



Lepanthes elizabethae (Pleurothallidinae, Orchidaceae), a new species from Colombia

OSCAR ALEJANDRO PÉREZ-ESCOBAR¹, MARTA KOLANOWSKA² & EDICSON PARRA-SÁNCHEZ³

¹Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Menzinger Straße 67, D–80 638, Munich, Germany; email: oapereze@yahoo.com

²Department of Plant Taxonomy and Nature Conservation, University of Gdańsk, ul. Wita Stwosza 59, 80–308 Gdańsk, Poland

³Facultad de Biología, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Carrera 45 No 26–85, Bogotá, Colombia

Introduction

With over 800 species, *Lepanthes* Swartz (1799: 85) is one of the largest genera in Pleurothallidinae (Orchidaceae). It ranges from southern Mexico to Bolivia and northern Brazil. A high level of endemism is observed in the Andes of Colombia and Ecuador (Pridgeon 2005). Despite the large number of species described by Luer (1986, 1994, 1996, 2009), several new *Lepanthes* have been described by other authors (Catling & Catling 1988, Tremblay & Ackerman 1993, Ortiz 1998, Pupulin & Bogarín 2004, Pupulin *et al.* 2010).

Plants of *Lepanthes* usually grow epiphytically in cloud forests and paramos, but some on rocks and the ground have also been reported (Farfán *et al.* 2003). Species of *Lepanthes* are easily recognized by their lepanthiform sheaths, successive inflorescences arising from the upper- or underside of the leaf, usually transversely bilobed petals and often bilobed lip (Farfán *et al.* 2003), usually with an appendix attached to the sinus of the body. Inflorescences are rarely simultaneous, as in *L. foreroi* P.Ortiz, O.Pérez & E.Sánchez (2009: 137) and *L. pleurorachis* Luer (1983: 363). The greatest species diversity is found in Colombia with 305 species (Vieira pers. com). New taxa and unreported species for the Colombian flora are described and published every year (Ortiz *et al.* 2009, 2010, Calderón 2010, Pérez *et al.* 2010).

During field studies conducted in the department of Valle del Cauca, a new *Lepanthes* was found. It resembles *L. lycocephala* Luer & Escobar (1984: 147), from which it differs by the plant size and shape of upper lobes of petals, lip blades and lip appendix.

Lepanthes elizabethae O.Pérez, Kolan & E.Parra, *sp. nov.* (Figs. 1, 2)

Type:—COLOMBIA. Valle del Cauca: Municipio de Yumbo, Corregimiento de DAPA, Bosque de Niebla residual entre las fincas Cielo Azul y DEBUSALE, ca. 1800 m, 10 October 2010, Pérez, González & Buß 999 (holotype CUVC!).

Lepanthes elizabethae is similar to *L. lycocephala*, from which it is easily distinguished by the minute plant habit, triangular, strongly acuminate upper lobe of the petals, dolabriform blades of the lip without erect lobes near the base, and rounded, trilobed appendix of the lip.

Epiphytic, minute *plant*, up to 13 mm tall. *Roots* filiform, 0.5 mm in diameter. *Ramicaul* slender, erect, ca. 3.7 mm, covered by 2–4 ribbed lepanthiform sheaths with the ribs minutely denticulate and ostia minutely ciliate. *Leaves* suborbicular to obovate, obtuse, the apex slightly folded towards the abaxial surface, the base cuneate, contracted into a petiole 0.8 mm long, margin slightly undulate, shortly ciliate, 7.4 × ca. 5.0 mm. *Inflorescence* racemose, secund, successive, dense, 3.2 mm long, including the peduncle 1.6 mm long, borne from the abaxial surface of the leaf. Floral bracts cylindrical, 0.3–0.5 mm long. *Pedicel* 1 mm; *ovary* 1.2 mm long, smooth. *Flowers* minute, pink-reddish; slightly stained with yellow at the base of the sepals and petals. *Sepals* membranaceous, glabrous, ovate, acute, mucronate; the dorsal one triveined, entire, 3.6 × 2.1 mm,