



Photography: Rodrigo Escobar

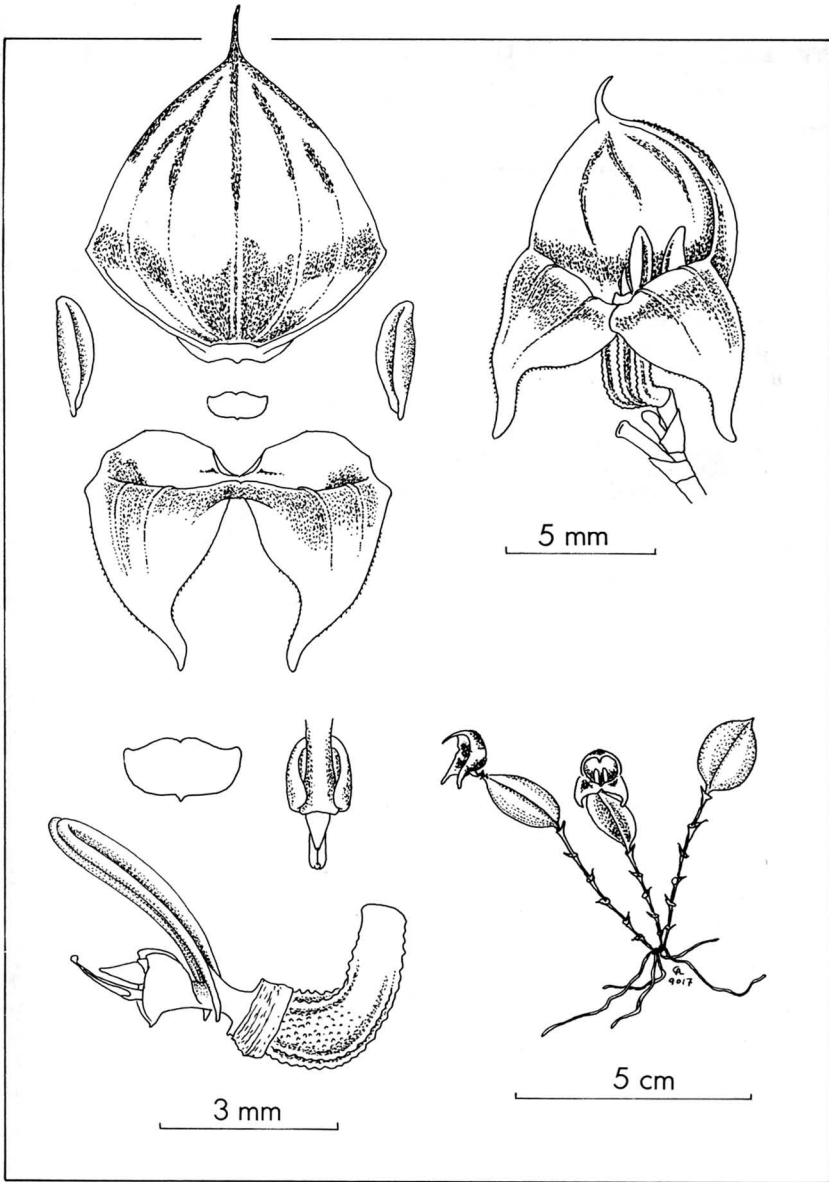
Lepanthes felis

Lepanthes felis Luer & Escobar, sp. nov.

Planta parva, inflorescentia congesta folio elliptico aequilonga, sepalis in cupulam profundam connatis, sepalo dorsali concavo obtuso brevicaudato, sepalis lateralibus deflexis acutis, petalis carnosis oblongis, labello minuto transverse oblongo lateribus columnam amplectentibus.

Plant small, epiphytic, caespitose; roots slender. Secondary stems erect, slender, 1.5-4.5 cm long, enclosed by 3-8 minutely ciliate lepanthiform sheaths. Leaf erect,

¹The Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, 811 South Palm Avenue, Sarasota, Florida 33577.



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Illustration: Carlyle A. Luer

coriaceous, suffused with purple beneath, elliptical, subacute, shortly acuminate, 18-20 mm long, 10-14 mm wide, the base cuneate into a 2-3 mm-long petiole. Inflorescence a congested, successively flowered raceme up to 5 mm long, borne by a filiform peduncle 15-18 mm long; floral bract 1.5 mm long; pedicel 2 mm long; ovary curved, 2-3.5 mm long, crested, minutely muriculate; sepals yellow, suffused and veined in red-purple, minutely ciliate-pubescent, the dorsal sepal ovate, concave, 13 mm long, 10 mm wide unspread, connate to the lateral sepals for 5 mm to form a deep sepaline cup, the apex obtuse, abruptly contracted into a slender tail 1.5 mm long, the lateral sepals ovate, oblique, 8.5 mm long, 5 mm wide, connate basally and concave below a transverse fold, deflexed above the fold, the apices

acute, acuminate; petals emerald green, fleshy, oblong, sulcate, 4 mm long, 1.25 mm wide, the apex rounded, the base with a minute tooth; lip dull green, transversely oblong, 1 mm long, 2 mm wide expanded, the broadly rounded apex minutely apiculate, the lateral lobes more or less ovate-triangular, erect, obtuse, embracing the column, the base connate to the base of the column; column cylindrical, 1.5 mm long, the anther and stigma apical.

ETYMOLOGY: From the Latin *felis*, “a cat,” for the fancied illusion of the flower.

TYPE: Colombia: Dept. of Antioquia: Munic. of Frontino: Alto de Cuevas, alt. 2050 m, 14 May 1983, *R. Escobar & E. Valencia 2605* (Holotype: SEL); same area, 4 May 1983, *C. Luer, J. Luer, R. Escobar, A. Pridgeon & E. Valencia 9017* (SEL); same area, 12 April 1974, *R. Escobar et al. 764* (JAUM); Munic. of Mesopotamia, alt. 2050 m, Dec. 1974, *R. Escobar & O. Monsalve s.n.* (JAUM).

This peculiar species, apparently without close relatives, has been in cultivation for about ten years, and has been known affectionately as “El Gato,” or “the Cat.” The flowers are deeply cup-shaped with the erect, green petals within shining like the eyes of a cat. Three color forms are known.