

Lepanthes mariposa Luer, sp. nov.

Planta perpusilla, inflorescentia brevi racemosa congesta super folio crasso elliptico, petalis late bilobis sepalis ellipticis subaequantibus, lobis suborbiculatis, labelli laminis suborbiculatis convexis, connectivis brevibus, appendice ligulata pubescenti.

Plant very small, epiphytic, densely caespitose; roots filamentous. Secondary stems erect to suberect, 7-25 mm long, enclosed by 3-5 microscopically pubescent lepanthiform sheaths. Leaf more or less spreading, thickly coriaceous, elliptical, acute, 10-16 mm long, 5-8.5 mm wide, the base cuneate into a petiole 2 mm long. Inflorescence a congested, secund, successively flowered raceme up to 3 mm long, borne on top of the leaf by a filiform peduncle 2-4 mm long; floral bract 0.75 mm long; pedicel 1 mm long; ovary 1 mm long; sepals light yellow, elliptical, subacute to obtuse, the dorsal sepal 2 mm long, 1.5 mm wide, connate to the lateral sepals for 0.25 mm, the lateral sepals 2 mm long, 1.25 mm wide, connate 0.5 mm; petals yellow to orange or orange-brown, more or less suffused with purple, glabrous, or at the most cellular, transversely bilobed, nearly as large as the sepals, 1 mm long, 2 mm wide, the lobes more or less suborbicular, subequal; lip bright purple, the blades cellular, suborbicular, convex, 1.2 mm long, the connectives cuneate, short, from near the base of the blades, to form a narrow body, connate to the column above the base, the appendix proportionately large, ligulate, pubescent; column 0.8 mm long, the anther dorsal, the stigma ventral.

Etymology: From the Spanish mariposa, "a butterfly," in allusion to the appearance of the petals.

Type: Panama: Prov. of Chiriqui: epiphytic in scrubby trees near Volcan, alt. 1350 m, 7 Dec. 1983, C. Luer, J. Luer & H. Butcher 9278 (Holotype: SEL): epiphytic, La Cordillera, near Volcan, alt. 1300 m, 9 Dec. 1983, C. Luer, J. Luer, A. Maduro & H. Butcher 9310 (SEL); epiphytic in cloud forest, Cerro Colorado, alt. 1700 m, 16 Feb. 1977 C. Luer, J. Luer & R. L. Dressler 1598 (SEL).

This floriferous little species with short racemes on top of the little ovate leaves is easily recognized by the large pair of petals that spread like the wings of a butterfly to either side of the lip and column.