

Lepanthes rigidigitata Luer & Hirtz, sp. nov.

Ety.: From the Latin *rigididigitatus*, "with a rigid digit," referring to the erect column.

Planta parva, racemo flexuoso laxo folio elliptico multilongiore, sepalis triangularibus aequalibus expansis, petalis labelloque minutis late ovatis, columna erecta maxima.

Plant small, epiphytic, scandent; roots slender. Ramicauls stout, erect, proliferating other ramicauls, 15-20 cm long, enclosed by 4-6 ribbed, lepanthiform sheaths with thick, minutely ciliate margins. **Leaf** erect, coriaceous, 13-17 mm long including a petiole 1-2 mm long, the blade elliptical, subacute, 4-7 mm wide, cuneate below into the petiole. **Inflorescence** a lax, flexuous, successively many-flowered raceme, usually 1 flower open, to 12 cm long including a peduncle 1-2 cm long, borne from near the apex of a ramicaul; floral bracts 1 mm long, obtuse, sparsely echinate; pedicel 1 mm long; ovary sparsely echinate, 1 mm long; **sepals** carinate and sparsely tuberculate externally, expanded, pale yellow, glabrous, triangular, acute, the dorsal sepal 4 mm long, 1.9 mm wide, 3-veined, connate to the lateral sepals for 0.5 mm, the lateral sepals also 4 mm long, 1.9 mm wide, but 1-veined, connate 0.5 mm; **petals** pale yellow, transversely ovate-hastate, broadly obtuse, 0.5 mm long, 0.6 mm wide, 1-veined; **lip** pale yellow, transversely subquadrate with the sides broadly rounded and curved up, 0.7 mm long, 0.8 mm wide, the apex truncate with an obtuse apiculum, the base broadly transverse and adnate to the base of the column; **column** rose, terete, erect, 2.3 mm long, 0.6 mm thick, footless.

ECUADOR: **Morona-Santiago**: near Chigüinda, alt. 1500 m, cultivated at Ecuagenera, Gualaceo, 10 Nov. 2001, A. Hirtz (Holotype: MO), C. Luer illustr. 20218.

This species is characterized by expanded, triangular sepals, minute petals and lip, and a large, erect, cylindrical column. These characters are also seen in two Colombian species: *Lepanthes micellilabia* Luer & Escobar with a short, congested raceme, and *L. isosecles* Luer & Escobar with a long, pendent raceme. The long, lax raceme of *L. rigidigitata* is not pendent. It also differs from the latter by the prolific habit and transversely ovate petals and transversely quadrate lip.

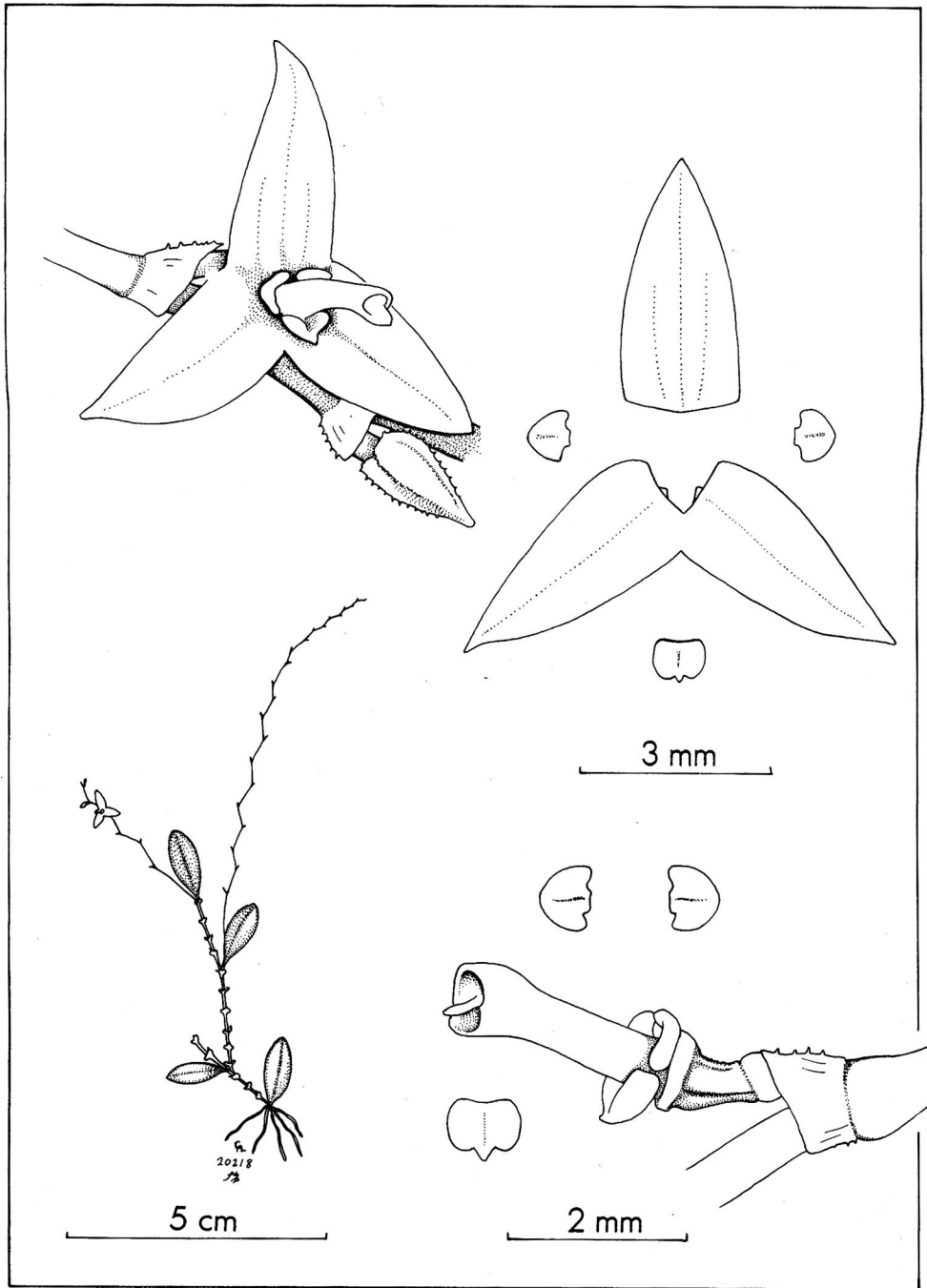


Fig. 4. *Lepanthes rigidigitata*