

Lepanthes empis Luer, sp. nov.

Planta minuta, inflorescentia foliis late ellipticis brevior, racemo congesto disticho, floribus minutissimis, sepalis ovatis acutis, petalis transverse bilobis multangulatis, labelli laminis oblongis, appendice ovoidea pubescenti transverse fissis.

Plant minute, epiphytic, caespitose; roots comparatively coarse. Secondary stems erect, slender, 3-17 mm tall, enclosed by 2-4 microscopically pubescent lepanthiiform sheaths. Leaf erect, coriaceous, broadly elliptical, obtuse, the blade 5-11 mm long, 4-6 mm wide, the base cuneate into a twisted petiole 1 mm long. Inflorescence a congested, distichous, successively flowered raceme up to 4 mm long, borne behind the leaf by a filiform peduncle 3-4 mm long; floral bract and pedicel each 0.75 mm long; ovary 0.75 mm long; sepals light green to rose, ovate, acute, the dorsal sepal 1.8 mm long, 1 mm wide, the lateral sepals 1.8 mm long, 0.9 mm wide, connate 0.8 mm; petals purple to orange margined in purple, glabrous, at most cellular, transversely bilobed, 0.5 mm long, 1.2 mm wide, with a minute, obtuse angle near the middle of the outer margin, the upper and lower lobes subequal, more or less ovate, obtusely angled on the outer margins, the apices rounded; lip glabrous, at most cellular, purple, the blades oblong, 0.6 mm long with rounded ends, the connectives cuneate from the bases of the blades, connate to the column above the base, the sinus filled with a proportionately large, pubescent, ovoid appendix with the apex transversely cleft.

Etymology: From the Greek empis, "a gnat or mosquito," referring to the minute flowers.

Type: Panama: Prov. of Chiriqui: epiphytic in small trees near Volcan, "La Cordillera," alt. 1300 m, 9 Dec. 1983, C. Luer, J. Luer, A. Maduro & H. Butcher 9314 (Holotype: SEL).

This minute species, one of the smallest in the genus, is characterized by the short, congested raceme, the entire sepals, the multangular petals, and the proportionately large ovate appendix cleft transversely.