

**Masdevallia gigas** Luer & Andreetta, sp. nov.

Planta grandis epiphytica caespitosa, foliis anguste elongatis caulibus brevibus, pedunculo longo suberecto racemo paucifloro, floribus grandibus successivis, sepalis pallide roseo brunneis longicaudatis cupulam patentem formantibus cum mento obtuso compresso, petalis bivalvatis apice verruculosus, labello spatulato epichilio orbiculari concavo carinulis multis radiantibus.

Plant large, epiphytic, caespitose; roots coarse, flexuous. Secondary stems stout, 3-7 cm long, channeled, mostly enclosed by a somewhat longer, loose sheath and a short 1 or 2 at the base, unifoliate. Leaf erect, thinly coriaceous, narrowly obovate, 15-40 cm long, 2.5-3.5 cm wide, carinate on the back, the apex acute, tridentate, the base gradually narrowed into a conduplicate petiole. Inflorescence a progressively contracted, few-flowered raceme to 20 cm long of large, successive flowers, borne on an ascending, suberect peduncle 20-45 cm long, from a node low on the secondary stem; floral bract 1-2 cm long; pedicel 2-4.5 cm long; ovary 6-7 mm long; sepals light pinkish brown, connate below the middle to form a widely patent sepaline cup, with red-brown tails about 6 cm long, the dorsal sepal broadly ovate 30-35 mm long, 27 mm wide, connate to the lateral sepals for 12 mm, the obtuse apex acuminate into the tail, the lateral sepals ovate, subcarinate externally, each about 40 mm long, 23 mm wide, connate to near the middle to form a deep, obtuse, compressed mentum, the acute apices acuminate into the tails; petals thick, spatulate, white marked with brown, 4 mm long, 2.5 mm wide, carinate externally, bivalved at the rounded apex, with brown verrucosities between the laminae, the inner lamina acute and denticulate; lip pink, spatulate, 10 mm long, 6 mm wide, the hypochile 4 mm long, 3 mm wide, with subacute, erect, marginal angles, shallowly cleft between, the base curved, concave, hinged to the column-foot, the epichile suborbicular, 6 mm long, 6 mm wide, concave with upturned margins, with multiple, radiating lamellae within; column light yellow, stout, 5 mm long, with a foot 3 mm long.

ETYMOLOGY: From the Latin *gigas*, "a mythological giant," in reference to the size of the plant and flowers.

TYPE: *ECUADOR*: *CARCHI*: epiphytic in cloud forest of the western slopes of the Andes, alt. 1800-2200 m, Oct. 1975, A. Andreetta & A. Hirtz 2, cultivated in Cuenca, flowered in cult. 12 July 1977, *C. Luer 1690* (HOLOTYPE: SEL); same area, 21 Feb. 1978, *C. Luer, J. Luer & A. Hirtz 2681* (SEL).

DISTRIBUTION: Northern Ecuador.

This large, rosy-flowered species is characterized by the elongated, suberect peduncle which often lists with the weight of a flower. The first flower produced on each peduncle is the largest, the subsequent flowers becoming progressively smaller. The dull pinkish brown color is composed of numerous, microscopic, brownish-purple dots on a dull yellow background. Among individual plants of the species, the epichile of the lip is somewhat variable. The degree of concavity and the number of radiating lamellae contained therein are not constant.