

Lepanthes gaileana Luer & Hirtz, sp. nov.

Fig. 102.

Ety.: Named in honor of Gail Furniss of Atlanta, Georgia, whose enthusiasm for the genus *Lepanthes* has contributed greatly to the completion of this work.

Planta parva racemo laxo paucifloro folio elliptico superanti, sepalis in cupulam profunde connatis marginibus conspicue erosissimis tenuicaudatis, petalis oblongis transversis, labelli laminis oblongis planis glabris apice ciliatis, appendice grandi crassa oblonga pubescenti apice glandulosa.

Plant small, epiphytic, caespitose; roots slender. Ramicauls slender, erect, 2-4.5 cm long, enclosed by 5-6 minutely ciliate-scabrous, lepanthiform sheaths. **Leaf** erect, coriaceous, elliptical, obtuse, 15-18 mm long, 6-8 mm wide, the base cuneate, contracted into a petiole ca. 2 mm long. **Inflorescence** a loose, successively few-flowered raceme up to 6 cm long including the filiform peduncle 2-2.5 cm long, borne beyond the leaf; floral bract minutely muricate, 1.5 mm long; pedicel 3 mm long; ovary 2 mm long; **sepals** dark red, membranous, deeply connate into a gaping cup, markedly erose, the blade of the dorsal sepal transversely ovate, concave, 6 mm long, 8 mm wide, with the apex obtusely acuminate into a slender tail 4 mm long, connate to the lateral sepals for 5 mm, the lateral sepals connate 6 mm into a transversely subovate, bifid lamina, 8 mm long, 11 mm wide, with the apices irregularly acute, contracted into slender tails 7 mm long; **petals** olive green, microscopically pubescent, transversely bilobed, 0.8 mm long, 5 mm wide, the upper lobe oblong with the end rounded, the lower lobe equally long, narrower, slightly recurved; **lip** olive green, bilaminar, the blades oblong with the ends rounded, glabrous, flat, with the apices minutely ciliate, 1.5 mm long, the connectives cuneate, the body connate to the base of the column, the appendix oblong, thick, pubescent, 0.5 mm long, the apex with a glabrous, bilobulate gland; **column** 1.5 mm long, winged at the apex, the anther dorsal, the stigma ventral.

Carchi: above Maldonado, alt. 2500 m, July 1995, A. Hirtz, X. Hirtz & J. Del Hierro 6226 (Holotype: MO), C. Luer illustr. 17749.

This species is apparently rare and endemic in northernmost Ecuador where it was recently collected for the first time. It is related to a small group of Colombian species characterized by a sepaline cup, e.g. the Colombian *L. chelonion* Luer & Escobar. This species, however, is easily distinguished from them by the prominently erose margins of the sepals.

In habit the plant is small with a loose, successively flowered raceme far surpassing the elliptical leaf. The dark red sepals are deeply connate into a gaping cup with markedly erose margins, and slender tails. The olive green petals are transversely oblong, and the flat, oblong blades of the lip are also olive green. The appendix is thick, oblong and pubescent with a glabrous apical, bilobulate gland.

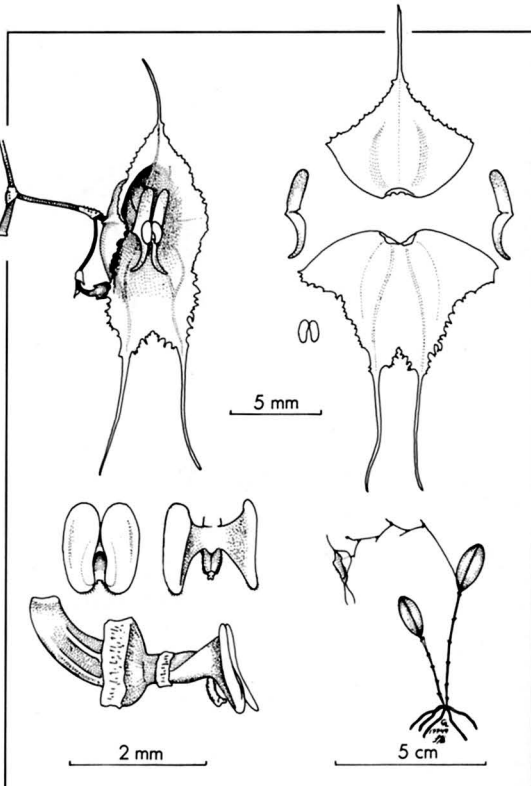


Fig. 102. *Lepanthes gaileana*