

***Lepanthes megalostele* Luer, sp. nov.**

Planta mediocris caespitosa, inflorescentia folio elliptico brevior, racemo congesto disticho, sepalis glabris subacutis quam petalis transverse oblongis brevioribus, labello laminis ellipticis ciliatis columna minoribus, appendice grossa pubescenti apice incurvato.

Plant medium in size, epiphytic, caespitose; roots slender. Secondary stems slender, erect, 5-8 cm long, enclosed by 7-8 blackish, close, microscopically ciliate lepanthiform sheaths. Leaf erect, coriaceous, elliptical, acute, 3-4 cm long, 1.5-1.8 cm wide, the base cuneate into a petiole 3 mm long. Inflorescence a congested, distichous, successively flowered raceme up to 7 mm long, borne by a filiform pedicel 10-22 mm behind the leaf; floral bract 1 mm long, spiculate; pedicel 1.75 mm long; ovary 2 mm long; sepals light yellow, glabrous, carinate, subacute, the dorsal sepal ovate-triangular, 2.66 mm long, 1.9 mm wide, connate 0.66 mm basally to the lateral sepals, the lateral sepals ovate, connate 1.5 mm, 2.66 mm long, 2.5 mm wide together; petals orange, suffused with red, transversely oblong, 0.8 mm long, 3.33 mm wide, microscopically pubescent, the upper lobe elliptical, obtuse, the lower lobe smaller, oblong, obtuse; lip red, the blades elliptical, 1 mm long, the apices acute, ciliate, the bases rounded, the connectives and body narrow, connate to the base of the column, the appendix thick, broadly triangular, pubescent, with an acute, incurved apex; column proportionately large, 1.5 mm long, the anther and stigma apical.

Etymology: From the Greek *megalo-*, "large," and *stele*, "column," in reference to the large column of the species.

Type: *ECUADOR*: NAPO: epiphytic in wet forest north of Tena, "Cotundo," alt. 1100 m, June 1983, A. Hirtz 917B (Holotype: SEL), C. Luer illustr. 9090.

This species is notable for the congested, distichous inflorescence shorter than the elliptical leaf; the small flowers with petals longer than the sepals; the column larger than the blades of the lip; and the thick, pubescent appendix with an incurved apex.