

For those invested in the study and preservation of local vegetation,

The country of Panama is covered in natural and beautiful vegetation, and some of this is continually at risk of endangerment due to poaching and expanding settlements. Panama's mountainous areas and rainy season create premier conditions for orchid growth. Although there have been more past discoveries of orchids in areas of Costa Rica, this is notably due to the larger amount of focused research there. Regardless, there has already been roughly 1,000 orchid species identified in Panama, most of which accomplished by short-term visitors.

APROVACA was founded on May 15, 2001, with the goal of protecting endangered endemic Panamanian species of orchids. Illegal orchid poaching by locals has greatly diminished the number of orchids in El Valle and threatens to eradicate several species of orchids only found in El Valle. Aside from administration, the center has an orchid garden/nursery for local orchids and horticultural varieties, as well as a hostel which helps to fund the organization's activities. As an ongoing project, APROVACA is collaborating with the Institute of Agricultural Investigation of Panama (Instituto de Investigación Agropecuaria de Panamá, IDIAP) to reintroduce endemic local orchids into their natural habitats. Through their efforts, APROVACA has been a member of the Orchid Conservation Coalition since March 2010. Some of the more notable or common orchids found in the garden are: Holy Ghost, Vanilla, Lady Slipper, Oncidiums and other tropical botanicals and miniature orchids.

In order to continue the preservation of Panamanian orchids, APROVACA needs your assistance. The staff at the organization do have many years of experience in the field but are still limited in some aspects. As there are some lesser known and/or more difficult to identify orchids in the area, some flowers in the garden go unidentified. APROVACA would greatly benefit from a knowledgeable individual or group that is willing to provide assistance on a regular basis primarily in identification of orchid and other plant species, as well as proper care techniques as necessary.

The commitment involved can be flexible and discussed if you or your organization is interested in this opportunity. Although in-person interaction is preferred, APROVACA is also willing to work over the phone and email in this relationship as an alternative. If in-person, lunch would be provided, and lodging can be arranged if a longer stay at the site is desired.

Thank you for your time, interest and commitment to Panama's natural beauties. Please reach out to APROVACA's headquarters or visit the website for more details.

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