

Masdevallia wuerstlei Luer, sp. nov.

Ety.: Named for Berthold Würstle of Spielberg, Germany, who cultivated this species for many years.

Species haec *M. medusae* Luer & Escobar persimilis, sed pedunculo tereti, racemo laxo et pedicellis longissimis tortuosis differt.

Plant large, presumably epiphytic, caespitose; roots coarse. Ramicauls stout, erect, 3-5 cm long, enclosed by 2-3 close, thin, tubular sheaths. Leaf erect, thickly coriaceous, 9-17 cm long including the petiole 1.5-3 cm long, the blade narrowly elliptical, obtuse, 1.8-2.2 cm wide, gradually narrowed below into the petiole. Inflorescence a loose, simultaneously several-flowered raceme up to 8 cm long, of long-pedicellate flowers, borne by a stout, terete peduncle 27 cm long, with a thin bract near the middle and at the base of the ramical; floral bracts thin, not imbricating, tubular, 15 mm long; pedicels 3-5 cm long, tortuous; ovary green, 3 mm long; sepals green, spotted with purple-brown, minutely verrucose within, the dorsal sepal obovate, 12 mm long, 7.5 mm wide, connate to the lateral sepals for 3.5-5 mm to form a short, gaping, sepaline cup, the apex obtuse, acuminate into a slender tail green tail 2.5 cm long, the lateral sepals ovate, oblique with recurved margins, 12-15 mm long, 9 mm wide, connate basally for 2 mm, the apices subacute, contracted into green tails 1-2.2 cm long; petals white, oblong, 6 mm long, 1.5 mm wide, the apex oblique, minutely bi-apiculate, the labellar margin with a low, longitudinal callus, more or less thicker below the middle; lip white, diffusely dotted or speckled with red-purple, oblong-subpandurate, 6 mm long, 2.25 mm wide, with obtuse, marginal folds above near the middle, the epichile ovate, obtuse, minutely apiculate with a keel beneath, minutely verrucose, the hypochile oblong, subtruncate at the base, hinged beneath; column white, with purple along the margin, semiterete, 6.5 mm long, the foot 4 mm long with an incurved extension.

COLOMBIA: Without collection data, obtained from Hubein, cultivated by B. Würstle at Spielberg, Germany, 29 August 1982, *C. Luer 8129* (Holotype: SEL).

This species, obtained from a collector without data except for Colombia, has been in cultivation by Berthold Würstle in Spielberg, Germany, for an unknown number of years. It has always produced loosely flowered racemes with long, tortuous pedicels. Except for being smaller with shorter tails, the flowers are similar to those of *M. medusa* from the Eastern Cordillera of Colombia.

Masdevallia medusa is characterized by a triquetrous peduncle and a congested raceme with imbricating floral bracts. The peduncle of *M. wuerstlei* is terete with a tubular bract near the middle, and with a loosely flowered raceme with rachis visible between floral bracts. The pedicels of both concepts are elongated, but those of *M. wuerstlei* are conspicuously twisted.

Whether or not this plant is an aberration of *M. medusa* is impossible to state for certain, but the terete peduncle with a bract is significant. The problem is similar to that of *M. schlimii* Lindl. with terete peduncles and *M. sceptrum* Rchb.f. with triquetrous peduncles. *Masdevallia infracta*, characterized by a triquetrous peduncle, produces on rare occasions a terete peduncle. However, a terete peduncle, together with a lax raceme and tortuous pedicels, suggest a specific difference. If *M. wuerstlei* were considered a form of *M. medusa*, for the same reasons *M. sceptrum* would be considered a form of *M. schlimii*.

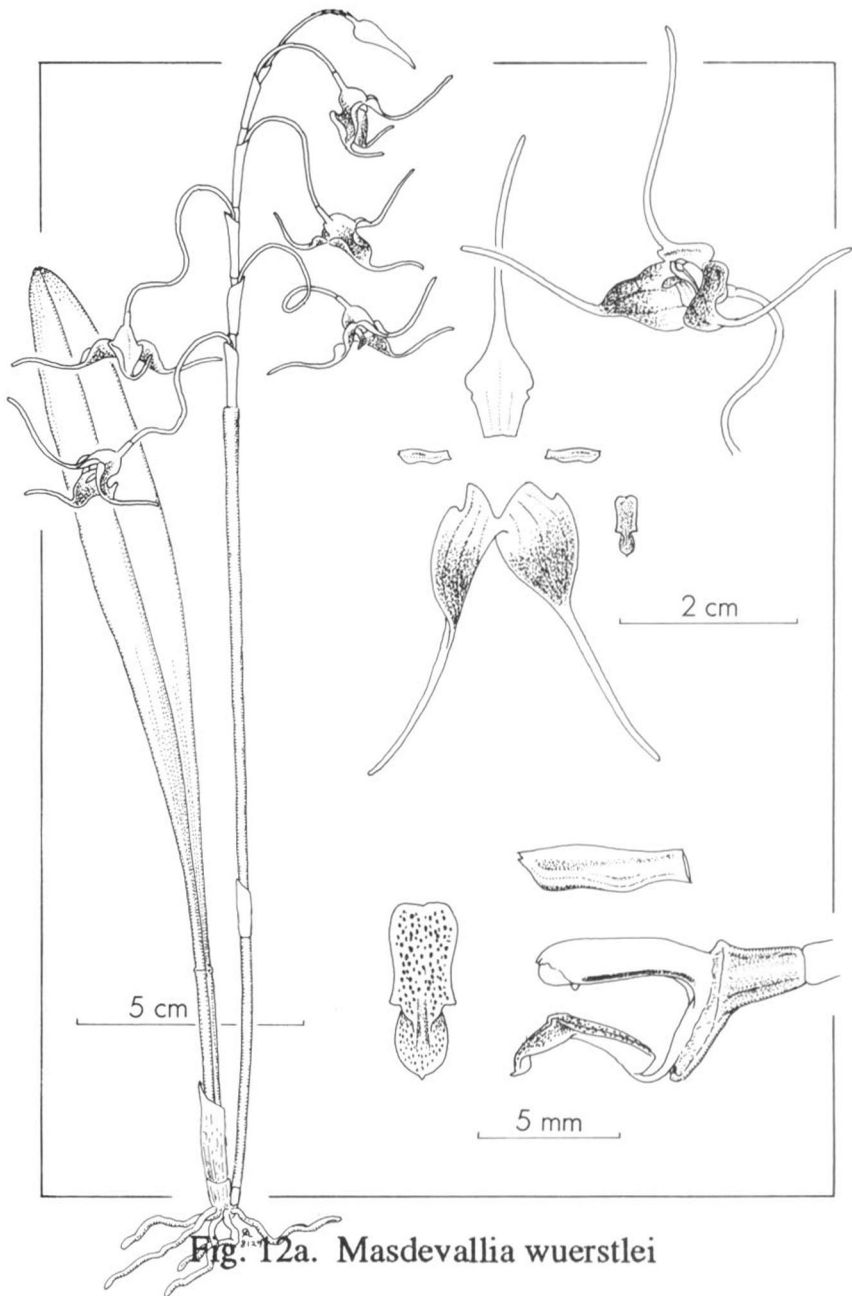


Fig. 12a. *Masdevallia wuerstlei*