

Lepanthes zunagensis Luer & Hirtz, sp. nov.

Ety.: Named for Río Zuñag where the species was discovered.

Fig. 265.

Planta parva, inflorescentia cum racemo congesto folio ovato acuminato brevior, sepalis late ovatis minute denticulatis, petalis labelloque ruberrimis, petalis glabris transverse bilobis, lobo superiore oblongo anguste obtuso, lobo inferiore triangulari, labelli laminis ovatis planis apice minute ciliatis, connectivis anguste cuneatis, appendice ciliata intricata.

Plant small, epiphytic, caespitose; roots slender. Ramicauls slender, erect, 1.5-2 cm long, enclosed by 6-7 minutely ciliate, lepanthiform sheaths with dilated ostia. **Leaf** erect, coriaceous, ovate, acute, acuminate, 3 cm long, 1.5 cm wide, the rounded base abruptly contracted into a petiole 1 mm long. **Inflorescence** a congested, successively several-flowered raceme up to 4 mm long, borne on top of the leaf by a slender peduncle 11 mm long; floral bract 1-1.5 mm long; pedicel 1-1.5 mm long; ovary 1 mm long; **sepals** white, broadly ovate, subacute, minutely denticulate, the dorsal sepal 4 mm long, 3.5 mm wide, 5-veined, connate to the lateral sepals for 1.5 mm, the lateral sepals oblique, connate 2.5 mm, 4 mm long, 4.5 mm wide together, each 3-veined; **petals** dark red, glabrous, transversely bilobed, 1 mm long, 5 mm wide, the upper lobe oblong, the apex oblique, narrowly obtuse, the lower lobe triangular, narrowly obtuse, smaller than the upper lobe; **lip** dark red, bilaminar, the laminae glabrous, ovate, flat, minutely ciliate at the acute apex, rounded at the base, 1.75 mm long, the connectives narrowly cuneate, the body narrow, connate to the base of the column, the appendix longitudinally bisegmented, pubescent; **column** 1 mm long, the anther dorsal, the stigma ventral.

Pastaza: north of Topo, epiphytic in forest along Río Zuñag, alt. 2200 m, 23 Feb. 1990, A. Hirtz, S. Dalström, L. Årnby, J. Del Hierro, E. Astorga, S. Ortega & J. Cabezas 4723 (Holotype: MO), C. Luer illustr. 14721.

This species from the eastern slopes of the Andes of central Ecuador is most similar to *L. deficiens* Luer & Escobar from Colombia. The habit is small with markedly dilated ostia of the lepanthiform sheaths. The flowers with intensely dark red petals and lip are borne in a short raceme on top of the leaf. The sepals are broadly ovate and minutely denticulate. The petals are large, longer than a sepal. The lip is bilaminar with a longitudinally bisegmented appendix.

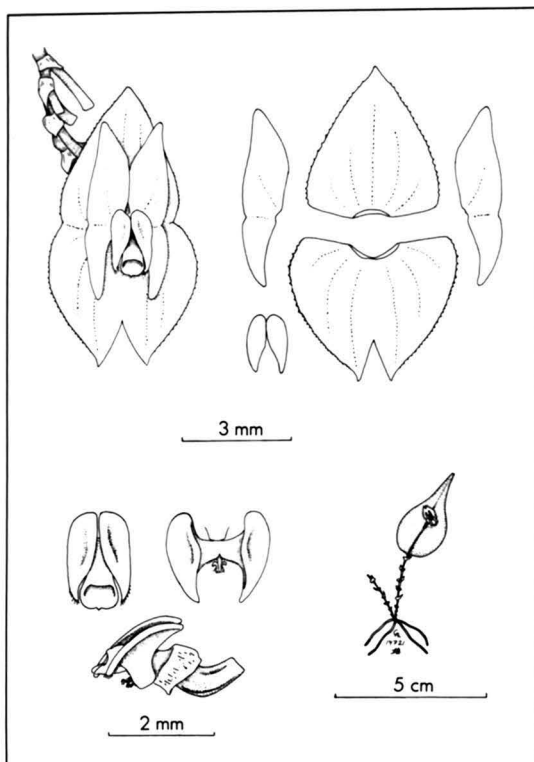


Fig. 265. *Lepanthes zunagensis*