

Masdevallia vampira Luer, sp. nov.

Haec species *M. chimaerae* Rchb. f. et affinibus similis, sed floribus glabris, sepalis plus minusve complanatis vel leviter concavis viridibus subtiliter intenseque atropurpureo vittatis longicaudatisque, petalis bivalvibus et labello flexibili grandi epichilio ovoideo concavo multinervato distinguitur.

Plant large, epiphytic, caespitose; roots coarse, flexuous. Secondary stems stout, channeled, 4-6 cm long, unifoliate, sheathed by 1-2 loose, dry sheaths which are often shredded or shed. Leaf erect, elliptical, 15-25 cm long, 4-5.5 cm wide, comparatively thin, sometimes indistinctly plicate, the apex subacute, tridenticulate, the base tapered into a short, ill-defined petiole. Inflorescence a successively several-flowered (5-7) raceme to 17 cm long, borne by a horizontal to descending peduncle, 20 to more than 40 cm long, from low on the secondary stem; floral bract oblique, acute, 12-25 mm long; pedicel 18-25 mm long; ovary verruculose, dark olive-green, 10 mm long; flowers widely spread, horizontally dependent; sepals glabrous, more or less flat or slightly concave, light green but the green largely obscured by multiple, thin, more or less parallel, longitudinal, blackish purple veins that converge toward the apices, the dorsal sepal ovate, 2.4-5.5 cm long, 2.2-4 cm

wide, connate to the lateral sepals for 1.5 cm, the subacute apex contracted into a straight, filiform, blackish tail 5-11 cm long, the lateral sepals ovate, oblique, connate in a broad, shallow mentum, to near the middle into a synsepal 3-6 cm long, 2.2-7 cm broad, the subacute apices contracted into tails similar to that of the dorsal sepal; petals white, marked with purple, thick, oblong, 6 mm long, 2 mm wide, the obtuse apex bivalved with a verrucose callus protruding from between the laminae; lip white with pinkish to yellowish veins, 15-24 mm long, 11-17 mm wide, the hypochile cleft with obtuse, erect, lateral angles and with denticulate carinae extending forward, loosely hinged to the column-foot, 7 mm long, 5 mm wide, the epichile ovoid, concave, the margins incurved, with multiple, branching, elevated, radiating veins within, 10-17 mm long, 11-17 mm wide; column yellow. stout, 7 mm long, with a thick foot nearly as long.

ETYMOLOGY: Named for the resemblance of the flowers to a bat; from old middle European *vampir*, and *Vampirus*, a genus of bats.

TYPE: *ECUADOR*: PICHINCHA: epiphytic in cloud forest along the old road between Quito and Santo Domingo, alt. ca. 2000 m, B. Malo s.n., cultivated near Cuenca, flowered in cult. 20 July 1977, C. Luer 1819 (HOLOTYPE: SEL).

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL EXAMINED: same area, Jan. 1973, A. Andreetta 6, cultivated in Cuenca, flowered in cult. 12 July 1977, C. Luer 1692 (SEL).

DISTRIBUTION: Western Ecuador.

This magnificent species, commonly known as the "black chimaera," has been in cultivation for about fifteen years. The leaves are often broad and more or less plicate. The long, horizontal or drooping peduncle bears a succession of immense flowers totally hairless and without warts. The broad, flat sepals are green, but this base color is not readily visible because it is overlaid by numerous, thin, purplish black veins that converge at the apices to convey a black appearance to the flower. The black tails are long and slender. The large, concave, multiveined epichile of the lip occupies the center of the flower. The lip is flexibly hinged to the column-foot, not rigidly fixed as in *M. chimaera*.

In common with many allied species, exposure for a few minutes to warm or dry air causes the flower to become limp. The sepals and tails promptly regain their rigidity and stand straight out on a 180° plane after return to a cool, moist atmosphere.