

Brachionidium galeatum Luer & Hirtz, sp. nov.

Ety.: From the Latin *galeatus*, "with a helmet," referring to the concave synsepal.

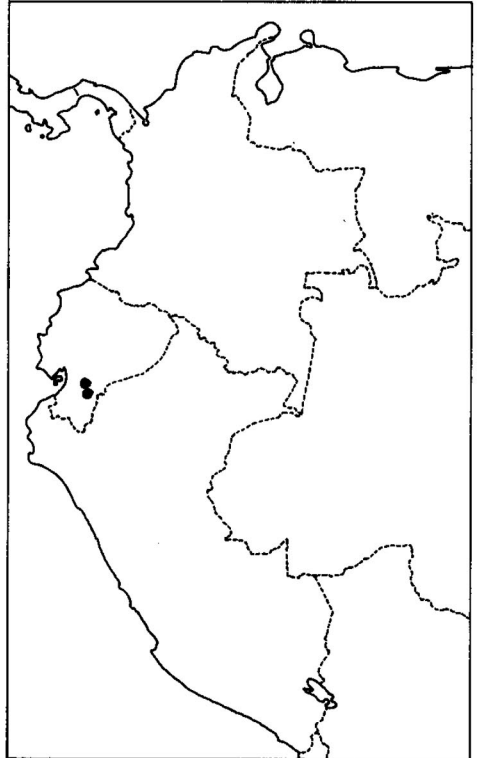
Planta mediocris erecta rhizomate crasso elongato vaginis furfuraceis, folio elliptico caroso rugoso-verrucoso, sepalis purpureis minute ciliatis, sepalo impari elliptico acuto, synsepalo lato profunde concavo, petalis ovatis obliquis acuminatis minute ciliatis, labello transverse ovato, angulis lateralibus acutis, apice rotundato apiculato, disco bicarinato verruculoso cum callo pubescenti ad centrum.

Plant medium in size, terrestrial, suberect to erect, up to 20 cm tall, the rhizomes relatively stout, sometimes branching, 5-12 mm long between ramicauls, with 3 loose, scurfy, long-mucronate sheaths, subfimbriate on the lower margins; roots coarse, produced from nodes near the base. Ramicauls suberect, slender, 3-5 mm long, enclosed by 2 tubular, mucronate sheaths. **Leaf** erect to suberect, thickly coriaceous, fleshy, denticulate above the middle, elliptical, subacute, apiculate, 10-14 mm long, 4-5 mm wide, with 7 prominent, coarsely rugose-verrucose veins, the base contracted into a petiole 1 mm long. **Inflorescence** a solitary, purple, non-resupinate flower borne by an erect, slender peduncle 13-20 mm long, with a mucronate bract near the middle and another at the base; floral bract, smooth, 2.5 mm long, long-mucronate, enclosing the pedicel and much of the ovary; pedicels thick, 0.5 mm long, with a protruding filament 3 mm long; ovary 2 mm long; sepals minutely short-ciliate, the middle sepal ovate, acute, slightly acuminate, 8-11 mm long, 3-6 mm wide, 3-veined, the lateral sepals completely connate into a suborbicular, deeply concave synsepal, 9-12 mm long, 5-10 mm wide, 6-13 mm wide expanded, 4-veined, the apex abruptly short-acuminate; petals minutely short-ciliate, ovate, oblique, acute, long-acuminate, 7.5-11 mm long, 2-3 mm wide, 3-veined; lip transversely ovate, 1.75 mm long, 3 mm wide, with acute lateral angles, the apex rounded, apiculate, with lightly verrucose submarginal calli, the disc with a central, elevated, flattened, pubescent callus, the broad base hinged to the column-foot; **column** stout, 1 mm long, bidentate; pollinia 8.

ECUADOR: Prov. of Morona-Santiago: terrestrial in cloud forest east of Gualaceo, alt. 2150 m, 16 May 1988, C. Luer, A. Hirtz, W. Flores, A. Andreetta & W. Teague 13398 (Holotype: MO); Cordillera del Condor, east of Chuchumbletza, alt. 1750 m, 21 May 1988, C. Luer, A. Hirtz, W. Flores, A. Andreetta & W. Teague 13565 (MO).

This species is apparently endemic in southeastern Ecuador. It is distinguished by the erect rhizome with scurfy sheaths and furrowed-rugose leaves. In habit it is similar to *B. rugosum* from a much higher altitude also in southeastern Ecuador. Both species are characterized by the small, erect habit with small, rugose leaves, but the rhizome of *B. galeatum* is stouter with scurfy sheaths.

The small, purple, tailless flowers of *B. galeatum*, are distinguished by the cucullate synsepal that is uppermost in the flower. It is proportionately large and deeply concave. The petals are relatively narrow and acuminate. The lip is transversely ovate with a pair of submarginal carinae on the front surface.



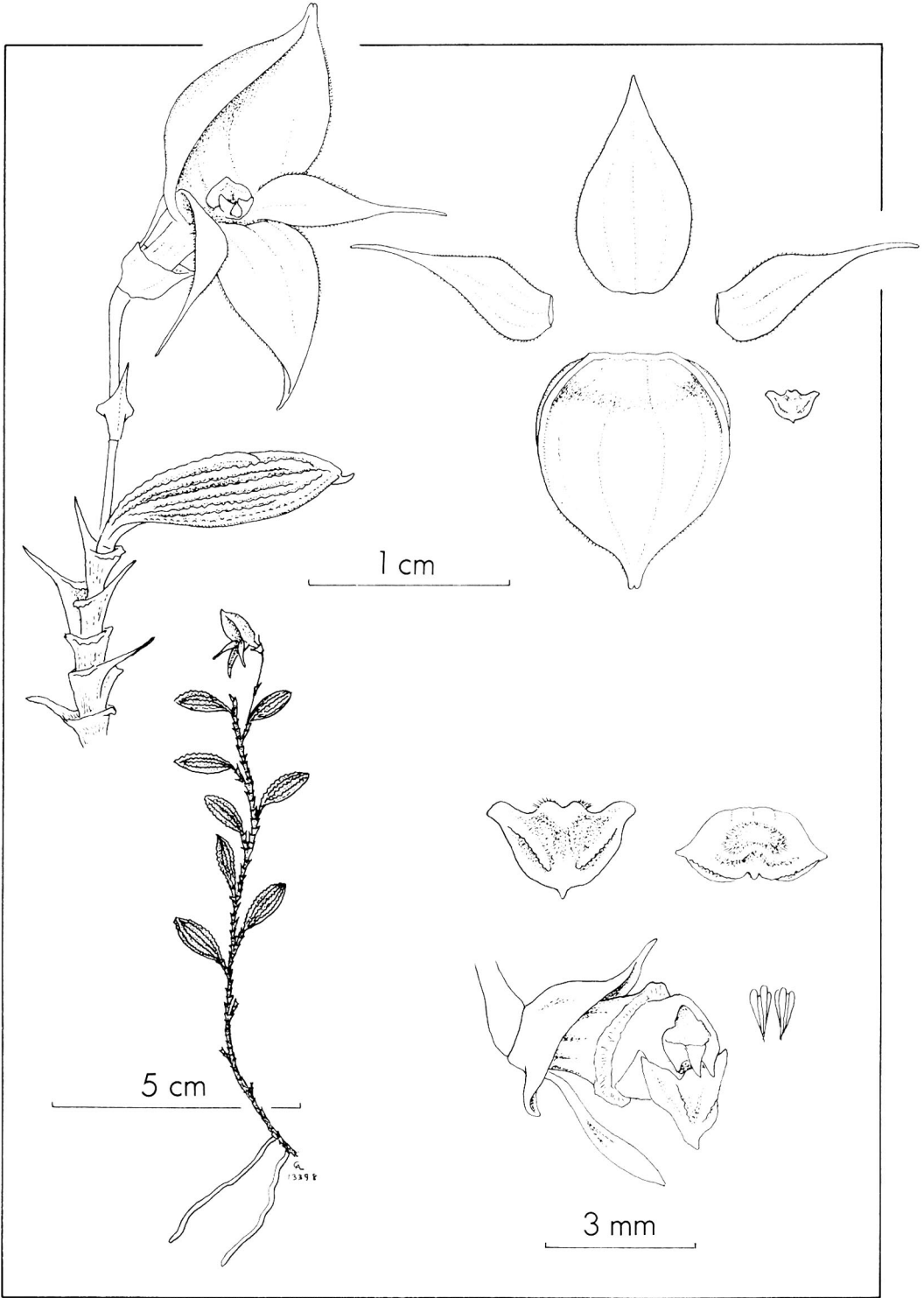


Plate 24. *Brachionidium galeatum* Luer & Hirtz