

Masdevallia merinoi Luer & Portilla, sp. nov.

Ety.: Named for Gilberto Merino of Gualaico, Ecuador, who collected this species.

Inter species sect. *Amaluzae*, habitu mediocri, sepalis striatis longissime caudatis, petalis acutis cum callo humili et labello oblongo apice rotundo minute eroso distinguitur.

Plant small, epiphytic, caespitose; roots slender; ramicauls slender, erect, 0.8-1 cm long, enclosed by 2 loose, tubular sheaths. Leaf erect, coriaceous, petiolate, 4-5.5 cm long including the petiole 1.5 cm long, the blade elliptical, acute, 1-1.2 cm wide, the base narrowly cuneate into the petiole. Inflorescence a successive, few-flowered raceme, borne by a slender, suberect to horizontal peduncle 7-8 mm long, with a bract at the base and another on the lower quarter, from low on the ramicaul; floral bract tubular, 5-7 mm long; pedicel 7 mm long; ovary 4 mm long; sepals dull white, striped with red-purple, glabrous, the dorsal sepal oblong, 15 mm long, 7 mm wide, connate to the lateral sepals for 9 mm to form a cylindrical tube, the apex acute, acuminate into a slender, white tail 4 cm long, the entire length 5.5 cm, the lateral sepals broadly subovate, oblique, 6 cm long, connate 12 mm into a lamina 13 mm wide, the apices acute, attenuated into slender tails; petals white, elliptical, acute, 6.5 mm long, 1.8 mm wide, callous on the lower half on the middle third; lip suffused with red-purple, oblong, 8.5 mm long, 3 mm wide, the apex rounded, minutely erose, disc longitudinally sulcate between a pair of low calli, the base decurved, subcordate, hinged beneath; column white, semiterete, 4.5 mm long, the foot 4 mm long including the incurved extension.

ECUADOR: Zamora-Chinchiipe: above Valladolid, alt. 1600 m, collected June 1998 by Gilberto Merino, cultivated at Ecuagenera, Gualaico, Ecuador, Oct. 1999, *J. Portilla 14* (Holotype: MO), C. Luer illustr. 19254.

Among the species of sect. *Amaluzae*, this species is most closely allied to *M. manchinazae* Luer & Hirtz, but differs in the larger flower with the sepaline tube thrice longer, and the lateral sepals are free a short distance beyond the tube. The lateral sepals of *M. manchinazae* are deeply connate far beyond the tube. Except for being larger, the petals and lip are basically similar. The lip of *M. merinoi* is minutely verrucose with the verrucae low and elongate, with the apex round and minutely erose. The lip of *M. manchinazae* is smooth and entire.

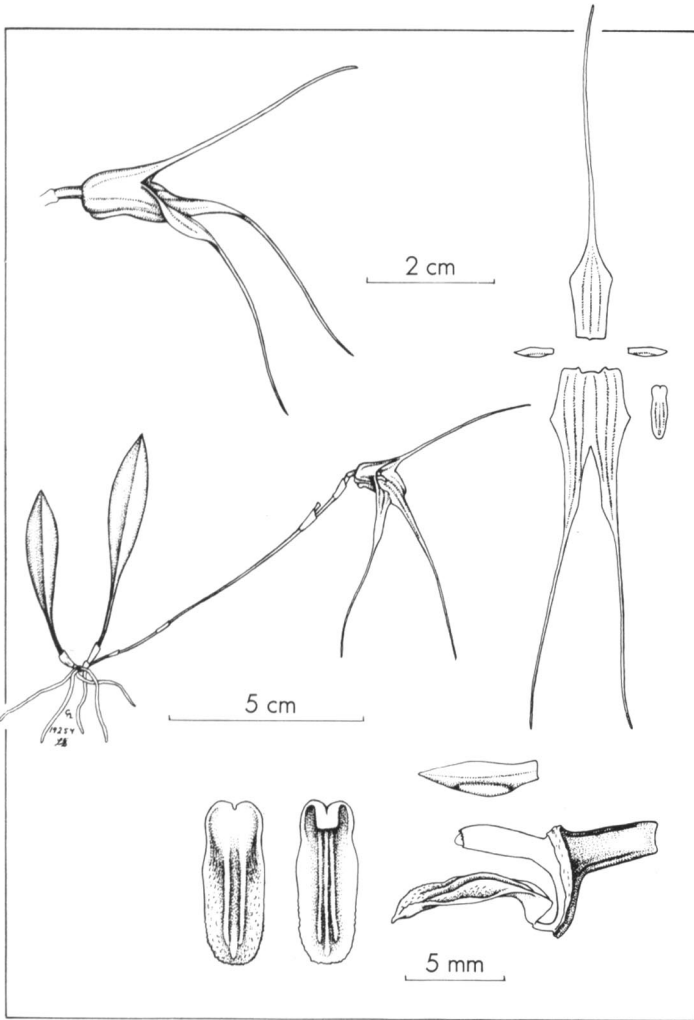


Fig. 7a. *Masdevallia merinoi*