

*Masdevallia nicaraguae* Luer, sp. nov.

Species haec *M. floribundae* Lindl. affinis sed flore albo caudis sepalorum crassis illis lateralium brevibus triangularibus differt, et a *M. tubuliflora* Ames flore majore laminis sepalorum lateralium expansis et apice columnae integro dignoscenda.

Plant small, epiphytic, caespitose; roots slender, flexuous. Secondary stems unifoliate, 1-1.5 cm long, enclosed by 1-2 thin, tubular sheaths. Leaf suberect, coriaceous, narrowly obovate, 6-11 cm long including a 2-4 cm petiole, 1.4-1.7 cm wide, the obtuse apex tridenticulate, gradually narrowed below into the channeled petiole. Inflorescence a solitary flower borne by an erect to suberect, slender peduncle 4-6.5 cm long, with a bract below the middle, from a node low on the secondary stem; floral bract tubular, 5-6 mm long; pedicel 10-14 mm long; ovary green, minutely pitted, 6-8 mm long; sepals glabrous, white, faintly suffused with rose within toward the bases, the dorsal sepal veined in rose, oblong, 25 mm long, 5 mm wide, connate to the lateral sepals for 11-12 mm to form a cylindrical tube, the triangular free portion contracted into an erect, greenish white, thick, semiterete tail, the lateral sepals 21-23 mm long, connate 14 mm into a bifid, more or less obovate synsepal 12-15 mm wide, broadly dilated above the union with the dorsal sepal, the free portions triangular, diverging, contracted into short, thick greenish white tails ca. 4 mm long; petals white, oblong, 5 mm long, 1.5 mm wide, the obtuse apex obscurely apiculate, with a low, longitudinal callus parallel to both margins, the lower callus ending in an obtuse angle below the middle; lip white with purple specks, oblong-ligulate, 5 mm long, 1.5 mm wide, the subacute apex yellow, with minutely erose margins, the disc with a pair of longitudinal calli above the middle, the truncate base hinged beneath; column white, semiterete, 4 mm long, the apex entire, the thick foot 2 mm long with an incurved extension.

ETYMOLOGY: Named for Nicaragua, the country of origin.

TYPE: NICARAGUA: GRANADA: epiphytic in cloud forest on Mombacho Volcano, J. T. Atwood s.n., cultivated by J & L Orchids, Easton, Ct., flowered in cult. 7 Nov. 1977, *C. Luer 2118* (HOLOTYPE: SEL).

DISTRIBUTION: Nicaragua.

This species, apparently endemic in Nicaragua, is allied to *M. floribunda* and *M. tubuliflora*. From the former, *M. nicaraguae* may be distinguished by the thick sepaline tails, especially those of the lateral sepals that are short and triangular. From the latter, *M. nicaraguae* may be separated by the larger flowers, the erect tail of the dorsal sepal, the broadly dilated lateral sepals above the sepaline tube, and the entire apex of the column.

*Masdevallia nicaraguae* appears to have been illustrated by A. Heller from the Department of Matagalpa.