

Pleurothallis chama Luer, sp. nov.

Planta magna terrestris (epiphytica ?) caespitosa, caulibus secundariis teretibus gracilibus unifoliatis, folio erecto coriaceo ovato acuminato acuto tridenticulato base profunde cordato auriculis erectis, floribus singularibus fasciculatis carnosus bilabiatis, sepalis ochraceis rubro punctatis, sepalo dorsali late elliptico obtuso plurivenoso, synsepalo transverse ovato, petalis maroninis oblongis incurvatis acutis denticulatis, labello crasso oblongo-obovato plano obtuso denticulato, disco supra medium verruculoso infra medium bixcavato.

Plant large, terrestrial, presumably epiphytic, caespitose; roots slender, flexuous. Secondary stems slender, terete, 20-35 cm long, with a tubular sheath low on the stem and another at the base, unifoliate. Leaf erect, coriaceous, ovate, acuminate, acute, tridenticulate, the base deeply cordate, the auricles folded upward, sessile, 8-12 cm long, 5-7 cm wide, the auricles 2-2.5 cm deep. Inflorescence fasciculate, the bilabiate, fleshy flowers produced singly and successively from a spathe 11-13 mm long at the base of the leaf; floral bract 5-6 mm long; pedicel 7-8 mm long; ovary 6-7 mm long; sepals pale yellow-brown, speckled with red, glabrous, but microscopically ciliate, the dorsal sepal broadly elliptical, obtuse, 12 mm long, 8 mm wide, 7-veined, the lateral sepals connate into a transversely ovate lamina, acuminate, obtuse, bidentate, 10 mm long, 11 mm wide; petals maroon, oblong, acute, denticulate, incurved, 8 mm long, 3 mm wide; lip thick, oblong-obovate, obtuse, flat, the margins minutely denticulate, the base shallowly concave or truncate, the disc red-brown and finely verrucose above the middle, with a yellow, elliptical depression to either side of the glenion, 4.5 mm long, 2.5 mm wide; column small, 1 mm long, 2 mm wide.

ETYMOLOGY: From the Latin *chama*, "a gaping mollusk, a cockle," in allusion to the bivalved appearance of the flower.

TYPE: *ECUADOR*: ZAMORA-CHINCHIPE: terrestrial on the road embankment near km 25 between Loja and Zamora, through cloud forest, alt. ca. 2000 m, 6 March 1977, C. Luer, J. Luer & K. Cordoba 1554 (HOLOTYPE: SEL).

DISTRIBUTION: Eastern Ecuador.

A single large plant of this species was found growing on a steep road cut through cloud forest of the Oriente. Undoubtedly, it grows epiphytically nearby. The long stems produce more or less erect, deeply cordate leaves with acuminate apices. The broadly rounded auricles of the base are pinched upright, thereby placing the spathe at the bottom of a fold. The gaping, bivalved flowers resemble those of *Pleurothallis cordata* (Ruiz & Pav.) Lindl., but they are larger and the dorsal sepal is multi-veined. The sepals do not spread widely to expose the broad, dark red petals that curve inward around the flat, oblong lip with finely denticulate margins.

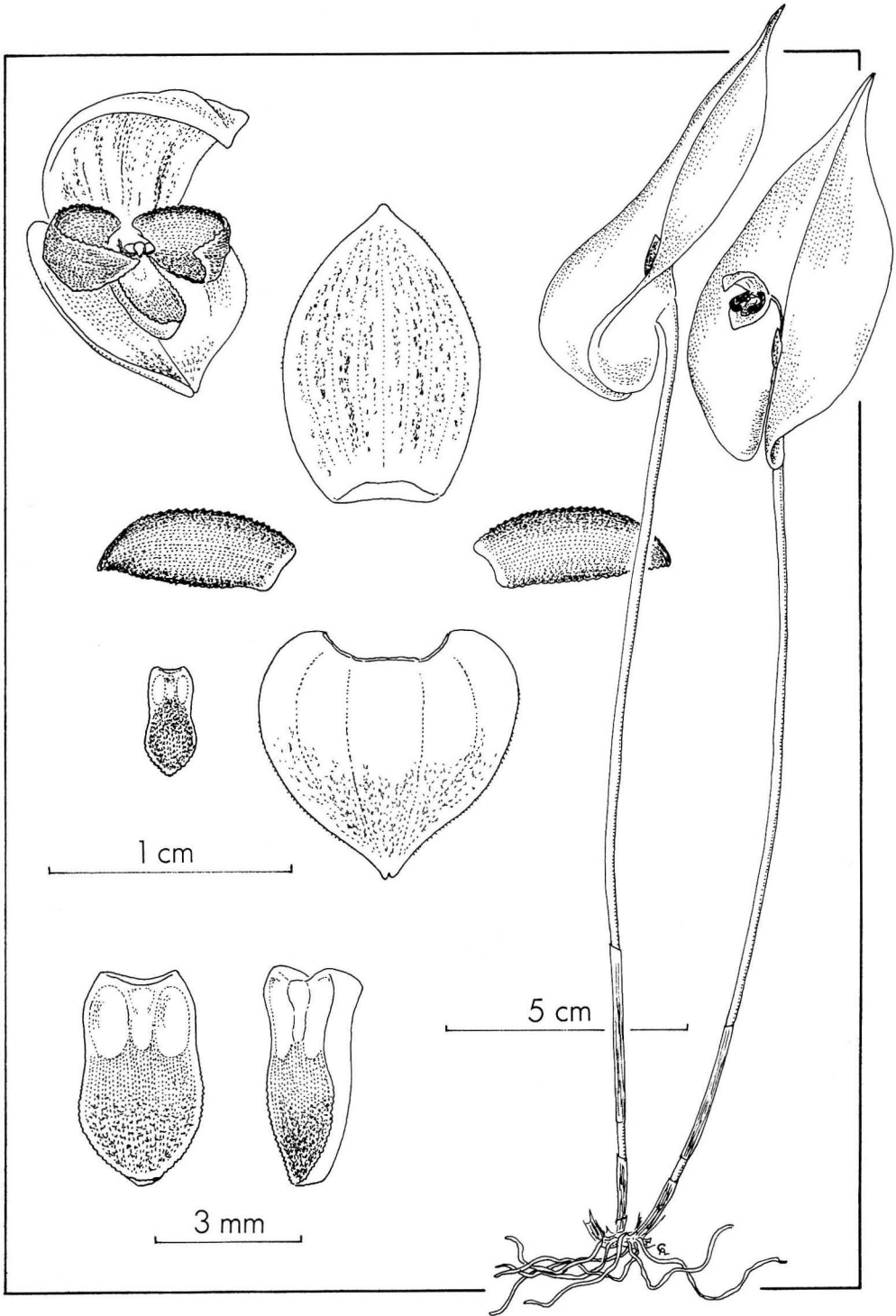


Figure 233. *PLEUROTHALLIS CHAMA* Luer