

**Lepanthes elytrifera** Luer & Jost, sp. nov.

Ety.: From the Latin *elytra* and *-fer*, "bearing a pair of horny covers like the wings of beetles."

Planta grandis, racemo disticho congesto folio elliptico abrupte brevi-acuminato brevior, sepalis ovatis acuminatis liberis, petalis transverse lobatis glabris, labelli laminis oblongis convexis membranaceis, connectivis crassis, appendice bifurcata distinguitur.

Plant large, epiphytic, caespitose; roots slender. Ramicauls stout, erect, 13-20 cm long, enclosed by 12-14 acuminate, glabrous, lepanthiform sheaths with thickened margins. Leaf erect, elliptical, shortly acuminate, 6-8 cm long, 3-4 cm wide, the base rounded, abruptly contracted into a petiole 6-7 mm long. Inflorescence a distichous, congested, successively many-flowered raceme, up to 15 mm long, borne behind the leaf by a slender peduncle 25-30 mm long; floral bracts acuminate, 2-2.5 mm long; pedicels 1.5-2 mm long; ovary 8 mm long; sepals free, diverging, pale yellow, microscopically ciliate, sharply carinate, concave centrally, ovate, acute, acuminate, the dorsal sepal 9 mm long, 4 mm wide, 3-veined, the lateral sepals oblique, 9 mm long, 2 mm wide, 2-veined; petals yellow, red at the base, connate to the column above the base, glabrous, transversely bilobed, 0.75 mm long, 2 mm wide, the upper lobe obliquely oblong, obtuse, the lower lobes triangular; lip purple, bilaminar, the blades glabrous, oblong, with obtuse ends, notched medially below the apex, ciliate apically, 2 mm long, convex with the lateral halves membranous, the connectives broadly cuneate, thick, forming a stout body, connate to the base of the column, the appendix small, bifid above the base; column 1.5 mm long, the anther and stigma apical.

ECUADOR: **Tungurahua**: mountains above Ulba, alt. 2550 m, 23 Mar. 1999, *L. Jost 1490* (Holotype: MO), C. Luer illustr. 19156.

This large species of series *Lepanthes* subsection *Lepanthes* is superficially similar to *L. condorensis* Luer & Hirtz, with diverging sepals, but the sepals of *L. elytrifera* are free. The blades of the lip are oblong with the outer halves membranous, and thickened medially with the connectives. The appendix is forked above the middle.

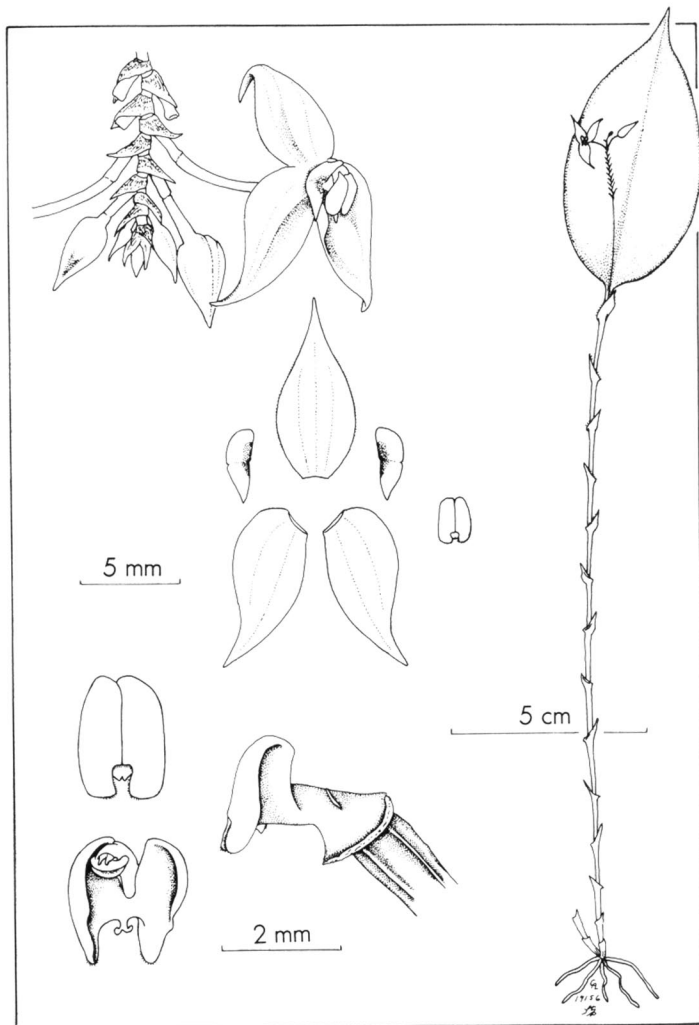


Fig. 296. *Lepanthes elytrifera*