

STELIS COMPACTA

Stelis compacta *sp. nov.* *Planta* pusilla, cæspitosa, ± 2 cm. alta. *Caules secundarii* graciles, ± 5 mm. longi, 1-foliati. *Folium* oblanceolatum, apiculatum, coriaceum, 1–2.7 cm. longum, ± 2 mm. latum, carina prominenti dorsali media. *Pedunculus* gracilis, filiformis, 3 cm. longus, foliis longior. *Bracteæ* tubulares, ad apicem dilatatæ, oblique truncatæ. *Bracteæ inflorescentiæ* squamiformes, pedicellis breviores, apiculatæ. *Sepala lateralibus* late ovata, 1 mm. longa, circa 1 mm. lata. *Sepalum dorsale* lateralibus simile sed angustius. *Petala* oblanceolata vel spathulata, obtusa, uninervia, circa 1 mm. longa. *Labellum* crassum, ovato-lanceolatum, acuminatum, obtusum vel subacutum, in alabastro acutum, 1 mm. longum. *Columna* erecta, crassiuscula, apoda, utroque ad apicem ala rotundata. *Pollinia* 2, subglobosa vel pyriformia, minutissima.

GUATEMALA: Cubilquitz, Depart. Alta Verapaz, at 350 m. alt., May, 1901, H. von Tuerckheim (no. 7991).

This compact little plant which, with some hesitation, is here referred to the genus *Stelis* Swartz, is most nearly allied with *Stelis lancilabris* Reichb. f. (*Beiträge zu einer Orchideenkunde Central-Amerika's*, 94, tab. 8, II. 3–5, 1866), which it closely resembles in habit and with which it agrees in having membranaceous petals devoid of thickening at the apical margin. According to Lindley's tentative classification of the genus in *Folia Orchidacea*, *Stelis compacta* belongs in the section *Mono-stachyæ brachypodæ*, although in its floral parts it resembles none of the well-known species of that extremely artificial group. The petals in outline bear no resemblance to the labellum, and in this respect are unusual for the genus. The floral bracts are obliquely truncate and clasp the slender rhachis. The apicules

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which terminate the narrow leathery leaves are bristle-like and about 0.5 mm. in length. The type specimen is made up of four well-developed plants and several fragments.

While the generic characters of this plant may have been incorrectly diagnosed on account of its unusual floral conformation, its affinities with the species of *Brachionidium* Lindl. (a nearly allied genus) are not clear, and its agreement with the generic characters of *Pleurothallis* R. Brown—a somewhat heterogeneous group—is equivocal. Except for the structure of the column, one might readily place the plant in *Brachionidium* on the strength of the brief characterization published by Lindley in *Folia Orchidaceæ*. For the present, at least, I prefer to place it in the genus *Stelis* because of its agreement with Reichenbach's *Stelis lancilabris* and its lack of agreement with any of the species known to me in the other genera mentioned. As R. A. Rolfe has stated (*Memoirs of the Torrey Botanical Club*, 4: 261), the groups designated by Lindley as the Monostachyæ and Polystachyæ cannot be retained, as the traits which distinguish them are not constant even for the same species.

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PLATE 53: *Stelis compacta*

Plant, natural size, reconstructed from the type in herb. Ames. The single flower was drawn, enlarged, with the aid of the camera lucida.

STELIS *compacta* Ames



Pl. 53