

A New Central American Masdevallia

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THE PLANT WHICH SUPPLIED THE TYPE SPECIMEN for this new species came to us in a shipment of miscellaneous orchids, collected by Mr. C. K. Horich, San José, Costa Rica. Mr. Horich stated that the handful of miniature Pleurothallids in which this plant was included came from La Palma mountains between San Jeronimo and Alto Hondura, and from an altitude between 1400 and 1550 meters.



MASDEVALLIA HORRIDA

This little plant, forming a dense tuft of upright linear leaves, 2.8–3.5 cm. long and only about 2 mm. wide, stood out immediately among the others as distinct, though it suggested a Pleurothallis or Stelis rather than a Masdevallia. We planted it in a small pan in a loose mixture of chopped Osmunda fiber, shredded sphagnum moss and a fine grade of fir bark which seems to suit it to perfection.

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Having been received at the end of April 1958, the plant produced its first flowers during August of the same year. The flowers, which are raised well above the leaves and are quite large for such a small plant, revealed it to be an odd little *Masdevallia*, evidently a new species for which we propose the name "horrida."

Visitors to our greenhouses never fail to notice this plant when it is in flower, in spite of its small size, and they exclaim over it with pleasure. The standard remark is: "Why do you call it "horrida"? It is not horrid, it is sweet!" The answer to this, of course, is that the Latin word "horridus" does not mean horrid but stands for "bristly" or "prickly" and is very descriptive and fitting. The "cup"



MASDEVALLIA HORRIDA

Drawing showing leaves, flower, lip and petal, all enlarged.

formed by the more than halfway-united (connate) sepals is densely covered with bristly hairs outside, a character which is very unusual for a *Masdevallia*. All three sepals end at their tips in a fleshy, yellow-colored, drooping appendage which adds to the oddity of the appearance of the flowers.

The dorsal sepal is greenish yellow outside and inside, while the lateral sepals are so densely spotted maroon on both sides that they appear to be solidly maroon colored. The lip and the petals are inside the cup formed by the sepals and are so small that they add nothing to the general appearance of the flower. Only the comparatively large, greenish yellow column contrasts with the maroon of the lip and of the lateral sepals.

No claim is made that this new species of *Masdevallia* is a great beauty but that it is as charming as it is curious cannot be denied. It has something of a sturdy baby about it — “cute” is a rather fitting term often applied to it — and it is appealing in a very special way. It demands a winter temperature of 60 to 65° F. but does not seem to object to temperatures of 80 to 90° F. during summer. Since it is of easy culture and flowers readily and freely — last year (1959) it flowered first in June and then produced a second, larger crop of flowers in August — it is well worthy of the attention of orchid fanciers who are fond of the smaller species.

Masdevallia horrida Teuscher & Garay, sp. nov.

Epiphytica, caespitosa, pusilla, usque ad 6 cm. alta: radicibus filiformibus, flexuosis, glabris; caulibus secundariis vix ullis, approximatis, vaginis obtectis; folio lineari, carnoso, apice acuto, basin versus angustato, 3–6 cm. longo, ca. 1 mm. lato; inflorescentia singula, erecta, uniflora, 2.5–6 cm. longa; pedunculo capillari; bractea infundibuliformi, 5 mm. longa; sepalis inter se in cupulam amplam connatis, apice in caudam claviformem productis, 9-nerviis, nervis extus carinatis et densissime horridis, caudis inclusis 1.5 cm. longis, caudis ipsis 5–7 mm. longis; petalis carnis, oblique oblongo-obovatis, apice truncatis cum apiculo in medio, basin versus dorsaliter unidentatis, uninerviis, 3–3.5 mm. longis, 2 mm. latis; labello carnoso, elliptico vel obovato-elliptico, apice acuto vel obtusiusculo, basi subtruncato, disco bicarinato, 3-nervio, nervo mediano apicem versus incrassato, 5 mm. longo, 3 mm. lato; columna arcuata, basi in pedem brevem producta, 3 mm. longa; ovario horrido.

COSTA RICA: La Palma mountains, between San Jeronimo and Alto Hondura, 1400–1550 m. altitude. Coll. C. K. Horich s.n. (Type in the Orchid Herbarium of Oakes Ames no. 69493) — The type material is cultivated at the Montreal Botanical Garden and the description and illustration is prepared from living material.

There appears to be no closely similar species among the Central American *Masdevallias*. — *Montreal Botanic Garden, 4101 Est. Rue Sherbrooke, Montreal 6, Canada.*