

***Sobralia hirtzii*** Dodson, sp. nov.

**Type:** Hirtz et al. 5215; Ecuador, Imbabura, Ibarra to Lita, Guallupe to Buenos Aires, km 32, 2200 m, 16 March 1991 (RPSC holotype).

**Illustration:** Dodson, Native Ecuadorian Orchids, 5: 971 #2209 & 972 #2210 (2004).

**Latin diagnosis:** Species haec *S. dichotomae* Ruiz & Pav. similis, sed sepalis petalisque intus bruneis, labello sud quadrilobato, lobis apicalibus flabellatis, con lamella centrali albifimbriata distinguitur.

**Etymology:** Named in honor of Ing. Alexander Hirtz who collected the type and has made a very large contribution to the knowledge of Ecuadorian orchids with his broad exploration of Ecuador, specimen preparation and photography.

**Description:** Terrestrial on road embankments or rarely epiphytic. Stems cane-like, to 2 m tall, subwoody. Leaves ovate, acuminate, thick, plicate, with thick veins on the underside, to 36 x 6.5 cm. Inflorescences lateral from the axils of the upper leaves, racemose, not surrounded at the base by large bracts. Flowers long lasting, large, produced nearly simultaneously. Sepals and petals brown inside and out; basal portion of the lip pale pink flecked with red-brown, the blade pink around the outer margin becoming red toward the center, fimbria in the mid portion white. Dorsal sepal elliptic with an acute apex, concave, to 6 x 1.5 cm; lateral sepals elliptic, spreading, free at the base, to 5 cm x 1.5 cm; petals elliptic, obtuse at the apex, spreading, to 4.5 x 1.8 cm; lip sub 4-lobed with a deep sinus at the apex, to 5 x 4 cm; apical pair of lobes flabellate; disc with 3-5 shallow keels surrounded on each side by fleshy fimbriae; column white, winged toward the apex, to 3 cm long. Flowering January to May.

**Other Specimens: Esmeraldas:** Lita to Alto Tambo, km 22, 800 m, 16 February 1989, Dodson 17102 (RPSC). **Carchi:** Tulcan to Maldonado, near Maldonado, 1500 m, 16 February 1989, Dalstroem & Hoijer 1252 (SEL); km 71.7, 2165 m, 29 April 1993, Dodson et al. 19052 (RPSC); 2200 m, 16 March 1991, Hirtz 5215 (RPSC). **Imbabura:** Ibarra to Lita, Guallupe to Buenos Aires, km 32, 2000 m, 16 January 1987, Dodson et al 16773 (RPSC); km 35, 2200 m, Hirtz 5785 (RPSC).

This is the only species belonging to the section *Sobralia* known from Ecuador. The plants are very large and the inflorescence racemose with several long-lasting flowers open simultaneously.