

Brachionidium capillare Luer & Hirtz, sp. nov.

Ety.: From the Latin *capillaris*, "capillary," referring to the hairlike tails of the sepals and petals.

Planta perparva repens rhizomate gracile elongato, pedunculo gracile folio suborbiculato leviter longiore, sepalis niveis eciliatis, sepalo impari ovato acuto longissime caudato, synsepalo anguste triangulari longissime caudato, petalis anguste ovatis longi-acuminatis, labello late ovato, angulis lateralibus acutis, apice obtuso apiculato.

Plant very small, terrestrial, repent, the rhizomes slender, branching, 5-6 mm long between ramicauls, with 3 closely fitting sheaths; roots comparatively coarse, produced singly from nodes on the rhizome. Ramicauls suberect, 0.5 mm long, enclosed by 2 tubular sheaths. Leaf erect to suberect, coriaceous, suborbicular, 5-6 mm long, 4.5-6 mm wide, 5-veined, the rounded apex notched with an apiculum in the sinus, the rounded base contracted into a petiole less than 1 mm long. Inflorescence a solitary, snow-white, non-resupinate flower borne by an erect, slender peduncle ca. 1 cm long, with a bract near the middle; floral bract, infundibular, mucronate, 1 mm long, enclosing pedicel and ovary; pedicel thick, 0.25 mm long, with a protruding filament 1.5 mm long; ovary 1 mm long; sepals eciliate, the middle sepal narrowly ovate, acute, acuminate, long-caudate, 13 mm long including the capillary tail 10 mm long, 1.5 mm wide near the base, barely 3-veined, the lateral sepals connate into a narrowly triangular, acute, long-attenuate synsepal, 9.5 mm long, 1 mm wide at the base, 2-veined; petals eciliate, narrowly ovate, oblique, acute, acuminate, long-caudate, 10 mm long including the capillary tail 8 mm long, 1.2 mm wide near the base, 1-veined; lip broadly ovate, 1.5 mm long, 1.5 mm wide, with acute, decurved lateral angles, concave above the middle, the apex obtuse, apiculate, the disc with a central, flattened, ovoid, microscopically pubescent callus with a minute glenion, the broad base hinged to the column-foot; column stout, 1 mm long, bidentate; pollinia 8.

ECUADOR: Prov. of Pastaza: terrestrial in cloud forest north of Mera, alt. 1350 m, 12 April 1985, C. Luer, J. Luer, & A. Hirtz, flowered in cultivation by P. & A. Jesup. 26 April 1987, C. Luer 12743 (Holotype: MO); Río Hollin, alt. ca. 1000 m, 1994, A. Hirtz 6159 (MO).

This very small species is apparently endemic in wet forests of eastern Ecuador at a relatively low altitude. It grows terrestrially, often in an intertwined mass of thin, creeping rhizomes with tiny leaves, in loose, shaded humus.

Brachionidium capillare is recognized by the minute, creeping habit with tiny, round leaves, and small, although long-tailed, non-ciliate, white sepals and petals. The lip is broadly ovate with acute, lateral angles that could be interpreted as small, lateral lobes. The margin of the lip is entire and broadly rounded with a long-apiculate apex.

Like *B. jesupiae*, *P. capillare* was flowered in cultivation by the Jesups in Connecticut where large masses of the plant produce a profusion of flowers. The two species are similar, the leaves of *P. capillare* being smaller and rounded, and the margin of the lip is entire instead of bimar-ginate as in *B. jesupiae*.



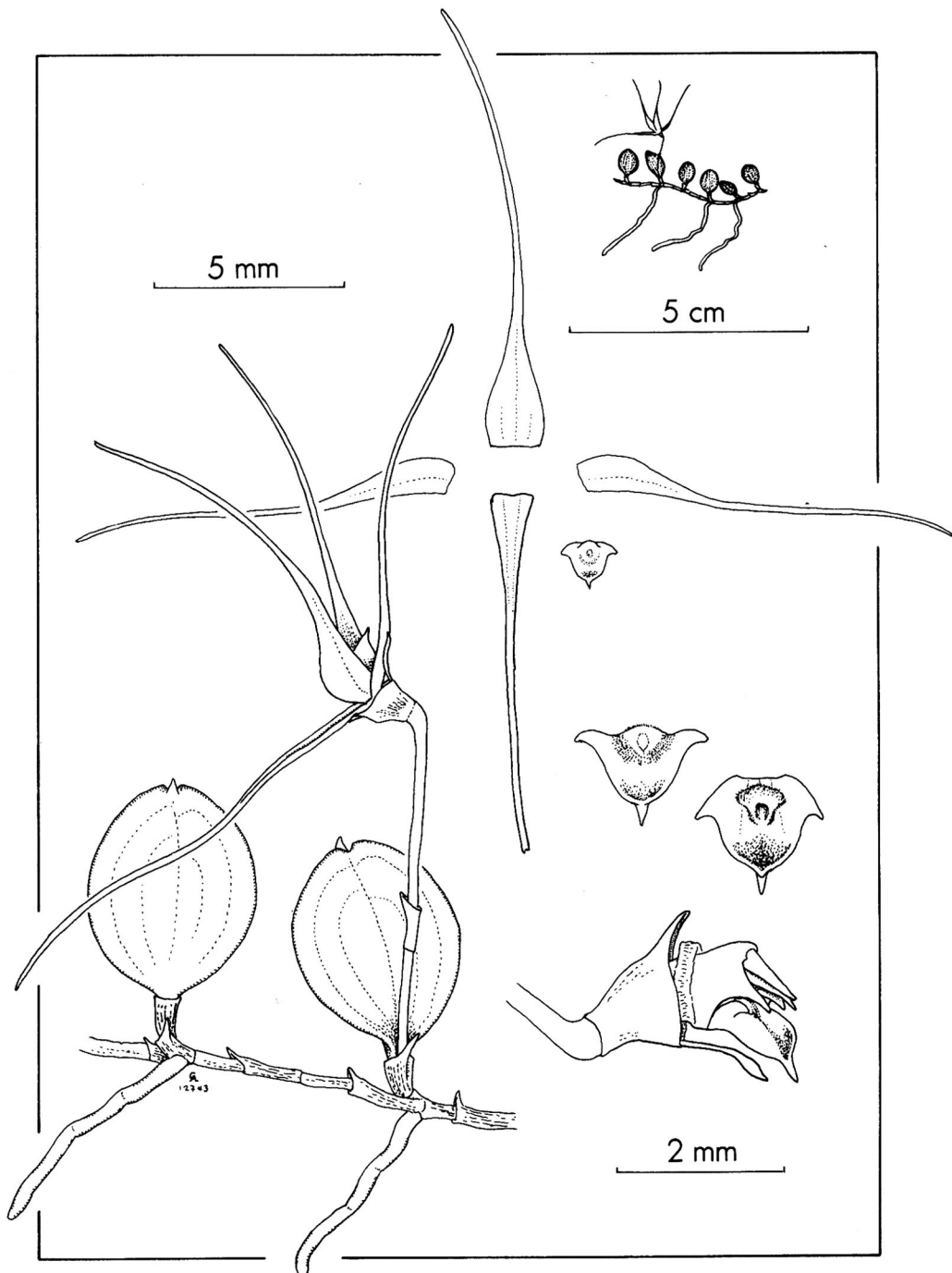


Plate 8. *Brachionidium capillare* Luer & Hirtz