

*Platystele alucitae* Luer, sp. nov.

Planta perparva caespitosa, caulibus secundariis abbreviatis, racemo disticho plurifloro foliis anguste obovatis multilongiore, floribus successivis minutis flavo-virescentibus plus minusve purpureo suffusis, sepalo dorsali ovato concavo longicaudato, sepalis lateralibus anguste ovatis acuminatis, petalis filiformibus, labello atrobrunneo vel atropurpureo glanduloso ovato acuto basi excavato.

Plant very small, epiphytic, densely caespitose; roots comparatively thick, flexuous. Secondary stems abbreviated, unifoliate, 2-4 mm long, concealed by 2 loose, tubular sheaths. Leaf erect, coriaceous, narrowly obovate, petiolate, 8-18 mm long, 3-5 mm wide, the apex subacute, tridenticulate, gradually narrowed below into a slender petiole 3-7 mm long. Inflorescence an erect, distichous, several-flowered raceme up to 6.5 cm long bearing up to 15 minute flowers, 2-4 open simultaneously, the peduncle filiform, from a node on the secondary stem; floral bract oblique, acuminate, 1 mm long; pedicel 3-4 mm long; ovary 0.5 mm long; sepals and petals glabrous, translucent green or yellow, with or without purple suffusion; dorsal sepal ovate and concave in the lower third, 3-3.5 mm long, 0.5-1 mm wide, the apex acute, acuminate into a filiform tail; lateral sepals narrowly ovate, oblique, 3-4 mm long, 0.5-0.9 mm wide, connate at the bases, the apices narrowed into filiform tails; petals linear-capillary, 2.5-3 mm long, 0.1-0.3 mm wide; lip dark brown to dark purple, glandular-cellular, ovate, 0.75-1.5 mm long, 0.4-0.8 mm wide, the apex acute, the base truncate with a broad, depressed, semicircular area, shortly deflexed below; column hooded, 0.75 mm long and broad.

ETYMOLOGY: From the Latin plural of *alucita*, "a gnat," in allusion to the appearance of a flowering raceme.

TYPE: ECUADOR: IMBABURA: epiphytic in cloud forest above Apuela, alt. ca. 2500 m, 8 Feb. 1979, C. Luer, J. Luer, R. Escobar & A. Hirtz 3943 (HOLOTYPE: SEL).

DISTRIBUTION: Ecuador.

Numerous hair-like racemes, each bearing a succession of gnat-like flowers, tower above large tufts of leaves of this tiny species. The sepals are

long-caudate, the petals are capillary, and the little ovate lip is sharply acute with a curved excavation at the base.