

Lepanthes persimilis Luer & Sijm, sp. nov.

Ety.: From the Latin *persimilis*, "very similar," referring to its similarity to *L. pilosella*.

Species haec *L. pilosellae* Rchb.f. similis, sed sepalo dorsali quinquinervoso, petalis magnitudine dimidiis et labello cordato duplo majore differt.

Plant average in size for the subgenus, epiphytic, pendent-repent, with branches up to 10 cm long or longer, the rhizomes stout, subflexuous, 5-7 mm long between ramicauls, enclosed by 2 long-spiculate, imbricating, lepanthiform sheaths; roots slender, from nodes along the rhizome. Ramicauls 1 mm long, concealed by 1 long-ciliate, lepanthiform sheath. **Leaf** pendent or prostrate, coriaceous, densely ciliate-pubescent, elliptical-ovate, subacute to obtuse, 11-14 mm long, 8-9 mm wide, 5-veined, the base contracted into a petiole less than 1 mm long. **Inflorescence** a successive, single flower, borne by an ascending peduncle 1.5-2.5 mm long, borne laterally from a ramicaul; floral bract ciliate, 1.5-2 mm long; pedicel 3 mm long; ovary smooth, 1 mm long; **sepals** glabrous, the dorsal sepal translucent, prominently striped in purple along the veins, orbicular, concave, 5 mm long, 5 mm wide, 5-veined, free from the lateral sepals, the lateral sepals connate 2 mm into an ovate, bifid lamina, 5 mm long, 3.75 mm wide, 4-veined, with the apices acute; **petals** glabrous, oblong-triangular, subacute, 0.8 mm long, 0.4 mm wide; **lip** glabrous, ovate-cordate, 2.3 mm long, 2 mm wide expanded, with the apex broadly rounded, with the basal angles obtuse, with the sides encircling and protruding beyond the column, the base connate to the base of the column; column 2 mm long, the anther and the stigma apical.

ECUADOR: without collection data, obtained from Johannes Pap, flowered in cultivation, 11 Aug. 2000, by A.P. Sijm 991112 (Holotype: MO), C. Luer illustr. 19384.

Superficially, this species is similar to *L. pilosella* and its relatives with ciliate-pubescent, elliptical-ovate leaves. The sheaths are long-spiculate. The flower is similar with a large, rounded, concave, purple-striped, dorsal sepal, and a bifid synsepal. The petals are minute, half the size of those of *L. pilosella*. The lip is considerably larger and ovate with the sides incurved, surrounding the column, and with the broadly rounded apex protruding beyond the column. The lip is longer than broad.