

Pleurothallis niveoglobula Luer, sp. nov.

Planta parva epiphytica caespitosa, caulibus secundariis gracilibus unifoliatis inferne teretibus superne compressis, folio ovato acuminato base rotundata, floribus minimis niveis globulis fasciculatis longipedicellatis, sepalo dorsali et synsepalo orbiculatis concavis, petalis obovatis obtusis, labello late ovato subplano.

Plant small, epiphytic, caespitose; roots slender, flexuous. Secondary stems slender, terete below, compressed above, 5-11 mm long, with a close tubular sheath below the middle and 1-2 others at the base, unifoliate. Leaf elliptical-ovate, acuminate, acute, tridenticulate, base rounded, sessile, 15-38 X 7-20 mm. Inflorescence a fascicle of long-pedicellate, minute, white, globose flowers, from a spathe about 6 mm long, at the base of the leaf; peduncle 4-5 mm long; floral bract tubular, 2 mm long; pedicel 9-10 mm long; ovary purple-brown, 1.5 mm long; dorsal sepal suborbicular, deeply concave, obtuse to rounded, 2 X 1.6 mm, 3-veined; lateral sepals connate into an orbicular synsepal similar to the dorsal sepal, 2 X 2 mm; petals obovate, oblique, subcarinate with a fleshy, abruptly obtuse apex, 1.5 X 1 mm; lip fleshy, broadly ovate, subacute, slightly channeled centrally, broadly united to the base of the column; column terete, 1 mm long, without a discernible foot.

ETYMOLOGY: From the Latin *niveus*, "snow white," and *globulus*, "a little ball" (dim of *globus*), in reference to the shape and color of the flowers.

TYPE: ECUADOR: PASTAZA: epiphytic about 10 km west of Puyo along the Rio Pastaza, alt. 900 m, 25 July 1975, C. Luer, G. Luer & Wilhelm 506 (HOLOTYPE: SEL); probably same area, Janet Kuhn s.n. (SEL), greenhouse acc. no. 25-75-101, flowered in cult. 6 June 1975; NAPO: epiphytic 15 km west of Tena, alt. 600 m, 26 July 1975, C. Luer, G. Luer & Wilhelm 507 (SEL).

DISTRIBUTION: Ecuador.

"Snowball" first came to my attention in June of this year when a flowering plant was sent to me by Janet Kuhn of Easton, Connecticut. She had collected it on one of her trips to Ecuador. About a month later the species was encountered frequently on mossy trunks of trees in the Napo-Pastaza region.

In spite of its minute, snow white, globular flowers, the plant is not unattractive because the flowers are produced continuously and in abundance. From the base of the leaf they are held up on hair-like pedicels in a fascicle, like so many white-headed pins. The glossy green, sharp-pointed, round-based leaves are borne on slender stems which are laterally compressed with a sharp-edged posterior carina. The stems are often produced in densely caespitose masses.

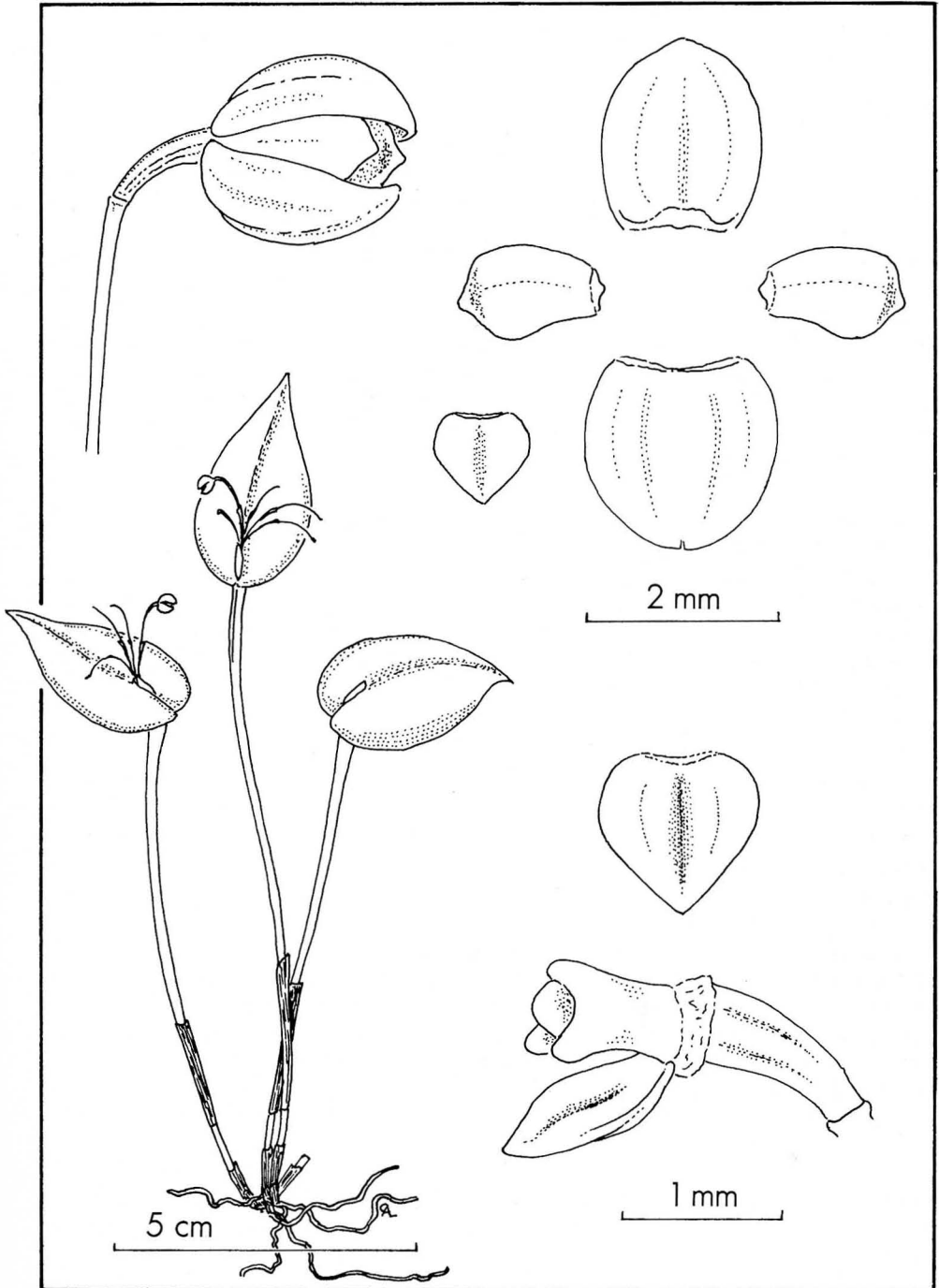


Figure 64. *PLEUROTHALLIS NIVEOGLOBULA* Luer