

Lepanthes ridicula Luer, sp. nov.

Ety.: From the Latin *ridiculus*, "absurd," referring to the unusual morphology of the floral parts.

Planta mediocris, racemo folio ovato leviter concavo breviore, sepalis denticulatis recurvis, petalis oblongis erectis lobo inferiore subnullo, labello columnnam amplectenti apice breviter lobato cum appendice minuto orbiculato distinguitur.

Plant medium in size, epiphytic, caespitose; roots slender. Ramicauls erect, slender, 4-8 cm long, enclosed by 13-15 light brown, minutely ciliate, lepanthiform sheaths with dilated orifices. Leaf erect, coriaceous, elliptical, slightly concave, acute, acuminate, 25-43 mm long, 1.5-1.8 mm wide, the base cuneate into a petiole 1.5 mm long. Inflorescence a congested, successively few-flowered raceme, up to 5 mm long, borne by a filiform peduncle 10-30 mm long, along the dorsum of the leaf; floral bracts 1.5 mm long; pedicel 1.5 mm long; ovary 1.5 mm long; sepals dark orange, carinate, denticulate, the dorsal sepal ovate-triangular, subacute, 2.5 mm long, 1.5 mm wide, 3-veined, connate to the lateral sepals for 0.5 mm, with the margins revolute a short distance above the base, the lateral sepals triangular, oblique, acute, reflexed below the middle, 2.25 mm long, 1.5 mm wide, 2-veined, connate 0.25 mm; petals dark orange, purple at the base, glabrous, the upper lobe oblong, obtuse, erect, 1.5 mm long, 0.5 mm wide, the lower lobe reduced to 0.1 mm; lip orange, glabrous, widely bilobed, 1.5 mm long, with the lobes broad, incurved, surrounding the column, the apices free, 0.25 mm long, with a small, spherical appendix in the sinus, the base connate to the base of the column; column 1 mm long, anther dorsal, stigma ventral.

PANAMA: Chiriquí, obtained from Andres Maduro, cultivated at J & L Orchids, Easton, CT, 19 June 1998, C. Luer 18827 (Holotype: MO).

Vegetatively, this species does not seem unusual, but each of the floral parts is unusual. The dorsal sepal is reflexed with the denticulate margins recurved a short distance above the broad base. The lateral sepals are triangular, denticulate and convex below the middle, and recurved above the middle whereupon they become slightly concave. The oblong petals stand erect with the lower lobe reduced to a tiny nubbin. The lip is similar to that of some species of subgenus *Brachycladum* with broadly expanded lateral lobes surrounding the column. Anteriorly, the lip is shallowly divided into a pair of incurved, overlapping apices with a minute, rounded appendix between.

