

136. *Stelis brachyrachis* Luer & Hirtz, sp. nov.

Ety.: From the Greek *brachyrachis*, "short rachis," referring to the short raceme.

Planta parva, racemo laxo paucifloro grandibracteato foliis brevior, sepalis late ovatis ciliatis, et labello subrotundo supra medium concavo.

Plant small, epiphytic, densely caespitose; roots slender. Ramicauls erect, stout, 1.5-3.5 cm long, enclosed by 2 loose, tubular sheaths, with another at the base. **Leaf** erect, coriaceous, elliptical, subacute to obtuse, 4-8 cm long, 1-1.5 cm wide, cuneate below into a petiole 1.5-3 cm long. **Inflorescence** an erect, slightly flexuous, distichous, successively few-flowered raceme, 3-5 cm long including the peduncle ca. 1 cm long, with 1-2 flowers open simultaneously, with a slender spathe 0.5 cm long, from an annulus below the apex of the ramicaul; floral bracts proportionately large, infundibular, oblique, acute, 5 mm long; pedicels 2 mm long; ovary 2 mm long; **sepals** purple-brown below the middle, green above the middle, expanded, ciliate, pubescent only near the margins, broadly ovate, obtuse, connate basally, the dorsal sepal 5 mm long, 5.5 mm wide, 5-veined, the lateral sepals oblique, 4 mm long, 4.5 mm wide, 5-veined; **petals** purple with white edge, transversely suboblong, the apex broadly rounded, slightly thickened on the edge, 1 mm long, 1.75 mm wide, 3-veined, shallowly concave; **lip** rose, suborbicular, 0.6 mm long, 1.3 mm wide, 1.3 mm deep, the apex broadly rounded with a thin margin, shallowly concave anteriorly with a superficial glenion, the dorsum featureless but pubescent at the angles, the base broadly truncate, hinged to the base of the column; **column** stout, 1.5 mm long, 1.5 mm wide, the foot obsolescent, the anther and the bilobed stigma apical.

Morona-Santiago: new road to Guamote west of Mascalas, alt. 2300 m, 2 Mar. 2001, C. Luer, J. Luer & A. Hirtz 19610 (Holotype: MO).

This species is apparently endemic on the eastern slope of the Andes of central Ecuador. It is characterized by short ramicauls; twice longer, elliptical leaves; and a slightly shorter, loosely few-flowered raceme. The floral bracts are large and conspicuous; the much shorter peduncle bears the flower over the margin. The sepals are broadly ovate and ciliate; the petals are wide and thin; and the lip is concave within the rounded apical margin.

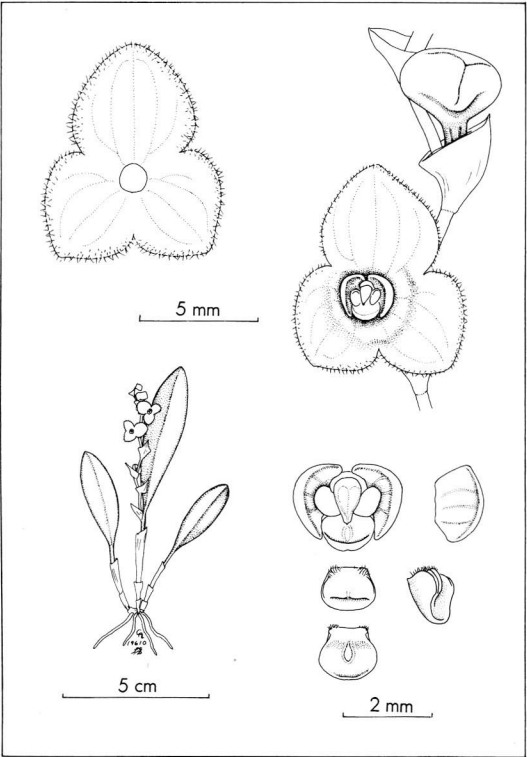


Fig. 135. *Stelis brachyrachis*