

Pleurothallis punicea Luer, sp. nov.

Planta mediocris epiphytica rhizoma breviter repenti, caulibus secundariis purpureis anguste compressis, foliis puniceis anguste ellipticis, racemo paucifloro abbreviato, floribus carnosus purpureovittatis, sepalo dorsali anguste oblongo concavo, sepalis lateralibus ad medium connatis gibbosis acutis bicarinatis, petalis anguste ovatis obliquis serratis, labello spatulato longiunguiculato supra medium ovato obtuso serrulato.

Plant medium sized to small, epiphytic, shortly repent, the primary stem thick, producing a secondary stem about every 3-5 mm, branching; roots filiform, flexuous. Secondary stem purple, slender, laterally compressed, 3.5-7 cm long, monophyllous, with 2 thin tubular sheaths at the base. Leaf red-purple, coriaceous, narrowly elliptical, acute, tridenticulate, base cuneate, sessile, 7-11 × 1-1.5 cm. Inflorescence a short, few-flowered (commonly 3) raceme, about 1 cm long, from a spathe about 6 mm long, evanescent, at the base of the leaf; floral bract infundibular, 1.5 mm long; pedicel and ovary purple, each 1.5 mm long, flowers fleshy, not widely spreading; dorsal sepal narrowly oblong, acute, concave, 8 × 2 mm, with 3 purple stripes along the veins; lateral sepals connate to near the middle to form a deep mentum below the column-foot, narrowly ovate, oblique, bicarinate, otherwise similar to the dorsal sepal; petals white with a purple mid-vein, narrowly ovate, oblique, acute, margin serrate, 4 × 0.75 mm; lip spatulate, ovate above the middle, obtuse, serrulate, sides turned up with intramarginal lamellae, disc pink with a rounded callus near the apex, abruptly contracted just below the middle into a narrowly linear, concave claw, base minutely auriculate at the attachment to the column foot, 4 × 1.5 mm; column rose, terete, 2.5 mm long, with a prominent foot.

ETYMOLOGY: From the Latin *puniceus*, "red-purple," in reference to the color of the plant and flowers.

TYPE: ECUADOR: NAPO: epiphytic, about 15 km west of Tena, alt. 600 m, 26 July 1975, C. Luer, G. Luer & Wilhelm 519 (HOLOTYPE: SEL).

DISTRIBUTION: Ecuador.

The entire plant is heavily suffused with red-purple. The narrow, thickened leaves of this distinctive species are proportionately long, usually a little longer than the narrowly flattened stems that bear them. The purple-striped flowers with a prominent mentum are borne compactly and simultaneously on very short racemes of three or four flowers. The hard and fleshy flowers are only slightly spreading and they remain in seemingly fresh condition as the ovaries swell. The white petals are narrow and serrated with a solitary purple stripe. The pink lip is abruptly contracted into a long narrow claw just below the middle. The apical half is ovate and serrulate with a rounded swelling near the blunt apex.

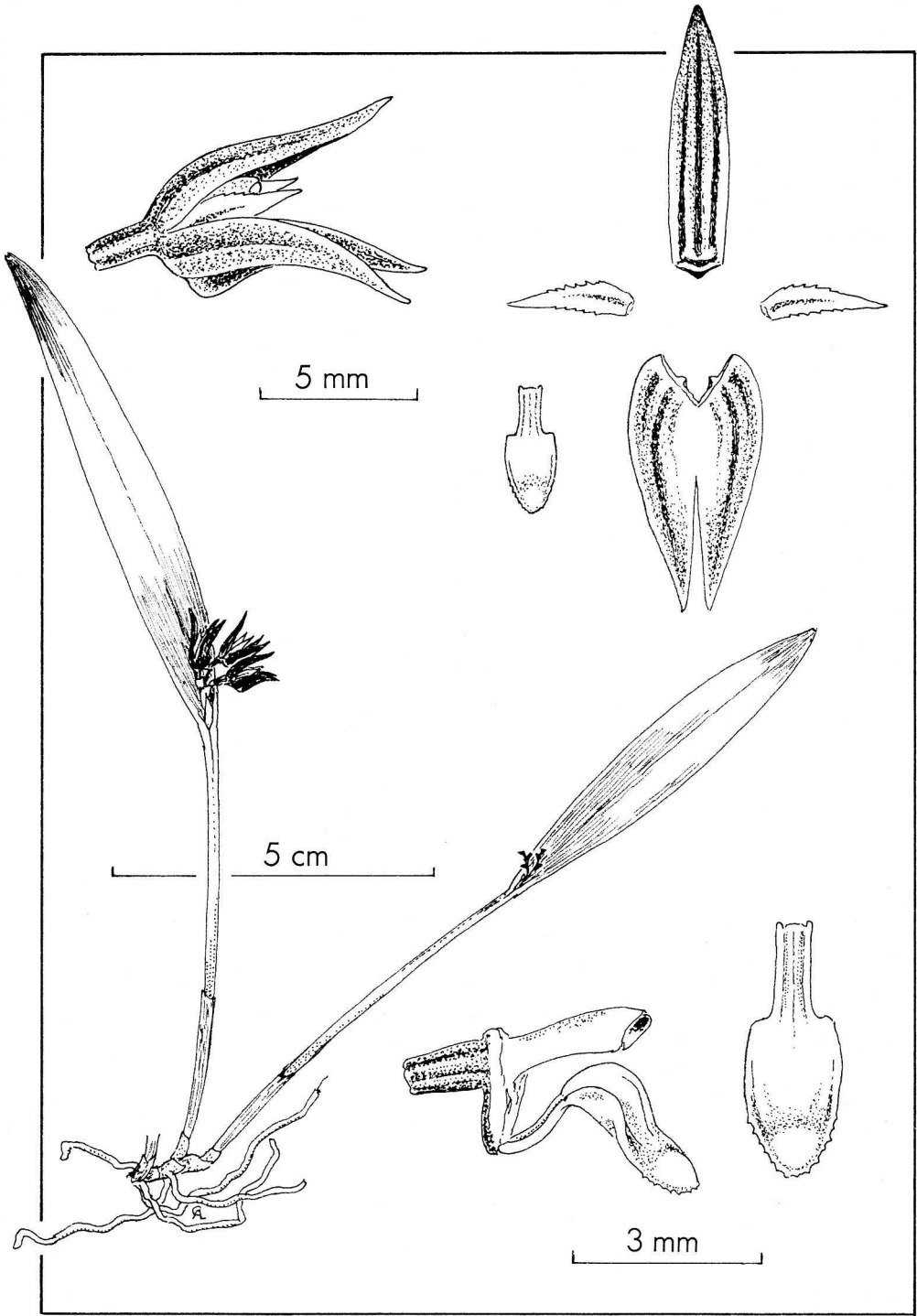


Figure 70. *PLEUROTHALLIS PUNICEA* Luer