



A new *Masdevallia* (Orchidaceae: Pleurothallidinae) from Colombia

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Abstract

Masdevallia unguentum is described and illustrated for the first time from material cultivated at Finca Dracula, Panama. The morphological similarities of the species are discussed, and the species is distinguished by fragrance and unique sepal morphology.

Key words: *Dracula*, fragrance, *Masdevallia angulifera*, *Masdevallia saltatrix*, Neotropical orchids

Introduction

Masdevallia Ruiz & Pavon (1794: 122) is a Neotropical genus of orchids with over 400 species (Luer 2000a) distributed throughout tropical, montane forests in Central and South America. Their morphology is variable, but the plants are generally caespitose herbs with a short stem enveloped by compressed, papery sheaths, giving rise to a single petiolate, coriaceous, elliptical leaf that is usually erect. Inflorescences are solitary-flowered or racemose. Flowers are resupinate, with sepals showing various degrees of connation, calliferous petals, a reduced and hinged lip attached to a free column foot, and a semiterete column with two pollinia. Monophyly of *Masdevallia* is supported by analysis of ITS nrDNA (Pridgeon et al. 2001) with the exclusion of *Diodonopsis* Pridgeon & Chase (2001: 253).

During a survey of the species of *Dracula* Luer (1978: 190) in cultivation at Finca Dracula, Panama, a plant similar to *Masdevallia saltatrix* Reichenbach (1876: 10) was found that was initially thought to be an artificial hybrid with *Masdevallia angulifera* Reichenbach ex Kraenzlin (1925: 19) because it lacked collection data and like *M. angulifera* it had a strong odor. The odor of the Finca Dracula plant is spicy with herbal notes, and the odor of *M. angulifera* is similar to that of banana oil or acetone. The Finca Dracula plant is not likely a hybrid between *M. angulifera* and another species in the *M. saltatrix* group because none in the group has sepals with revolute margins, and *M. angulifera* does not impart this character to its hybrid offspring.

Taxonomy

Masdevallia unguentum A.Doucette, sp. nov. (Figs. 1, 2)

A Masdevallia saltatrice floribus aromaticis et cauda reflexiore dorsalis sepali differt.

Etymology:—From the Latin “unguentum” an ointment used to perfume the body. The name alludes to the aromatic flowers and their similarity to *Masdevallia saltatrix*, a species named for female dancers.