

*Pleurothallis pidax* Luer, sp. nov.

Planta mediocris vel grandis caespitosa, caulibus robustis teretibus vagina grandi laxa, folio grandi coriaceo elliptico vel suborbiculari, inflorescentia pauci- vel multiracemosa, racemis multifloris folio brevioribus, floribus parvis sepalis libris breviter ciliatis lateralibus gibbosis, petalis oblongis apice truncatis crassis, labello oblongo-pandurato ecalloso apice rotundato, columna late alata.

Plant medium to large, epiphytic, caespitose; roots slender, flexuous. Secondary stems stout, terete, unifoliate, 10-25 cm long, with a large, loose, tubular sheath below the middle and 1-2 others at the base. Leaf erect, coriaceous, elliptical to suborbicular, the obtuse to rounded apex minutely retuse and apiculate, the base cuneate into a channeled petiole 2-6 cm long, the blade 6-30 cm long, 2.5-20 cm wide. Inflorescence racemose, up to 18 densely many-flowered, distichous racemes 8-22 cm long, the flowers small, pale yellow-green, infrequently rose, the peduncle slender, from a spathe ca. 1.5 cm long at the base of the leaf-petiole; floral bract thin, 1.5-2 mm long; pedicel and ovary each 1.5-2 mm long, curved; dorsal sepal free, ovate, obtuse, 4-5 mm long, 2 mm wide, minutely ciliate; lateral sepals oblong, oblique, 4 mm long, 1.5 mm wide, connate at the base to form a mentum with the column-foot, ciliate, carinate externally; petals translucent with 3 close veins, oblong-obovate, 2.5-3.25 mm long, 1.5 mm wide, the apex truncate, thickened, indistinctly toothed; lip oblong-pandurate, arcuate, 2-2.5 mm long, 0.75-1 mm wide, the apex rounded, slightly dilated below the middle, the base truncate, the disc flat, 3-veined, yellow to light purple, edged in dark purple; column broadly winged, 2.5 mm long, with a short foot.

ETYMOLOGY: From the Greek *pidax* (πίδαξ), "a fountain," in allusion to the sprays of flowers.

TYPE: *ECUADOR*: LOS RIOS: epiphytic in rain forest at Río Palenque Science Center, Km. 47 south of Santo Domingo, alt. 200 m, March 1976, cultivated at SEL, greenhouse acc. no. 91-76-51, flowered in cult. Jan. 1978, *C. Luer* 2277 (HOLOTYPE: SEL).

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL EXAMINED: *ECUADOR*: COTOPAXI: cloud forest near km 40 between Quevedo and Pilalo, alt. ca. 700 m, March 1975, *C. Luer* & *R. Kent* 1092 (SEL); above El Corazon, alt. ca. 1500 m, 17 Feb. 1979, flowers rose, *C. Luer*, *J. Luer* & *A. Hirtz* 3994 (SEL); below El Corazon, alt. 1200 m, 18 Feb. 1979, flowers yellow, *C. Luer*, *J. Luer* & *A. Hirtz* 4029, 4030 (SEL); LOS RIOS: Río Palenque Science Center, 2 March 1974, *C. H. Dodson* 5242 (SEL) and 7 March 1975, *C. H. Dodson* 5856 (SEL); PINCHINCHA: 20 km east of Santo Domingo, alt. 900 m, Jan. 1979, *L. Besse*, *K. Tan* & *J. Halton* 159 (SEL, QCA).

DISTRIBUTION: Western Ecuador.

Closely related to the widespread and variable *Pleurothallis gelida* Lindl. and the West Indian *P. univaginata* Lindl., *P. pidax* is nearly sympatric with *P. gelida* on the western slopes of the Andes of central Ecuador where *P. gelida* usually occurs at higher elevations. From *P. gelida* this species may be distinguished by usually more numerous racemes usually shorter than the leaves, the smaller flowers, the shortly ciliate sepals, the petals thickened at the apex, the ecallose lip and the broadly winged column. From *P. univaginata* it may be separated by the more numerous racemes, the smaller flowers, the ciliated sepals, the petals thickened at the apex, the non-unguiculate lip and the broadly winged column.