

Pleurothallis imperialis Luer, sp. nov.

Planta et flos grandes pro sectione *Macrophyllis-Fasciculatis* Lindl., folio late cordato, flore hianti specioso, sepalo dorsali et synsepalo late ovatis usque 2.5 cm longis flavovirentibus ad basim purpurascens, petalis late oblongis, labello atropurpureo transverse elliptico profunde convexo obtuso subconicoideo circa 5 mm longo et 8 mm lato.

Plant and flower large for the section *Macrophyllae-Fasciculatae*, terrestrial, presumably also epiphytic, caespitose; roots slender, flexuous. Secondary stem erect, slender, terete, to 35 cm tall, with a long tubular sheath below the middle and another basally, unifoliate. Leaf ovate, apex acuminate, tridenticulate, base deeply cordate, sessile, 13-21 × 4-9 cm. Inflorescence fasciculate, single-flowered, from a spathe up to 2 cm long from the base of the leaf; flower showy, yellow-green and purple; floral bract tubular 3.5 mm long; pedicel 25 mm long; ovary sigmoid, 11-12 mm long; dorsal sepal broadly ovate, acute, concave, 26 × 20 mm spread out, 15-veined, yellow-green and rose-purple basally; lateral sepals united into an ovate synsepal, acute, 21 × 16 mm, 12-veined, similar to the dorsal sepal in color; petals oblong, subfalcate, obtuse, 13 × 5 mm, margins microscopically papular, 3-veined, purple-brown; lip dark purple, transversely elliptical, deeply convex, broadly and bluntly conical, 5 mm long and 8 mm across, slightly concave basally with a circular rose-colored patch, broadly hinged to the column-foot; column thick and broad, 2 mm long and 3 mm broad, with a thick column-foot also 2 × 3 mm.

ETYMOLOGY: From the Latin *imperialis*, "pertaining to an emperor," in allusion to the size, beauty, and regal colors of the flower.

TYPE: *ECUADOR*: PICHINCHA: Terrestrial along the roadside near km 85 between Quito and Santo Domingo, alt. 1500 m, 2 March 1975. *C. Luer & R. Kent 300*, HOLOTYPE in SEL; *CARCHI*: Along crest of mountain behind Rio Blanco on railroad from Ibarra to San Lorenzo, km 78, alt. 1400 m, 14 Dec. 1961. *Dodson & Thien 1601* SEL.

DISTRIBUTION: Ecuador.

One plant of this species was found growing terrestrially on a road embankment with several other species of the section *Macrophyllae-Fasciculatae*. The large leaves were not particularly distinctive, but the immense bud suggested that the plant was one which we had not seen before. A few days later the spectacular flower opened. Borne on a long slender pedicel, the flower was held snugly with the synsepal pressed near the center of the huge transverse leaf: a most impressive display. The sepals were chartreuse and suffused with rose-purple toward the base. The dorsal sepal was concave and the lateral margins of the synsepal were recurved. The thick, broad petals were held down to either side of the unique lip which protruded as a purple, transverse, bulbous organ. It was deeply convex and bluntly cone-shaped. Only a pair of stems were sacrificed for the herbarium. Fortunately, the plant is thriving in the cool house at the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens.

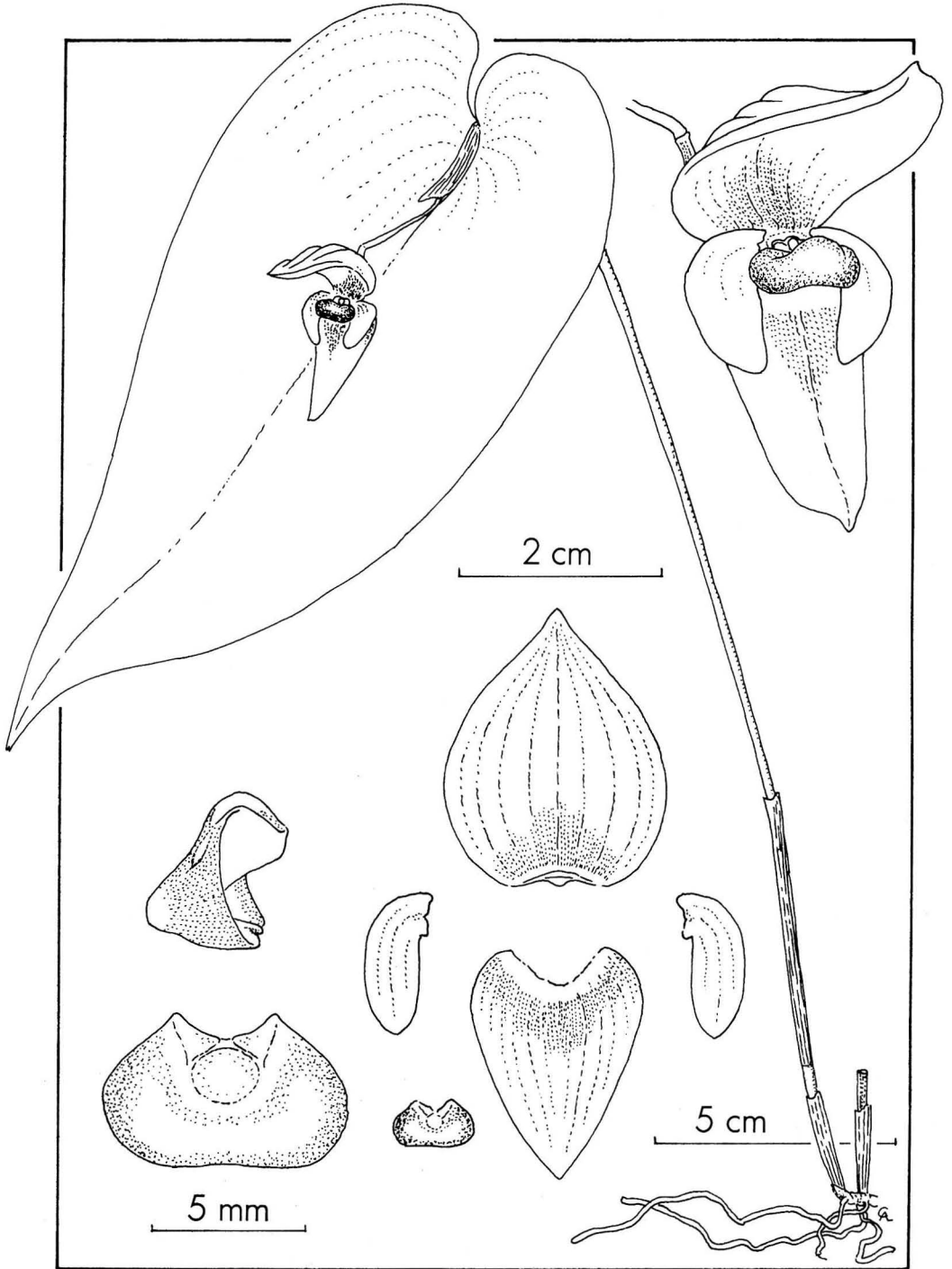


Figure 29. *PLEUROTHALLIS IMPERIALIS* Luer