

*Masdevallia welischii* Luer, sp. nov.

Planta mediocris lithophytica caespitosa, radicibus crassis, pedunculo unifloro foliis carnosius anguste obovatis longiore, flore specioso cinnabarino indumento sepalis dorsalibus iridocyaneis, sepalis in tubum connatis partibus libris ovatis caudatis, cauda sepalis dorsalibus gracili erecta, caudis sepalorum lateralium brevibus, petalis albis oblongis acutis carinatis, labello ligulato apice callo nigro.

Plant medium in size, lithophytic, caespitose; roots thick, coarse, flexuous. Secondary stems erect, semiterete, unifoliate, 2.5-4.5 cm long, enclosed by 2 loose, ribbed, tubular sheaths. Leaf erect, thickly coriaceous, glossy green, narrowly obovate, 7-11 cm long, 1.5-2.2 cm wide, the obtuse apex tridentate, narrowly cuneate below into an ill-defined, sulcate petiole. Inflorescence a solitary, very showy flower borne by an erect to suberect, terete peduncle 12-18 cm long, with a bract below the middle and another at the base, from a node low on the secondary stem; floral bract 1.5-2 cm long; pedicel 2-4 cm long; ovary 5-7 mm long; dorsal sepal brown-orange and glabrous externally, red-orange within and covered by short, slender, reddish hairs that appear bright blue in sunlight, connate to the lateral sepals for 14 mm into a cylindrical tube, the free portion ovate with the subacute, acuminate apex contracted into a slender, erect, dark red-brown tail ca. 15 mm long, the entire length of the dorsal sepal 40 mm, the width 13 mm; lateral sepals bright vermilion, red within the tube above the white base, glabrous except for a few hairs along the margins near the dorsal sepal, ovate, oblique, abruptly dilated above the sepaline tube, connate 29 mm into a bifid lamina 26 mm wide, the ovate, subacute apices produced into slender, red-brown tails 6 mm long, the total length of each lateral sepal 36 mm; petals white, oblong, 10 mm long, 2.5 mm wide, the acute apex minutely notched, with a carina along the lower margin terminating in a short, acute, retrorse tooth; lip white, marked with purple, oblong-ligulate, 7 mm long, 2.75 mm wide, the obtuse apex with a central, thick, black callus, the disc with a pair of low, parallel calli, the base cordate, hinged beneath; column white, marked with purple along the dorsum and margins, semiterete, 7 mm long, the foot 3 mm long with a short, curved extension.

ETYMOLOGY. Named in honor of David Alan Welisch of San Francisco, California, who discovered this species.

TYPE. PERU: Dept. of Cuzco: Prov. of La Convencion, Vilcabamba mountains near Yanama, on exposed rocks, alt. 3000 m, Oct. 1978, D.

Welisch s.n., cultivated in San Francisco, flowered in cult. 15 Aug. 1979, C. Luer 4085 (HOLOTYPE: SEL).

DISTRIBUTION: Peru.

This species was discovered by David Welisch in a high, remote, mountainous area of Peru in October 1978 while he was searching for the long-lost *Masdevallia davisii* Rchb. f. The plants were past flowering, and although the orangish, withered sepals did not look like what he expected for *M. davisii*, he was thrilled because he suspected that he had something never seen before. His plants grew well in the San Francisco climate and flowered the following August, not only proving to be new, but also one of the showiest of all the so-called "coccinea" group.

Most spectacular in this noteworthy species is the pubescence of the dorsal sepal that glows with a blue iridescence in the sunlight. The hairs are short and pointed, not capitate as they are in *Masdevallia veitchiana* Rchb. f. or its putative hybrids. The vermilion, dilated lateral sepals are glabrous except for a few hairs along the margins nearest the dorsal sepal.