



A Semi-aquatic Cactus in Guatemala

Mario Veliz (Guatemala)





Selenicereus grandiflorus ssp. *hondurensis*, habitat, Guatemala. © M. Veliz.

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Mario Esteban Véliz Pérez (Guatemala)

When we think of Cacti, we see them immediately in semi-arid or arid regions, with extreme conditions of temperature and little rain, but there are also species adapted to cloud forests or fog, growing as epiphytes in conditions of high rainfall and temperate climates, such as the genera *Epiphyllum* or *Disocactus*; however, a species of semi-aquatic cactus, living at 10 m above sea level, with a warm climate, high temperatures and with submerged stems, **which you can propagate by putting sections of stems in a jar with some water** seems almost inconceivable. It exists never-the-less in the case of *Selenicereus grandiflorus* ssp. *hondurensis* (K. Schum.) Ralf Bauer.

Epilithic or epiphytic plant, usually several meters in length and 1-2.5 cm in diameter, ribs 7-10; areoles with 7-24 setose spines, 4-12 mm long, reddish brown to yellow, becoming grey in age ; flowers 18-30 cm long, tube receptacle 7.5-12 cm long ; external segments of perianth linear, 7.5-10 cm long and ca. 4.5 mm wide, brownish or reddish; inner segments of perianth narrowly lanceolate, 7.5-10 cm long and 0.9-1.2 cm wide; ovary with many yellowish or reddish brown areolas, flexible spines up to 2 cm long, style 15-20 cm long ; fruits fleshy, white or pink, with many flexible spines.

This subspecies grows in rainforests on the Atlantic side of Guatemala, Honduras and Belize. In Guatemala, it is frequently observed at the Rio Dulce, municipality of Livingston, department of Izabal. The stems of this species are largely submerged, as can be seen in some of the attached photos and on the picture cover.

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Selenicereus grandiflorus ssp. *hondurensis*, cult..

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