

PLEUROTHALLIS CHONTALENSIS Heller & Hawkes, sp. nov.

Planta parva, caespitosa. Foliis erectis, obovatis, tridentatis. Pedicellis glandulo-pubescentibus, alae ancipitae prominentibus ornatae. Labellum oblongo-ligulatum, ad apicem rotundatum obtusumque, ad basin lobulis erectis parvis denticulatis ornatis.

Plant caespitose, small, to 6 cm tall, the roots slender, flexuose, white, to 2 cm long, the secondary stems 5 - 7 mm long, concealed by white scarios sheaths. Leaves subcoriaceous, erect, obovate, tridentate but not oblique at apex, 3 - 4.5 cm long including the 5 - 10 mm long petiole, 0.8 - 1.3 cm broad above middle. Inflorescence solitary from base of petiole, erect, the peduncle filiform, to 4 cm long, glandular, with small basal sheath, usually bearing a single flower (this with lateral sepals uppermost in most instances) with an abortive attendant bud; on occasion old inflorescences indicate as many as five successive flowers. Floral bracts tubular, acute, glandular-pubescent, 2 mm long. Flowers not opening fully, about 1.5 cm long, ochraceous greenish-yellow, the petals and lip-callus orange. Pedicellate ovary glandular-pubescent, the ovary triangular with 3 high ancipitous wings and a lower one between each, the ovary 3 mm long, borne at right angles to persistent 1 cm long pedicel. Sepals ovate-lanceolate, acute, 1 cm long, 3-nerved, the surface somewhat glandular, the margins ciliate, the keeled nerves ciliate, the median one of the dorsal sepal ancipitous, prominent, this segment 3 mm broad below middle, its inner surface with conspicuous bullate or ocellate spots; lateral sepals joined to within about 2 mm from apex, 4 mm broad above middle. Petals thin-textured, spatulate, with wide lobe on anterior margin, the apex falcately acute, narrowed basally, 2-nerved, 3 mm long and 1.1 mm broad above middle. Lip parallel to column, oblong-ligulate, with a rounded obtuse apex, broadest at base, 3.5 mm long and 1 mm broad near apex, fleshy, verruculose, sulcate, the apex more fleshy, margins ciliate, with an erect lobule on each side 1 mm from base; callus elevated, bifid, papillose, extending from lip-base to lateral lobules. Column slender, clavate, winged, 2.5 mm long, apically with 2 acuminate lateral teeth and a broad denticulate posterior one, the broadly elliptic, alate foot 1.2 mm long, at right angles to column; anther helmet-shaped, apiculate.

NICARAGUA: Dept. Chontales: Rio Mico, epiphytic, alt. 1500 feet, August 1960, A. H. Heller 3735 (Type in Oakes Ames Orchid Herbarium of Harvard University). Same locality, alt. 1400 feet, in bloom December, A. H. Heller 3575. Same locality, alt. 1400 feet, in bloom May and June, A. H. Heller 7827. Cerro El Chamorro, La Libertad district, epiphytic, alt. 2175 feet, June, A. H. Heller 1036.

Pleurothallis chontalensis belongs to the P. glandulosa Ames alliance, this including P. barbae Schltr., P. fulgens Rchb.f., P. glandulosa Ames, P. pertenuis C. Schweinf., and P. vitariifolia Schltr. Its closest ally appears to be the Costa Rican P. barbae Schltr., from which it differs in the following respects: broad, not linear leaves; although the pedicel is glandular-pubescent, the ovary is only sparsely so, and has very prominent ancipitous wings; the floral bracts are densely glandular and acute, not apiculate; the inner surface of the dorsal sepal has bullate or ocellate spots of some prominence, these not noted in P. barbae; the lip is of divergent shape, and the two lateral lobules are very small and denticulate; the column-foot lies at right angles to the column, is broadly suborbicular, separated from the column by a constriction or isthmus, and is deeply excavated with wing-like margins; and the lateral teeth at the apex of the column are acuminate, while the broad triangular posterior one is lacinate.

This pretty novelty is named for the spectacular Nicaraguan department in which it occurs with some frequency.