

PLEUROTHALLIS CARNOSILABIA Heller & Hawkes, sp. nov.

Planta caespitosa, variabilis, caulis secundariis gracilis, vaginae striatae, inflatae ornatis. Floribus fere duobus. Labellum late ligulatum, carnosum, longitudine cavae duae papillo-sae ornatae, ad basin lobis parvis tenuis porrectis dolabri-formis ornatis.

Plant caespitose, variable in size, in bloom from 2.5 to 12 cm tall, the secondary stems slender, 7 mm - 4 cm long, concealed by two scarious, striated, somewhat inflated sheaths. Leaves coriaceous, elliptic to oblong-elliptic, coriaceous, 2 - 7.5 cm long including the 5 mm long petiole, 1.2 cm broad at middle, the apex tridentate, with the middle tooth the longest. Inflorescence from base of petiole, arising from a sheath 2 - 3 mm long, lax, up to 2 cm long, spreading, usually 2-flowered, the peduncle flexuose, filiform; old peduncles frequently persist. Floral bracts 3 mm long, white, tubular, with an inflated apex, connate from above middle to base, with an apicule at the triangular apex. Pedicellate ovary arcuate, 5 - 6 mm long, reddish. Flowers about 1.5 cm long, the sepals magenta, white at base; petals green with vivid maroon nerves; lip white, with basal part of callus brownish-red, with three short red carinate nerves on underside; column maroon. Sepals 8 mm long, the dorsal joined to laterals above base, elliptic-lanceolate, subacute, concave, 4 mm broad at middle, with three carinate nerves on back, sparsely verrucose between these; laterals connate almost to the fleshy acute recurved apex, 6 mm broad when expanded, 4-nerved, the nerves carinate, broadly ovate-elliptic. Petals somewhat oblique and narrowed toward base, 4.5 mm long and 2.1 mm broad, spreading, sub-spatulate to obelliptic, with three prominent raised papillose veins on inner surface, the one on anterior margin raised as an erect lobule above the middle, the surface verrucose between the nerves, the apex rounded, cucullate and muricate. Lip 6.5 mm long and 3.5 mm broad above the middle, the lamina broadly ligulate, entire surface except apex scurfy, the apex smooth, rounded, sub-bulbose; unusual longitudinal papillose excavations occur on each side of median callus in upper half of lip; the base of the lip bears two thin porrect dolabriform lobes 2 mm long; disc with a verruculose raised callus above base of claw, 1 mm broad near base and near apex, extending down center of lip to within 1 mm of tip about, narrowed in middle where it is strongly pilose-verrucose; thick margins of the lip curve inwards to mask some of the excavations. Column 2.5 mm long, with a foot 1 mm long, narrowing upward to a triangular, acute, denticulate apex, the stigmatic cavity large, orbicular, medial; anther erect, vaguely sigmoid and narrow in lateral view, with denticulate apex; pollinia 2, linear, white, erect and parallel to column in natural position.

NICARAGUA: Dept. Chontales: Cerro Pistacho, Babiloni a district, epiphytic on large mossy tree, alt. 2150 feet, May 1962 (flowering June and July), A. H. Heller 6537 (Type in Oakes Ames Orchid Herbarium of Harvard University).

There are apparently no Central American species of Pleurothallis even remotely related to P. carnosilabia. The closest ally would seem to be the Colombian P. triquetra Schltr., in that the lip has somewhat similar longitudinal excavations, but the present taxon differs widely in other respects. The basal part of the lip is much like that of P. pteroglossa Schltr., also from Colombia.

The specific epithet is given in allusion to the extremely fleshy labellum.