

Lepanthes meniscophora Luer & Hirtz, sp. nov.

Ety.: From the Greek *meniskophoros*, "meniscus-bearing," referring to the petals.

Fig. 154.

Planta mediocris, inflorescentia racemosa subdensa secunda folio ovato purpureo brevior, sepalis ovatis acuminatis denticulatis, petalis pubescentibus bilobis anguste crescentiformibus, labello bilaminato, laminis pubescentibus oblongis, appendice oblonga pubescenti.

Plant small to medium in size, weak, epiphytic, caespitose, roots slender. Ramicauls slender, erect, 2.5-8 cm long, enclosed by 8-10 lepanthiform sheaths with oblique, dilated, ciliate, long-acuminate ostia. **Leaf** spreading, coriaceous, suffused with purple, ovate, acute, lightly acuminate, 3-5 cm long, 1-1.6 cm wide, the base cuneate into a petiole 1 mm long. **Inflorescence** a subdense, secund, successively several-flowered raceme, 15 mm or more long, borne on top of the leaf by a peduncle 5-10 mm long; floral bracts 1 mm long; pedicels 1.5 mm long; ovary 4 mm long; **sepals** light yellow, suffused with purple, denticulate, carinate-spiculate externally along the veins, the dorsal sepal ovate, obtuse, shortly acuminate, 6.5 mm long, 4 mm wide, 3-veined, connate to the lateral sepals for 1 mm, the lateral sepals ovate, oblique, 5 mm long, 3 mm wide, 2-veined, connate 2 mm, the apices acute, acuminate; **petals** purple, pubescent, transversely bilobed, narrowly crescent-shaped, 1 mm long, 8 mm wide, the lobes slender, acute, the lower lobe slightly longer than the upper lobe; **lip** purple, bilaminar, the blades pubescent, oblong with rounded ends, 2 mm long, the connectives broadly cuneate, the body broad, connate to the base of the column, with an oblong, pubescent appendix in the acute sinus; **column** 2 mm long, the anther dorsal, the stigma ventral with a pedunculate processes in association with the appendix.

Carchi: epiphytic in forest east of Maldonado, alt. 2500 m, Nov. 1991, A. Hirtz 5420 (Holotype: MO), C. Luer illustr. 16205; above Maldonado toward Río La Plata, alt. 2200 m, 11 Jan. 1993, A. Hirtz 5873 (MO); above Maldonado, alt. 2500 m, July 1995, A. Hirtz & J. Del Hierro 6227 (MO).

Imbabura: Los Cedros Reserve, wet forest, alt. 2100 m, 26 Jan. 1993, S. Dalström, T. Höjjer & H. Wanntorp 1770 (MO), C. Luer illustr. 16597.

This species, endemic in northwestern Ecuador, is distinguished by the second inflorescence lying on top of a purplish leaf. The sepals are denticulate and shortly acuminate. The petals are crescent-shaped. Similar petals are seen in the Colombian *L. antennifera* Luer & Escobar and the Bolivian *L. barbatula* Luer & Vásquez.

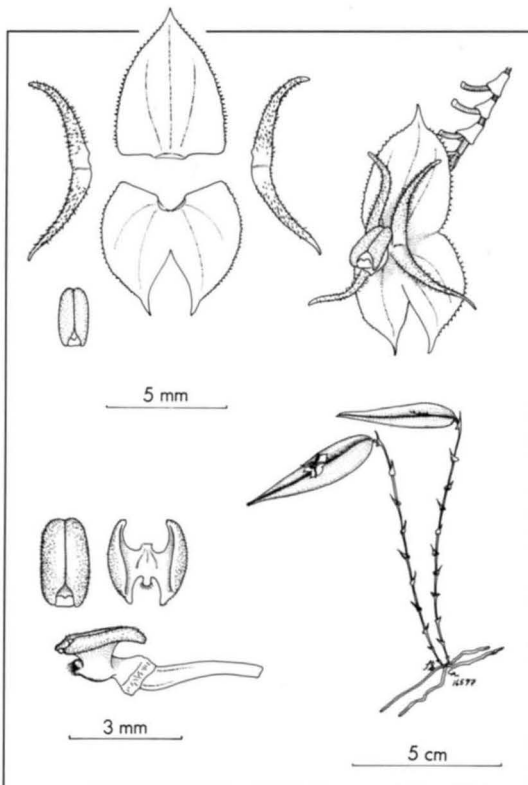


Fig. 154. *Lepanthes meniscophora*