

***Lepanthes absens* Luer & Hirtz, sp. nov.**

Fig. 1

Ety.: From the Latin *absens*, "absent," referring to the absent appendix.

Planta mediocris, inflorescentia cum racemo congesto disticho folio ovato acuminato brevior, sepalo dorsali synsepaloque late ovatis obtusis breviter acuminatis denticulatis, petalis transverse bilobis pubescentibus, lobo superiore oblongo apice oblique acuto quam lobo inferiore triangulari majore, labelli lamina oblongis minute ciliatis, connectivis late cuneatis, corpore crasso antice concavo, appendice nulla.

Plant medium in size, epiphytic, caespitose; roots slender. Ramicauls slender, erect, 5.5-7 cm long, enclosed by 10-12 microscopically scabrous, lepanthiform sheaths. **Leaf** erect, coriaceous, ovate, acute, long-acuminate, 4.5-5 cm long, 1.3-1.5 cm wide, the rounded base contracted into a petiole 1-1.5 mm long. **Inflorescence** a congested, distichous, successively several-flowered raceme up to 3 or more mm long, borne on top of the leaf by a slender peduncle 10-11 mm long; floral bract 1 mm long, muriculate; pedicel 1 mm long; ovary 1 mm long; **sepals** light yellow, denticulate, the dorsal sepal broadly ovate, obtuse, abruptly short-acuminate, 3 mm long, 3.25 mm wide, connate to the lateral sepals for 1 mm, the lateral sepals ovate, oblique, 3 mm long, 2 mm wide, connate 1 mm, the apices abruptly short-acuminate and diverging; **petals** yellow, minutely pubescent, transversely bilobed, 1 mm long, 3.6 mm wide, the upper lobe oblong, subacute, obtusely angled on the inner margin, larger than the lower lobe, the lower lobe triangular, oblique, narrowly obtuse; **lip** red, bilaminar, the laminae oblong, 2 mm long, the apices subacute, minutely ciliate, the bases obtuse with a short, rounded process on the inner angle, the connectives short, cuneate, the body thick, connate to the base of the column, the anterior surface concave, devoid of an appendix; **column** 1.5 mm long, the anther dorsal, the stigma ventral.

Pastaza: north of Topo, epiphytic in forest along Río Zuñag, alt. 2200 m, 23 Feb. 1990, A. Hirtz, S. Dalström, L. Årnby, J. Del Hierro, E. Astorga, S. Ortega & J. Cabezas 4697 (Holotype: MO), C. Luer illustr. 14723.

This species is known from a single collection on the eastern slope of central Ecuador. It is characterized by the congested inflorescence shorter than the ovate, acuminate leaf; broad, obtuse, denticulate sepals; transversely bilobed petals with an obtusely angled upper lobe and a triangular lower lobe; oblong blades of the lip with a thick body concave on the anterior margin without an apparent appendix.

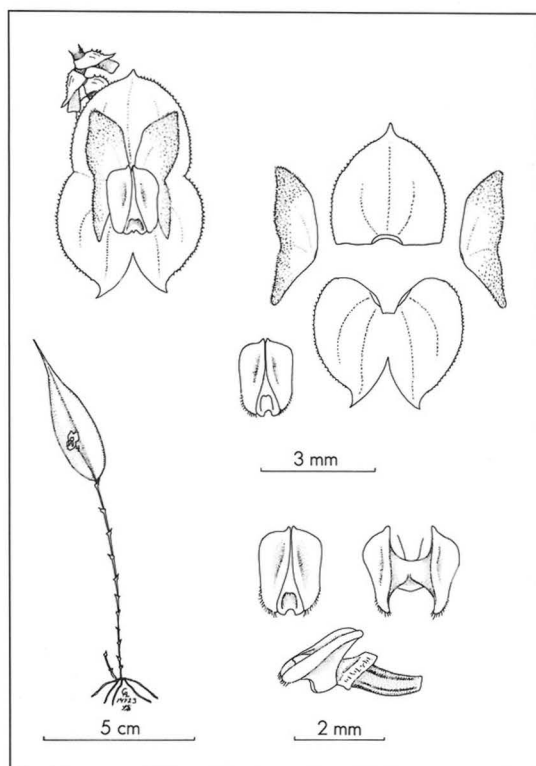


Fig. 1. *Lepanthes absens*