

garden that Andy had made on a tree covered with detritus. He constructed shelves out of bits of moss and tree branches on top of the detritus and placed the orchids on the shelves. Altogether we collected 91 specimens on Cerro Negro. Many were probably the same species. The standard procedure was to get at least three flowering plants of each type that we thought were the same species. One plant would go to Dr Luer to be described, one would get its flower pickled and its plant pressed for the National Herbarium in Quito, one Lou would keep in his green house as a safety or for the Herbarium QCA at the 'Universidad Católica del Ecuador.'

On Monday morning Alí, Andy and I —Mario had unexpectedly left a couple of days early because he believed that he had done what he was hired to do- cut the path up to Cerro Negro- except when he left he was really only halfway there from base camp—woke up and had our last meal on our mountain. We took down the tent and tarp. We cleared away any evidence of human presence and by 10am we were ready to start our descent. It was a hazy day and had been hazy since the night before. "Ni luna ni otra" was the pun Alí always says when there's no moon to be seen at night. The night before had been quiet although much discussion was still going on between Alí and Andy about the peccary they had seen the day before. "It was sick, its hairs were standing up on its ends and it was dragging its feet" Andy

said. "It looked constipated" he continued while chewing on our potato, tuna, vegetarian meat and mushroom mush. They claimed they saw the peccary at 3000m. It is no wonder that it is not well. Peccaries usually live no higher than about 2000m in the Oreinte. This one was obviously a long way from home. Other than our on going 'puerquito' conversation, I could hear owls in calling to one another in the distance. 'I wonder if they could be new species' I thought to myself.

As soon as we got back to Baños, we headed for the lab, or otherwise known as 'Lou's place.' He was busy constructing a 'slug-free' zone in his greenhouse especially for Teagueias when we arrived. He had no doorbell and the only way that someone could get him to open the door is to yell. Both Andy and I yelled his name loudly several times hoping that he would hear us from his greenhouse on the roof. After five minutes of screaming Lou poked his head over the edge of his roof and said 'Hi'. He ran down the stairs opened his door and greeted us with hugs. I could tell that he was anxious to see what we have brought back for him. We wasted no time. As soon as we got into his house we took out the plants and laid them out on his living room floor. For every plant that we pulled out of either the bag or the box, he would let out an excited 'wow' or 'that's new.' He was like a little boy on Christmas day discovering the goodies that Santa

Claus brought him. We discussed briefly how the trip had gone and then he sent us home to wash up. We still had our knee-high 'campesino' rubber boots on and the same clothes we had worn the last time he saw us. While Andy and I sluiced off the dirt, sweat and cold of our misty treasure hunt on the mountain, Lou photographed the profiles of the entire plant as evidence of vegetative features. The next day was when the tedious scientific sorting and identifying would start.

Andy and Lou spent three days first inspecting the photographs I

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took in the field and putting them into what they thought were species groups. From the photographs Lou estimated that there could be anywhere between seven and fifteen species in our collection. Next, they examined all the alcohol specimens under the microscope to see if they could be placed in the same groupings as the photographs. To double check, they looked over the plants for the different vegetative features. One way to see if two species are the same is to check the smoothness of the leaves. Two Teagueias might have very similar flowers but if one had smooth leaves and the other had bumpy leaves, they are probably different species. (Although in the end they classi-