

Lepanthes ariasiana Luer & Jost, sp. nov.

Ety.: Named in memory of the late Diego Arias, local collector and founder of the Llanganetes Foundation.

Inter species subgeneris *Brachycladii* habitu perparvo, pedunculo brevissimo, sepalo dorsali convexo, sepalis lateralibus triangularibus late divergentibus, petalis transverse oblongis et labello oblongo ad basim lobato distinguitur.

Plant very small, epiphytic, long-repent, scandent, with branches up to 8 cm long or longer, the rhizomes slender, 4-5 mm long between ramicauls, enclosed by 2 long-ciliate, imbricating, lepanthiform sheaths; roots slender. Ramicauls 0.5 mm long, concealed by 1 long-ciliate, lepanthiform sheath. **Leaf** coriaceous, elliptical, obtuse to rounded at the apex, glabrous, 4-5 mm long, 3-4 mm wide, 3-veined, the base contracted into a petiole 0.25 mm long. **Inflorescence** a single flower followed by a second, borne by an ascending peduncle 0.5 mm long from near the apex of a ramicaul; floral bract infundibular, long-ciliate, 1 mm long; pedicel 1.5-2 mm long; ovary smooth, 1 mm long; all floral parts reddish tan, **sepals** membranous, glabrous externally, cellular within, the dorsal sepal obovate, acute, convex, 2 mm long, 1.4 mm wide, 3-veined, connate to the lateral sepals for 0.5 mm, the lateral sepals ovate, oblique, subacute, 2 mm long, 1.5 mm wide, connate 0.25 mm, 3-veined, widely diverging; **petals** densely cellular-pubescent, sparsely long-ciliate, transversely bilobed, oblong, 0.5 mm long, 1.6 mm wide, the lobes oblong with rounded apices, the upper lobe twice longer; **lip** protuberant, sparsely long-ciliate, 3-lobed, 1.6 mm long, 0.75 mm wide, 2.25 mm wide expanded, with the apical lobe oblong, broadly rounded at the apex, the basal lobes rounded, encircling the column, the base connate by a short, narrow claw to the base of the column; column 0.5 mm long, the anther and the stigma apical.

ECUADOR: **Tungurahua**: Cerro Abitagua, alt. ca. 1860 m, 17 June 1998, *L. Jost 1063* (Holotype: MO), C. Luer illustr. 18930.

Among the species of subgenus *Brachycladium*, this species is one of the smallest. It is without close allies. It is distinguished by the very small habit with elliptical, glabrous leaves; an extremely short peduncle bearing the tiny, reddish flower from a short pedicel below the tip of the leaf; triangular lateral sepals diverging 180°; transversely oblong, long-ciliate petals; and a protuberant, oblong, long-ciliate lip with basal lobes surrounding the column.