, however, only a foretaste of the next day, which will be largely dedicated to *Heliampora*. We arrive tired but delighted at *Gruta do Quati* (the Coati Cave), the cave that will serve as our *hotele* for the second and third nights on Roraima. We've barely sat down when we're greeted, as a late lunch (it's after 4 p.m.), by a plate of pasta Bolognese, which seems to me to be the best in the world.

Friday, January 31, Saturday and Sunday, February 1 and 2

I will recount three days in one go because, in my mind, everything got mixed up during those days, and even today, I struggle to untangle the threads. I don't really want to, in fact. This sweet reverie, experienced up there on the heights of Roraima, had actually ended up getting the better of my will and my resolutions. I wanted to be rigorous, to observe, to note down, to understand, and above all not to let myself be overcome by emotion. When the expedition began, when I arrived in Boa Vista, Brazil, I started a logbook in the form of voice recordings, which I conscientiously kept until January 30th, the second day after my arrival on the summit of Roraima. By the evening of January 31st, I was unable to continue this logbook or return to it later. All that remains are the numerous photographs, the notes taken on site, the sketches made in front of the plants, and the countless emotions. But organizing all of this each evening into a coherent, structured speech, delivered after putting my mind in order after a crazy day? That was completely impossible for me. However, I will try my best now; I will throw out a few words here, write a few colors there, and I hope to be able to continue this sharing I began since my return.

"He's passionate."

This is a sentence I've regularly heard about myself. I've always found it somewhat strange, as it seems natural to me to be driven by desires, projects that keep you awake during the day, wake you up in the middle of the night, make your life difficult, sometimes impossible, put you at odds with yourself, sometimes with others, often with the world.

"He's passionate."

A lapidary description, almost a verdict. As if to explain admirable or unreasonable, even selfish behavior, like a stubbornness that's necessarily difficult to understand.



Figure 14. *Utricularia quelchii*, a common species on the top of Mount Roraima.



Figure 15. A clump of *Heliamphora glabra* near Lake Gladys.

For me, as for countless others, it started young: books read very late at night as a child, until my eyelids wilted; a wooden pencil singing on a poor-quality sheet of paper lit by a yellowish lamp before the pink light of day emerged; nights spent dreaming of projects and days projecting dreams.

As far back as I can remember, I've always loved nature and art, especially drawing. I've always loved science: paleontologist and entomologist were the two careers I wanted to pursue as a child and then as a teenager. I eventually became a French teacher. Strange life. My love of words only came later, a little in middle school and then especially in high school. Despite this love for literature, science has always remained nestled within me. Memories of the stories of Alfred Russel Wallace, the great explorer, the idol of my youth whom I loved to prefer to Darwin, his eminent colleague and friend; memories of those all-too-short days spent running and identifying insects, observing the fauna and flora, of those all-too-short nights also spent trying to illustrate stories or observing moths.

Encounters with many works too. One of them was *The Lost World* by Arthur Conan Doyle, an adventure story published in 1912 with an old-fashioned charm featuring explorers attacking a table-top mountain somewhere deep in the Amazon. This mountain, you may have guessed, was inspired by Mount Roraima, where I found myself at the end of January 2025. Doyle's characters were motivated by the desire to prove the existence of prehistoric fauna that had survived isolated from the world on this high, misty plateau. If Edward Malone, Professor Challenger, Lord Roxton, and Professor Summerlee saw their adventure crowned with success, it was strangely not their exploits that had left a deep imprint on my heart as a literary scientist. What had moved me most was the young Edward Malone. The adventure neophyte had embarked on this crazy expedition only to prove to Gladys, the woman he was in love with, that he had the makings of a hero, the beautiful

Englishwoman having indeed told him that she would only marry a man capable of the greatest exploits. Certainly, the ascent of this mysterious mountain was to transform the romantic Malone into a true ancient hero. I remember my adolescent emotion when, after discovering a lake at the summit of this fabulous mountain, Professor Challenger suggested that Malone be the one to name it. I remember the shyness of the young explorer when he suggested that this body of water be named Lake Gladys. I also and above all remember the young man's broken heart when, upon returning from his adventure, he finds Gladys in London and discovers that she has married a dull scribbler, thus forgetting the lyrical flights of fancy she had spoken earlier. I understood Malone's decision to set off again to explore the world with Lord Roxton at the end of the novel. I identified with him. From this seminal book, I had retained as much the heroes' thirst for discovery as the young man's incorrigible romanticism. No, I'm lying to myself: I adored Edward Malone's romanticism more than anything.

Many years later, when I fell in love with carnivorous plants—another manifestation of my love of nature and science—I discovered the existence of *Heliamphora*, pitcher plants of extraordinary shapes and colors that thrive almost exclusively on these inhospitable cloudy heights and nowhere else in the world. I discovered that several of them grew on Mount Roraima itself, not with dinosaurs as in the novel by Sherlock Holmes's father, but alongside numerous strange plants and animals in chimerical landscapes. Everything came together. Imagine my surprise when I learned that a lake on the northern tip of Roraima had been named Lake Gladys by famous explorer Charles Brewer-Carias in reference to Doyle's novel. As much as the plants themselves, I had to see this lake. It would inevitably disappoint me, I thought. I wouldn't find any aquatic prehistoric reptiles there, no illuminated caves on the rock walls overlooking it. I would inevitably find it small. It wouldn't be able to compete with the phantasmagorical lake of my adolescence, but no matter. I needed to find it again, to dive back into these waters that nourished me at a defining moment in my life.

And it was, in fact, a magnificent moment.

At almost half a century old, I felt as if I were holding the hand of the child, and resting my hand on the shoulder of the adolescent, both of whom still breathe and vibrate within me. That the three of us were complete. Finally. Discovering *Heliamphora* in the immediate vicinity of this lake allowed me to add touches of color (and what colors!) to this painting, which I didn't realize it was time to complete.

The encounters and sensations of these three days blended together, as I said earlier; the painting started to animate itself: cliffs, plants, landscapes, streams, animals, ravines, torrents, clouds, and winds. All followed one another in a strange farandole. As I walked, I imagined in my daydreams that I was a marveling Alice performing anabasis in the strangest of lands. I was aware that I was probably being ridiculous, mystical. But no matter, *I was passionate*. I probably always will be.

Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, February 3, 4, and 5

"Tepuis change you."

This phrase, spoken to me by my friend Michal Golos, intrigued me. Another acquaintance, Mateusz Wrazidlo, had described Mount Roraima as a unique place, a place where the connection with nature is so strong that it borders on the mystical. I also remember another friend, Thomas Carow, who, in his youth, several decades ago, had set off to conquer several tepuis. He confided to me, shortly before my own departure, that this experience was one of the happiest moments in his life. I was quite impressed by these various testimonies, but also wary: I am a very rational person in my daily life, and it is with a certain distance, a hint of irony, and a swig of disdain that I have

always greeted all flights of fancy that even remotely resemble a form of esotericism. A real irony, ultimately, for someone who nourished his formative years on Baudelairean correspondence and other Ardennes cenestopathies. Like many people, I must admit I'm a contradiction.

I was full of these bloated thoughts while I contemplated the Gran Sabana from the Maverick, the highest point of the mountain on which I had spent several days. From the top of this rock located at over 2,800 meters, I admitted that I had given up on being content with my primary mission: to observe, note, record, compare, draw, and other verbs that we readily attach to the vintage image of the naturalist. I had understood from the beginning of my journey to Boa Vista, Brazil, that this trip would be different from all the previous ones. It would be intimate. I had unknowingly brought most of my previous versions with me, and without realizing it, while I thought it was almost an expedition like those that had preceded it, I began to feel emotions and feelings that were completely unfamiliar to me: calm, serenity, a strange relaxation. Even today, as I write these lines, I find it very difficult to describe what happened up there. I feel as if I had abandoned something on this mountain of clouds and mists: an old coat, an ancient melody, or even a bunch of old keys. I don't know exactly. The encounters with the plants, the rock, the water, the air, the auditory and visual embraces with these vertiginous cliffs, I will not forget them. They insinuated themselves through the different senses, they passed through the pores, and traced a path deep within my vessels. To the double helices within me.

I won't recount the last moments on that floating mountain, just as I won't recount the descent and return to Paratepui. Some moments are best kept to oneself. I just remember that I spoke little the last two days, that I tried almost desperately to absorb everything I could. I often touched the lucky necklace I'd been given in the village the day I left. It now seemed both lighter and heavier.

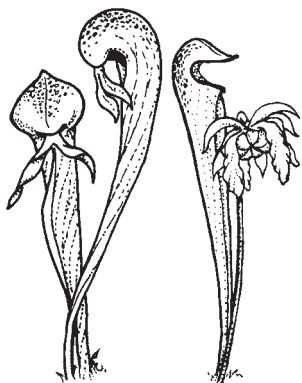
When we descended, we returned to Santa Elena de Uairén and spent the next day exploring other botanical wonders of the Gran Sabana at more measured elevations (1,200 m). While the new plants we encountered were marvelous, I felt as if I were aboard an old plane slowly skimming the ground; my ears were lulled by an engine purring a more ordinary chant. It would take me several weeks to understand, but I had indeed left a part of myself on Roraima.

Far away, up there,
A book has closed.
Since then,
I breathe better.

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For more pictures from this expedition, please check the author's Instagram page: https://www.instagram.com/a_gardens_chronicle/



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Front Cover: *Heliamphora glabra* growing in a marsh on Mount Roraima. Photo by François Mey. Article on page 92.

Back Cover: View from the top of Mount Roraima, near the ramp top. Photo by François Mey. Article on page 92.

Carnivorous Plant Newsletter is dedicated to spreading knowledge and news related to carnivorous plants. Reader contributions are essential for this mission to be successful. Do not hesitate to contact the editors with information about your plants, conservation projects, field trips, or noteworthy events. Views expressed in this publication are those of the authors, not the editorial staff.

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ERRATUM

Due to an oversight by the CPN editors, the paper in the September 2024 issue of CPN:
Patel, P. K. and Prajapati, C. 2024. *Utricularia australis* R. Br. (Lentibulariaceae):
an addition to the carnivorous plants in flora of Gujarat, India. Carniv. Pl. Newslett.
53(3):139-143. <https://doi.org/10.55360/cpn533.pp521>

erroneously reported *Utricularia australis* as a new state record for Gujarat. This species had
already been documented as a new record for the state with a nearly identical title in:

Gamit, V., Gujar, R., Tatu, K., and Sugoora, R.K. 2022. *Utricularia australis*
(Lentibulariaceae): an addition to the wetland flora of Gujarat, India. J. Econ.
Taxon. Bot. 46 (1&2): 25-27.

—BOB ZIEMER, CPN Managing Editor

<https://doi.org/10.55360/cpn543.ed935>



Hotele Balvina on Mt. Roraima. Photo by François Mey. Article on page 92.

