

**Brachionidium hirtzii** Luer, sp. nov.

Planta mediocris vel grandis longirepens rhizomate gracili, pedunculo gracili foliis tenuis late ellipticis brevior, flore grandi, sepalo impari synsepalo petalisque ovatis ciliatis longicaudatis, labello transverse ovato obtuso cum callo plano breviter pubescenti.

Plant medium to large, terrestrial to epiphytic, long-repent, with branches up to 50 cm long, the rhizomes slender, 15-25 mm long between ramicauls, enclosed by 3 thin, loosely fitting, acuminate sheaths; roots slender, from nodes. Ramicauls suberect, 4-6 mm long, enclosed by 2 similar, imbricating sheaths. Leaf suberect, thinly coriaceous, broadly elliptical, subacute to obtuse, 20-33 mm long with a petiole 2-3 mm long, 10-20 mm wide, the base broadly cuneate to rounded. Inflorescence a large, showy, solitary, non-resupinate, purple or yellow flower, borne by a suberect peduncle 17-23 mm long, with a bract near the middle and at the base, from near the apex of the ramicaul; floral bract inflated, acuminate, 3-4 mm long; pedicel 0.5 mm long, with a filament 5 mm long; ovary 2 mm long; sepals and petals translucent, shortly but densely ciliate; dorsal sepal ovate, 25 mm long, 6 mm wide, 3-veined, the apex acute, acuminate with a slender tail; lateral sepals completely connate into a triangular-ovate lamina 25 mm long, 6

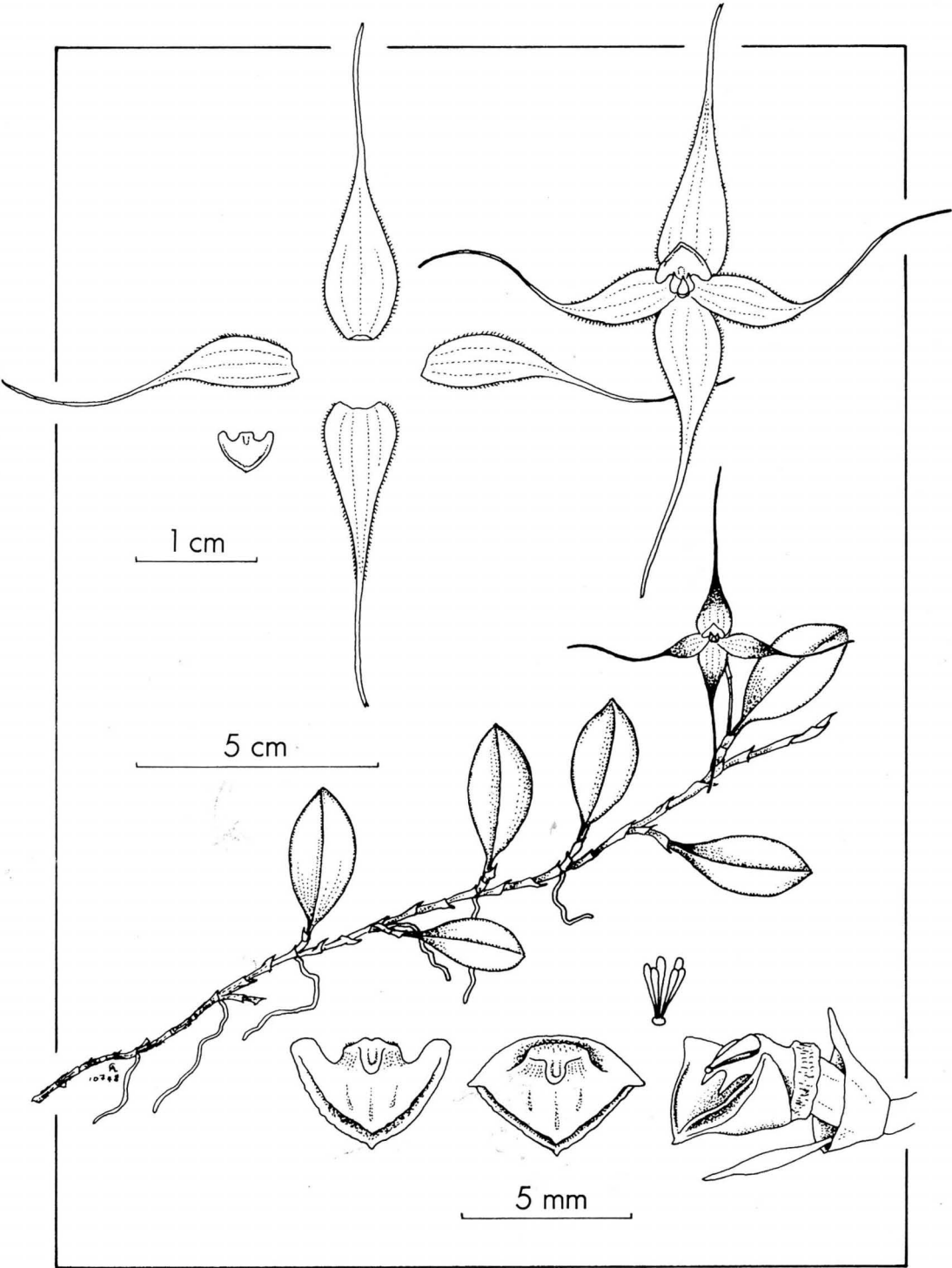
mm wide, 4-veined, the acute apex acuminate into a slender tail; petals ovate, oblique, acute, acuminate into a long, slender tail, 26 mm long, 4 mm wide, 3-veined; lip transversely ovate or trapeziform, 3.25 mm long, 4.5 mm wide, the lateral angles subacute, the apex obtuse with callous margins, the disc with a flat, shortly pubescent callus with a well-developed glenion; column 2 mm long; pollinia 6.

ETYMOLOGY: Named in honor of Alexander C. Hirtz of Quito, Ecuador, who was the first to discover this species in flower.

TYPE: *ECUADOR*: Prov. of Loja: epiphytic in cloud forest, Cajanuma Range south of Loja, alt. 2,750 m, 21 Mar. 1985, C. Luer, J. Luer, A. Hirtz, & W. Flores 10748 (Holotype: MO).

This species has been known to exist in the mountains south of Loja for several years, but it had not been found with flowers until very recently. The plants grow in moss and humus on the dark forest floor, apparently rarely flowering. Higher in the trees with more light and air circulation, some plants with several of the large, showy flowers were found by Hirtz. The color of the translucent sepals and petals is either purple or yellow.

In habit and flowers this species is similar to the Central American *B. valerioi* Ames & Schweinf., but the lip of the latter is denticulate.



*Brachionidium hirtzii* Luer