

PLEUROTHALLIS ALEXII A.H.Heller, sp.nov.

Planta epiphytica, erecta. Foliis linearo-ligulatis, coriaceis, ad apicem tridentatis. Inflorescentiis filiformibus, paulo elongatis, 2-floribus. Floris nutantibus, campanulatis. Petalis carnosissimis, concavis. Labellum ligulatum, sulcatum, ad apicem convexum, verruculosum, ad margine parce glanduloso-pilosum, supra basin auriculae parvae rotundatae ornatae.

Plant caespitose, about 5 cm tall, the rhizome creeping, bearing secondary stems at intervals of 1 - 2 mm. Secondary stems 1 - 1.5 mm long, concealed by scarious sheaths up to 1 mm long which also enclose the petiole. Leaves linear-ligulate, tridentate at apex, coriaceous, including the 1 cm long petiole to about 5 cm long, to 7 mm broad at middle. Inflorescence horizontal for half its length, then obliquely erect, the peduncle reddish-green, filiform, 6 - 8 cm long, with three nodes on basal third each with a 4 mm appressed sheath, with a fourth somewhat inflated sheath 5 mm long at middle. Flowers two, borne successively, large for the plant, about 1.5 cm long, nodding, the apical half of sepals dark wine-purple, the lower half striped with white; petals dark wine-purple; lip yellowish with red calli and an ochre apex; column ochraceous, with the anterior margin and foot reddish, the anther-cap white. Pedicellate ovary filiform, arcuate, verruculose above, maroon in color, 8 mm long. Sepals connate at base, 3-nerved, the exterior sparsely verrucose, the dorsal one ovate-lanceolate, shortly acuminate, 1.3 cm long and 3.8 mm broad near base, concave there, otherwise convex, the midnerve strongly carinate, the lateral nerves slightly carinate; lateral sepals connate to 3 mm from apex, 1.5 cm long and 7 mm broad when expanded, the midnerve ancipitously carinate. Petals very fleshy, concave, the surface sparsely glandular, 3.5 mm long and 2 mm broad above the middle, obliquely expanded upwards on anterior margin, the apex subacute. Lip ligulate, sulcate, 4 mm long and 1.8 mm broad above middle, the apical part convex, the apex broadly rounded and broadly retuse, with an erose apicule on the underside; a rounded auricle is set on each side of the narrowed portion about one-third from base; entire surface finely verruculose, the margins sparsely glandular-pilose; calli paired, small, basal, pilose. Column conspicuously clavate, broadly winged, 3 mm long, with a 2 mm long foot, elevated at base of foot and glandular on sides, the apex with three teeth, the posterior one broad and denticulate, the lateral ones acuminate.

NICARAGUA: Dept. Matagalpa: Cerro Matapalo (Tuma Grade), epiphytic, alt. about 3200 feet, July 1965, A. H. Heller 8631 (Type in Field Museum of Natural History).

A pickled specimen is on deposit at the Oakes Ames Orchid Herbarium of Harvard University.

Pleurothallis Alexii appears to have no particularly close allies in the Central American flora. It can be compared with the widespread P. Brighamii S. Wats., but differs in its drooping campanulate flowers, the very fleshy concave petals, and the structure of the lip. It is named to honor the junior author of this series of studies.

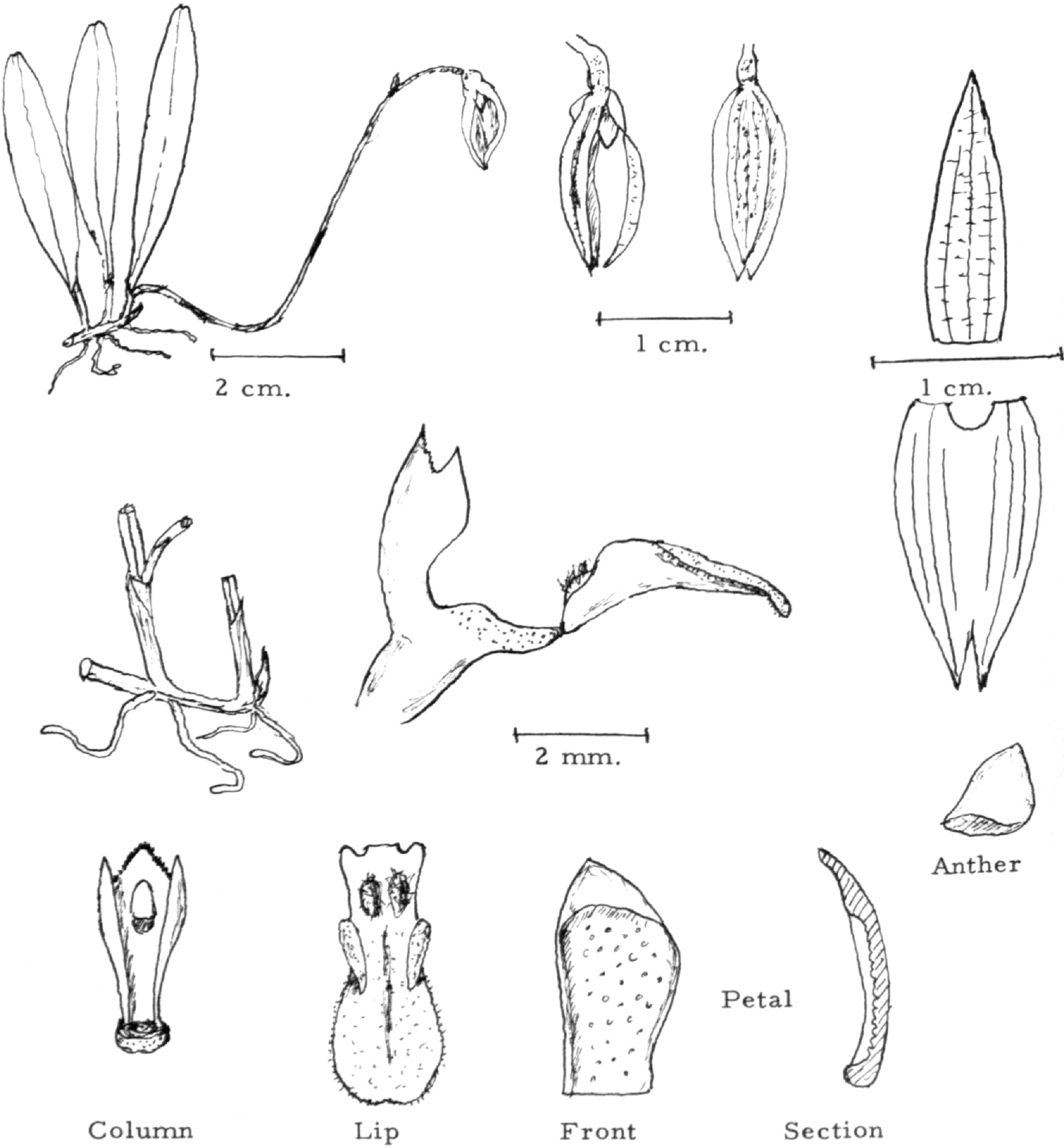


Plate 4. Pleurothallis Alexii A. H. Heller, sp. nov.