

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

Ety.: From the Latin *alopez*, "a fox," referring to the long-haired, taillike appendix.

Fig. 9.

Planta mediocris caespitosa, inflorescentia racemosa congesta longipedicellata foliis rubris ovatis acuminatis plus minusve longiore, sepalis ovatis, petalis transverse lobatis brevipubescentibus, lobo superiore dolabriformi, lobo inferiore oblongo incurvato, labelli laminae lunatis brevipubescentibus, connectivis late cuneatis, appendice longissima oblonga longipubescenti apice biglandulata.

Plant medium in size, epiphytic, caespitose; roots numerous, filamentous. Ramicauls erect to suberect, very slender, 5-9.5 cm long, enclosed by 10-12 lepanthiform sheaths with dilated, shortly ciliate ostia. **Leaf** erect, more or less suffused with red, thinly coriaceous, ovate, acute, acuminate, 3-4.5 cm long, 1-1.7 cm wide, the base cuneate, contracted into a petiole 2 mm long. **Inflorescence** a congested, distichous, long-pedicellate, successively many-flowered raceme up to 15 mm long, borne on top of the leaf by a filiform peduncle 25-40 mm long; floral bracts 1.5 mm long; pedicels 2.5 mm long; ovary 1 mm long; flowers red-purple; **sepals** ovate, subacute, entire, subcarinate, the dorsal sepal 2.75 mm long, 1.75 mm wide, connate to the lateral sepals for 0.5 mm, the lateral sepals oblique, 2.5 mm long, 1.25 mm wide, connate 1.5 mm; **petals** minutely pubescent, transversely bilobed, 0.5 mm long, 2.5 mm wide, the upper lobe dolabriform, the angle on the inner margin subacute, the lower lobe obliquely oblong, incurved, obtuse; **lip** minutely pubescent, bilaminate, the blades ovate-lunate with the apices acute, 1.4 mm long, the connectives broadly cuneate, forming a broad body, connate to the base of the column, the sinus occupied by a large, descending, 1 mm long, oblong, long-pubescent appendix with the apex biglandular; **column** 1.5 mm long, the anther dorsal, the stigma ventral.

Morona-Santiago: epiphytic in cloud forest, Cordillera del Condor, east of Guismé, alt. 1600 m, 4 Feb. 1987, C. Luer, J. Luer, & A. Hirtz 12622 (Holotype: MO); same area, 21 May 1988, C. Luer, A. Hirtz, W. Flores, A. Andreetta & W. Teague 13536 (MO); same area, 18 Feb. 1986, C. Luer, J. Luer, A. Hirtz, W. Flores & A. Embree 11893 (MO).

This species is apparently endemic in the Cordillera del Condor of southeastern Ecuador. The peduncles of *L. aloplex* are about as long as the leaves, but the congested, long-pedicellate racemes with a small, red-purple flower usually hang over the margin near the apex, in a manner similar to *L. vespertilio*. The most distinguishing feature of *L. aloplex* is the long, bushy-tailed appendix, reminiscent of the appendix of *L. alkaia* Luer & Escobar, from the Eastern Cordillera of Colombia. *Lepanthes aloplex* differs in the larger habit, longer peduncles and pedicels, and red, entire sepals.

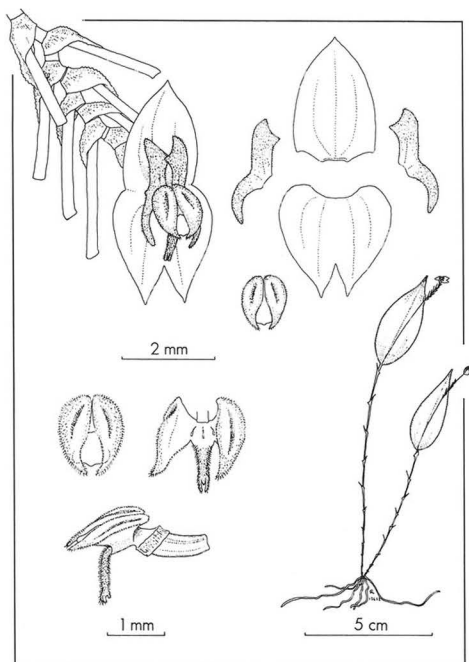


Fig. 9. *Lepanthes aloplex*