

Brachionidium diaphanum Luer & Vásquez, sp. nov.

Planta parva repens, rhizomate elongato ramificantis, foliis ellipticis cauli longioribus, pedunculo gracili folio brevioris, flore grandi, sepalis petalisque diaphanis, sepalo mediano suborbiculato longicaudato, synsepalo ovato longicaudato apice fisso, petalis obovatis obliquis minute ciliatis longicaudatis, labello transverse oblongo, angulis basalibus acutis incurvis, disc cum callo ovoideo pubescenti.

Plant small, epiphytic in moss, the rhizome elongate, repent, branching, 3-12 mm long between secondary stems, enclosed by frequently shed, tubular sheaths; roots slender, from nodes. Secondary stems ascending, 4-5 mm long, enclosed by 2 tubular sheaths. Leaf erect, coriaceous, elliptical, acute, 15-22 mm long, 4-6 mm wide, narrowly cuneate below into a subpetiolate base. Inflorescence a solitary, non-resupinate flower borne by a slender peduncle 6-7 mm long, with a bract below the middle; floral bract infundibular, 4 mm long; pedicel 1 mm long, with a filament 4 mm long; ovary stout, 2.5 mm long; sepals and petals translucent white, the middle sepal suborbiculat-obovate, 9 mm long, 8.5 mm wide, 3-veined, the apex obtuse, acuminate into a filiform tail ca. 20 mm long, the lateral sepals connate into an ovate synsepal 12 mm long, 9 mm wide, 4-veined, the apex acute, acuminate into a tail ca. 20 mm long, split apically for ca. 10 mm; petals broadly obovate, oblique, 8.5 mm long, 7 mm wide, the apex obliquely acute, acuminate into a filiform tail ca. 18 mm long; lip yellow-white, transversely oblong, concave, 3 mm long, 7 mm wide expanded, the rounded apex bluntly apiculate, the basal angles acute, incurved, the broad base delicately hinged to the column-foot, the disc with an ovoid, pubescent callus, shallowly channeled; column stout, rose, 2 mm long; pollinia 8.

Etymology: From the Latin diaphanus, "colorless and nearly transparent," referring to qualities of the flower.

Type: Bolivia: Dept. of Cochabamba: Prov. of Chapare: epiphytic in moss in cloud forest near Pampa Tambo, alt. 2700 m, 28 Oct. 1979, R. Vásquez 197 (Holotype: SEL; Isotype: Herb. Vásquezianum), C. Luer illustr. 9407; same area, alt. 2500 m, 22 Jan. 1980, in fruit, C. Luer, J. Luer & R. Vásquez 497 (SEL).

This small, repent species is most noteworthy for the comparatively large, diaphanous flowers. The sepals and petals are provided with long, filiform tails, that of the synsepal being split for about half the length.