

***Pleurothallis praemorsa* Luer, sp. nov.**

Planta perparva epiphytica caespitosa, caulibus secundariis gracilibus brevibus unifoliatis, foliis coriaceis ellipticis brevipetiolatis, racemo flexuoso, pedunculo pubescenti, floribus successivis marroninis expansis, sepalis anguste ovatis acutis, petalis ellipticis acutis, labello anguste obovato convexo infra medium minute bilobulato apice abrupte truncato base biauriculato.

Plant very small, epiphytic, caespitose; roots fine, flexuous. Secondary stems slender, 4-8 mm long, with a close, thin, ribbed, tubular sheath and another at the base, unifoliate. Leaf erect, coriaceous, elliptical, subacute at the tridenticulate apex, the base cuneate into a short, 3-5 mm long, channeled, more or less twisted petiole, the blade 1.5-2 cm long, 5-7 mm wide. Inflorescence an ascending, fractiflex raceme, 5-15 mm long, of successive, widely spread, maroon flowers, the peduncle shortly pubescent, about 15 mm long, from a 1 mm spathe at the base of the leaf-petiole; floral bract pubescent, 1.5-2 mm long; pedicel 1.5-2 mm long; ovary red, 0.5-1 mm long; dorsal sepal narrowly ovate, acute, subcarinate, 6 mm long, 1.75 mm wide; lateral sepals narrowly ovate, acute, carinate, connate only at the base to form a mentum with the column-foot, each 6.5 mm long, 1.25 mm wide; petals elliptical, maroon, white at the acute apex, the margins minutely glandular, 3.25 mm long, 1.3 mm wide; lip maroon, narrowly obovate, convex, the apex sharply truncate, edged in white and minutely glandular, the base delicately hinged to the column-foot, flanked by a pair of thin, white auricles, with a small pair of erect, oblong, lateral lobes on the lower third, 4.5 mm long, 1.25 mm wide; column red, 2 mm long with a denticulate clinandrium, with a short, concave foot.

ETYMOLOGY: From the Latin *praemorsus*, "as if bitten off," in allusion to the appearance of the apex of the lip.

TYPE: *ECUADOR*: PASTAZA: epiphytic in rain forest about 20 km east of Puyo, alt. ca. 600 m, 3 Aug. 1977, C. Luer, J. Luer & J. Brenner 1813 (HOLOTYPE: SEL).

DISTRIBUTION: Eastern Ecuador.

Only a single plant of this small species was discovered by Jane Luer in the upper branches of a felled rain-forest tree. A prolonged search failed to reveal another. The little tufted plant is not remarkable, but a pubescent peduncle produces a markedly fractiflex, slowly lengthening raceme of successive, maroon flowers. Although larger, the flowers superficially resemble those of *Pleurothallis polygonoides* Griseb. and its allies. *Pleurothallis praemorsa* is apparently closely related to the much larger *P. smaragdina* Luer.

The lip terminates in an abruptly truncate apex. On the jungle-collected plant I interpreted the apex as having been chewed off by an insect. Subsequent flowers, however, prove this to be a physical feature. The sharply transverse apex is minutely glandular and edged in white, appearing very much like a few-day-old amputation.