

Section **HUMBOLDTIA**105. **Stelis alpina** Luer & Hirtz, sp. nov.

Ety.: From the Latin *alpinus*, "of a high altitude," referring to the habitat.

Species haec *S. purpureae* (Ruiz & Pav.) Willd., affinis, sed bracteis longioribus, sepalis majoribus acutis, petalis supra columnam profunde superpositis, et labelli glenio angustissimo distinguitur.

Plant large, terrestrial to presumably epiphytic, densely caespitose; roots slender. Ramicauls erect, stout, 14-20 cm long, enclosed by a loose, tubular sheath on the middle third and 2-3 sheaths at the base. **Leaf** erect, coriaceous, elliptical-oblong, subacute, petiolate, 10-13 cm long including the petiole 1.5-3 cm long, the blade 2-3.5 cm wide, contracted below into the petiole. **Inflorescence** 1-2 erect, subcongested, distichous, many-flowered racemes with many flowers open simultaneously, 18-21 cm long including the peduncle ca. 5 cm long, with a spathe 1.5-2 cm long, from an annulus below the apex of the ramicaul; floral bracts oblique, acute, 11 mm long below to 5 mm long above; pedicels 3 mm long; ovary 3 mm long; flowers non-resupinate, bilabiate; **sepals** purple, glabrous, the dorsal sepal triangular, acute, 11 mm long, 7 mm wide, 5-veined, connate 3 mm to the synsepal, the lateral sepals connate into an ovoid-triangular, obtuse, concave synsepal, 9 mm long, 9 mm wide, 10-veined; **petals** yellow-green, thickly semilunate, overlapping above the column, 1.5 mm long, 2.3 mm wide, 3-veined, concave below the broadly thickened, rounded apex, and concave basally below the transverse callus; **lip** yellow-green, transversely oblong-triangular, 0.9 mm long, 1.5 mm wide, 1 mm deep, the apex broadly rounded, the bar shallowly concave with a very narrow glenion, the dorsum with 3 rounded calli, the base truncate, hinged to the base of the column; **column** stout, 1 mm long, 1.5 mm wide, the foot obsolescent, the anther and the bilobed stigma apical.

Carchi: west of the pass west of Tulcán, terrestrial on the road embankment, Bosco, alt. 3400 m, 16 Mar. 1991, C. Luer, J. Luer, J. del Hierro, A. & X. Hirtz 15046 (Holotype: MO); same collection data, C. Luer, J. Luer, J. del Hierro, A. & X. Hirtz 15049 (MO); between Tulcán and Maldonado, alt. 3200 m, 9 Nov. 1982, C. Luer & R. Escobar 8315 (SEL).

This species is known from a high altitude on a slope of Volcán Chiles in northernmost Ecuador. It is distinguished from those species most closely allied to *S. purpurea* by producing one or two long, long-bracted, many-flowered racemes of large, gaping flowers, more than twice as long as elliptical-ovate leaves. The dorsal sepal is triangular and acute while the synsepal is ovate and concave. The central apparatus is proportionately small with thick petals deeply overlapping the column. The lip is transverse and broadly rounded with a very narrow glenion and with three calli on the dorsum.

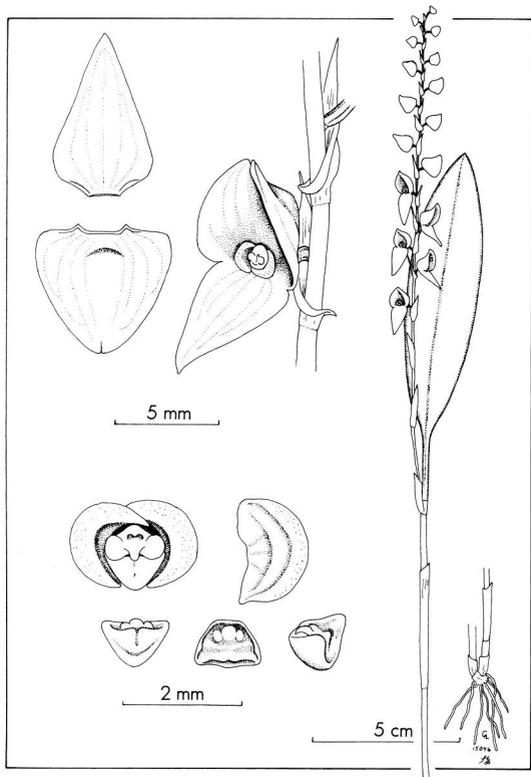


Fig. 105. *Stelis alpina*