

**PLEUROTHALLIS HELLERI** A.D. Hawkes, sp. nov.

Planta pro genere multo procera, erecta. Foliis subcoriaceis, nervosis, ellipticis, ad basin apicemque contractis, magnis. Inflorescentiis pluribus, flexuosis, gracilibus, multifloris. Floris patentibus. Labellum carnosum, verrucosum, infra medio 3-lobatum, lobum medium oblongo-ovatum, obtusum, ad basin callis duobus elevatis mammillatis ornatum.

Plant large for the genus, to 50 cm tall, the rhizome abbreviated, stout, woody, set with scarious fibers and flexuose white roots 1 mm in diameter. Secondary stems erect, borne at intervals about 1 cm apart, terete, glabrous, to 35 cm long, 2 - 3 mm in diameter, with a striated sheath 1.5 cm long at base and another one 4 cm long near middle. Leaves obliquely spreading, subcoriaceous, nervose, elliptic, abruptly contracted to a subacuminate tridentate apex, contracted at base to a conduplicate petiole 1.5 cm long, up to 20 cm long and to 6 cm broad at middle. Inflorescences 2 to 6 straggly, flexuose racemes to 10 cm long, arising from a 4 mm keeled spathe, arching to sub-pendent, the peduncle slender, 1 - 2 cm long, the rachis bearing 10 to 20 flowers about 1 cm apart. Floral bracts triangular-ovate, inflated, 1.5 mm long. Flowers spreading, about 2 cm long when expanded, greenish-yellow with red dots on the lateral lobes of the lip and its callus. Pedicel persistent, filiform, 3.5 mm long, the ovary 2.5 mm long. Sepals lanceolate, long-acuminate, setaceous, dorsally carinate, 1 cm long, the dorsal 2.6 mm broad near ovate base, 3-nerved, the laterals connate to the narrowly truncate apex, 4-nerved. Petals narrowly linear, attenuate, setaceous, 1-nerved, 9 mm long and 0.6 mm broad at base, spreading. Lip fleshy, 2 mm long and 0.7 mm broad, slightly arcuate in natural position, verrucose, with a short membranaceous cucullate claw, 3-lobed below middle with thin, erect, rounded lateral lobes which are difficult to spread out, the midlobe oblong-ovate, obtuse; disc with an elevated mammillate callus along the base of each lateral lobe. Column short, 1.5 mm long, stout, clavate, finely papillose especially on the prominent rounded column-foot; anther subquadrate, with 2 verruculose pollinia.

NICARAGUA: Dept. Chontales: Cordillera Amerrisque, epiphyte, alt. 2700 feet, December 1962, A. H. Heller 3784 (Type in Field Museum of Natural History; isotype in Oakes Ames Orchid Herbarium of Harvard University). Río Mico, alt. 1150 feet, January 1963, A. H. Heller 7870.

As yet, this singularly attractive *Pleurothallis* is known only from two localities in Nicaragua's Departamento de Chontales. It may, however, be more widespread here, since its habit is superficially much like that of the common and widespread *P. gelida* Ldl., and its distinctiveness would not have been noticed unless specimens were encountered in bloom. *Pleurothallis Helleri* is distantly allied to *P. ruscifolia* R. Br., distributed from Cuba and Guatemala to northern South America. The inflorescences of the latter, however, are glomerate or fasciculate, with obsolete peduncles, while in the present novelty up to twenty flowers appear on each of the multiple rather elongate racemes. Floral structure, too, of *P. Helleri*, particularly details of the lip, differs from all other members of the genus with which we are familiar.

The new species is named to honor the senior author of this serial, A. H. Heller, who has immeasurably increased our knowledge of the orchids of his adopted land, Nicaragua.

Plate 8. Pleurothallis Helleri A. D. Hawkes, sp. nov.

