

# Flowers of Costa Rica

## Page 1: Introduction

Costa Rica is home to an extraordinary variety of flowers thanks to its tropical climate and diverse ecosystems. This guide highlights the most emblematic native and endemic flowers of Costa Rica, offering botanical details, habitat information, and cultural significance. From orchids in cloud forests to vibrant tropical blooms, this resource is designed to inform nature lovers, botanists, and eco-tourists alike.

# Flowers of Costa Rica

## Page 2: Why Flower Diversity Matters

Costa Rica harbors over 9,000 species of vascular plants, with nearly 1,400 species of orchids alone. These flowers play critical roles in pollination, ecosystem balance, and even local traditions. Many are key attractions for eco-tourism, while others are deeply rooted in indigenous knowledge. Preserving this floral diversity is essential for maintaining biodiversity and ecological resilience.

# Flowers of Costa Rica

## Page 3: Botanical Zones Overview

Costa Rica's geography divides it into several ecological zones: tropical rainforests, dry forests, cloud forests, and mangroves. Each zone supports unique floral species adapted to specific conditions such as altitude, rainfall, and soil type. This section summarizes the floral characteristics of each major botanical zone.

## Flowers of Costa Rica

### Page 4: National Flower **Guaria Morada**

The Guaria Morada (*Guarianthe skinneri*) is Costa Ricas national flower. This delicate purple orchid blooms in dry forests during the early months of the year and is associated with good fortune and spiritual connection in Costa Rican culture. Its widely cultivated in gardens and used in traditional celebrations.

## Flowers of Costa Rica

### Page 5: Iconic Orchids of Costa Rica

Costa Rica is one of the worlds orchid hotspots. Some standout species include:

- *Masdevallia* known for their vibrant, triangular blooms.
- *Cattleya dowiana* prized for its fragrance and large yellow-purple flowers.
- *Epidendrum radicans* also called the "crucifix orchid", common along roadsides.

These orchids can be found in cloud forests, highlands, and even urban gardens.

## Flowers of Costa Rica

### Page 6: Heliconias and Tropical Blooms

Heliconias are among the most visually striking flowers in Costa Rica. Their bright red, orange, and yellow bracts attract hummingbirds and are commonly seen in rainforests and ornamental gardens. Other prominent blooms in this category include:

- Ginger flowers (Zingiberaceae)
- Bird of Paradise (Strelitzia reginae)
- Anthuriums and Calatheas

## Flowers of Costa Rica

### Page 7: Flowers of the Cloud Forests

High-elevation cloud forests in Monteverde and other areas offer a unique microclimate where epiphytic flowers thrive.

Notable examples:

- *Passiflora ligularis* (Sweet granadilla flower)
- *Fuchsia boliviana*
- Orchid species adapted to mist and mossy trees

These blooms often grow on branches rather than soil, relying on air moisture and organic debris.

## Flowers of Costa Rica

### Page 8: Coastal and Mangrove Flora

In coastal and wetland areas, flowers have adapted to saline soils and tidal changes. Examples include:

- *Hibiscus tiliaceus* a yellow flower that thrives near beaches.
- *Ipomoea pes-caprae* a creeping beach morning glory.
- Mangrove blossoms small, inconspicuous but ecologically vital.

These plants are crucial for stabilizing coastlines and supporting marine ecosystems.



## Flowers of Costa Rica

### Page 9: Medicinal and Cultural Flowers

Many Costa Rican flowers hold cultural and medicinal value:

- Flor de Itabo (*Yucca guatemalensis*) its edible flowers are a traditional food.
- Flor Blanca (*Plumeria*) used in altars and as a symbol of peace.
- Tagua or Poro flower (*Erythrina berteroana*) Costa Rica's traditional school vacation flower.

These flowers reflect the interweaving of botany and culture.

## Flowers of Costa Rica

### Page 10: Conservation and Eco-tourism

Deforestation, climate change, and illegal trade threaten Costa Ricas floral diversity. However, botanical gardens, national parks, and reforestation programs are helping preserve this heritage. Places like Lankester Botanical Garden and La Selva Biological Station are key for research and education. Visitors are encouraged to support sustainable tourism and avoid collecting wild plants.