

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

Fig. 175.

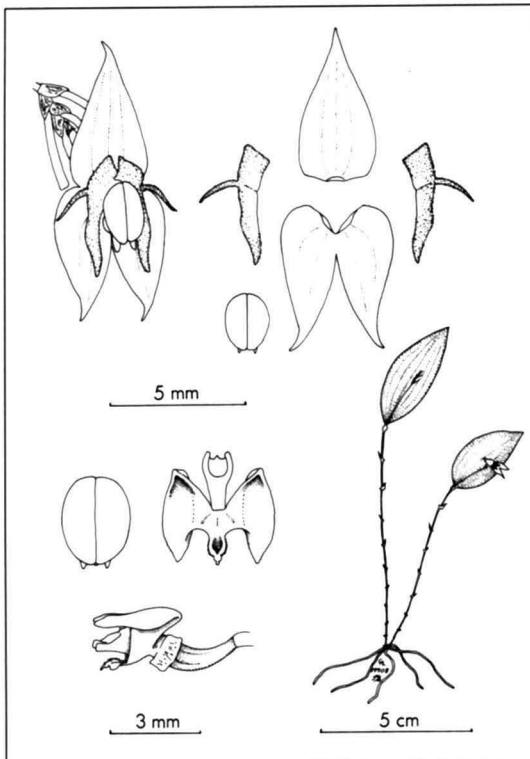
Ety.: Named in honor of Santiago Ortega of Quito, Ecuador, co-discoverer of this species.

Species haec *L. cotyledonis* Luer affinis, sed habitu minore, foliis ellipticis acutis, sepalis integris, sepalo dorsali anguste ovate, petalorum lobo superiore truncato, lobo inferiore anguste oblongo acuto, processu marginali longiore, et labelli laminis convexis corpore non concavo differt.

**Plant** small, weak, epiphytic, caespitose; roots slender. Ramicauls very slender, erect, 6-7.5 cm long, enclosed by 9-10 close, thin, microscopically scabrous, lepanthiform sheaths with long-acuminate apices. **Leaf** erect to suberect, thinly coriaceous, suffused with purple, reticulate-veined, elliptical, 3-4 cm long, 1.5 cm wide, the apex acute, the bases cuneate into a petiole ca. 2 mm long. **Inflorescence** an extremely congested, secund raceme of successive, long-pedicellate flowers, up to 5 mm long, borne by a filiform peduncle 12-18 mm long along the back of the leaf; floral bracts 1 mm long; pedicels 3 mm long; ovary 1.5 mm long; **sepals** pale brown, entire, glabrous, the dorsal sepal ovate, acute, 5.5 mm long, 3 mm wide, connate to the lateral sepals for 1 mm, the lateral sepals ovate, oblique, lightly acuminate, acute, 5 mm long, 2 mm wide, connate 0.5 mm; **petals** light yellow, finely pubescent, transversely bilobed, 1 mm long, 4.5 mm wide, with a narrow process 1.5 mm long from the margin near the middle, the dorsal lobe subquadrate, truncate, the lower lobe narrowly oblong, acute; **lip** dark brown, bilaminate, the blades thin, glabrous, lunate, convex, above the column, 2 mm long, the connectives thin, broadly cuneate, the body connate to the base of the column, the sinus obtuse, the appendix oblong, protuberant, ciliate-pubescent, concave centrally, the apex obtuse, minutely glandular, 0.5 mm long, the column 1.5 mm long, the anther dorsal, the stigma ventral.

**Morona-Santiago:** forest along the new road between Mendez and Morona, alt. <1000 m, 19 Jan. 1989, A. Hirtz, A. Andreetta & S. Ortega 4137 (Holotype: MO), C. Luer illustr. 17908.

This species is apparently endemic in low-land eastern Ecuador where it is known only from the original collection by Hirtz and companions. It is most closely related to *L. cotyledon*. *Lepanthes ortegae* is distinguished by the small habit with very slender, weak ramicauls that bear a thin, purple, reticulated leaf. The long-pedicellate raceme is very congested, borne near the middle of the back of the leaf. The sepals are smooth and acute; the upper lobe of the petals is truncate while the lower lobe is much longer, narrow and acute; the blades of the lip are thin and convex above the column; and the appendix is protuberant with a central cavity and apical glands.

Fig. 175. *Lepanthes ortegae*