

Brachionidium fornicatum Luer & Hirtz, sp. nov.

Ety.: From the Latin *fornicatus*, "vaulted," referring to concave sepaline tube.

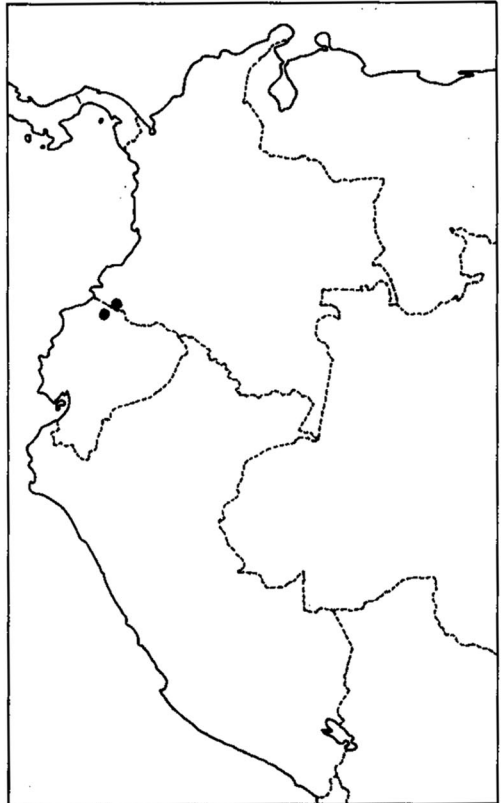
Planta grandis erecta, *B. parvifolii* (Lindl.) Lindl. similis, sed flore cupuliformi cum caudis brevibus, sepalo mediano plano suborbiculari, synsepalo superiore profunde concavo bicaudato, labello transverse cordato marginibus concavis.

Plant large, terrestrial, erect, up to 50 cm or more tall, the rhizome stout, branching, 2-5.5 cm long between ramicauls, with 2-3 distant, smooth, tubular sheaths, rooting from the base. Ramicauls suberect, 1-1.5 cm long, enclosed by 2 imbricating, mucronate sheaths. **Leaf** erect, coriaceous, 2.5-5 cm long including the 3-5 mm long petiole, the blade elliptical, acute, 1.2-1.5 cm wide, multiveined, the base cuneate into the petiole. **Inflorescence** a solitary, non-resupinate, yellow flower borne by an erect, slender peduncle 2.5-4 cm long, with a bract near the middle and at the base, from near the apex of the ramicaul; floral bract inflated, acute, 5-7 mm long, enclosing the pedicel and much of the ovary; pedicel 1-1.5 mm long, with a filament 5-7 mm long; ovary 4-5 mm long; sepals yellow, eciliate, the middle sepal flat, descending, broadly ovate to suborbicular, 15-18 mm long, 12-16 mm wide, 5-(7-)veined, the apex broadly obtuse, contracted into a slender, brown tail ca. 10 mm long, the lateral sepals connate into a deeply concave, ovoid synsepal, 20 mm long, 22 mm wide expanded, 8-veined, the apex obtuse, contracted into a pair of slender, erect, brown tails ca. 10 mm long; petals yellow, minutely short-ciliate, ovate, oblique, 11-15 mm long, the apex subacute, acuminate into a slender, deflexed, brown tail ca. 10 mm long; lip yellow, edged in brown, transversely ovate-cordate, 4 mm long, 6 mm wide, 2 mm deep, broadly rounded at the apex, minutely apiculate, the lateral angles obtuse, the margins with a broadly concave external to low, lunate calli, each terminated with a low callus near the middle, the disc with a flat, minutely pubescent callus with a glenion anteriorly; column stout, 3 mm long, 4 mm wide; pollinia 8.

ECUADOR: Prov. of Carchi: terrestrial near Playón de San Francisco, alt. 3300 m, 14 Feb. 1994, A. Hirtz 6030 (Holotype: MO).

COLOMBIA: Dept of Nariño: cloud forest east of La Victoria, alt. 3000 m, 4 Nov. 1979, C. Luer, J. Luer & A. Hirtz 4667 (SEL).

This species occurs among scrubby vegetation at high altitudes in northernmost Ecuador and adjacent southernmost Colombia. It is a free-standing species, occurring singly or in bush-like colonies a meter across. The branching rhizomes produce a short ramicaul with an elliptical leaf about three to five centimeters apart. The uppermost synsepal is concave with two tails short and erect. The middle sepal is flat and decurving, overlain at the base by the decurving petals. The transverse lip is similar to that of *B. parvifolium*, but it is distinguished by a low pair of central calli from the marginal, longitudinal calli.



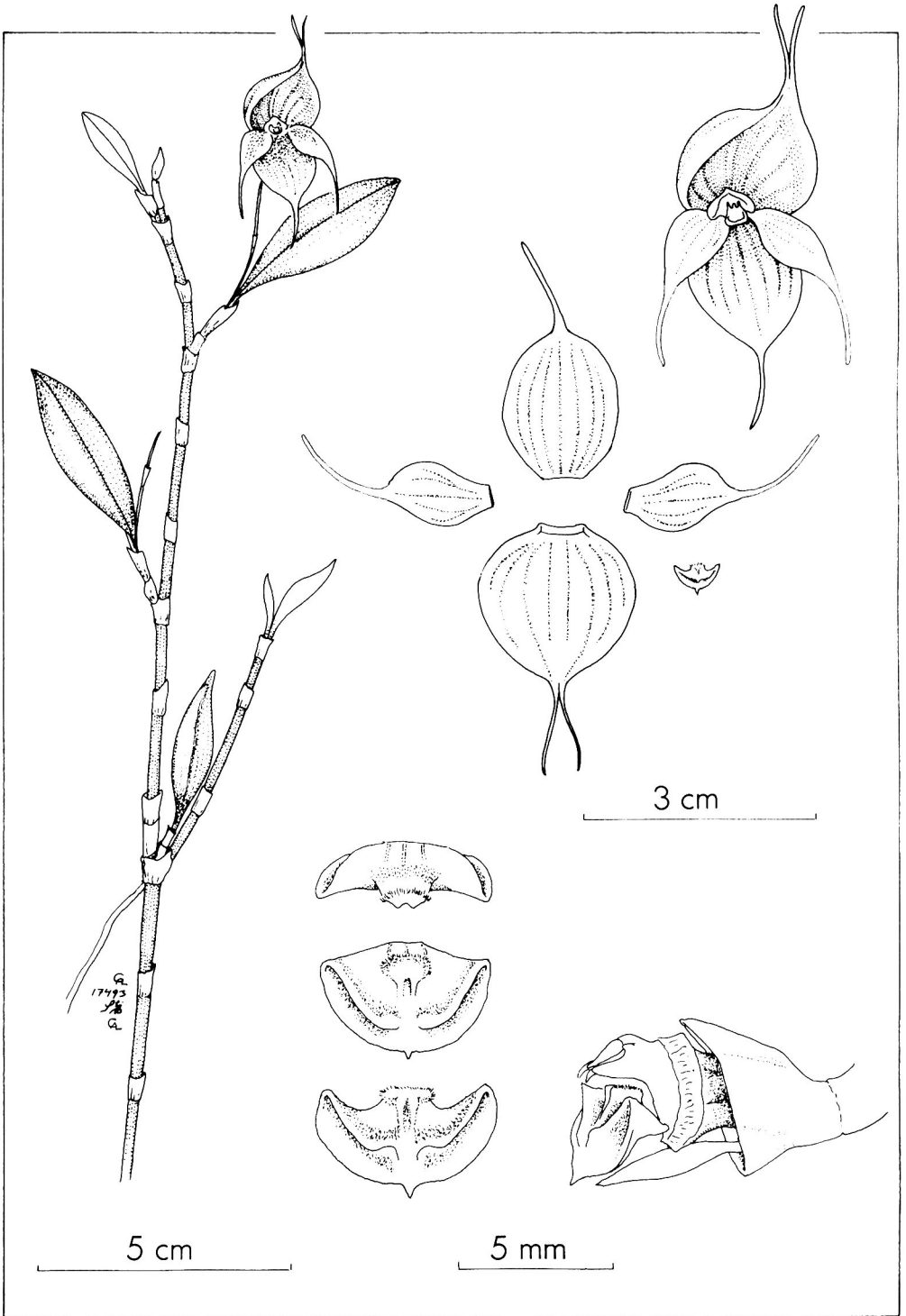


Plate 22. *Brachionidium fornicatum* Luer & Hirtz