

Masdevallia alexandri Luer, sp. nov.

Species haec *M. heteropterae* Rchb. f. et affinitatibus cognata sed floribus parvis sepalis glabris brunneo fasciatis, petalis multangulis carinatis apiculatis basi lobulatis et labello arcuato subpandurato bicarinato apice rotundato distinguitur.

Plant small, epiphytic, caespitose; roots slender, fasciculate. Secondary stems ca. 1 cm long, unifoliate, enclosed by 2 thin, tubular sheaths. Leaf suberect, thinly coriaceous, elliptical, petiolate, 4-8 cm long including the 1.5-3 cm long petiole, 1.5-2 cm wide, the apex acute, tridenticulate, cuneate below into the conduplicate petiole. Inflorescence a single flower borne successively in a congested, 3- to 4- flowered raceme at the summit of a slender, erect peduncle 8.5-9 cm long, with a bract near the middle, embraced below the middle by the conduplicate leaf-petiole, from a node on the secondary stem; floral bracts imbricating, thin, tubular, 5-6 mm long; pedicels 7 mm long; ovary smooth, greenish brown, 3 mm long; sepals glabrous, light greenish brown with multiple minute bars of dark brown, the dorsal sepal suborbicular, concave, 7 mm long, 6.5 mm wide, connate to the lateral sepals for 1 mm, the apex rounded, contracted into a slender, erect, brown tail 23-25 mm long, the lateral sepals light yellow-brown toward the bases, obovate-oblong, 9 mm long, 3 mm wide, united to the column-foot to form a rounded mentum, then deflexed, the rounded apices contracted into tails similar to that of the dorsal sepal, 22-27 mm long; petals yellow-green, suffused and marked with brown, oblong-multangular, 4 mm long, 2 mm wide, the obtuse apex apiculate, obscurely bi- or trilobed above the middle on the upper margin, dilated on the lower margin with a carina ending in a rounded lobule at the base; lip brown, oblong-subpandurate, arcuate, 4 mm long, 2.25 mm wide spread out, the apex rounded, the base subcordate, hinged beneath, the disc with a pair of low, parallel calli from near the middle to the apex; column yellow, dotted with purple-brown, semiterete, 3.5 mm long, with an equally long, curved column-foot.

ETYMOLOGY: Named in honor of Alexander C. Hirtz of Quito, Ecuador, who discovered this species.

TYPE: *ECUADOR*: PICHINCHA: epiphytic in cloud forest above Mindo, alt. 2200 m, 20 Oct. 1979, A. Hirtz & A. Andreetta s.n. (HOLOTYPE: SEL), C. Luer, illust. 4374.

DISTRIBUTION: Western Ecuador.

This small species is related to *M. heteroptera* and its allies, but may be distinguished by the small habit, glabrous sepals minutely banded in brown, multangular petals with a carina along the lower margin ending in a distinct lobule at the base, and a subpandurate, arcuate lip. Although these basically similar species form a unit or section within *Masdevallia*, in my opinion they are not generically distinct. The single characteristic of the hinge of the lip originating below the margin of the apex of the column-foot is found in other species of *Masdevallia*.