

Lepanthes exigua Luer & Jost, sp. nov.

Ety.: From the Latin *exiguus*, "very small," in referring to the habit.

Inter species subgen. *Brachycladii* habitu exigua, foliis minute ciliatis, sepalis microscopice ciliatis pubescentibusque lateralibus apiculatis, petalis nanis obliquis uninervis, labello cordato acuto differt.

Plant very small, epiphytic, pendent-repent, the rhizomes slender, 1.5-2 mm long between ramicauls, enclosed by 2 long-ciliate, imbricating, lepanthiform sheaths; roots slender, from nodes near the base of the branches. Ramicauls 0.5 mm long, concealed by 1 long-ciliate, lepanthiform sheath. **Leaf** pendent in the natural position, coriaceous, lentiform, minutely short-ciliate, broadly elliptical, obtuse, 3-4 mm long, 2.75-3 mm wide, 3-veined, the base contracted into a petiole less than 0.5 mm long. **Inflor-escence** a single flower, borne by an ascending peduncle 1 mm long from near the apex of a ramicaul; floral bract long-ciliate, 1 mm long; pedicel 1.2 mm long; ovary costate-dentate, 1 mm long; **sepals** yellow with the veins purple, membranous, microscopically ciliate-pubescent, the dorsal sepal broadly obovate, erect, obtuse, 3 mm long, 2 mm wide, 3-veined, connate 0.5 mm to the lateral sepals, the lateral sepals oblong, connate 1.5 mm into a bifid lamina, 3 mm long, 3 mm wide, 4-veined, the apices oblique, obtuse, apiculate; **petals** yellow, suffused with purple, pubescent, obliquely bilobed, 0.8 mm long, 1.3 mm wide, the lobes opposite, obtuse, the upper lobe 1-veined; **lip** purple, minutely pubescent, cordate-trilobed, 2 mm long, 2.6 mm wide expanded, with the apical lobe triangular, acute, with the lateral or basal lobes erect, obliquely triangular, rounded, embracing the column, the base connate to the base of the column; column 1.5 mm long, the anther and the stigma apical.

ECUADOR: **Morona-Santiago**: cloud forest epiphyte, road between Mendez and Paute, alt. 1890, 14 May 2000, *L. Jost 2042* (Holotype: MO), C. Luer illustr. 19424.

This tiny species occurs in southeastern Ecuador at a medium altitude near 1900 meters above sea level. The minutely ciliate leaves are three millimeters or less long, and the single-flowered peduncle is barely one millimeter long, both the rhizome and peduncle with long-ciliate sheaths. The sepals are obtuse, the laterals apiculate; the petals are oblique and single-veined; and the lobes of the cordate lip enclose the lip.