

144. **Stelis cingens** Luer & Hirtz, sp. nov.

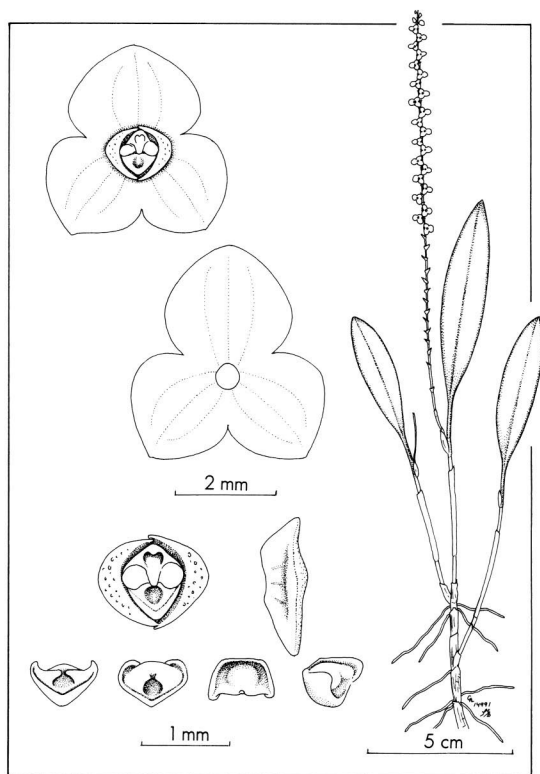
Ety.: From the Latin *cingens*, "surrounding," referring to the petals surrounding the column and lip.

Planta grandis ascendens-repens, racemo multifloro congesto floribus parvis alternantibus foliis ellipticis acutis longipetiolatis longiore, sepalis late ovatis glabris, petals columnam labellumque cingentibus et labello transverse ovoideo distinguitur.

Plant large, epiphytic, the rhizome stout, ascending, repent; roots slender. Ramicauls erect or ascending, slender, 5-13 cm long, enclosed by a tubular sheath and another 1-2 sheaths at the base. **Leaf** erect, coriaceous, elliptical, acute, long-petiolate, the blade 6-10 cm long, 1.5-2 cm wide, cuneate below into the slender petiole 1.5-2 cm long. **Inflorescence** a strict, erect, congested, secund, many-flowered raceme with most flowers open simultaneously, the flowers alternating, facing one side, to 17 cm long including the peduncle 1.5 cm long, from below the apex of the ramicaul, with a spathe 10 mm long; floral bracts inflated, oblique, obtuse, 3 mm long; pedicels 1.5 mm long; ovary 0.75 mm long; flowers either yellow or purple; **sepals** expanded, glabrous, broadly ovate, obtuse, connate basally, the dorsal sepal 2.75 mm long, 2.75 mm wide, 3-veined, the lateral sepals 2 mm long, 2.25 mm wide, 3-veined; **petals** transversely ovate, thin, concave, completely surrounding column and lip, with the apex broadly obtuse, thickened, 0.5 mm long, 1-1.5 mm wide expanded, 3-veined; **lip** thick, transversely oblong-ovoid, the apex round with a thick margin, 0.5 mm long, 0.8 mm wide, 0.5 mm deep, the bar thick with a proportionately large glenion, the dorsum with a broad, low callus, the base truncate, hinged to the base of the column; **column** stout, 0.75 mm long, 1 mm wide, the anther and the bilobed stigma apical.

Bolívar: near the pass north of Chillanes, alt. 2650 m, 11 Mar. 1991, C. Luer, J. Luer, A. Hirtz et al. 14991 (Holotype: MO).

This large species from south-central Ecuador is characterized by a stout rhizome, ascending ramicauls, and a long raceme that far exceeds the leaves. The small flowers are arranged alternating, touching, perpendicular to the rachis, and all facing one direction. The sepals are broadly ovate. The petals completely surround the column and lip, overlapping above the column, and below the lip.

Fig. 144. *Stelis cingens*