

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

Fig. 92.

Ety.: From the Latin *expansus*, "spread out," referring to the widely expanded petals.

Planta parvula caespitosa, inflorescentia racemosa congesta folio elliptico brevior, sepalis ovatis obtusis, petalis transverse lobatis minute pubescentibus expansis, lobo superiore triangulo acuto, lobo inferiore anguste triangulo-falcato, labelli laminae ellipticae brevipubescentibus, connectivis late oblongis, corpore lato, appendice crassa oblonga pubescenti.

Plant very small, epiphytic, caespitose; roots slender. Ramicauls erect, slender, 1.5-3 cm long, enclosed by 5-7 minutely ciliate, lepanthiform sheaths. **Leaf** spreading, coriaceous, elliptical, acute, purplish, 8-13 mm long, 4-6 mm wide, the cuneate base contracted into a petiole 1 mm long. **Inflorescence** a congested, successively several-flowered raceme up to 2 mm long, borne on top of the leaf by a filiform peduncle 2-4 mm long; floral bracts 0.75 mm long; pedicels 1 mm long; ovary 1 mm long; dull white, elliptical, obtuse, the dorsal sepal 2.5 mm long, 1.5 mm wide, connate to the lateral sepals for 0.25 mm, the lateral sepals oblique, subacute, 2.5 mm long, 1.25 mm wide, connate 1 mm; petals bright dark purple, transversely bilobed, 1 mm long, 4 mm wide, the upper lobe triangular, acute, the lower lobe narrowly triangular-falcate, acute; **lip** bright dark purple, bilaminar, the blades minutely pubescent, convex, elliptical with rounded ends, 1.25 mm long, the connectives broadly oblong, from the blades below the middle, the body broad, connate to the base of the column, the appendix broad, thick, oblong, pubescent; **column** 1 mm long, the anther subapical, the stigma ventral.

Esmeraldas: epiphytic in wet forest west of Lita, alt. 750 m, 18 Jan. 1985, C. Luer, J. Luer, A. Hirtz, C. H. Dodson, D. Benzing & D. Bermudes 12414 (Holotype: MO); west of Lita, alt. 800 m, 13 Aug. 1986, A. Hirtz 2961 (MO).

This very small species was recently discovered by Alexander Hirtz in the wet, lowland forest of northwestern Ecuador. The flowers with bright purple, widely spread petals, are large compared to the small, spreading leaf upon which they lie. The lower lobes of the petals are prominently falcate. The blades of the lip are convex and minutely pubescent.

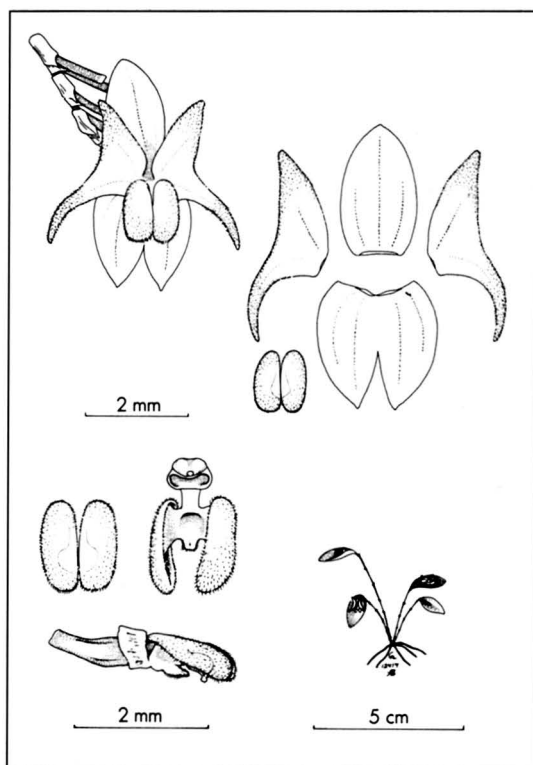


Fig. 92. *Lepanthes expansa*