

A Name for an Interesting Epidendrum

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WHILE COLLECTING IN CENTRAL CUBA, I found a large, pendent *Epidendrum* which is striking because of its large size and distinctive habit. I was surprised to learn that the plant was considered to be a variety of *E. ramosum* Jacquin (var. *lanceolatum* Grisebach). Typical *E. ramosum* (var. *ramosum*) is also found in central Cuba and bears little resemblance to the larger plant. Later, in eastern Chiapas, Mexico (near the Guatemalan border), I again had the opportunity of observing these plants in the field. In Chiapas both *E. ramosum* var. *ramosum* and *E. ramosum* var. *mixtum* (Schlechter) Ames, Hubbard and Schweinfurth are found. In this area typical *E. ramosum* occurs primarily in the various sorts of hardwood forest, while var. *mixtum* is one of the relatively few orchids which grows abundantly in the pine forest. Occasional plants of either form may occur in either sort of vegetation, and some plants were observed which appeared to be intermediate between var. *ramosum* and var. *mixtum*. Thus the classification of these as subspecies, or varieties, of a single species seems to be quite correct. The other plant, "var. *lanceolatum*", however, is abundantly distinct from *E. ramosum*, as will be noted below, and appears to be more closely related to *E. singuliflorum* Schlechter and *E. isomerum* Schlechter. All four of these species grow together in Chiapas, which permitted careful comparison of living plants. Since observing the living plants in the field, I have studied all of the herbarium specimens at the Ames Orchid Herbarium and at the Missouri Botanical Garden, as well as some material lent by the U. S. National Herbarium and the New York Botanical Garden. Study of the preserved collections amply confirmed my original suspicion that "var. *lanceolatum*" is a distinct species. As this interesting *Epidendrum* has no valid name, as such, it may be useful to describe it and discuss its distinctive features.

Epidendrum acuñaë Dressler, spec. nov.

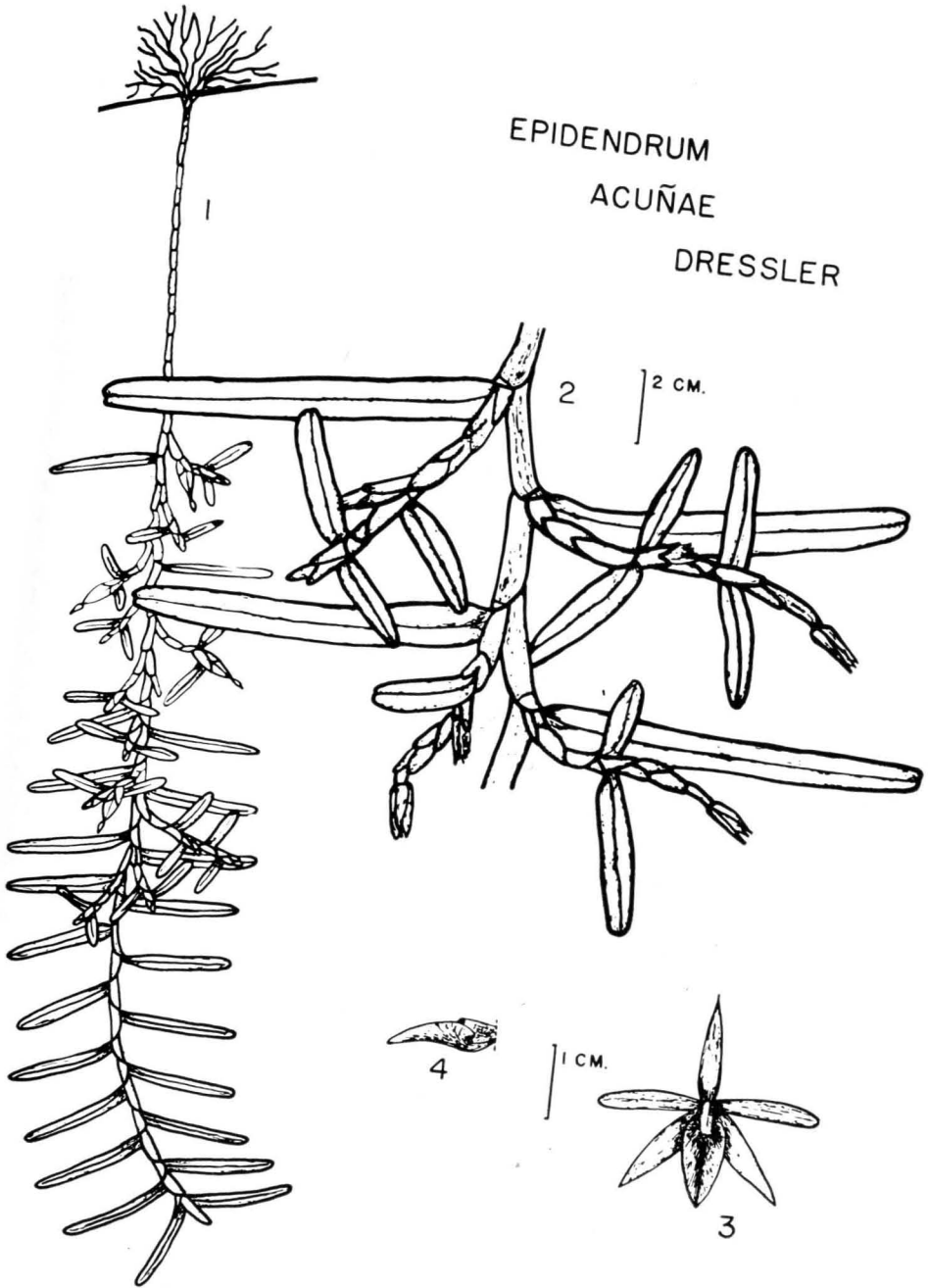
Spathiger roigii Acuña, Estac. Exper. Agron. Bol. Tec. 60: 93. 1939. Without Latin diagnosis.

Epidendrum ramosum var. *lanceolatum* Griseb., Fl. British West Indies 618. 1864, according to Correll, not *E. lanceolatum* Bradf. ex Griseb.

Herba epiphytica, caulis principalis e basi radicans, pendens, 1-2 m. longus. Folia caulis principalis crassa, coriacea, 8-14 cm. longa, 1-1.6 cm. lata, ligulato-lanceolata, retusa. Rami floriferi ex nodis caulis principalis et ex axillis superioribus ramorum floriferorum vetustiorum, 2.5-6 cm. longi (plerumque ca. 3 cm.), 1-3 vaginis scariosis, efoliatis basalibus. Folia ramorum floriferorum 1-3, 3-5 cm. longa, 0.6-1 cm. lata. Flores solitarii, terminales. Bractee florales 3-5, 1-2 cm. longae, scariosae, carinatae, obtusae imbricatae, ad pedicellum adpressae. Sepala lanceolata, 12-15 mm. longa, petala oblanceolata, 12-14 mm. longa, labellum ovatum, acutum, 12-14 mm. longum, 5-6 mm. latum. Venae omnes perconspicuae. Capsula ca. 3 cm. longa (rostrum ca. 1.5 cm. longum inclusum).

TYPE: Cuba, 1860-1864. *Charles Wright 3333*, in the Missouri Botanical Garden herbarium. This collection is chosen as type, because it shows the distinctive habit well and also bears some flowers in good condition. Most other collections bear only withered flowers or capsules. This species is known from southern Mexico,

EPIDENDRUM
ACUÑAÆ
DRESSLER



EXPLANATION OF THE PLATE

FIGURE 1, habit, drawn from *Dressler 1306*, Cuba, a plant about one yard long. FIG. 2, detail of a portion of the same plant, showing successive lateral branches. FIG. 3, flower, spread out. FIG. 4, lip and column, side view; 3 and 4, drawn from *Johnson 267*, Guatemala.

M. Szlapa

Guatemala, Honduras, Panama and Cuba. Other collections are cited by Correll (3).

While *Epidendrum acuñae* bears neither showy nor numerous flowers, its habit of growth is unusual, and a healthy plant is very striking, indeed. We have found the plant primarily on hardwood trunks and branches overhanging water; mountain streams in Cuba and a large lake in Mexico. A single, fallen plant found on the trail indicates, though, that it may sometimes grow on upper branches in the tropical forest, away from the water's edge. It will do well in cultivation if allowed to hang from a block of wood and if frequently sprayed or dipped in water.

The plant in question is clearly that which Acuña (1) named *Spathiger roigii*, in 1939, but Acuña's name was in a genus which is not considered distinct from *Epidendrum*, and it was published without Latin diagnosis (and is therefore invalid). Correll (3) has shown that the name *Epidendrum ramosum* var. *lanceolatum* may refer to this plant. This name is validly published, and, if the plant were very closely related to *E. ramosum*, the matter might be closed; it proves, however, to be more closely related to a quite different species, *E. singuliflorum* Schltr. Our plant has been compared with *E. boissierianum* Schlechter and *E. modestiflorum* Schlechter (both are members of the *E. ramosum* complex) and characterized as a "more dwarf usually 2-flowered variant" (2). This description may apply to the above plants, but certainly not to *Epidendrum acuñae*. The flowers of this species are similar to those of *E. ramosum*, though larger, but there are fundamental differences in the inflorescence and habit of growth which distinguish it at once from the whole *E. ramosum* complex. The robust main stem of *Epidendrum acuñae* is not (or only very rarely) terminated by an inflorescence, but continues to grow in length until the plant dies or is injured. Small lateral branches with only one to three small leaves (or occasionally quite leafless) arise from the nodes of the main stem and each is terminated by a single flower. In subsequent years new flowering shoots arise from the upper axils of previous flowering shoots. This process may continue until the lateral branch appears to be a simple leafy shoot, several inches in length, but close examination shows that it is actually a series of short determinate stems, each a little over an inch long. This interesting habit of growth does not occur in *E. ramosum*, but it is characteristic of *E. isomerum* and *E. singuliflorum*. Schlechter (5) recognized the peculiar nature of *E. singuliflorum*, but interpreted the main stem as a "stem-like rhizome" (rhizomate cauliformi), perhaps because the main stem was nearly leafless in his specimen. With further reduction in the size of these lateral branches we would have the condition found in some species of *Pleuranthium* (which the author does not believe to be generically distinct from *Epidendrum*). It is interesting to note that the flowers of *Pleuranthium cardiophilum* Garay have been compared to those of *E. singuliflorum*.

This species, its near allies and *E. ramosum* may be distinguished by the following key. The relatively tiny *E. repens* Cogniaux and *E. confertum* Ames & Schweinfurth have a similar habit of growth, but will not be confused with any of these other species, though they may be related. We do not have adequate material of *E. cocleense* Ames, Hubbard & Schweinfurth, but it closely resembles *E. isomerum*, and may show the same habit of growth. There is another, more southern, plant which has been treated as a variety of *E. ramosum* by some authors (var. *imbricatum* (Lindley) Ames, Hubbard & Schweinfurth or var. *angustifolium* (Cogniaux) L. Williams). Pabst (4) gives reasons for considering it a distinct species, *E. paranaense*. I have not seen this species in the field, but it is amply distinct from *E. acuñae* in habit and inflorescence.

1. Main stem terminated by an inflorescence, flowers produced several in cluster (solitary flowers may occur on very depauperate plants); plants usually erect; leaves somewhat coriaceous, thin when dry; flowers pale green or cream *E. ramosum*
1. Main stem not terminated by inflorescence, flowers produced singly on short lateral branches; plants pendent; leaves fleshy-coriaceous, remaining thick even when dry; flowers green or dark green, usually bronzy.
 2. Leaves linear-lanceolate, acute; lamina of lip flat, not clasping the apex of column.
 3. Lamina of lip ovate, obtuse *E. cocleense*
 3. Lamina of lip narrowly lanceolate, acute *E. isomerum*
 2. Leaves oblong to lanceolate, obtuse or retuse; lamina of lip basally more or less clasping apex of column.
 4. Lip tubular-involute, the sides of the lip touching above the apex of the column *E. singuliflorum*
 4. Lip not tubular-involute, clasping sides of column, but not touching above or concealing the apex of the column *E. acuñae*

Since no valid specific epithet is available for this plant and one cannot make a new combination of Grisebach's varietal name (the name *E. lanceolatum* having been used for another plant), it seems best to simply regard the plant in question as a "new" species. Special thanks are due Dr. Robert C. Foster for preparation of the Latin diagnosis, and Miss Martha Szerlip (now Mrs. Benjamin Wittels) for the accompanying illustration. — *Missouri Botanical Garden, 2315 Tower Grove Avenue, St. Louis 10, Missouri.*

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