

162. ***Stelis impostor*** Luer & Hirtz, sp. nov.

Ety.: From the Latin *impostor*, "an impostor," referring to a mistaken identity.

Planta parvis mediocrisve caespitosa, racemo erecto paucifloro quam folio elliptico longiore, sepalis ovatis obtusis marginibus longiciliatis; petalis semilunatis, labello subplano cordato distinguitur.

Plant small to medium in size, epiphytic, caespitose; roots slender. Ramicauls erect, slender, 2-3 cm long, enclosed by a tubular sheath from below the middle and 2-3 other sheaths below. **Leaf** erect, coriaceous, elliptical, petiolate, with the apex subacute, 4-5 cm long including the petiole ca. 1 cm long, the blade 1-1.2 cm wide, cuneate below into the petiole. **Inflorescence** an erect, loose, distichous, slightly flexuous, several-flowered raceme, with several flowers open simultaneously, 5-7 cm long including the peduncle 2.5-3 cm long, subtended by a slender spathe ca. 5 mm long at an annulus below the apex of the ramicaul; floral bracts tubular, oblique, obtuse, 3 mm long; pedicel 1.5 mm long; ovary 1.5 mm long; **sepals** brown-lavender with cilia white, glabrous externally, broadly ovate, obtuse, slightly convex, connate basally, the dorsal sepal 3.75 mm long, 3.5 mm wide, 5-veined, the lateral sepals oblique, 2.5 mm long, 3.5 mm wide, 4-veined; **petals** green, transversely semilunate, 0.6 mm long, 1.6 mm wide, 3-veined, shallowly concave below the broadly obtuse, thickened, subverrucose margin; **lip** green, transversely subcordate, 0.6 mm long, 1.3 mm wide, 1 mm deep, the apex rounded with thin margin, the bar shallowly concave anteriorly with a small glenion, the dorsum with a low, rounded callus, microscopically pubescent, the base broadly truncate, hinged to the column; **column** stout, 1.5 mm long, 1.5 mm wide, the foot obsolescent, the anther and the stigma apical, the stigma bilobed.

Morona-Santiago: near Macas, alt. 800 m, cultivated by Ecuagenera at Gualaceo, 1999, A. Hirtz 7141 (Holotype: MO), C. Luer illustr. 20431a.

An illustration of a flower of this species by Elmer Smith was misidentified as *S. hirtella* in *Systematics of the genus Stelis* (Garay, 1980). At that time, he transferred it to "Apatostelis" because of confluent stigmatic lobes, as present in the true *S. hirtella*, but the stigmatic lobes in the illustration are separated. *Stelis impostor* also occurs on the eastern declivity of the Andes, but farther south. It is characterized by a loose raceme that exceeds the small, elliptical leaf. The pinkish brown flowers are distinguished by a long, disheveled, ciliated margin. The lip is shallowly subcordate and obtuse.

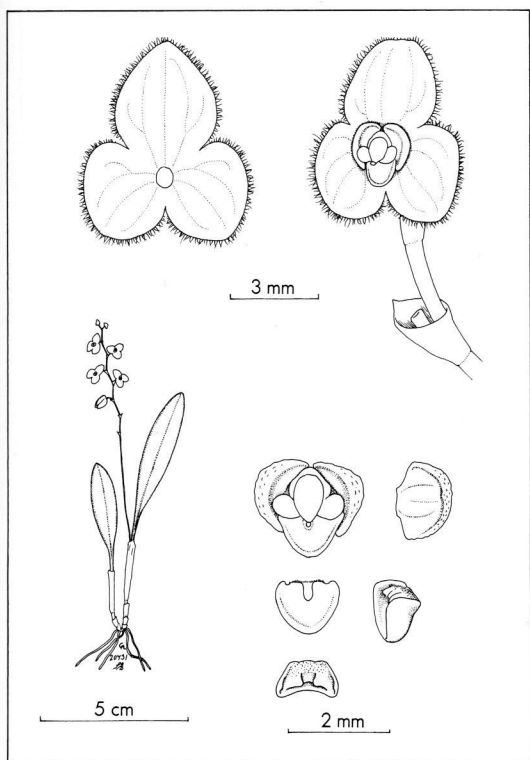


Fig. 162. *Stelis impostor*