

Vargasiella venezuelana *C. Schweinfurth sp. nov.*

Herba terrestris, elata, robusta, in parte inferiore decumbens. Caulis vaginis numerosis, adpressis, imbricantibus, foliiferis omnino celatus. Folia elliptica vel elliptico-oblonga, valde acuminata, ad basim articulatam longe attenuata, submembranacea, plicata. Inflorescentia e folii medii axilla exoriens, elata; pedunculus vaginis nonnullis brevibus, tubulatis remote ornatus; racemus peraxe pauciflorus. Flores mediocres, laete purpurei, subcrassi, cum sepalis longitudinaliter concavis. Sepalum dorsale expansum lanceolato-oblongum, obtusum vel acutum. Sepala lateralia valde similia sed paullo majora, obliqua. Petala sepalis multo breviora et latiora, ovalia vel oblongo-elliptica, obtusa vel subacuta. Labellum simplex, unguiculatum; unguis brevis sed distinctus, a basi oblonga abrupte dilatatus, carina mediana crassa, apice divisa ornatus; lamina leviter recurva, triangulari-ovata, apice rotundata, basi prominenter cordata. Columna crassa, brevis.

Plant terrestrial, tall and robust, with a decumbent, sparsely rooting stem, up to about 187.5 cm. long including the erect inflorescence. Roots very remote, solitary, fibrous, rather stout, finely pubescent. Stem entirely concealed by appressed, imbricating, evanescent, leaf-bearing, tubular sheaths of which the lower ones are scarious and disintegrating into fibres and the middle and upper ones are green and leaf-bearing. Leaves elliptic or elliptic-oblong, acuminate to a sharp point, long-narrowed below to an articulated base, submembranaceous, plicate, with five to seven prominent nerves, about 14–17 cm. long, up to 3.3 cm. wide. Inflorescence springing from the axil of one of the middle leaves, up to 52 cm. high; peduncle dull lavender, glabrous, about 43 cm. or less long, remotely provided with about six short, tubular, acute sheaths; raceme very loosely few- (about 9-) flowered, the rachis about 9 cm. or less long. Floral bracts small, narrowly lanceolate, concave, equaling about half of the pedicellate ovary which is up to 2.3 cm. long. Flowers rich purple, subfleshy, with the sepals projecting backward and the petals erect. Sepals longitudinally concave. Dorsal sepal when expanded lanceolate-oblong, obtuse or acute, about 1.5 cm. long and 4.4 mm. wide. Lateral sepals similar, obliquely lanceolate-oblong, obtuse or acute, about 1.6 cm. long and 6 mm. wide. Petals distinctly shorter and broader than the sepals, oval to oblong-elliptic, obtuse to subacute, somewhat concave, up to 1.2 cm. long and 7 mm. wide, the margins often somewhat irregular. Lip simple, clawed, with involute, undulate margins; claw short but distinct, abruptly dilated from an oblong base, about 3 mm. long, provided with a central fleshy keel that divides abruptly into two diverging branches; lamina gently recurved, triangular-ovate, rounded at the apex when expanded, conspicuously cordate at the base, about 1.1 cm. long in the cen-

ter and up to 1 cm. wide; disc fleshy-thickened in the middle below. Column stout, about 5 mm. high.

This plant is the second species referable to the remarkable South American genus *Vargasiella*. It is clearly distinct from *V. peruviana* C. Schweinf. in its greater vegetative proportions, its bright purple (rather than whitish pink) flowers, its narrower, longitudinally concave sepals and its distinctly clawed lip.

VENEZUELA: State of Bolívar, Chimantá Massif, northwestern part of summit of Abácapa-tepuí, at 2125-2300 meters altitude, in *Bonnetia* forest, April 13, 1953, *Julian A. Steyermark* 74914 (TYPE in Herb. Ames No. 69272).