

# **The July 2023 Field Trip in Search of Ceibas in Puerto Rico, with a “final note” from December 2023 trip**

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To confirm the location of problematic ceibas found using iNaturalist and Google Earth Street View and to seek additional trees Sharon and I took a casual circumnavigation of the island along the major highways. Our five-day route was from the Muñoz Marín international airport in San Juan to Caguas, Juncos, Las Piedras, Humacao, Maunabo, Santa Isabel, Ponce, Adjuntas, Ponce, Yauco, Guánica, Lajas, Cabo Rojo, Hormigueros, Mayaguez, Rincón, Aguada, Moca, Aguadilla, Isabela, Quebradillas, Barceloneta, Toa Baja, Dorado, Cataño, and back to San Juan metro. Then, for four nights we stayed in Luquillo, with the family of son Chad (Parissa, Lila, and Liam). From their penthouse suite we took day trips to Bayamón, Carolina, Canóvanas, Dorado, Loiza, Río Grande, Ceiba, and Fajardo.

As during the ceiba searches in Belize (March 2018) and Honduras (April 2021), geographer Craig Revels of Central Washington University served the essential roles of landscape observer and driver of our air conditioned rental car.

By grand coincidence, we were able to visit with Dr. José Mari Mut at his home and saw his ceiba and a large one behind his house. He is a remarkable academic who has written two books that include valuable materials on ceibas in Puerto Rico. We also met Manuel Gonzalez, the energetic owner of nursery Jardimar, on PR-3. He is also a ceiba enthusiast. Eduardo Ballester, a professional photographer, showed us the ceibas around his Hacienda El Paraíso in Las Piedras.

This report is presented according to our itinerary, with times and places of ceiba photographs recorded. Several ceibas, seen but not photographed (NP), are noted as well. Often these are inserted here with new GESV (Google Earth Street View) photographs.

We found, in addition to many of the 513 reported in *The Ceibas of Puerto Rico, A Cultural Geography* (June 2023, [williamvdaavidson.com](http://williamvdaavidson.com)), 193 ceibas. A table is presented in conclusion indicates tree locations, by category and municipio.

The quick trip to St. Regis resort by Drew and Diana Davidson in December 2023 found four more ceibas. To date, we therefore report a total of **710 ceibas in Puerto Rico**.

**Ceibas are silent bystanders that tell an unspoken tale. Every ceiba shown in this collection of photographs was planted with intention.**

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Wednesday July 12th

Arrive San Juan International Airport

Caguas overnight

Thursday July 13th

9:39am Caguas: PR1 km 36.8;

GESV 4/2016.



10:15am NP Caguas: PR156, km 59.8. In field west of municipal cemetery, [no GESV]

10:29-41 Caguas: Jardín Botánico y Cultural William Miranda Marín (nine fotos)

Fotos 1: ceiba behind African statuary in la Arboleda Ancestral Africana. Foto 2: tallest ceiba in garden.





Foto 3: trail ceiba.



Foto 4: a young single.



Foto 5: another even younger single. Foto 6:





**Foto 7: Vereda Celestial, a line of 16 ceibas planted along an abandoned railroad track where human ashes are welcome.**



**Foto 8: More of the ceiba line.**





**Foto 9: South end of the ceiba line.**



**NP Caguas: 4 ceibas at cloverleaf, PR52x1 km 32 x 30 km .3-.4 (GESV 3/2016)**





**NP Gurabo: 3 ceibas, NS, roadside, @ PR30, km 4.7 (GESV 3/2016)**



**NP Gurabo: 3 ceibas, SS, PR30E, km 10, roadside and corner [no GESV]**

**NP Las Piedras: PR198, km 3.4 [no GESV]**

**NP Las Piedras: east side hill, back road [no GESV]**

**NP Las Piedras: rural road E of capilla de Espiritu Santo [no GESV]**

**NP Las Piedras: El Pajuil [no GESV]**

**NP Las Piedras: at rural house [no GESV]**

**NP Las Piedras: on rural road [no GESV]**

**1:45pm Las Piedras: Hacienda El Paraiso (rural retreat and wedding venue), 3 fotos**

**Foto 1: largest ceiba, planted in 2000 by owner Eduardo Ballester, a professional photographer, at his house (10' 6" circumference, chest high).**





Foto 2: Hacienda El Paraiso: Upslope ceiba at house (arrow) and three ceibas (2 small and 1 large) in flat land below.



3 pm J/Humacao: Monument/shrine to cacique J/Humacao .





NP Humacao: PR3 x 60, SE entry sign and ceiba (arrow) (GESV 4/2020).



NP Humacao: PR53 x 3 cloverleaf NE (GESV 4/2020); PR60 entry west (GESV 5/2023).



NP Humacao: roundabout ceiba, Mision San Gabriel Arcangel, from PR60 (GESV 5/2013)





NP Yabucoa: PR53, km 43.8-9 x 901, 5 ceibas in row, NE of intersection (GESV 6 2020)



NP Yabucos: PR901, just W of PR53 (GESV 5/2016)



NP Yabucoa: ceiba on PR901 [no GESV]

NP Yabucoa: PR901, km 9.8, SS, rural private house, [no GESV]

NP Maunabo: SW entry, PR3 x 760 (GESV 5/2016)



**NP Patillas: PR3, km 116, field ceiba [no GESV]**

**NP Patillas: PR3, km 118.8, SS, large road ceiba [GESV 4/2016]**



**NP Ponce: cloverleaf @ PR52x12, SW sector [GESV 4/2016]**



**Overnight Holiday Inn, Ponce**



Friday July 14th

9:54am Santa Isabel, Jauca, El Ojo, Habitat

While searching for the wind farm ceibas of Santa Isabel (which we never found), we stumbled upon 17 young ceibas planted along PR 545 (3.7 km) at the entrance to a modest rural vacation retreat called "Habitat." The trees are perhaps 6-8 years old and are spaced 18 to 20 feet apart.



10:08a Santa Isabel, Felicia 2, Salón del Reino de los Testigos de Jehová, PR153, km 3.5 [also available GESV 7/2021]





**10:28a Santa Isabel, urban ceiba.**



**2:03p Ponce: three large ceibas on grounds of Army National Guard recruiting station, PR2 (Ponce bypass, south side).**



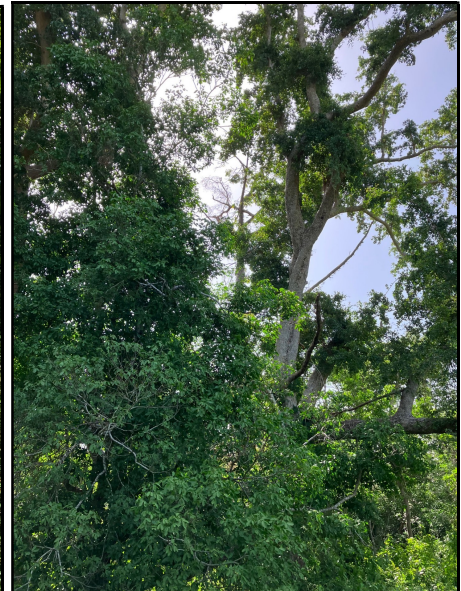


3pm Ponce: Tibes Indigenous Ceremonial Center, on the northern edge of the city  
NP Entry to Tibes east at PR10, km 7.2/3 x PR 503, 2 saplings. (see at GESV 5/2016)

3:00 p Tibes Fotos: 1 – 4: larger ceibas on forest trails in the ruin.



3:03p





3:03p Fotos 5 – 6. Ceibas at the bateys (ball courts).



3:14p foto 7. In field just outside the west gate of ruins.



4:22p Ponce: Tibes, foto 8. PR10sur x 503, NW exit of park; also GESV 5/2016.





Because we have not yet seen a ceiba in municipio Adjuntas, we took a quick drive up PR10 and drove around the town and nearby, but did not see any ceibas. Informants in town said “We don’t have any up there.”

NP Ponce: 3 large @ school on 123 south, east side. [no GESV]

6:20pm Holiday Inn overnight

Saturday July 15th

8:05 Ponce: Holiday Inn, 3 trees, western edge



10:06 Yauco: Monumento Histórico Nacional, ruins of an early Catholic Church, with 5 ceibas, 2 young, 3 larger.







**10:29 Yauco: ceiba plaza, 4 fotos**

The primary ceiba of the city is located in its own plaza just below the beautifully painted Escalinata. The ceiba is being covered with colorful embroidery, as the workers said, "to protect it." Atop the stairway is a statue of the Taino cacique Yauco, namesake of the municipio.

Fotos 1 and 2: foto of mural and Escalinata, the latter is courtesy of Craig Revels.





Fotos 3 and 4:



10:59 Guánica: a large ceiba at east entry to Fuig, PR332, bus stop, in ruins of Hacienda María Antonia.



11:06a Guánica, Fuig: The “Ceiba Elefante.” Informant said his grandfather planted the three nearby trees 75 yrs ago from “Elefante” seeds. He did not know the age of “Elefante.”





Foto 3 Fuig: Three 75-year-old ceibas on nearby corner.



11:25 Guánica, Ensenada: quarry ceiba, PR116, km 21.2.

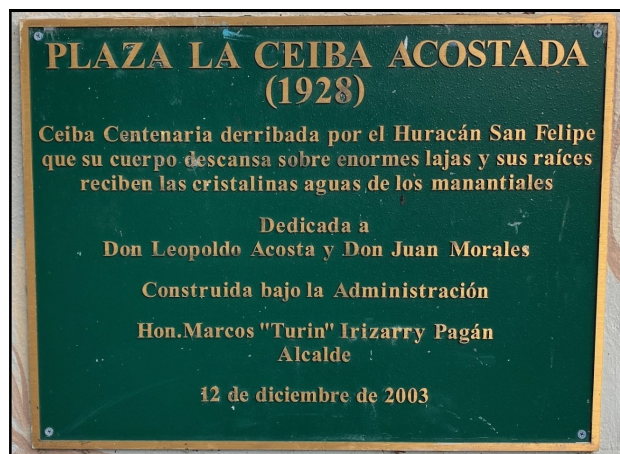




11:28 Guánica: El Tinglas restaurant, with giant ceiba, PR116, km 21.2.



1 pm Lajas: Plaza of the famous “ceiba acostado,” SE edge of Lajas. The fallen ceiba, now some 56 feet long, re-rooted from an upper limb that impaled into the ground and it is growing a new trunk. Two other large ceibas are nearby.











### Hormigueros:

Because we have not yet seen a ceiba in the municipio of Hormigueros we spent some time driving the major north-south streets through the city. No trees were seen.

4:49 Mayaguez: large double-trunk ceiba in apartment complex behind Columbus Landing giant.





4:59p Mayaguez: parking lot tree, near coast



GESV 5/2016



Sunday July 16th

9:56a Mayaguez: UPR campus, “La Gran Ceiba,” at the student center. According to José Mari Muñ’s *Arboles y palmas del Recinto Universitario de Mayaguez* (2008: 119), four other ceibas can be seen on campus, including two planted 1989-1990.





10:28p Mayaguez: Columbus Landing tree





10:30a Mayaguez: Sharon and Craig measuring the giant at 66'3"-- chest-high.



NP Mayaguez: PR102, ES just north of Rio Yaguez, two others (GESV 5/2016).





11:30 Aguada: Asomante, PR115, km 27.3, at armeria;

GESV 5/2016



12:16p Moca: Castillo Labadie, sugar/coffee plantation restored for tourism.





12:28p Moca: Castillo Labadie



12:30p two ceibas at entry



1:05 Aguadilla: Guerrero “haunted” ceiba 375 m south (abajo) of bakery on PR465; visited other “La Ceiba” Bakery on PR110 spoke with owner who verified the 466 store was named after the large tree “abajo.”





3:49    Aguadilla: Maleza Alta, former U.S. military base housing.



3 51    Aguadilla: Maleza Alta, military base, W x off Q R





3 56 Aguadilla: Maleza Alta, military base area 3 Q x O, SS; GESV 5/2020.



3:59 Aguadilla: Maleza Alta, former military base housing.





**4:26 Aguadilla: Maleza Alta, former military base housing.**



**4:27 Aguadilla: Maleza Alta, PR110 (San Antonio Road), two ceibas.**



**Total north of airport = 8, 7 23 fotos, one not, some gesv duplicates from 2016, 2020**



Monday July 17th

9:02 Aguadilla: Camaceyes, large ceiba behind home of José Mari Mut.



9:03 Aguadilla: ceiba planted by Mari Mut at his home about 1990, PR467, km 1.8.





12:07 Isabela: PR112, km 0.6, entrance into Villa España gated community.



12:43 Quebradillas: PR2, km 100, NS.

(GESV 5/2016)





12:44p Quebradillas: PR2, km 100, NS, ceiba mural



NP PR2, km 99, 3 median ceibas

NP PR2, km 2, 93.6/8, 2 median ceibas

12:59p Quebradillas: PR2, km 92.3, puente @ calle de la ceiba, bus stop.





1:46p Barceloneta, Palmas Altas, PR684, km 1, namesake tree at Hacienda La Ceiba.



NP Barceloneta, PR22, km 55.2 cloverleaf, SW (GESV 5/2016)





NP Manatí, 51.2 2 small trees, SS of road [no foto]

NP Manatí, 50.5 1 ceiba far out in field, SS, near tower, Vaqueria Manatí [no foto]

NP Manatí, 45.4 1 large tree at toll booth/soccer field, NS (GESV 5/2016)



NP Toa Baja, PR22 x 866, km 15.6, NS (GESV 4/2016)

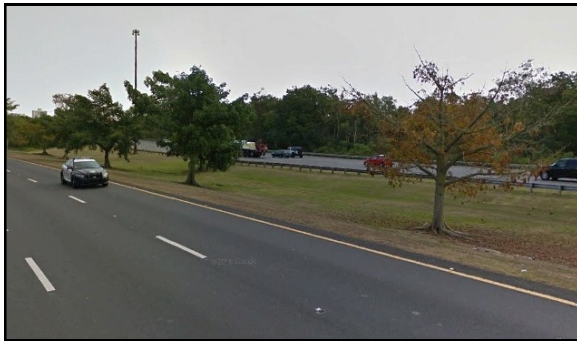




NP Bayamón, PR22, km 14.9, SS, Bayamón Military Academy (GESV 4/2016)



NP San Juan, PR22x1 intersection, 5 on north road side before onto PR1 (GESV 4/2016)



NP Río Grande, PR66, km 14.8, NS at bridge (GESV 4/2016) and GE photograph



NP Río Grande, PR3, km 22.4, SS (GESV 4/2016)





**NP Río Grande, PR3, km 31.1, NS (GESV 4/2016)**



**Tuesday 18th**

**10:41 Fajardo: entrance ceiba at headquarters of Las Cabezas de San Juan National Park.**





10:42 Fajardo: Park tree measured at 31'6" diameter (at chest high) by Lila and Liam Davidson of Minneapolis, our grandchildren.



10:59 Fajardo: El Conquistador Resort, Arthur Hills golf course, five ceibas near entrance.





11:11 Fajardo: calle Union, Administration building, Interamerican University.





## Ceiba

As might be expected, the eastern municipio of “Ceiba” has numerous locations bearing the name and several ceiba trees, especially near entrances to the city. Over the island, only here is a ceiba planted in the church plaza.

Ceiba: ceiba in church plaza; bus stop with symbol of the city (GESV 5/2016).



2:30 Ceiba: Agua Claras, double trunk east of PR3 x PR974 near 53; km 9.



2:32 Ceiba: PR53, km 10.3 x PR3, 4 trees, NS, south of double trunk; also (GESV 3/20216)





3:00 Ceiba: Agua Clara, single ceiba, PR 53, km 6.9 east side



3:01 Ceiba: 2 trees at PR53, km 6.5 x PR3 ES;

(also GESV 3/2016)





3:07 Ceiba: church/plaza ceiba, on PR3, 3 fotos.





3:10p Ceiba: ceiba at Clinica Familiar,



3:17 Ceiba: entry sign and ceiba, PR53 x PR975 SW





**Ceiba: Centro Civico Seyba, Inc. (GESV 5/2016)**



**3:22 Ceiba: Centro Civico Seyba, Inc. July, 2023.**



**3:25 Ceiba: corner ceiba at PR3 x calle 979**

**(GESV 5/2016)**





3:30 Ceiba: north entry ceiba in park on PR3, km 52.6 x Tarawa Drive





3:34p Ceiba: PR3, km 52.1 east side;

also GESV 5/2016



3:38 Fajardo: Quebrada Vueltas, entry. At PR53, exit 2 and PR3, km 49.8, into Quebrada Vueltas (Fajardo), on the east side are six ceibas.

The first is on the SE corner of the intersection (GESV 5/2016).





Another is at the south entry sign into barrio Quebrada Vueltas, PR53 x 3, km 49.9 (GESV 5/2016)



And, four larger trees are aligned along the west side of PR3 (km 49.7-49.5) as it heads north on the campus of Ana D. Flores Vocational School, SS (GESV 4/2016)



NP Fajardo: PR53, km 1.4, east side and PR53, km 40.3 x PR3, SE corner (GESV 4/2016).





4:00 Luquillo: Corredor Ecologico del Noreste, PR3 km 40.5, east side, before (right, 2016) and after (left, 2023) development of park infrastructure. (GESV 4/2016)



Wednesday July 19th

On the southern edge of Loiza, a large walk-in cave is the focus of a park and museum that relate the aboriginal use of the area. Three ceibas have been planted within the park and three more can be seen immediately outside the park.





**11:08 Loiza: Sharon beneath the largest ceiba next to cave and behind the museum in Parque Histórico Cueva María de la Cruz.**



**11:09 Loiza: the third ceiba behind the museo.**





**11:25 Loiza: the fourth ceiba just outside the park.**



**11:26 Loiza: fifth and sixth ceibas in a playground across the street.**





**11:30 Loiza: 2 ceibas, PR187 W of Loiza, W side of bridge @17.1 km; GESV 8/2019.**



**11 44 Canóvanas, 2 ceibas, PR188, 2.7 km, E road side; GESV 8/2019**



**11 57 Canóvanas: San Isidro, ceiba in east of town.**





12:29 Rio Grande: El Carmen, urban ceiba. The only tree we found with seeds and fluff.



12:49 Luquillo: PR 3, km 33.5, Jardimar Nursery 5 ceibas, plus seedlings for sale.









NP Rio Grande: PR2@PR3, km 25.4, NS roadside (GESV 3/2023)



3:54 Rio Grande: 2 on Wyndham Río Mar Country Club golf course.



4:16p Luquillo: PR3, km 32.9, SS, playground; (Ponylandia, GESV 4/2016)





Thursday July 20th

2:04 Carolina: Hoyo Mulas, PR874 [70] at Relleno Sanitario, SW corner. Two ceibas, one elevated and deeply trenched (?).



2:13p Carolina: calle Roberto Clemente or 345, west side. Also, GESV 3/2016





2:33 Carolina: major landmark ceiba at Hacienda Campo Rico.



2:58 Carolina: Sabana Abajo, calle Callejon Ceiba PR190; and across the street.





3:27-8 Carolina: PR887, km 0.1 @ PR3, corner @ bus stop, also, center field BB park San Anton;  
also, GESV 3/2016



3:35 Carolina: Martin Gonzalez, @hospital on PR3 UPRCarolina



NP Carolina: On Paseo de los Gigantes, PR70; ceiba at Clemente plaza (GESV 3/2016)





NP Carolina: Plaza Roberto Clemente (GESV 3/2016)



Friday July 21th

NP Río Grande: PR3 km 31, NS (GESV 4/2016)



11: 54 Dorado: Dorado del Mar golf course, 2 ceibas near road.





**12:17 Dorado: Gran Parque Agroturístico Ecológico Recreativo Dorado. Ceiba behind Mameyal lake with seahorse statue island.**



PR 693 through Dorado municipio is truly a “ceiba highway.” For a stretch of 2.4 miles, beginning just south of PR 22 at the entry to sector Santa Rosa to PR 6693, 26 ceibas have been planted. Major clusters can be seen at the entrances to Barrios Maguayo and Higuillar. Also on 693 is the ceiba rotunda, of five trees, at Dorado Beach Plantation.

Entry ceiba into sector Santa Rosa, Dorado (“Santuario de Dorado”). Photo taken from Expressway 22, facing south on 693 (GESV 4/2016). Single tree nearby at cloverleaf, SW sector, PR22x659 (GESV 4/2016).





Dorado: PR693x694, tree ceibas, entrance to barrio Maguayo ("Herencia de una cultura")  
GESV 4/2016.





Dorado: PR 693 km 3 west side (GESV 4/2016); PR 693 km 3.2 x 695. Entrance into barrio Higuillar (“Valle de Hermosure”)



Dorado: intersection of PR693N x 6693, km 1.3 (18 ceibas)

Looking N onto 693; looking east at intersection (GESV 4/2016)



Views to west from intersection (GESV 4/2016)





**Dorado: Dorado Beach Plantation rotunda, five ceibas (GESV 4/2016).**



**12:41 Cataño municipio entry tree, with sign, at PR5 km 1.5 x 52; GESV of 3/2016, opposite view.**





12:49-53 Leaving the Bacardí complex, heading south on PR165, we saw several ceibas. The small park for the monument to the “Boatmen of Cataño” at PR165 and 188 has three trees.

12:49pm Cataño

GESV 3/2016



Farther south along PR165 are eight more.

12:50pm Cataño: PR165, km 32.4, east side

GESV 3/2016



12:50pm Cataño: PR165 km 33.6, east side;

GESV 3/2016





NP      Guaynabo: PR165 km 35.2 median (GESV 3/2016)



12:52pm Cataño: PR165 km 34.6, west side

GESV 3/2016



12:52 Guaynabo: PR165 km 35.6, median

GESV 3/2016





12:52 Guaynabo: PR165 km 36.5, first of three median ceibas;



NP Guaynabo: PR165 km 36.5/6, three median ceibas, north to south (GESV 3/2016)



NP Guaynabo: PR22 exit 6, north side (GESV 4/2016)





**NP Bayamón: PR167 km 26.7, west side (GESV 2/2023).**



**NP San Juan: PR17, km 4.1, NS, near PR18; PR17, NS, just before PR18 (GESV 4/2016)**



**NP San Juan: Parque L. Munoz Marin (GESV 3/2017).**





**Table 1. The 48 Municipios visited during July 2023 search for ceibas in Puerto Rico, with “new” ceibas seen since the earlier iNaturalist and Google Earth Street View surveys.**

Municipalidad	Ceibas 2020s	Rural, Reserves	Urban Parks	Urban, Other	Roadside, Intersection	NEW CEIBAS
Adjuntas	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aguada	1	0	0	1	0	1
Aguadilla	11	0	0	6	0	6
Añasco	2	0	0	0	0	0
Arecibo	9	0	0	0	0	0
Arroyo	0	0	0	0	0	0
Barceloneta	2	0	0	0	0	0
Bayamón	18	0	0	1	1	2
Caguas	20	0	6	2	1	9
Camuy	8	0	0	0	0	0
Canovanas	1	2	0	1	0	3
Carolina	7	2	1	3	4	10
Cataño	5	0	3	0	4	7
Ceiba	10	1	1	2	5	9
Dorado	20	3	0	0	21	24
Fajardo	8	5	0	4	5	14
Guánica	4	0	0	4	0	4
Guayama	3	0	0	0	0	0
Guayamilla	2	0	0	0	0	0
Guaynabo	4	0	0	0	5	5
Gurabo	8	0	0	0	6	6
Hatillo	2	0	0	0	0	0
Hormigueros	0	0	0	0	0	0
Humacao	16	0	2	0	2	4
Isabela	1	0	0	0	0	0
Juana Díaz	3	0	0	0	0	0
Juncos	1	0	0	0	0	0
Lajas	13	0	1	0	0	1
Las Piedras	1	3	0	0	6	9
Loiza	7	0	3	2	2	7
Luquillo	15	2	0	10	0	12
Manatí	11	1	0	0	3	4
Maunabo	2	0	1	0	0	1
Mayaguez	17	0	0	2	2	4
Moca	11	-2*	0	0	0	-2*
Patillas	6	1	0	0	1	2



Municipalidad	Ceibas 2020s	Rural, Reserves	Urban Parks	Urban, Other	Roadside, Intersection	NEW CEIBAS
Ponce	23	0	0	6	2	8
Quebradillas	6	0	0	0	1	1
Rincón	8	0	0	0	0	0
Río Grande	15	2	3	0	4	9 (+4)***
Salinas	17	0	0	0	0	0
San Juan	86	0	1	0	2	3
Santa Isabel	10	17	0	2	0	19
Toa Baja	2	0	0	0	1	1
Vega Alta	3	0	0	0	0	0
Vega Baja	6	0	0	0	0	0
Yabucoa	1	1	0	0	7	8
Yauco	9	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Puerto Rico</b>	<b>[513] **</b>					
		<b>40</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>193 (+4)***</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>(20.7)</b>	<b>(11.4)</b>	<b>(23.8)</b>	<b>(44.0)</b>	

\* Two ceibas seen in the earlier survey were not present during our on-site visit.

\*\* Initial survey using iNaturalist and Google Earth Street View photographs. (see “The Ceiba Trees of Puerto Rico, a cultural geography” at [williamvdaavidson.com](http://williamvdaavidson.com))

\*\*\* Trees found by Drew and Diana Davidson, December 2023.

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### Concluding Remarks

The field trip of July 2023 discovered 193 new ceibas in 29 of the 48 municipios we visited. Of course, we saw many of the trees reported earlier. The “new” ceibas are here organized by municipio using the categories of the original survey. We note especially that at Castillo Labadie, Moca, we found two fewer ceibas than we reported earlier. We still have no evidence of ceibas in Adjuntas and Hormigueros.



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## A final note:

In early December, 2023, Drew and Diana Davidson visited the St. Regis Bahia Beach Resort in Río Grande municipio on the northeast coast of the island. While there, their ceiba search on the grounds of the resort discovered four new trees – all “youngsters,” as described by resort staff. Three of those are attached below. First two photographs show the same pair near their room. The ceiba in the third photo was planted near the main building (*casa grande*). The tree reported to be at the boathouse was not photographed.



With the addition of these four ceibas from municipio Río Grande, the final total of known Puerto Rican ceibas is 710.