

153, 153a. **Stelis esmeraldae** Luer & Hirtz, sp. nov.

Ety.: Named for the province of Esmeraldas where the species occurs.

Planta parva caespitosa, racemo flexuoso foliis ellipticis plus minusve longiore, sepalis late ovatis breviter pubescentibus sepalo dorsali majori, petalis reniformibus margine lato crassoque, et labello subquadrato apice obtuse retuso superne calloso distinguitur.

Plant small, epiphytic, caespitose; roots filiform. Ramicauls erect, slender, 1-1.5 cm long, enclosed by a tubular sheath and 1-2 shorter sheaths at the base. **Leaf** erect, coriaceous, narrowly elliptical, subacute to obtuse, 2-5.5 cm long including an indistinct petiole 0.5-1 cm long, the blade 0.9-1.4 cm wide, narrowly cuneate below into the petiole. **Inflorescence** an erect, loose, flexuous several-flowered raceme, with several flowers open simultaneously, 3-5 cm long including the peduncle ca. 1.5 cm long, from below the apex of the ramicaul; floral bracts oblique, acute, 1.5-2 mm long; pedicels 1.5 mm long; ovary 1.75 mm long; **sepals** dull purple, light green toward the apices, expanded, densely short-pubescent, glabrous externally, broadly ovate, obtuse, connate basally, the dorsal sepal 3.5 mm long, 4.3 mm wide, 3-veined, the lateral sepals oblique, 2-2.5 mm long, 3.75 mm wide, 3-veined; **petals** purple, transversely reniform, 1 mm long, 1.8 mm wide, 3-veined, the apex broadly rounded with a broad, thick,

cellular-glandular margin that covers a transverse callus, the margin recurved medially to accommodate a stigma and to expose the center of the transverse callus, concave basally; **lip** purple, thickly subquadrate, 0.75 mm long, 1 mm wide, 0.75 mm deep, concave anteriorly within a broad margin that is protuberant at the broadly obtuse apex, the bar with a thick glenion, the dorsum with a central, rounded callus, the base broadly truncate, hinged to the base of the column; **column** stout, 1 mm long, 1.2 mm wide, the foot obsolescent, the anther and the bilobed stigma apical.

Esmeraldas: wet forest west of Lita toward San Lorenzo, alt. 750 m, 18 Jan. 1987, *C. Luer, J. Luer, A. Hirtz, et al. 12423* (Holotype: MO); same collection data, *C. Luer et al 12393* (MO); wet forest west of Lita, alt. 300 m, 12 Jan. 1992, *C. Luer, J. Luer, A. Hirtz, A. & P. Jesup 15581* (MO).

This species from wet, lowland forest of coastal Ecuador is distinguished by a small caespitose habit with elliptical leaves eventually surpassed by a flexuous raceme of flowers. The petals are remarkable with broad, thick, flattened margins. Apparently caused by pressure from the stigmas while in bud, the inner margin curves inward, exposing the central portion of a transverse callus that is otherwise covered by the broad margin. The broad apex of the lip slightly protrudes.

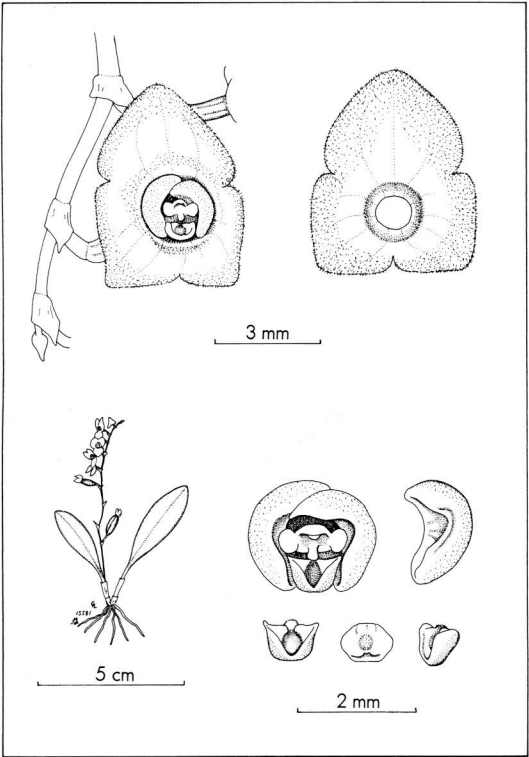


Fig. 153. *Stelis esmeraldae*