

Masdevallia rafaiana Luer, sp. nov.

Planta mediocris caespitosa, caulibus secundariis abbreviatis unifoliatis, inflorescentia folio anguste oblongo longiore, racemo flexuoso paucifloro floribus speciosis coetaneis, ovario cristato, cupula sepalorum brevissima, sepalo dorsali roseo late ovato concavo brevicaudato, sepalis lateralibus oblongis truncatis apiculatis carinatis, labello purpureo erecto oblongo obtuso supra medium biplicato, pede columnae longo incurvato.

Plant medium in size, epiphytic, shortly repent to caespitose; roots coarse, flexuous. Secondary stems stout, unifoliolate, 2.5-4 cm long, enclosed by 2-3 loose, tubular sheaths. Leaf erect, fleshy, coriaceous, shiny, narrowly oblong, carinate dorsally, indistinctly petiolate, 11-18 cm long, 1.5-2.5 cm wide, the apex obtuse to subacute, tridenticulate, gradually narrowed below the middle to a sulcate base. Inflorescence racemose, 15-22 cm long including the more or less flexuous raceme 2.5-8 cm long of 3 to 8 simultaneous, showy flowers, the peduncle slender, erect to suberect, with 2-3 tubular bracts, from a node on the secondary stem; floral bracts inflated, acute, 5 mm long; pedicel 3 mm long; ovary 2.5-4 mm long, with 6 undulating crests; dorsal sepal light rose, broadly ovate, concave, 14.5 mm long, 10 mm wide spread out, the margins minutely erose above the middle and sparingly ciliate, the apex abruptly contracted into a 3.5 mm long tail, connate basally for 2 mm to the lateral sepals; lateral sepals white, dotted with purple, oblong, oblique, 13 mm long, 6 mm wide, spreading, minutely erose, the apices contracted into tails ca. 4 mm long, connate 2 mm at the base to form a rounded mentum below the column-foot; petals yellow, oblong,

slightly curved, 6 mm long, 2 mm wide, the truncate apex slightly dilated, apiculate, with a longitudinal carina along the lower margin forming an obtuse angle above the base and near the apex; lip purple, erect, oblong, 7 mm long, 3 mm wide, sulcate centrally, with irregular marginal folds above the middle, the anterior portion suborbicular, obtuse, the base truncate, hinged beneath; column yellow-white, 6 mm long, winged above the middle, the foot equally long with a 2 mm long incurved extension.

ETYMOLOGY: Named in honor of Dr. Rafael Lucas Rodriguez C. of the University of Costa Rica, renowned illustrator of the orchids of Central America.

TYPE: *COSTA RICA*: SAN JOSE: epiphytic in wet cloud forest, alt. 2850 m, above Division on the road to San Isidro, 21 July 1979, *K. S. Walter 79198* (HOLOTYPE: SEL; ISOTYPE: CR); same area, in fruit, 20 Sept. 1979, *C. Luer, J. Luer & K. S. Walter 4241* (SEL).

DISTRIBUTION: Costa Rica.

This colorful species has been known to exist in Costa Rica for at least ten years. It was beautifully illustrated by Dr. Rafael Lucas Rodriguez in 1978. *Masdevallia rafaelliana* is the only member of the multiflowered "polysticta-group" known at this time to occur in Central America.