

Alaticaulia cracens Luer, Sijm & V.N.M.Rao, *sp. nov.* TYPE: VENEZUELA. Without collection data, purchased from a collector near Caracas, Venezuela, 2007, by A.P. Sijm. 270130, flowered in cultivation in Wilmington, DE, April 2011, by *M. Rao 2011-4* (Holotype: MO), C. Luer illustr. 21629. Fig. 9.

Species haec Alaticauliae virgo-cuencae (Luer & Andreetta) Luer *affiniis, sed pedunculo elongato gracillimo successive paucifloro et labello leviter longiore angustiore acutiore ad apicem solum microscopice papuloso differt.*

Plant medium to large, presumably epiphytic, caespitose; roots stout. *Ramicauls* stout, erect, 1.5 cm long, enclosed by 1–2 tubular sheaths. *Leaf* erect, coriaceous, obovate, obtuse to rounded at the apex, 10 cm long including the petiole 2–2.5 cm long, 2.5 cm wide, cuneate below into the petiole. *Inflorescence* a successively few-flowered raceme, 3 or more cm long, borne by a slender, erect and arching, triquetrous peduncle to 20 cm long, with a sheath at the base, from low on the ramicaul; floral bracts 12–13 mm long; pedicels 15 mm long; ovary 5–6 mm long; *sepals* microscopically cellular-pusticulate, the dorsal sepal pale yellow, slightly suffused with rose, 6 cm long including the tail, the blade obovate, 11 mm wide, acute, attenuated

into a slender, forwardly directed yellow tail, connate to the lateral sepals for 12 mm to form a cylindrical tube, the lateral sepals 5 cm long, light rose, more or less oblong, connate 28 mm into an ovate synsepal, 30 mm long excluding the tails, 20 mm wide, the apices acute, contracted into slender tails 2 cm long; *petals* white, cartilaginous, oblong, obtuse, obscurely bilobed, 5.5 mm long, 3 mm wide, 1-veined, the labellar margin thickened with a longitudinal callous round at base; *lip* purple, oblong, 7 mm long, 2.5 mm wide, the apex sharply acute, microscopically papular, microscopically erose, the disc with a pair of folds within the margins near the middle, the base truncate, hinged to the column-foot; *column* stout, cylindrical, 5 mm long, the foot 2 mm long with a short, incurved extension, the anther and stigma ventral.

Etymology: From the Latin *cracens*, “graceful,” referring to the inflorescence.

This Venezuelan species is most similar to the Ecuadorian *Alaticaulia virgo-cuencae* (Luer & Andreetta) Luer, but it differs mostly by a very slender, more or less flexible peduncle that bends to be nearly horizontal with the weight of the flower. Although pale colored, the sepaline tube and slender tails, as well as the petals and column, are similar, but the lip of *A. cracens* is slightly longer and slender with the apex sharply acute and only microscopically papular and erose.

