

***Sobralia mireyae* Dressler, sp. nov.**

HOLOTYPE: Panama, prov. Coclé, La Pintada; flowered in cult. 30 May 2006; R. L. Dressler 6707 (PMA, isotype, J.B.L. spirit).

A Sobralia kerryae Dressler *similibus*, *vaginis laevibus* (*absque trichomatibus minutis*), *crisis basalibus* $2/3$ parte *conjunctis*, *labello decem carinis prominentibus*, *columna in sectione acute triangulari recedit*.

Roots about 5 mm in diameter; stems to at least 50 cm; sheaths smooth and green; leaves 8–14 × 2.8–4.4 cm, ovate or lance-ovate, slightly acuminate, minutely bilobed, stiff, heavily corrugated, veins 9, including marginals; bract cluster approx. 4.5 × 1 cm, clasped by 2 leaf-bearing sheaths, the sheaths and bracts smooth and green or with a few purple spots, inflorescence bracts with narrow purplish-brown margins; pedicel and ovary 2.8–3 cm, flower white with orange and yellow keels; sepals basally united for about 1 cm, the bases not inflated, sepals 7.2–7.4 × 2.4–2.6 cm, apices subobtuse, apiculate, dorsal sepal elliptic or elliptic-oblong, lateral sepals oblong or oblong-elliptic, asymmetrical; petals 7.5–8 × 3 cm, oblong-obovate, subobtuse, minutely apiculate; lip 7–7.7 × 5.5–5.7 cm, obovate, tapering a bit distally; basal ridges 12 mm long, united for 8–10 mm, lip with about 10 major keels with minor divergent keels, the 3 median keels continuing to near apex, most others reaching midlobe; column 4 cm, apically 6–7 mm thick and 8 mm wide, triangular in section, ventrally concave, with two low ridges; column arms 3 × 2.3 mm, curved upward, subobtuse.

Sobralia mireyae (Figs. 7–8) is, as Erick had indicated, attractive. As noted above, the plants are easily recognized, even without flowers. In nature, the species apparently grows in exposed sites, and the leaves are stiff and heavily corrugated. The base of the stem is usually leafless for a way, and then has several leaves that are more or less evenly spaced. Above this there is an elongate stem (internode) between the uppermost foliage leaf and the inflorescence. This upper leafless stem may vary from 4 to 8 cm (about 1.5–3 inches). The type plant, no longer growing on a sunny, windy mountain top, now has a new stem with the leafless base about 63 cm (25 inches). We hesitate to guess just how long the rest of the stem will become under the milder conditions of the greenhouse. Rather than drawing the type plant, now quite atypical after having been in cultivation for many months, we have illustrated the habit of the small plant recently collected by Joel Rodríguez on La India Dormida, one of the high, exposed ridges near El Valle de Anton. In the unlikely event that the plants from La Pintada are a different species from those from El Valle, it should be understood that the flower shown here represents *S. mireyae*,



Fig. 7. *Sobralia mireyae*. The type specimen was prepared from this plant from La Pintada, Coclé, Panama. Photograph by Kerry Dressler.

even if the plant drawn is not the same species. Please note, too, that the plant shown in the drawing is not the same plant, part of which is preserved as the type specimen. Even if the plants from La Pintada are a different species from those of El Valle, there is no mixture in the type specimen. Still, in its proportions, the recently collected plant from La India Dormida looks very much as the plant from La Pintada was when it first left La Pintada. Florally, *S. mireyae* is distinctive in the basal callus, whose ridges are united for $2/3$ their length or more, the ten prominent keels on the lip and the column that is strongly triangular in section, with only very small ventral ridges. The smooth green inflorescence bracts are similar in color and texture to those of *S. bouchei* and *S. wilsoniana*, neither of which is similar to this species in other features. At first glance, the alternating bands of white and yellow on the blade of the lip give the impression of stripes, though the pattern is not regular enough to be called “striped.”

ETYMOLOGY: The epithet honors Mireya D. Correa A., one of the authors of *Catálogo de las Plantas Vasculares de Panamá*, and curator of the Herbarium at the University of Panama. It is not easy to maintain a herbarium near sea level in the tropics, but Correa has fought for the herbarium and kept it going for some years now. In all honesty, we cannot hope to really understand the tropical floras through the work of occasional visitors from the temperate zone. We must have resident collectors and resident botanists to be able even to fully catalog the tropical floras.

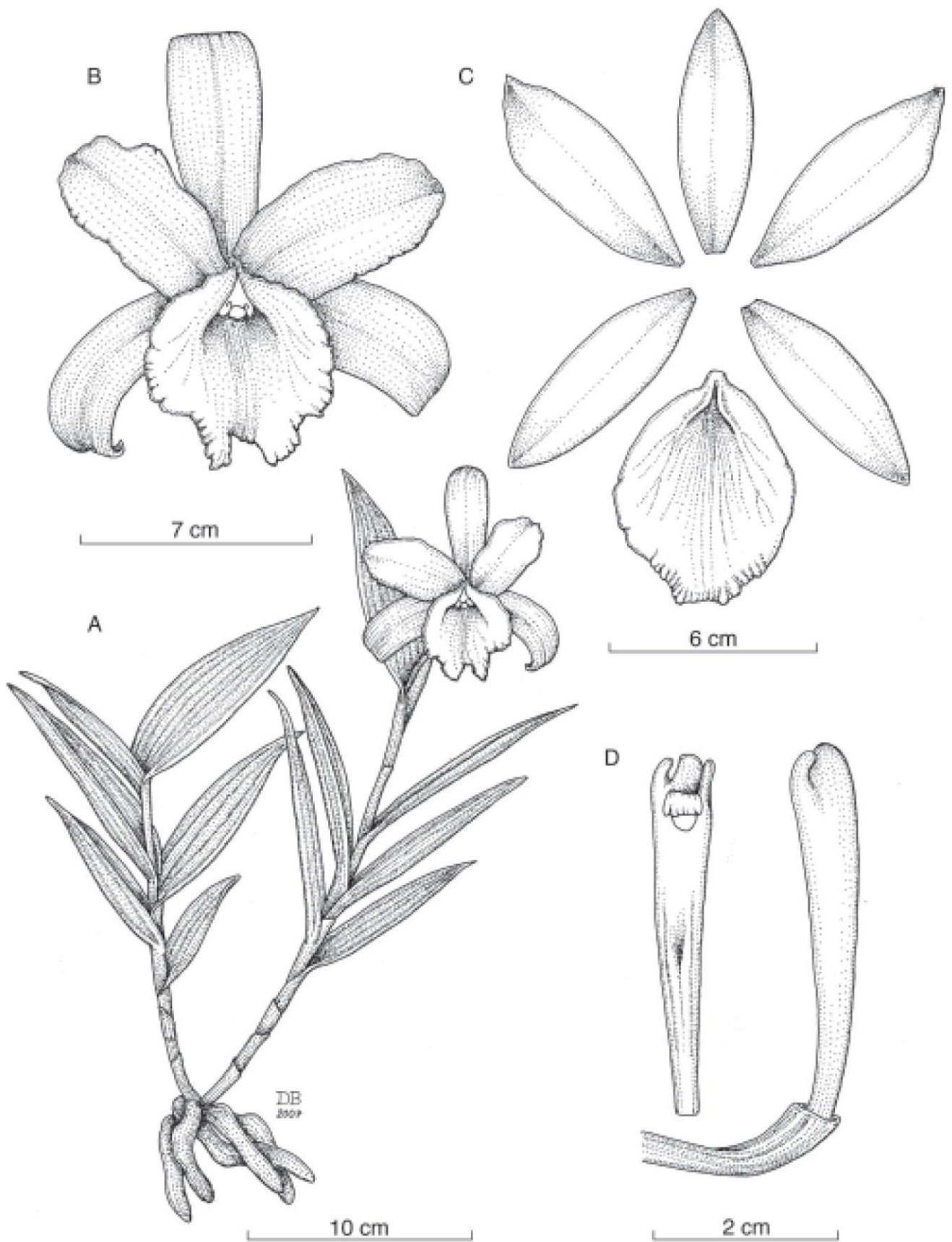


Fig. 8. *Sobralia mireyae*. A. Habit. B. Flower in natural position. C. Sepals, petals and lip, flattened. D. Column, ventral and lateral views. Illustration by Diego Bogarin.