

A New Species of Epistephium from Colombia

By RICHARD EVANS SCHULTES

THE REMNANT QUARTZITIC MOUNTAINS which are scattered throughout the Amazonian basin in Colombia are clothed with a curious and primitive vegetation. Likewise, the great sandy savannahs which are derived from the disintegration of these mountains harbor many rare or endemic species of plants. There are numerous orchids known only from these localities. One such orchid is the remarkable *Epistephium* described below.

Epistephium brevicristatum R. E. Schultes *sp. nov.*

Herba terrestris, elata, multo in arbustis inclinata, basi radicans. Caulis strictus, robustus, usque ad sex vel septem pedes longus. Folia vivo rigide crassa sed siccitate submembranacea, lanceolata-ovata, apice acuminato-acuta, basi sessilis, cordato-amplexicaulia, margine integra, utrinque glaberrima et nitida, plusminusve 12-nerviis, nervis minoribus reticulato-ramosis, usque ad 30 cm. longa, 12 cm. lata, superioribus gradatim minoribus. Racemus terminalis, usque ad plusminusve 70 cm. longus, laxiuscule 15- ad 20-florus. Flores maximi speciosissimique, omnino vinoso-rosei vel roseo-purpurei. Bractee crassae, triangulares vel ovatae, apice valde acuminato-acutae, inferioribus usque ad 2 cm. longae et 1 cm. latae. Ovarium 4-6.5 cm. longum. Perianthium in ovarii apice urceolo calyciformi leviter sinuato vel subdentato cinctum. Sepala valde membranacea, subaequalia, lanceolato-spathulata, apice subacuta, plusminusve 5.5 cm. longa, 1.4-1.8 cm. lata. Petala sepalis

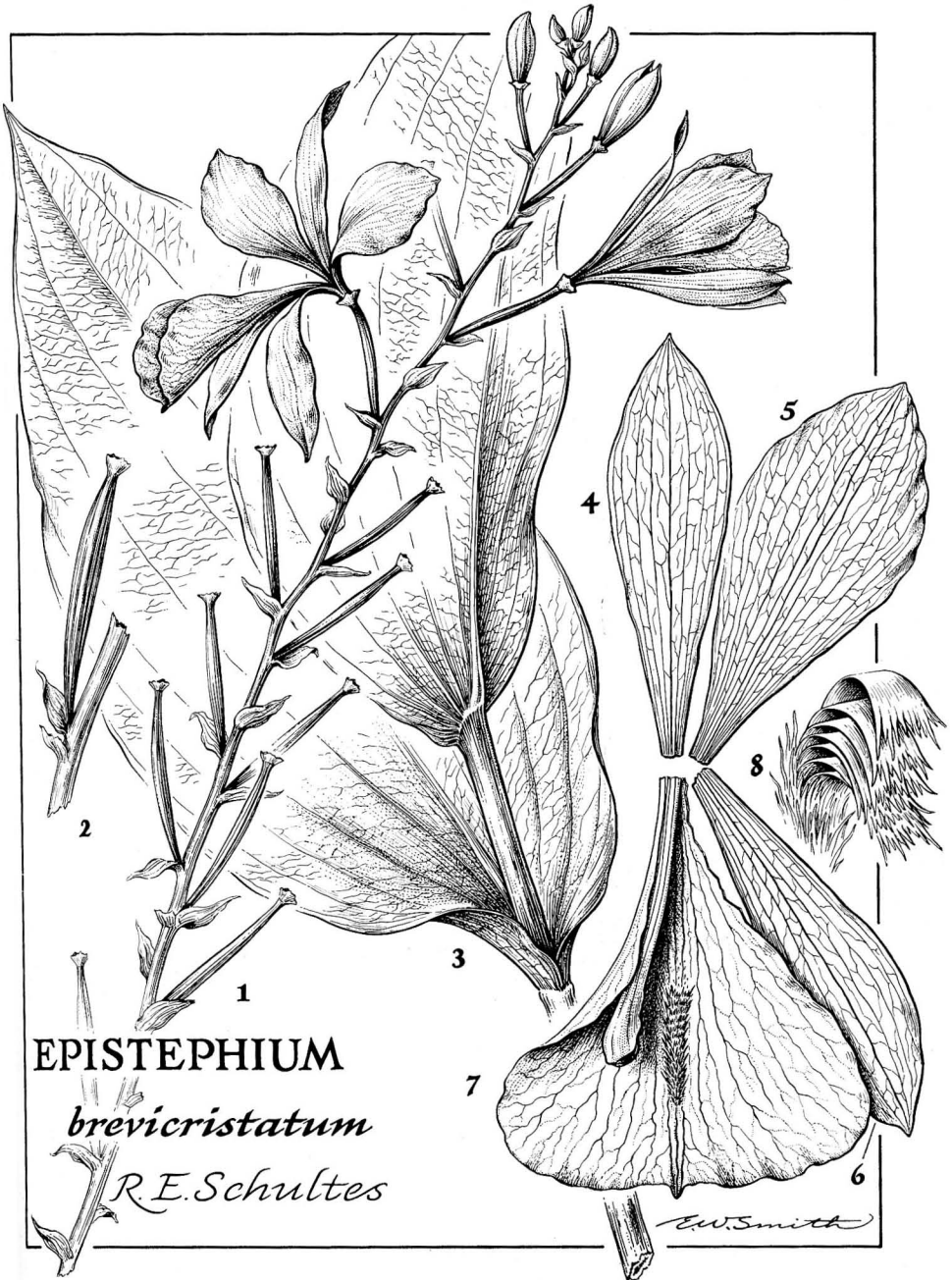
aequilonga, obovata obtusiuscula. Labellum sepalis aequilongum, ungue lineari columnae marginibus adnato, plusminusve 1 cm. longo, parte libera ambitu subtriangulari, apice leviter retuso-apiculata sed margine subintegrum, disco ad medium cristato; crista flava, 1-1.2 cm. longa, 1 cm. ab apice longe appendicibus crassis piliformibus retrorsim barbellata sensim in 5-10 laminas retrorsas longe irregulariterque fimbriatas transeuntibus ornata, basi sine lineis parallelis. Columna plusminusve 4 cm. longa, gracilis, glabra, usque ad supra medium labelli ungui adnata.

COLOMBIA: Comisaría del Vaupés, Río Kuduyarí (affluent of Río Vaupés), Yapobodá. Quartzite savannah. "Terrestrial. Flowers purple." October 4-6, 1951, *Richard Evans Schultes et Isidoro Cabrera 14269* (TYPUS in Herb. Ames 66984 ad 66987).



The quartzitic savannah of Yapobodá near the headwaters of the Río Kuduyari in the Colombian Vaupés, type location of *Epistephium brevicristatum*. This beautiful orchid sprawls in weed-like exuberance over the scrubby bush-vegetation of the savannah.

Epistephium brevicristatum, a rank, weedy orchid growing over low, scrubby vegetation, is apparently most closely related to *E. macrophyllum* Schlechter and *E. amplexicaule* Poeppig et Endlicher. It differs markedly from *Epistephium macrophyllum* in having a short cristate disk which is located no closer than 1 cm. from the apex of the lip, whereas *E. macrophyllum* is figured as having a much longer crest reaching to the apex itself. *Epistephium macrophyllum* likewise has three thickened longitudinal bands at the base of the lip; there appears to be no similar structure in *E. brevicristatum*. Another conspicuous difference is evident in the margin of the lip, for *Epistephium brevicristatum* is entire, whereas *E. macrophyllum* is conspicuously crenulate-dentate. The lip of *Epistephium brevicristatum* is apically slightly retuse, whilst that of *E. macrophyllum* is very deeply and widely excised.



EPISTEPHIUM
brevicristatum
R. E. Schultes

EXPLANATION OF PLATE

FIGURE 1, inflorescence, $\times 1/2$. FIG. 2, ovary, $\times 1/2$. FIG. 3, portion of basal part of stem, $\times 1/2$. FIG. 4, dorsal sepal $\times 1$. FIG. 5, petal, $\times 1$. FIG. 6, lateral sepal, $\times 1$. FIG. 7, column and lip (opened out), $\times 1$. FIG. 8, portion of crest of lip with laminae bent forward to show their structure, c. $\times 2$.

From *Epistephium amplexicaule*, this new species may be distinguished at once by a different shape of the lip. In the drawing which accompanied the original description the lip is drawn with a crest running almost the entire length, with hairy protuberances which are not retrorse. Furthermore, at the apex of the lip there is figured a thickened folding of the lamina and two clavate swellings.—*Botanical Museum of Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.*