

Brachionidium escobarii Luer, sp. nov.

Planta perparva repens, pedunculo foliis crassis plus minusve aequilongo, sepalis impari synsepalis petalisque atropurpureis ovatis acutis leviter acuminatis glabris, labello crasso transverse rhomboideo, angulis lateralibus acutis, apice obtuse acuminato apiculato bicalloso.

Plant very small, terrestrial, the rhizome repent, occasionally branching, up to ca. 8 cm long, 3-5 mm long with 2-3 pale, glabrous, loosely fitting sheaths between ramicauls; roots coarse, as thick as the rhizome. Ramicauls 1.5-3 mm long, erect, enclosed by 2 similar sheaths. Leaf erect, thickly coriaceous, suffused with purple, elliptical, acute, apiculate, 7-11 mm long including the petiole 0.5-1 mm long, 3.5-5 mm wide, the base cuneate into the petiole. Inflorescence a single, bright purple, non-resupinate flower borne by a slender, purple peduncle 10-12 mm long, with 2 basal bracts, from near the apex of the ramicaul; floral bract inflated, oblique, 2 mm long; pedicel thick, 1 mm long, with a protruding filament 2.5 mm long; ovary 2 mm long; sepals glabrous, the middle sepal ovate, acute, lightly acuminate, 5 mm long, 3 mm wide, the lateral sepals completely connate into an ovate lamina similar to the middle sepal, 5 mm long, 3.5 mm wide; petals glabrous, ovate, obtuse, shortly acuminate, 5 mm long, 3 mm wide; lip transversely rhomboid or 3-lobed, 2.25 mm long, 3 mm wide,

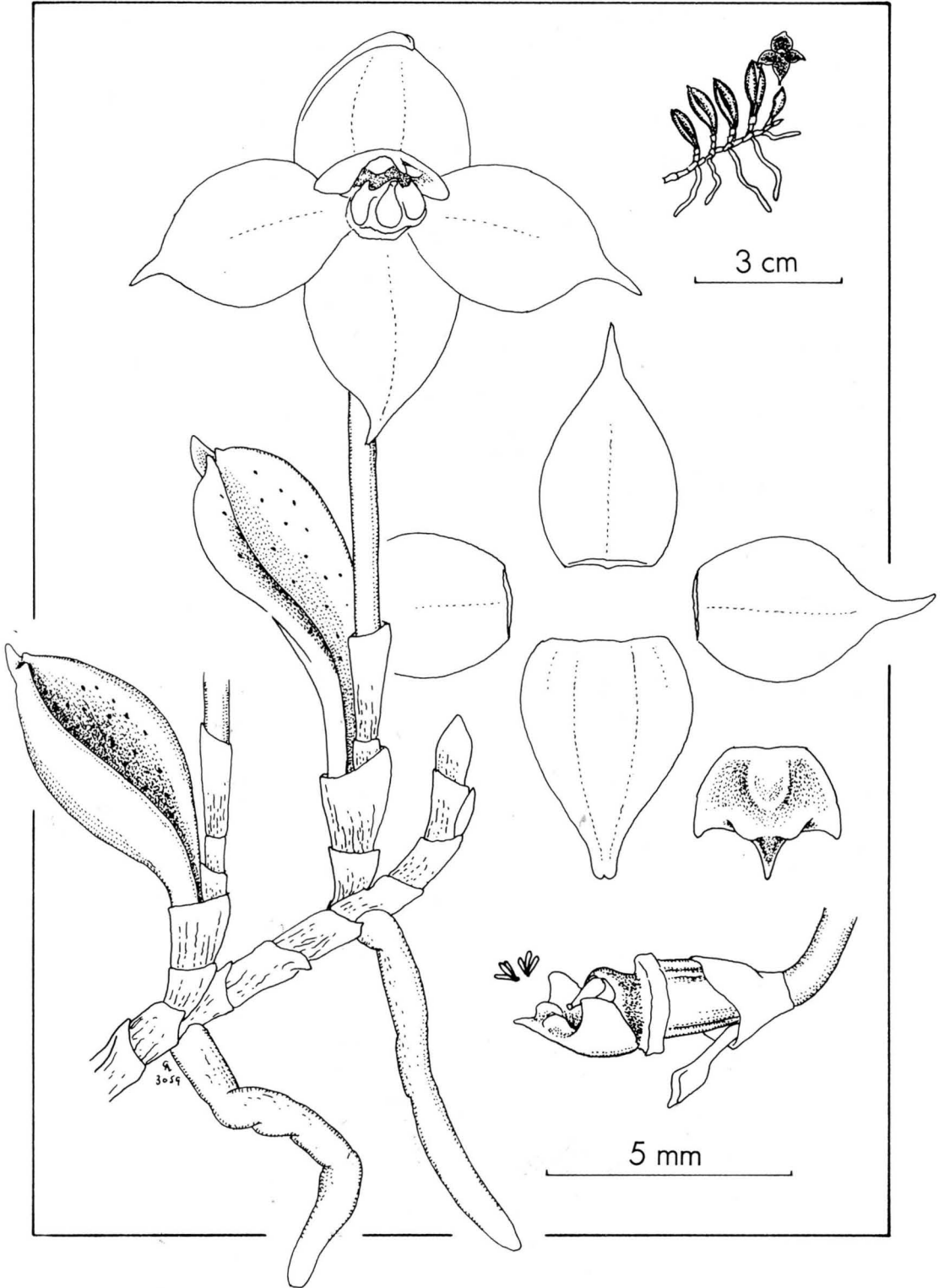
the lateral angles or lobes acute, the apex obtuse, acuminate into an apiculum, with a pair of rounded calli, the disc with a central, flat callus; column 1 mm long; pollinia 6.

ETYMOLOGY: Named in honor of Don Rodrigo Escobar of Medellín, Colombia, who discovered this species.

TYPE: *COLOMBIA*: Dept. of Nariño: terrestrial on damp road embankment, alt. 3,200 m, between Pasto and La Cocha, 30 July 1978, C. Luer, J. Luer, & R. Escobar 3059 (Holotype: MO; Isotype: SEL).

This very small, creeping species was discovered growing on a gravelly road embankment by Rodrigo Escobar. Although this area, rich in orchids, has been searched several times, this tiny species has been found only once. This area of southern Colombia is the type locality of *B. tetrapetalum* (Lehm. & Kränzlin) Schltr., which has been found nearby (southwest of Pasto) and in northern Ecuador.

Brachionidium escobarii is recognized by the minute habit; a horizontally creeping rhizome with an erect ramicaul and a thick, little, elliptical leaf about every 3-5 mm; proportionately large flowers, larger than the leaf; shortly acuminate, glabrous sepals and petals; and a three-lobed lip with acute lateral lobes and an acuminate, bicallos, apical lobe.



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