

Pleurothallis cactantha C. A. Luer, sp. nov.

Herba epiphytica perpusilla caespitosa, caulibus secundariis abbreviatis unifoliatis, foliis coriaceis ellipticis vel oblongis obtusis cuneatis breviter petiolatis, flore grandi pro planta albo subroseo suffuso spiculato solitario successivo fasciculato, pedunculo gracili sparsim spiculato, ovario echinato, sepalis ovatis acuminatis carinatis, petalis cuneatis retusis apiculo sinu, labello carnoso rubro ovato apice rotundato eroso disco bilamellato.

Plant epiphytic, very small, caespitose; roots filamentous, flexuous. Secondary stems abbreviated, 2-4 mm long, mostly concealed by 2 costate sheaths, unifoliolate. Leaf dark green to blue-green, coriaceous, elliptical to oblong, obtuse, tridenticulate, marginate, base cuneate, indistinctly short-petiolate, 7-10 × 2-4 mm. Flower large for the plant, solitary, successive, in a fascicle borne on a slender peduncle; peduncle sparsely spiculate, 13-20 mm long, from a node on the secondary stem; floral bract scarious, acute, 1.5 mm long; pedicel sparsely spiculate, 2 mm long; ovary echinate, 0.75 mm long; sepals translucent white, often faintly suffused with pink, spiculate externally; dorsal sepal ovate, long-acuminate, acute, 10-11 × 3 mm, 3-carinate; lateral sepals oblong, united to near the middle, the apices long-acuminate, 10-11 × 3.5 mm together, each bicarinate; petals translucent pale green, flushed with rose centrally, cuneiform, retuse, with a minute apicule in the sinus, 2.5 × 1.5 mm; lip red, fleshy, ovate, apex rounded, microscopically erose, dilated with upturned margins below the middle, with a pair of low, smooth lamellae near the margins, base shortly unguiculate; column pale green, terete, 2 mm long, with a foot 1.5 mm long.

ETYMOLOGY: From the Greek *kaktos*, "a spiny plant," later, "cactus," and *anthos*, "flower," in allusion to the spiny flowers.

TYPE: PANAMA: PANAMA: epiphytic along the Altos de Pacora road, alt. 650 m, 4 March 1976, C. Luer, J. Luer, P. Taylor, & R. L. Dressler 743 (HOLOTYPE: SEL).

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL EXAMINED: PANAMA: epiphytic, Cerro Jefe, alt. 1000 m, 19 Aug. 1967, R. L. Dressler 3027 (SEL); La Eneida, Cerro Jefe, alt. 1000 m, 9 June 1971, R. L. Dressler 4029 (SEL).

DISTRIBUTION: Panama.

This minute species is apparently endemic in the cloud forests around Cerro Jefe east of the Canal Zone. Plants are distinguished by their clumps of thick, little, oblong, blue-green leaves, lighter in color along the margins and mid-rib. They are locally abundant on the mossy branches of the larger trees, and untold quantities are dying as a result of clearing the land. Hair-like peduncles bear at their apices beyond the apices of the leaves, a fascicle of old pedicels, and at intervals an oversized flower. A faint pink flush appears in an otherwise white flower covered with minute, sparkling prickles. The rosy-suffused petals and red lip are visible through the translucent, long-attenuate sepals. The red lip is simple with intramarginal lamellae.

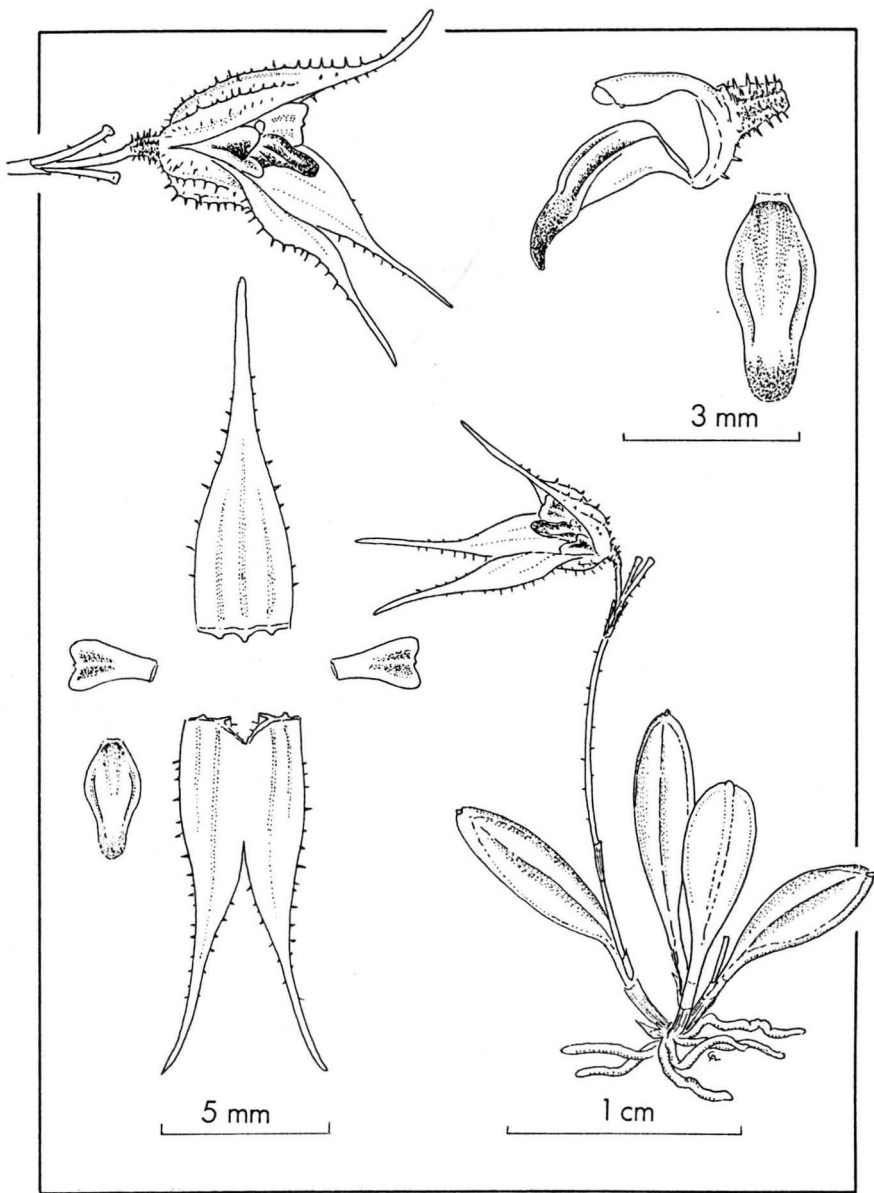


Figure 139. PLEUROTHALLIS CACTANTHA C. A. Luer