

132. *Stelis alternans* Luer & Hirtz, sp. nov.

Ety.: From the Latin *alternans*, "alternating," referring to the flowers in the raceme.

Planta parva caespitosa, racemo stricto congesto floribus alternantibus folio anguste lineari-elliptico longiore, sepalis ovatis obtusis minutissime papilloso, sepalo dorsali sepalis lateralibus majoribus, petalis transverse oblongis planis, et labello subdiscoideo.

Plant small, epiphytic, caespitose; roots slender. Ramicauls erect, 1.5-2 cm long, enclosed by a tubular sheath, and 2 others at the base. **Leaf** erect, coriaceous, narrowly linear-elliptical, acute, 6-8 cm long including an ill-defined petiole ca. 1 cm long, the blade 0.7-0.8 cm wide, narrowly cuneate below into the base. **Inflorescence** an erect, congested, distichous, mostly simultaneously many-flowered raceme with the flowers alternating, facing the same direction, 11-12 cm long including the peduncle 5-6 cm long, with a slender spathe 0.8 cm long at the base of the leaf; floral bracts oblique, obtuse, 1.5 mm long; pedicels 1 mm long; ovary 1 mm long; all floral parts purple, **sepals** cellular-papillose within, ovate, obtuse, connate 1 mm basally, the dorsal sepal 2.5 mm long, 2.3 mm wide, 3-veined, the lateral sepals oblique, 1.5 mm long, 2.3 mm wide, 3-veined; **petals** thin, transversely oblong with rounded ends, the apex transverse, 0.6 mm long, 1.2 mm wide, 3-veined, shallowly concave, the apical margin minimally thickened; **lip** thick, shallowly subdiscoide, 0.4 mm long, 0.8 mm wide, 0.8 mm deep, smooth anteriorly with the apical margin rounded, the bar with a proportionately large glenion, the dorsum flat, variably pubescent, the base broadly hinged to the base of the column; **column** stout, 0.5 mm long, 1 mm wide, the foot obsolescent, the anther and the bilobed stigma apical.

Morona-Santiago: Gualaquiza, alt. 1300 m, cultivated by Ecuagenera, 5 July 2002, A. Hirtz 8356 (Holotype: MO), C. Luer illustr. 20213; Limón, cultivated by Ecuagenera, 19 Apr. 2001, A. Hirtz 7565 (MO), C. Luer illustr. 20468.

This dainty species from southeastern Ecuador is recognized by narrow leaves borne by much shorter ramicauls, and surpassed by a slender, congested raceme of purple flowers. Each flower is held 45° from the rachis in two evenly spaced rows with all the flowers facing in the same direction. The dorsal sepal is significantly larger than the oblique laterals. The petals are transverse and shallowly concave, and the lip is shallowly discoid with the base sparsely to densely pubescent.

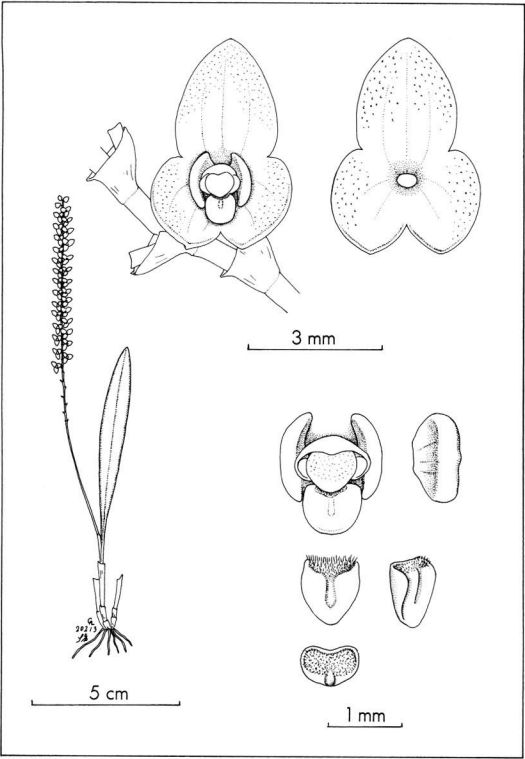


Fig. 132. *Stelis alternans*