

Pleurothallis cuspidata Luer, sp. nov.

Planta parva epiphytica caespitosa, caulibus secundariis abbreviatis vaginatis unifoliatis, foliis coriaceis obovatis obtusis petiolatis, racemo filiformi quam foliis longiore fractiflexo paucifloro, floribus atropurpureis successivis, sepalo dorsali ovato acuminato attenuato, synsepalo ovato base pubescenti bidentato, petalis glabris base ovatis apice acuminatis anguste cuspidatis, labello subpanduriformi ciliato apice rotundato base biauriculato disco carinato.

Plant small, epiphytic, densely caespitose, roots slender, flexuous. Secondary stems abbreviated, 3-7 mm long, enclosed by 2 ribbed sheaths, unifoliolate. Leaf coriaceous, obovate, subacute to obtuse, tridenticulate, the middle tooth prominent, the base narrowly cuneate into a channeled petiole, 2-3.5 cm long including the petiole, 7-9 mm wide. Inflorescence a few-flowered (6-8), fractiflex raceme to 5 cm long, the maroon flowers produced singly and successively; peduncle filiform, from a node on the secondary stem; floral bract oblique, acute, 1-2 mm long; pedicel slender, 2-3 mm long; ovary 1.5 mm long; dorsal sepal ovate, acuminate, the apex long-attenuate, glabrous, 9 mm long, 2.5 mm wide; lateral sepals connate to near the attenuated apices into an ovate, bidentate synsepal, forming a mentum below the column-foot, pubescent centrally, 9 mm long, 3.5 mm wide, bicarinate; petals ovate in the basal third, 1.75 mm broad, the upper two-thirds narrowly attenuate-filiform, total length 7.5 mm, glabrous; lip subpandurate, the margins ciliate, the apex rounded and recurved, the base delicately hinged to the column-foot, minutely biauriculate, the disc with a longitudinal callus from the base, becoming grooved as it courses toward the apex, 2.5 mm long, 1.25 mm wide; column stout, 2.5 mm long, with a concave foot.

ETYMOLOGY: From the Latin *cuspidatus*, "pointed" (*cuspis*, "point"), in reference to the long-pointed petals.

TYPE: PANAMA: CHIRIQUI: epiphytic in elfin cloud forest on Cerro Hornito, alt. ca. 1700 m, 15 Dec. 1976, C. Luer, A. Luer, R. L. Dressler, N. H. Williams & F. L. Stevenson 1335 (HOLOTYPE: SEL).

DISTRIBUTION: Panama.

This little species of the cloud forest belongs to the large group of small species characterized by densely caespitose, abbreviated secondary stems bearing obovate leaves. The sepals and petals of the relatively large, widely spread flowers are attenuated, the petals remarkably so. The lip bespeaks an alliance with *Pleurothallis abjecta* Ames and *P. barbulata* Lindl., both of which produce minute flowers in compact racemes or fascicles. *Pleurothallis cuspidata* is apparently more closely allied to the racemose *P. abbreviata* Schltr. and *P. fractiflexa* Ames & Schweinf. The former is a much smaller plant with less attenuate petals, and the latter is distinguished by pubescent petals.

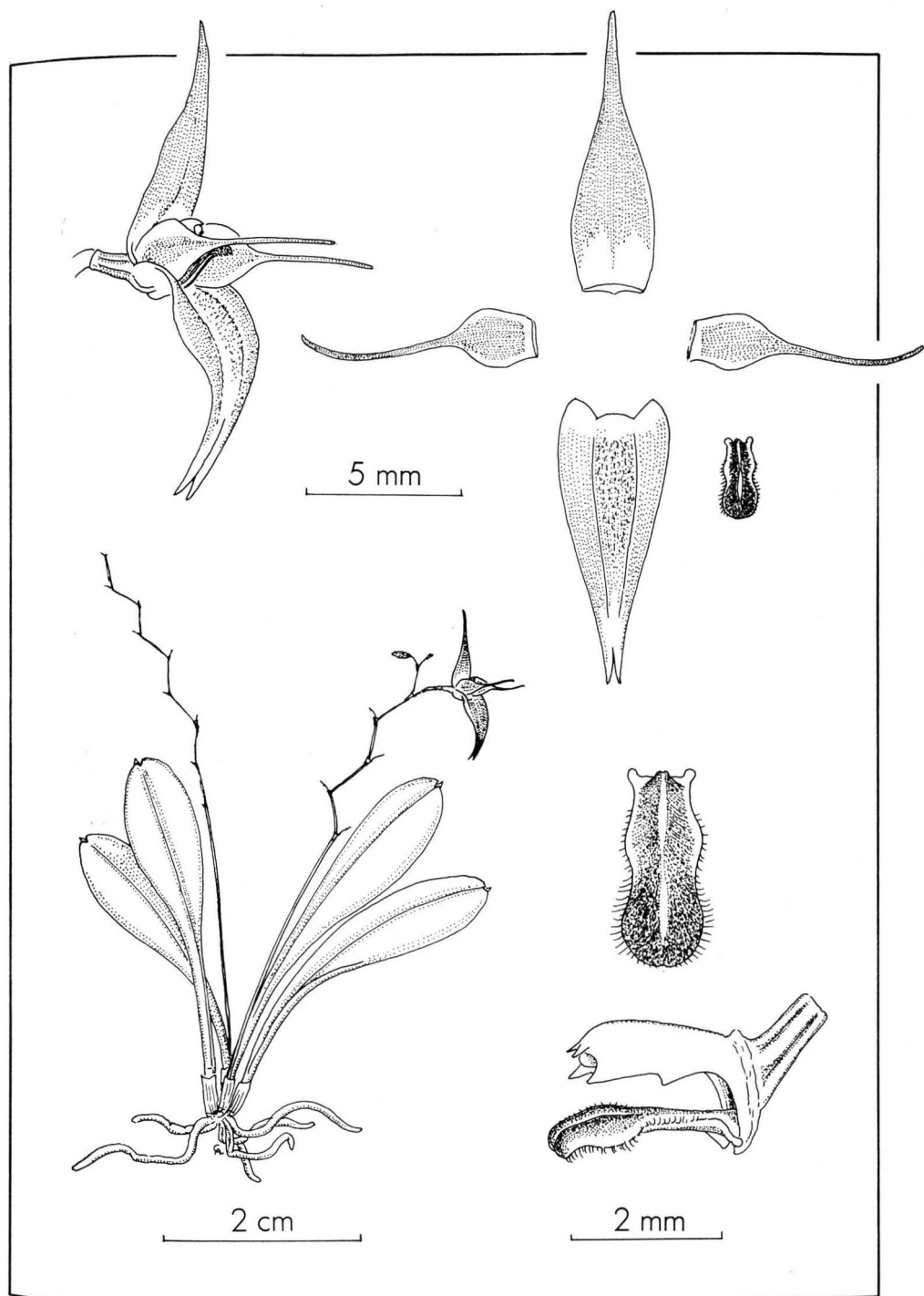


Figure 241. *PLEUROTHALLIS CUSPIDATA* Luer