

Pleurothallis nitida Luer, sp. nov.

Planta parva epiphytica caespitosa, caulibus secundariis crassis rigidis teretibus unifoliatis, foliis crassis nitidis ellipticis obtusis base subcordatis, floribus fasciculatis singularibus successivis nigropurpureo, sepalo dorsali synsepaloque ovatis subacutis concavis, petalis oblongis fimbriatis, labello crasso cordato apice acuminato acuto, lobis basalibus rotundatis erectis, disco concave, marginibus erosis.

Plant small, epiphytic, caespitose; roots slender, flexuous. Secondary stems stout, rigid, terete, 3-6 cm long, with a tubular sheath below the middle and another at the base, unifoliate. Leaf thick rigid, coriaceous, dark green, shiny, elliptical, the apex obtuse to retuse, obscurely tridentulate, the base subcordate, sessile, the median vein sulcate, the margins recurved, 2.5-3.5 cm long, 14-18 mm wide. Inflorescence fasciculate, the flowers deep purple, produced singly and successively from a spathe, 5-6 mm long, at the base of the leaf; floral bract 3-5 mm long; pedicel 5-7 mm long; ovary 3 mm long; dorsal sepal ovate, subacute, concave, 6 mm long, 4 mm wide, 3-veined; lateral sepals connate into a synsepal similar to the dorsal sepal, 4-veined; petals oblong, acute, fimbriate, 5 mm long, 1 mm wide; lip thick, cordate, the lateral margins erose, the apex acuminate, acute, the basal lobes rounded, erect, cannot be spread, the disc concave between thickenings extending forward from the basal lobes, 3 mm long, 2 mm wide; column stout, 2.5 mm long.

ETYMOLOGY: From the Latin *nitidus*, "shiny, polished," in reference to the glossy surface of the leaves.

TYPE: PANAMA: CHIRIQUI: epiphytic in elfin cloud forest on Cerro Hornito, alt. ca. 1700 m, 15 Dec. 1976, C. Luer, A. Luer, R. L. Dressler, N. H. Williams & F. L. Stevenson 1337 (HOLOTYPE: SEL).

DISTRIBUTION: Panama.

This small species is locally abundant, along with numerous other pleurothallids, on the mossy branches of a dwarf cloud forest near a mountain crest in western Panama. Dense clumps of the tough little stems bear hard, glossy leaves which present their curved, polished surfaces to either side of a sulcate mid-vein. A nearly black, deep purple flower is borne on a pedicel that holds it above the center of the elliptical blade. The concave sepals spread to permit the long-fringed petals to protrude.