

**Platystele argentosa Luer & Escobar, sp. nov.**

Ety.: From the Latin *argentosus*, "full of silver," referring to the unusually large numbers of crystalline deposits in the leaves and flower parts.

Planta parva caespitosa, foliis ellipticis obtusis petioliis conduplicatis, inflorescentia racemosa folio breviora, sepalis ovatis obtusis, petalis subfalcatis acutis ciliatis, labello crasso carnosissimo obovato ciliato apice acuto incurvo.

Plant small, epiphytic, densely caespitose; roots slender. Ramicauls erect, slender, 5-10 mm long, enclosed by 2-3 loose, imbricating sheaths. Leaf erect, coriaceous, gray-green, with numerous, minute, crystalline deposits, obovate, obtuse, 15-25 mm long including a broad, conduplicate petiole 3-5 mm long, 8-12 mm wide, the base narrowed into the petiole. Inflorescence a very congested, successively many-flowered raceme up to 5 mm long, borne by a slender peduncle 7-10 mm long within the sulcus of the petiole; floral bracts thin, 0.75 mm long; pedicels 1.5-2 mm long; ovary 0.5 mm long; sepals translucent green, ovate, obtuse, with minute, crystalline deposits, the dorsal sepal 1.8 mm long, 1.2 mm wide, 1-veined, the lateral sepals oblique, 1.5 mm long, 1.2 mm wide, connate basally; petals translucent green, with similar, crystalline deposits, linear-oblong, arcuate, acute, ciliate, 1.5 mm long, 0.4 mm wide; lip dark purple, ciliate and cellular pubescent, thick, ovoid, 1.2 mm long, 1.2 mm wide, the apex acute, incurved, the base cordate with lobes flanking the column; column cucullate at the apex, 0.6 mm long, the stigma bilobed, the foot obsolete.

COLOMBIA: Dept. of Antioquia: Parque Nacional Natural "Las Orquideas," Río Calles, alt. 1250-1375 m, 31 May 1988, A. Cogollo & J. Ramírez 3137 (Holotype: JAUM; Isotype: MO); same area, Quebrada El Guaguao, alt. 1390-1420 m, 12 Feb. 1989, A. Cogollo, D. Cárdenas & O. Alvarez 3911 (JAUM, MO). Dept. of Chocó: without known collector, flowered in cultivation by M. & O. Robledo at La Ceja, 22 Nov. 1981, C. Luer 6750 (SEL).

Vegetatively this species is distinctive with gray-green, spatulate leaves broadly conduplicate at the base. In the dried state, numerous, minute, crystalline deposits are visible within the substance of the leaves. The peduncle of the inflorescence lies in the sulcus of the petiole to bear the flowers in a congested raceme near the middle of the dorsum of the leaf. The sepals and petals are green and bear crystalline deposits similar to those seen in the leaves. The lip is deep purple, thick, ovoid, and ciliate with a cordate base and an incurved apex.

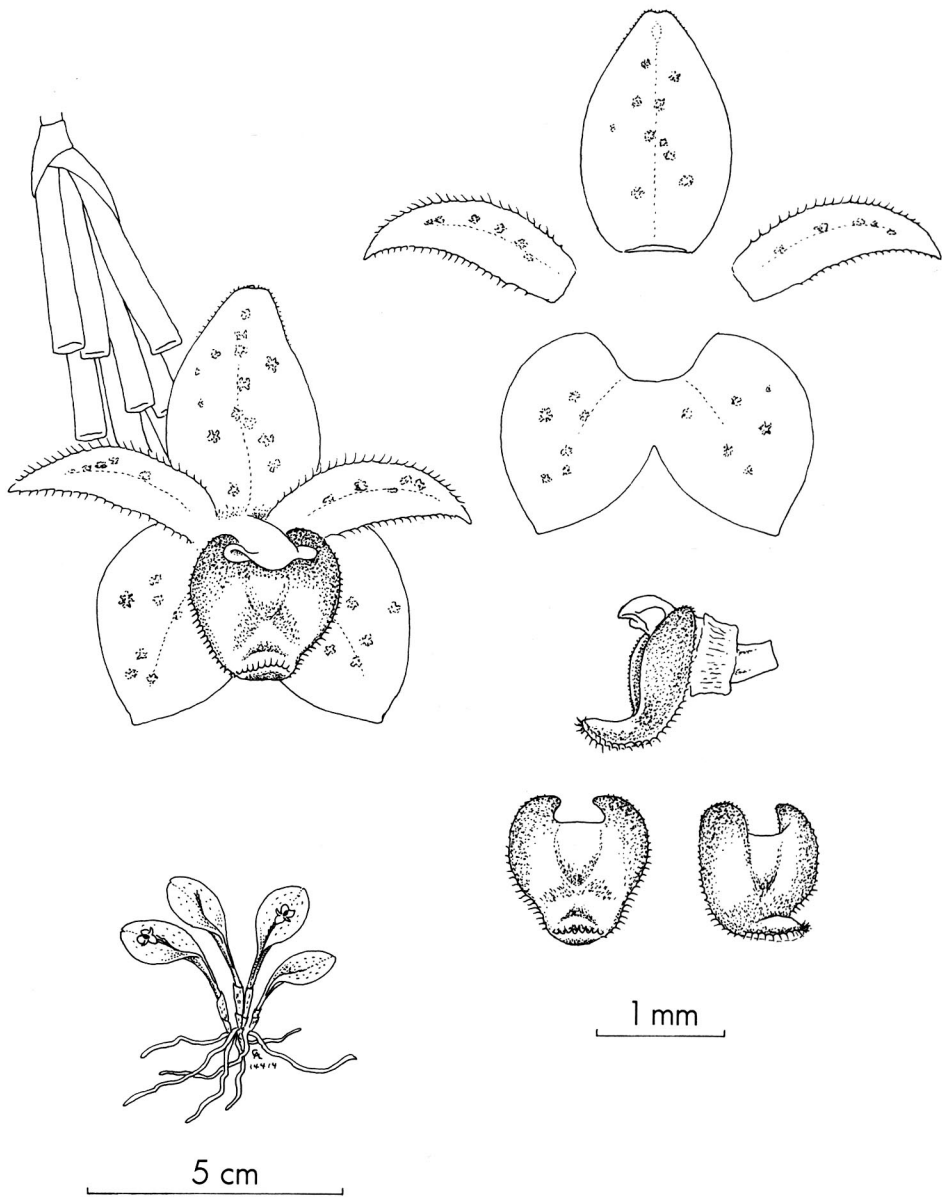


Plate 6. *Platystele argentosa* Luer & Escobar