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THE GENUS *SCAPHOSEPALUM* PFITZER.

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THERE is a curious little group of Orchids, comprising about nine known species, which have presented some difficulty to botanists. The first known was described as *Masdevallia verrucosa* Rehb. f., in 1849, but five years later the same author transferred it to *Pleurothallis*, where it was retained by Lindley in his mono-

graph of that genus, in 'Folia Orchidacea.' In 1855 a second species appeared, and Reichenbach reverted to his earlier opinion, and called it *Masdevallia ochthodes*: and successive species have been described under *Masdevallia*. Of the correctness of this view I have long felt a doubt, on account of certain anomalous characters, which do not altogether correspond with either of the two genera. The character which separates *Masdevallia* from *Pleurothallis* is that in the former the base of the dorsal sepal is united with the lateral pair to form a tube, of variable length in the different species, while in the latter there is no such union, consequently no tube. There is no other character which applies to all the species that can be relied upon to separate the two genera.

The remarkable amount of uniformity which prevails throughout the very numerous species of these two genera does not altogether apply to the little group in question, which Professor Pfitzer now proposes to separate, under the name *Scaphosepalum* (Engler and Prantl., 'Natürliche Pflanzenfamilien,' vol. i., Orchidaceæ, p. 139), in allusion to the scooped-out or boat-like arrangement of the united pair of lateral sepals. The following are its essential characters:—The flowers are invariably inverted as compared with the two genera named—that is, the lateral sepals and the lip are invariably uppermost, while the odd sepal and the column are underneath. The dorsal sepal is either free or so nearly so that the union is barely perceptible; while the lateral pair are united for some distance into a curiously curved and concave body, and then sharply turned outwards into a pair of diverging tails, which differ greatly in shape in the different species. The lip is a very curiously curved and crumpled body, which is not easily described in a few words, but, like the other characters named, totally unlike anything seen in either *Pleurothallis* or *Masdevallia*. In short, *Scaphosepalum* differs more from either of these two genera than they do from each other, and therefore I think its separation fully justified. The exclusion of this group from *Masdevallia* leaves that genus far more homogeneous in character, as well as more strictly separable from *Pleurothallis*. I now think that the anomalous species I described some time ago (Gard. Chron. 1888, pt. 2, p. 178) as *Masdevallia platyrhachis* must be referred to *Pleurothallis*.

The following are the species:—

1. *S. ANCHORIFERUM*. *Masdevallia anchorifera* Rehb. f., in Gard. Chron., 1884, i. p. 577.—Costa Rica. It is allied to *S. ochthodes*.

2. *S. BREVE*. *Masdevallia brevis* Rehb. f., in Gard. Chron., 1883, ii. p. 588.—British Guiana, Roraima district. Allied to the preceding species and *S. macrodactylum*.

3. *S. GIBBEROSUM*. *Masdevallia gibberosa* Rehb. f., in Gard. Chron., 1876, i. p. 8; Bot. Mag., t. 6990.—New Granada.

4. *S. MACRODACTYLUM*. *Masdevallia macrodactyla* Rehb. f., in Gard. Chron., 1872, p. 571.—New Granada.

5. *S. OCHTHODES* Pfitz., in Engl. and Prantl., Natürl. Pflanzenfam., i. Orch. p. 139. *Masdevallia ochthodes* Rehb. f., in Bonplandia, iii. (1855), p. 70.—New Granada, discovered by Wagener, near San Pedro and Turmero, at an altitude of 6000 feet.

6. *S. PULVINARE*. *Masdevallia pulvinaris* Rehb. f., in Gard. Chron., 1880, i. p. 200.—Columbia?

7. *S. PUNCTATUM*. *Masdevallia punctata* Rolfe, in Gard. Chron., 1888, ii. p. 323. — New Granada? Closely allied to *S. swertiæfolium*.

8. *S. SWERTIÆFOLIUM*. *Masdevallia swertiæfolia* Rehb. f., in Gard. Chron., 1880, ii. p. 390. Discovered by Lehmann on the Western Cordillera of New Granada.

9. *S. VERRUCOSUM* Pfitzer, in Engl. and Prantl., Natürl. Pflanzenfam., i. Orch. p. 139. *Masdevallia verrucosa* Rehb. f., in Linnæa, xxii. (1849), p. 819. *Pleurothallis verrucosa* Rehb. f., in Bonplandia, ii. (1854) p. 24.—New Granada, near La Baja, in the province of Pamplona, at 8200 feet elevation, Funck and Schlim, No. 1439.

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