

Brachionidium muscosum Luer & Vasquez, sp. nov.

Planta pusilla repens, rhizomate elongato ramificanti, foliis ellipticis caulibus longioribus, pedunculo filiformi folio longiore, sepalis petalisque diaphanis similibus ovatis minute ciliatis longi-attenuatis, labello minuto triangulari cum callo ovoideo pubescenti.

Plant very small, epiphytic in moss, the rhizome elongated, repent, branching, 2-5 mm long between secondary stems, enclosed by 2-4 tubular sheaths with attenuate apices; roots slender, from nodes. Secondary stems ascending, 1.5-2 mm long, enclosed by 2 tubular sheaths with attenuate apices. Leaf suberect, coriaceous, elliptical, acute, apiculate, 8-10 mm long, 3-4.5 mm wide, 3-veined, cuneate below into a 1 mm long petiole. Inflorescence a single, non-resupinate, delicate flower borne by an erect, filiform peduncle 12-14 mm long, with a bract below the middle; floral bract infundibular, acute, 1.5 mm long; pedicel 0.5 mm long, with a filament 2 mm long; ovary 1 mm long; sepals and petals translucent white, the middle sepal ovate in the lower fourth, minutely ciliate, the apex acute, long-attenuate into a filiform tail, 10 mm long, 1.75 mm wide, 3-veined; lateral sepals completely connate into a synsepal similar to the middle sepal, 10.5 mm long, 1.8 mm wide, 4-veined; petals ovate in the lower quarter, minutely fimbriate, the apex acute, attenuate into a filiform tail, 7 mm long, 1.25 mm wide, 1-veined; lip white, transversely ovate-triangular, concave, 1.25 mm long, 1.75 mm wide, the subacute apex minutely apiculate, the basal angles erect, narrowly rounded, the disc with an ovoid, pubescent callus, the broad base delicately hinged to the column-foot; column stout, 0.75 mm long; pollinia 6.

Etymology: From the Latin muscosus, "mossy," in reference to the habitat and appearance of the plant.

Type: Bolivia: Dept. of Cochabamba: Prov. of Chapare: epiphytic in moss in cloud forest east of Cochabamba toward Villa Tunari, alt. 1850 m, 29 Jan. 1984, C. Luer, J. Luer & R. Vasquez 9452 (Holotype: SEU).

This tiny species, discovered by Jane Luer, grows intertwined in loose mats of moss around the shaded bases of trees in moist cloud forest. The fragil little flowers are colorless and nearly transparent.