

*Pleurothallis variabilis* Luer, sp. nov.

Planta mediocris vel magna caespitosa, caulibus secundariis elatis teretibus, foliis anguste ovato-linearibus acutis basi leviter cordato, flore successivo albescenti, luteo vel purpureo, sepalo dorsali ovato, synsepalo late cordato concavo, petalis reflexis trapeziformibus integris acuminatis, labello late triangulari convexo obtuso carina supra basim rotundato.

Plant medium sized to large, epiphytic to terrestrial, caespitose; roots numerous, slender, fasciculate. Secondary stems slender, erect, terete, unifoliolate, 14-37 cm long, with a long, close, tubular sheath below the middle and 1-2 others at the base. Leaf erect to suberect to horizontal, coriaceous, narrowly linear-ovate, 9-18 cm long, 1.5-3 cm wide, the apex acute, tridenticulate, the base shallowly cordate, sessile. Inflorescence a single, non-rotated, widely spread, glabrous, creamy-white, yellow or purple flower produced successively in a fascicle from a 1.5 cm long spathe at the base of the leaf; peduncles 3-5 mm long; floral bract 5-13 mm long; pedicel 10-17 mm long; ovary 7-10 mm long; middle sepal ovate, narrowly rounded, 11-12 mm long, 6-7.5 mm wide, 3-veined; lateral sepals connate into a deeply concave, cordate, obtuse lamina 9-10 mm long, 9-10 mm wide; petals reflexed, thick, oblong-trapeziform, 8.5-10 mm long, 2-3 mm wide below the middle, acuminate above the middle to the subacute apex, the base broadly recurved; lip thick, broadly triangular, convex 3.5-5.25 mm long, 3.5-4.75 mm wide, the apex rounded to obtuse, the basal angles subacute, the base broad, deflexed, the glenion elevated on a protuding, rounded carina above the base; column stout, 1.5 mm long, 3 mm wide, the bulbous foot, 2 mm long, 3 mm wide, cellular-glandular.

ETYMOLOGY: From the Latin *variabilis*, "variable," referring to the different colors and positions of the flowers.

TYPE: ECUADOR: IMBABURA: terrestrial on the road cut in cloud forest above Apuela, alt. ca. 2500 m, 8 Feb. 1979, C. Luer, J. Luer, R. Escobar & A. Hirtz 3909 (HOLOTYPE: SEL).

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL EXAMINED: ECUADOR: NAPO: epiphytic in cloud forest below Papallacta, alt. ca. 2800 m, 28 Aug. 1978, C. Luer, J. Luer & A. Andreetta 3432 (SEL).

DISTRIBUTION: Ecuador.

Although similar in many respects to many other related species in the "cordate-leaved" complex, *P. variabilis* may be recognized by the long, slender secondary stems, long, narrow, shallowly cordate leaves, "non-rotated" flowers with entire, reflexed petals, and a broad, convex, obtuse, triangular lip with a prominent, rounded callus above the base. The colors of the flowers vary from ivory (Imbabura) to yellow or purple (Napó). When the leaf grows more or less erect (Imbabura), the flower presents itself with the lip lowermost, but when the leaf grows horizontally (Napó), the flower remains nonresupinate, the lip contained within the cucullate synsepal and the reflexed petals acting like balancing arms.