

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

Ety.: From the Greek *peloros*, "huge," and *stele*, "column," referring to the imposing column.

Planta parva, racemo laxove congesto longipedicellato folio ovato longuore, sepalis angustissime triangularibus, petalis minutissime trifurcatis, labello minutissime trilobato, columna tereti proportione multimajori distinguitur.

**Plant** small, epiphytic, caespitose; roots slender. Ramicauls slender, erect, 2-3 cm long, enclosed by 8-9 microscopically ciliate, lepanthiform sheaths with oblique apices. **Leaf** erect, thinly coriaceous, elliptical-ovate, 9-11 mm long, 6-7 mm wide, contracted below into a petiole ca. 1 mm long. **Inflor-escence** an erect to arching, successive, loose to congested, many-flowered raceme 10 mm or more long, borne beyond the leaf by a peduncle 10-15 mm long, from the apex of the ramicaul at the base of the leaf; floral bracts 0.75 mm long; pedicels 1.5 mm long; ovary 1.25 mm long; **sepals** free, white, membranous, glabrous, the dorsal sepal narrowly triangular, acute, 3.75 mm long, 0.75 mm wide, 3-veined at the base, the lateral sepals narrowly triangular, acute, carinate, 4 mm long, 0.75 mm wide, 2-veined at the base; **petals** purple, trilobed, the lobes filiform, minutely pubescent, the longest lobe 0.5 mm long, the next, 0.25 mm long, the third rudimentary lobe ca. 0.1 mm long at the base of the petal; **lip** purple, minutely pubescent, trilobed, with lateral blades curved, hugging the under surface of the column, 0.3 mm long, and an erect midlobe ca. 0.1 mm long, connate to the column ca. 0.2 mm above the base; **column** terete, 2 mm long, the anther dorsal, the stigma ventral.

ECUADOR: **Pichincha**: El Jordan, north of San Pedro Vicente Maldonado, west of Los Cedros, alt. 400 m, 2002, A. Hirtz 8430 (Holotype of *L. pelorostele*: MO), C. Luer illustr. 21284.

The proportionately large, terete column of this species dwarfs the extremely small petals and lip that cluster about its base. The narrowly triangular sepals that surround the column are twice as long. The minute, thread-like petals are three-lobed, but the midlobe is nearly microscopic. Hugging the undersurface of the column near the base are the pair of curved lobes of the minute three-lobed lip, while the third lobe stands erect at the point of bifurcation, probably analagous to an appendix.