

***Pleurothallis scalpricaulis* C. A. Luer, sp. nov.**

Planta mediocris epiphytica caespitosa, caulibus secundariis erectis rigidis valde compressis triquetris canaliculatis unifoliatis, folio erecto coriaceo elliptico subacuto cuneato sessili, racemo brevissimo pauciflora, floribus carnosus brunneis rectibus, sepalo dorsali obovato apiculato, sepalis laterali-bus late lunatis apiculatis, petalis spatulatis serrulatis apiculatis, labello ovato subacuto basi truncato biauriculato.

Plant medium to large, epiphytic, caespitose; roots slender, flexuous. Secondary stems erect, rigid, terete only at the base, soon becoming compressed, widened, canaliculate, with 3 sharp edges (a posterior carina and 2 in front to either side of the sulcus), 11-18 cm long, and 6 mm wide and 8 mm deep near the leaf, unifoliate, with 1-2 fugacious sheaths at the base. Leaf erect, coriaceous, elliptical, subacute, tridentate, base cuneate, sessile, 10-13 × 4-4.7 cm. Inflorescence a short, congested, few-flowered (5) raceme from the base of the leaf; flowers brown, fleshy, gaping; peduncle stout, 1.5 cm long; floral bract thin, tubular, greenish white, about 3 mm long; pedicel 2-3 mm long and ovary 3-4 mm long, both green and minutely pubescent; dorsal sepal obovate, acute, apiculate, 10-11 × 3.5 mm, finely and shortly pubescent externally, very faintly pusticulate within; lateral sepals widely lunate, acute, apiculate, united basally and lightly adherent to near the apices, each 7 × 3.5 mm, similar to the dorsal sepal; petals spatulate, obtuse, apiculate, the margins serrulate, the claw curved, thick, yellow-brown, 6 × 2 mm; lip olive brown, fleshy, ovate, apex subacute, base truncate and biauriculate, the sides curved up, channeled centrally and fleshy-thickened to either side; column 5 mm long, broadly winged, with a short foot.

ETYMOLOGY: From the Latin *scalprum*, "a chisel, or knife," and *caulis*, "stem," in allusion to the sharp, chisel-like qualities of the stem.

TYPE: ECUADOR: MORONA-SANTIAGO: epiphytic about 30 km south of Gualaquiza, alt. 500 m, 6 Aug. 1975, flowered in cult. 30 Nov. 1975, C. A. Luer, G. M. Luer, & S. Wilhelm 619 (HOLOTYPE: SEL).

DISTRIBUTION: Ecuador.

This species is most closely related to the Peruvian *Pleurothallis pantasmoides* C. Schweinf., but it differs in the spatulate, apiculate petals (instead of truncate), and in the position of the apex of the stem at the base of the leaf (instead of above the base). The most distinctive character of *P. scalpricaulis* is its rigid, flattened, sharp-edged secondary stem with a central groove, resembling very much a double-bladed chisel. The blade of the leaf is not decurrent on the stem as is the case in several other related species, e.g. *P. pantasmi* Rchb. f.

A single but large plant of this species was discovered among the branches of a tree felled for its lumber. The whole plant was a sickly yellow from excessive exposure to the sun. With care in the "cool" house of the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, it regained its green color and flowered. The color of the thick, glossy flowers is close to that of butter-scotch.

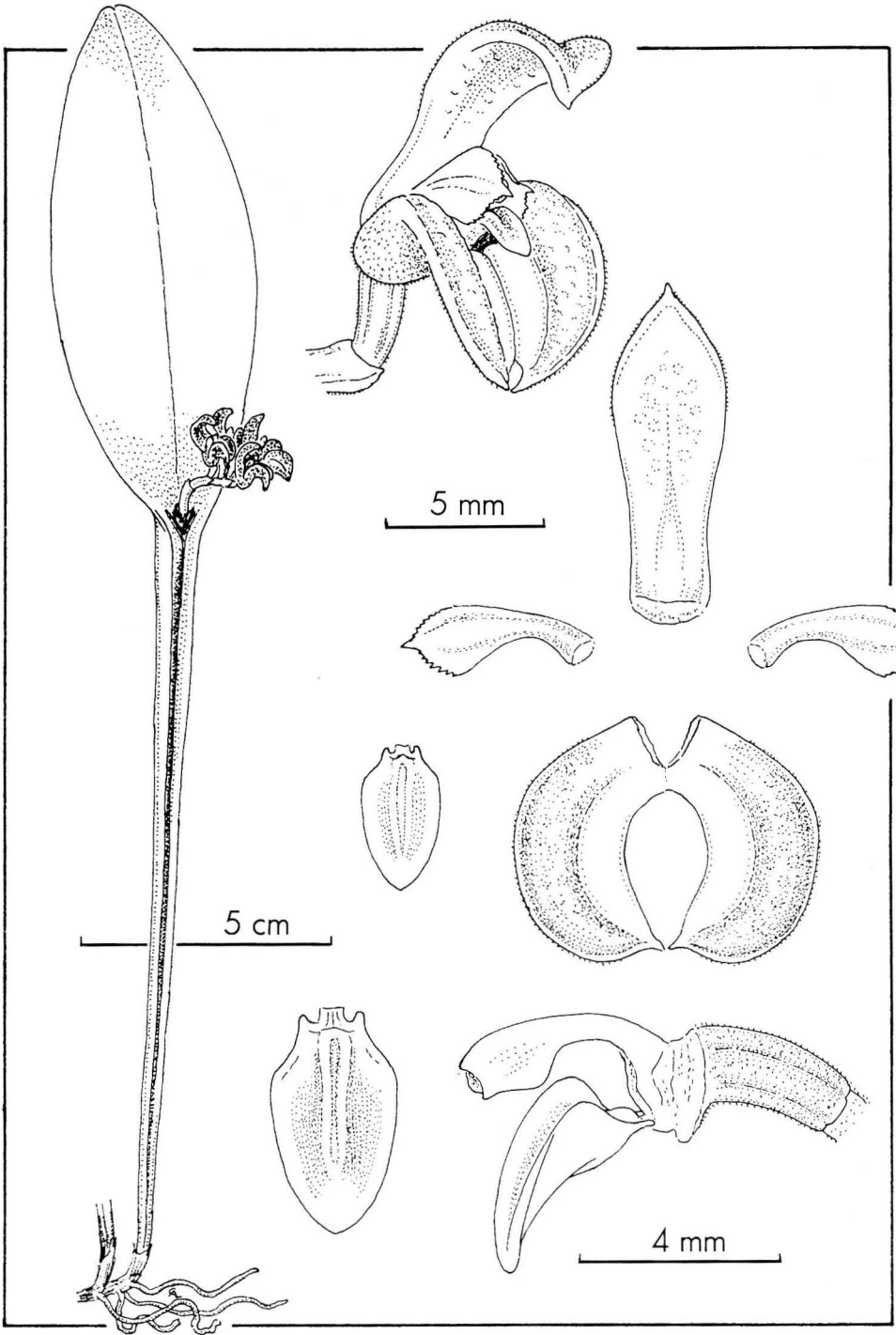


Figure 103. *PLEUROTHALLIS SCALPRICAULIS* C. A. Luer