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Lankesteriana International Journal on Orchidology, vol. 15, núm. 2, agosto, 2015, pp. 141-149
Universidad de Costa Rica
Cartago, Costa Rica

Available in: http://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=44341141003
THREE NEW SPECIES OF MASDEVALLIA (ORCHIDACEAE: PLEUROTHALLIDINAE) FROM THE AYACUCHO AND PUNO REGIONS IN PERU

STIG DALSTRÖM1,3 & SAUL RUÍZ PÉREZ2

12304 Ringling Boulevard, unit 119, Sarasota FL 34237, U.S.A.
Lanester Botanical Garden, University of Costa Rica, Cartago, Costa Rica
National Biodiversity Centre, Serbithang, Bhutan
2Allamanda 142, Surco, Lima 33, Peru
3Corresponding author: stigdalstrom@gmail.com

ABSTRACT. Three new species of Masdevallia, subgenus Masdevallia are described, illustrated with line drawings and color photographs, one dwarf species in section Coriaceae and two attractive and rather large species in section Masdevallia. The former section is also treated as the genus Byrsella by Luer (2006). All three new species are distinguished by unique combinations of features that separate them from all other species in the large genus Masdevallia.

KEY WORDS: New Masdevallia, Pleurothallidinae, Epidendreae, Epidendroideae, Peru

In 2006 the popular genus Masdevallia Ruiz & Pav. had become expansive with over 500 species, classed into numerous subdivisions (Luer, 2000a, 2000b, 2001, 2002, 2003). This vast number of species, in combination with molecular investigations by various authors (Abele et al., 2005; Pridgeon & Chase, 2001), encouraged Luer to split the genus into 16 new genera, in addition to the 4 already existing, which included Masdevallia (Luer, 2006). Although splitting large genera into smaller units may sometimes be helpful in order to make them more easily surveyed from a taxonomic point of view, the authors do not recognize the advantages of the 2006 division of Masdevallia. We find it more difficult to identify which genus many of the morphologically similar species really belong to, and believe it to be more user-friendly and practical to maintain the previous and more conservative taxonomic treatment of the genus, as circumscribed by Luer (2000a, 2000b, 2001, 2002, 2003).

TAXONOMIC TREATMENT

Masdevallia goettfertiana Dalström & Ruiz-Pérez, sp. nov.


Diagnosis. Masdevallia goettfertiana belongs to the subgenus Masdevallia, section Coriaceae which is mainly characterized by the thick leaf, the fleshy sepals, petals without any descending process, and a fleshy and verrucose lip. The dwarf plant habit with fleshy, pale glaucous leaves in combination with the fleshy flower with apically very narrow petals readily separate this species from all others in the genus.

Epiphytic herb. Plant dwarf for the subgenus, caespitose. Ramicauls erect, slender, to ca. 7 mm long, enclosed basally by 3 to 4 tubular sheaths. Leaf glaucous on both sides, erect to arching, coriaceous and fleshy, petiolate, blade basally conduplicate and cuneate, elliptic, obtuse, 35-55 × 7-8 mm, including the 5-15 mm long petiole. Inflorescence purple mottled, erect, terete, uniflowered, with a to ca. 15 mm long peduncle; peduncular bract 1, basal, tubular, ca. 4.5 mm long; floral bract appressed, tubular, ca. 6 mm long; pedicel to ca. 6 mm long; ovary deeply sulcate, indistinctly rugose, ca. 2.5 mm long. Flower shallowly cupulate and fleshy; dorsal sepal pale yellow, carinate externally, glabrous, connate to the lateral sepals for ca. 3-4 mm, then broadly acuminate and turning into an indistinct fleshy cauda, ca. 15 × 5 mm, including the tail; lateral sepals similar in texture, dark brown, except for the pale translucent base covered by dark purple
spots, and the yellow indistinct and short tails, indistinctly carinate externally, ca. 12–13 × 12–13 mm combined, including the ca. 2–3 mm long tails, connate to each other for ca. 4–5 mm; petals whitish, cartilaginous, obliquely and narrowly ovate and with a short fleshy, ventral keel, then with a narrow and elongate midsection with a rounded apex, ca. 4 × 1 mm; lip dorsally dark purple, ventrally white, fleshy and minutely erose, hinged on the column foot by a minute strap-like tissue, lamina ovate, obtuse, with indistinct angles above the middle, carnose and sub-verrucose, basally distinctly channeled, which turns into a shallow, longitudinal groove above the middle, and with a recurved apex, ca. 4 × 2 mm when flattened; column pale yellowish green with purple lateral stripes, almost straight, ca. 4.5 mm long, with an equally long, curved foot with a hook-shaped apex; anther cap whitish and campanulate; pollinia not seen.

The first plant of Masdevallia goettfertiana was found growing epiphytically at eye level on a dead branch along an old and well frequented trail. The habitat is characterized by secondary and very dense brush vegetation. The original plant was without any flower at the time of collection, but flowered the following year in cultivation. The dwarf plant with fleshy and glaucous leaves immediately gave rise to the notion that it probably represented something different and probably a new species. It came as a surprise, however, to realize that this small but charming orchid belongs to the section Coriaceae Rchb.f. a group of usually much larger species.

Additional material seen: Peru. Only a small population of plants has been observed in the same location as the holotype. No other collections known.

Distribution and habitat: Masdevallia goettfertiana has only been found in a single location in scrubby and dense cloud forest on Cerro Marrón, between San Juan del Oro and Pilcopata, where the habitat is severely threatened by deforestation. Fig. 4.

Eponym: This species is named in honor of Peter Göttfert, of Västerås, Sweden, an avid orchid enthusiast and well known Swedish nursery man, who is also a great supporter of orchid research.
**Masdevallia robineae** Dalström & Ruiz-Pérez, sp. nov.

TYPE: Peru. Puno, east of Ollachea, Camatani, La Villa, epiphytic in mossy cloud forest at 2115 – 2200 m elevation, flowered in cultivation Nov. 2014, S. Dalström 3774 (holotype: USM). Fig. 5.

Diagnosis. *Masdevallia robineae* belongs to the subgenus *Masdevallia*, section *Masdevallia*, subsection *Masdevallia*, and is distinguished by the white and basally pale yellow flower, with a triangular and rather flat lip with a truncate apex with an indistinct apiculum.

Lithophytic or epiphytic herb. Plant medium sized to large for the genus, caespitose. Ramicauls erect, slender, to ca. 4 cm long, enclosed basally by 2 or 3 tubular sheaths. Leaf erect to arching, coriaceous, petiolate, blade basally conduplicate and cuneate, elliptic, obtuse, to ca. 14 × 2 cm, including the ca. 4 cm long petiole. Inflorescence erect, terete and slender, single flowered, with a to ca. 13 cm long peduncle; peduncular bracts 2 (one hidden inside basal bract), tubular, below the middle of the peduncle, to ca. 16 mm long; floral bract appressed, tubular, to ca. 12 mm long; pedicel to ca. 13 mm long; ovary smooth, indistinctly sulcate, with scattered minute ‘fungal-pits’ (tiny pits where some fungi appear to establish in the wild), ca. 11 mm long. Flower attractive, cupulate; dorsal sepal basally pale lemon yellow and apically whitish, indistinctly carinate externally, glabrous, basally cuneate and connate to the lateral sepals for ca. 10 mm, then obtuse and acuminate into a narrow, suberect to arching yellow tail, ca. 60 × 12 mm, including the ca. 45 mm long tail; lateral sepals similar in coloration but with pale orange basally, indistinctly carinate externally, glabrous, connate to each other for ca. 20 mm, broadly and slightly obliquely elliptic, obtuse, acuminate with pale greenish yellow tails, ca. 65 × 27 mm combined, including the ca. 40 mm long tails; petals white, cartilaginous and slightly oblique, unguiculate, with a distinct ventral lobe, extending longitudinally and ending in a fleshy ridge near the bluntly obtuse apex, ca. 7 × 2.5 mm; lip white, hinged on the apex of the hook-shaped column foot via a canaliculated, strap-like structure, cuneate with involute basal margins in a fresh state (cordate basally when flattened), lamina almost triangular with a bluntly truncate and minutely apiculate apex, almost flat but with a shallow longitudinal groove and indistinctly erect lateral lobes, ca. 5.5–6.0 × 3 mm when flattened; column white with a purple base, curved downwards, ca. 6 mm long, with an slightly shorter, apically hook-shaped foot; anther cap white and campanulate; pollinia 2, minute and pyriform.

*Masdevallia robineae* (Figs. 5-7) is an attractive species and is sympatric with the equally attractive and rare *M. leonii* (Fig. 8) of subsection *Caudatae*. 

**Figure 6.** *Masdevallia robineae*. Flowering plant in natural habitat. Photo by Stig Dalström.

**Figure 7.** *Masdevallia robineae* in situ. Photo by S. Dalström.
Generally, the former species has a much longer leaf of a more slender shape, versus the much shorter, broadly ovate and paddle-shaped leaf of the latter species. The flowers are also quite different in shape. However, a plant with longer and slender leaves was found without flowers previous to the discovery of the type plant of *M. robineae*. It was believed to be something ‘different’ from *M. leonii*, which had previously been observed in flower. When the ‘long-leaved’ plant later flowered, however, it turned out to be a perfect *M. leonii*. Whether this was the result of natural hybridization or just some freak anomaly is unknown.

**Additional material seen:** Peru. Puno, east of Ollachea, Camatani, La Villa, lithophytic in shade on mossy boulder along the road, at 2200 m elevation, S 013° 43.832’; W 70° 27.602. Digital photo (Dalström archives). Only a few plants have been observed in the type area, growing epiphytically or lithophytically on mossy boulders. No other material seen.

**Distribution and habitat:** *Masdevallia robineae* is only known from the steep and locally densely forested valley between Ollachea and San Gaban, Puno, at the altitude of ca. 2100–2200 m. Fig. 9.

**Eponymy:** This species is named in honor of Robine Coppens by the request of her grandfather, Guido Deburghgrave of Liedekerke, Belgium, who discovered the type plant.

*Masdevallia roseogena* Dalström & Ruíz-Pérez, *sp. nov.*

**Type:** Peru. Ayacucho, Calicanto, collected by a team lead by Saúl Ruiz on the ridge above the village, in wet scrubby cloud forest at ca. 2500 – 2600 m elevation, 5 Dec. 2010, flowered in cultivation by Perúflora in December 2013, *S. Dalström et al 3722* (holotype: USM). Figs. 10, 11.

**Diagnosis.** *Masdevallia roseogena* belongs to subgenus *Masdevallia*, section *Masdevallia*, subsection *Masdevallia*, and is distinguished by the attractive snowy white flowers covered by rosy magenta spots and flush on the petals and lip, and internally and externally on the lateral sepals, and with a broadly ovate, minutely apiculate lip without any visible dorsal callus.

Epiphytic or terrestrial herb. Plant medium to large for the genus, caespitose. *Ramicaulis* erect, slender, ca. 3–4 cm long, enclosed basally by 3 to 4 tubular sheaths. Leaf erect to arching, coriaceous, petiolate, blade basally conduplicate and cuneate, more or less elliptic, obtuse, ca. 12.5 × 2.5 cm, including the ca. 4 cm long petiole. Inflorescence erect, terete and slender, single-flowered, with a to ca. 10 cm long peduncle; peduncular bracts 2, tubular, below the middle of the peduncle, to ca. 1 cm long; floral bracts appressed, tubular, to ca. 1.2 cm long; pedicel to ca. 2.5 cm long; ovary smooth and indistinctly sulcate, with scattered minute ‘fungal-pits’, ca. 6 mm long. Flower attractive, cupulate; dorsal sepal snowy white with rose-magenta flush externally and richly spotted internally, glabrous and carinate externally,
densely microscopically glandular internally, connate to the lateral sepals for ca. 13–15 mm, then acute and apically extended into an elongate and narrow tail, ca. 13 × 50 mm, including the 30 mm long, basally white, then purple, gradually turning olive green tail; lateral sepals similar in texture and coloration, glabrous and carinate externally, microscopically glandular internally, connate for ca. 15 mm, then slightly and obliquely obtuse, extending in a slender tail, ca. 50 × 20 mm combined, including the ca. 25 mm long tails; petals white with rose-magenta markings, cartilaginous and slightly oblique, indistinctly unguiculate with a distinct, curved lateral lobe, forming a fleshy, longitudinal ridge ending near the truncate and apiculate apex, ca. 5.5 × 2 mm; lip white suffused with rose-magenta and a pale yellow apex, hinged on the hook-shaped column foot via a minute strap-like structure, lamina ovate, minutely sub-verrucose dorsally, obtuse and apiculate when flattened, but revolute and ventrally concave in the natural state, with a shallow notch at the base, ca. 4.5–5.0 × 3.2–3.5 mm when flattened; column white with purple edges, straight, ca. 4 mm long, with an equally long, curved, apically hook-shaped foot; anther cap white and campanulate; pollinia not seen.

**Additional material seen:** Peru. Only a few scattered plants have been discovered in the same area as the holotype. No other collections known. This region is subject to intense deforestation and habitat destruction, particularly at higher elevations.

**Distribution and habitat:** *Masdevallia roseogena* has only been found in a single location along the densely forested ridge above the village of Calicanto, Ayacucho. Figs. 12, 13.

**Etymology:** This species is named in reference to the white flowers with a rosy ‘blush’ on the lateral sides of the sepals (the ‘cheeks’); Latin for rosy-red producing, and ‘gena’ referring to the cheeks.

*Masdevallia roseogena* was originally discovered by a team lead by Saúl Ruiz in extremely wet and dense, scrubby cloud forest along the ridge above
the small town of Calicanto in the Ayacucho region. This is a dangerous area, teeming with military presence and subject to occasional violence by the Shining Path movement. This in turn renders the local population extremely suspicious of foreigners and their whereabouts.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: We thank the staff at the Instituto Recursos Naturales (INRENA), and Betty Millán and Ricardo Fernández at the Universidad de San Marcos, Museo de Historia Natural, Lima, for providing assistance. We also thank Wesley Higgins for commenting on the manuscript, Manolo Arias Silva and his family and staff of Perúflora for logistic support and hospitality, and Steven Beckendorf, Guido Deburghgraeve, Jan Sönnemark, Howard Liebman and others for stimulating and helpful company in the field.

LITERATURE CITED


