

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

Fig. 270.

Etymology: From the Latin *exsertus*, "protruding," referring to the projecting column and lip.

Planta parva, inflorescentia cum racemo congesto secundo longipedicellato folio ovato acuto breviter, sepalis obtusis glabris, petalis transverse bilobis, lobis anguste anguste triangularibus minute pubescentibus, lobo superiore duplo majore, labelli laminis oblongis pubescentibus, connectivis brevibus supra medium, corpore ad columnam supra medium connato, appendice crasso truncato.

**Plant** small, epiphytic, caespitose; roots slender. Ramicauls very slender, erect, 3-4.5 cm long, enclosed by 10-12 ciliate, lepanthiform sheaths with acuminate ostia. **Leaf** spreading, thinly coriaceous, ovate, acute, 2-2.5 cm long, 0.8-1 cm wide, the base broadly cuneate into a petiole less than 1 mm long. **Inflorescence** a congested, secund, long-pedicellate, successively flowered raceme up to 6 mm long, borne on top of the leaf by a slender peduncle 3-10 mm long; floral bracts 0.5 mm long, glabrous; pedicels 1.5-2 mm long; ovary 1 mm long; **sepals** light green, glabrous, the dorsal sepal ovate, obtuse, 2.5 mm long, 1.75 mm wide, 3-veined, connate to the lateral sepals for 0.5 mm, the lateral sepals connate 1.5 into a broadly ovate, bifid lamina, with apices obtuse, very shortly acuminate, 2.25 mm long, 2.5 mm wide, each sepal 2-veined; **petals** pink, minutely pubescent, transversely bilobed, 0.5 mm long, 2.5 mm wide, the lobes narrowly triangular, acute, the upper lobe twice larger than the lower lobe; **lip** pink, bilaminate, the laminae oblong, convex, 1.5 mm long, pubescent, with the bases and apices rounded, the connectives short, from above the middle, the body broad, connate to the column above the middle, the appendix thick, truncate; **column** 1.75 mm long, the anther and the stigma ventral.

ECUADOR: **Carchi**: south of Chical, Cerro Oscuro, alt. 2100 m, May 1997, A. Hirtz 6552 (Holotype: MO), C. Luer illustr. 18688.

A member of subsection *Lepanthes* series *Lepanthes*, this species, apparently endemic in northwestern Ecuador, is distinguished by the small, horizontal, ovate leaf with the inflorescence borne on top. The raceme is long-pedicellate; the sepals are obtuse; the lobes of the transverse petals are narrowly triangular; and the column protrudes forward bearing the blades of the lip horizontally and from above the middle of the column. The appendix is thick and truncate.

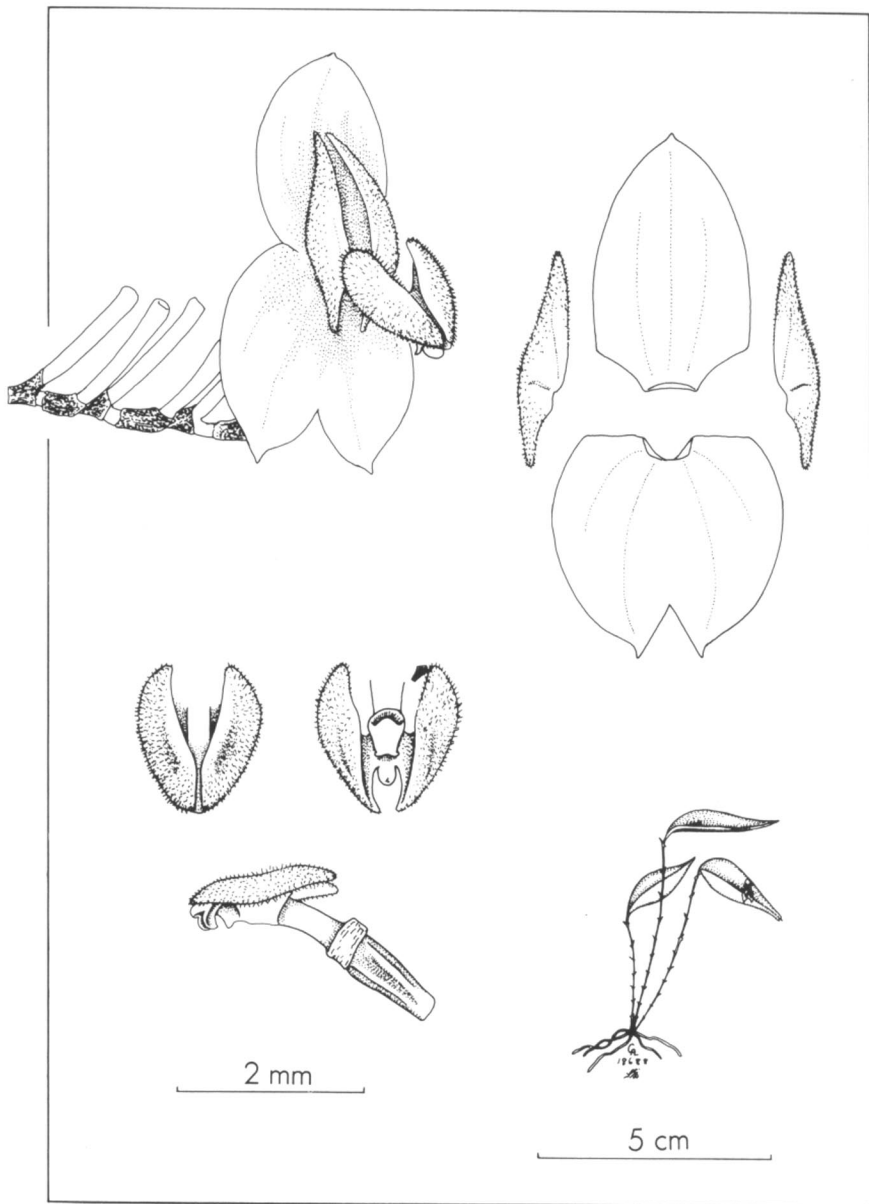


Fig. 270. *Lepanthes exserta*