

**Pleurothallis prolificans** Luer & Hirtz, sp. nov.

Fig. 51.

Ety.: From the Latin *prolificans*, "proliferating," referring to the production of ramicauls from the apex of other ramicauls.

Inter species subgeneris *Crocodeilanthidis* ramicaulibus prolificantibus, racemo solitario longissimo multifloro, spatha parva, folio ovato acuto brevipetiolato, sepalis liberis acutis intus pubescentibus, petalis trinervis, et labello oblongo bicalloso illi *P. piliferae* Lindl. similis distinguitur.

**Plant** large, coarse, terrestrial, scandent, roots slender. Ramicauls proliferating, stout to slender, erect to suberect, 5-20 cm long, with a close, tubular sheath near the middle and 2-3 imbricating sheaths about the base. **Leaf** erect, coriaceous, narrowly ovate, acute, shortly petiolate, 8-13 cm long, 1.5-3.5 cm wide, cuneate below into a petiole 0.5-1 cm long. **Inflorescence** one or occasionally two, slender, distichous to secund, densely and simultaneously many-flowered racemes, 20-40 cm long including the peduncle 3-12 cm long, subtended by a slender spathe 1 cm long, from an annulus ca. 5 mm below the abscission layer; floral bracts infundibular, 3 mm long, enclosing pedicel and ovary; pedicels 1 mm long; ovary 1.5 mm long; **sepals** greenish, suffused with purple or brown, subcarinate, long-pubescent within, the dorsal sepal ovate, acute, concave, 6.5 mm long, 3 mm wide, 3-veined, free from the lateral sepals,

the lateral sepals ovate, oblique, subacute, 6 mm long, 3 mm wide, 3-veined, connate 1 mm; **petals** translucent purple or brown, elliptical, obtuse, 3.5 mm long, 2 mm wide, 3-veined; **lip** yellow or green, fleshy, oblong, 3.5 mm long, 1.5 mm wide, the apex thick, rounded, the disc with a pair of erect, lobe-like, marginal calli below the middle, continuous with a pair of approximate, longitudinal calli, cleft between, the base concave below a basal callus, articulated with the bulbous tip of the column-foot; **column** stout, 1.75 mm long, the foot with the apex short, free, the anther, rostellum and stigma ventral.

ECUADOR: **Pichincha**: epiphytic between San Juan and Chiriboga, alt. 2450 m, 28 May 1988, *C. Luer & A. Hirtz 13699* (Holotype: MO; Isotypes: K, QCNE); old road from Quito to Santo Domingo, 12 Mar. 1976, *P. Taylor, J. & C. Luer 16305* (K); forest above Tandapi, alt. 2600 m, Mar. 1983, *A. Hirtz 1270* (MO); same area, alt. 2500 m, 31 Mar. 1985, *C. Luer, J. Luer, A. Hirtz & X. Hirtz 11012* (MO).

This species is apparently endemic in northwestern Ecuador. It is one of four prolific species known in the subgenus, the others being *P. expansa*, *P. galerasensis* and *P. virgata*. All four species are characterized by the climbing habit, but *prolificans* is distinguished by the ovate, very acute leaves, an inconspicuous spathe, one or occasionally two long racemes, and flowers similar to those of *P. pilifera*. For many years, *P. prolificans* was regarded as a prolific form of *P. pilifera*.

