

***Pleurothallis acestrophylla* Luer, sp. nov.**

Planta perparva epiphytica caespitosa, caulibus secundariis filiformibus teretibus declinatis unifoliatis, folio anguste lineari acuto, floribus solitariis successivis bilabiatis atropurpureis pusillis, sepalo dorsali et synsepalo ellipticis obtusis, petalis anguste linearibus, labello oblongo obtuso.

Plant very small, epiphytic, caespitose; roots filamentous, flexuous. Secondary stem filiform, terete, declining, 1-7 cm long, with 2 tubular sheaths on the lower third, monophyllous. Leaf long, linear, narrow, fleshy, subterete to conduplicate, acute, tridenticulate, base very narrowly cuneate, sessile, 4-7 cm \times 3-5 mm. Inflorescence single-flowered, fasciculate, red-purple, from a 5 mm spathe at the base of the leaf; floral bract about 3 mm long; pedicel about 4 mm long; ovary 2 mm long; dorsal sepal elliptic, subacute to obtuse, 3.5 \times 2 mm, 3-veined; lateral sepals united into a broadly ovate synsepal, obtuse, 3 \times 2.5 mm, 4-veined; petals dark red, linear, acute, 2.5 \times 0.5 mm, 1-veined; lip oblong-ovate, obtuse to rounded, broadly hinged to the base of the column, margin microscopically erose below the middle, disc plain, 2.25 \times 1.5 mm; column 1 \times 1 mm, with an obsolescent foot.

ETYMOLOGY: From the Greek *acestra*, "a darning needle," and *phyllon*, "leaf," in allusion to the slender, needle-like leaf.

TYPE: ECUADOR: PASTAZA: epiphytic in the environs of Puyo, alt. 750 m, 29 July 1975, C. Luer, G. Luer & Wilhelm 485 (HOLOTYPE: SEL); TUNGURAHUA: epiphytic near Rio Negro, alt. 1200 m, 4 March 1963, Dodson & Thien 2320 (SEL).

DISTRIBUTION: Ecuador.

Pleurothallis acestrophylla is a frail little species with stems like soft wire. With the weight of the slender leaves the stems bend and droop from their point of origin. The tiny clustered stems grow on the mossy trunks of trees in the rain forest in the region of the Pastaza River in the Oriente of Ecuador where they are probably endemic.

The needle-like leaves, at least as long as their supporting stems, are very narrow, but thick and centrally channeled. They resemble a grooved director, a simple little instrument used in surgery. The small purple flowers, which are produced singly, perch wide openly upon the base of the leaf.

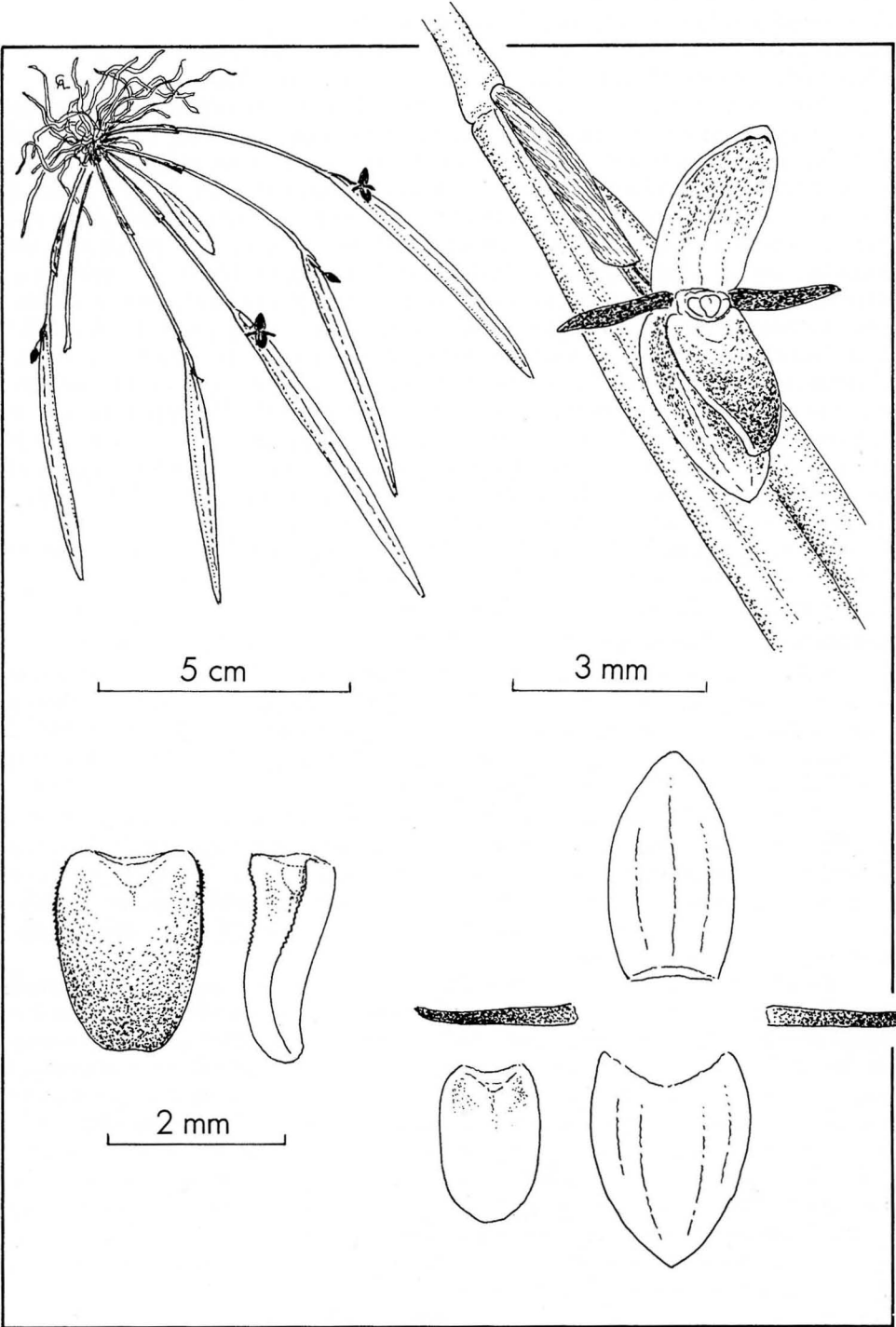


Figure 47. *PLEUROTHALLIS ACESTROPHYLLA* Luer