

Restrepia piperitosa Luer, sp. nov.

Plate 64.

Ety.: Named for *Mentha piperita* of the mint family, in allusion to the red-striped synsepal resembling peppermint candy.

Species haec *R. brachypodi* Rchb.f. affinis sed flore minore, synsepalo late purpureo striato striis infra medium confluentibus, et labello parvo maculato distinguitur.

Plant small, epiphytic, caespitose; roots slender. Ramicauls erect, 5-9 cm long, enclosed by 6-7 loose, compressed, imbricating sheaths, with the lower sheaths spotted with dark purple. **Leaf** erect, suffused with purple, coriaceous, elliptical, subacute to obtuse, 3.5-4.5 cm long, 2-2.3 cm wide, the base broadly cuneate, contracted into a twisted, subpetiolate base. **Inflorescence** a solitary flower, produced successively in a fascicle behind the leaf; peduncle slender, 3-4.5 cm long; floral bract tubular, 5 mm long; pedicel stout, 2.5 mm long, with a slender filament; ovary 3 mm long; **sepals** membranous, the dorsal sepal free, erect, translucent white with the midvein purple-brown, narrowly ovate in the lower third, attenuated above with the apex markedly clavate, 12.5 mm long, 2 mm wide above the base, 5-veined, the lateral sepals connate to near the apex into a concave, elliptical-obovate, very shortly bifid lamina, white on the distal fourth, heavily striped with red-purple to the basal fourth where the stripes are confluent, 12 mm long, 6 mm wide, multiple-veined, the apices obtuse; **petals** membranous, narrowly linear-ovate, the margins smooth except for 1-2 microscopic trichomes on the lower fourth, attenuated above the middle with the apex clavate-thickened, 8.5 mm long, 1 mm wide above the base; **lip** yellow, spotted with purple, oblong, 5 mm long, 1.8 mm wide, the epichile oblong, subtruncate, diffusely echinate, the hypochile subquadrate, concave with thin, erect margins toward the base, each side with a thin, uncinat process, the disc with a pair of carinae extending forward from the sides of the hypochile onto the epichile, the base subtruncate, connected to the column-foot by a short, thick neck; **column** greenish white, slender, clavate, 3 mm long, the base pedestal-like with a pair of small, obtuse calli.

PERU: without collection data, received by A. Hirtz from M. Arias of Lima, Peru, flowered in cultivation in Quito, Ecuador by A. Hirtz, 15 Dec. 1998, *C. Luer 18775* (Holotype: MO).

With flowers among the smallest of the genus, this species is most similar to *Restrepia brachypus*, although it resembles several other species. The broadly striped synsepal, pure white toward the apex and solid purple toward the base is distinctive. Except for the striped synsepal it resembles *R. echinata* and *R. elegans* with spotted synsepals. From striped *R. iris* it is distinguished by smaller flowers and a verrucose lip.

Restrepia piperitosa is characterized by a small or medium-sized habit with the lower sheaths of the ramicaul spotted. The small flower is borne near the apex of the leaf. The stripes of the synsepal that is white near the apex are reminiscent of peppermint candy. The petals are without lobes or processes. The lip is oblong with the spotted epichile diffusely spiculate-verrucose.

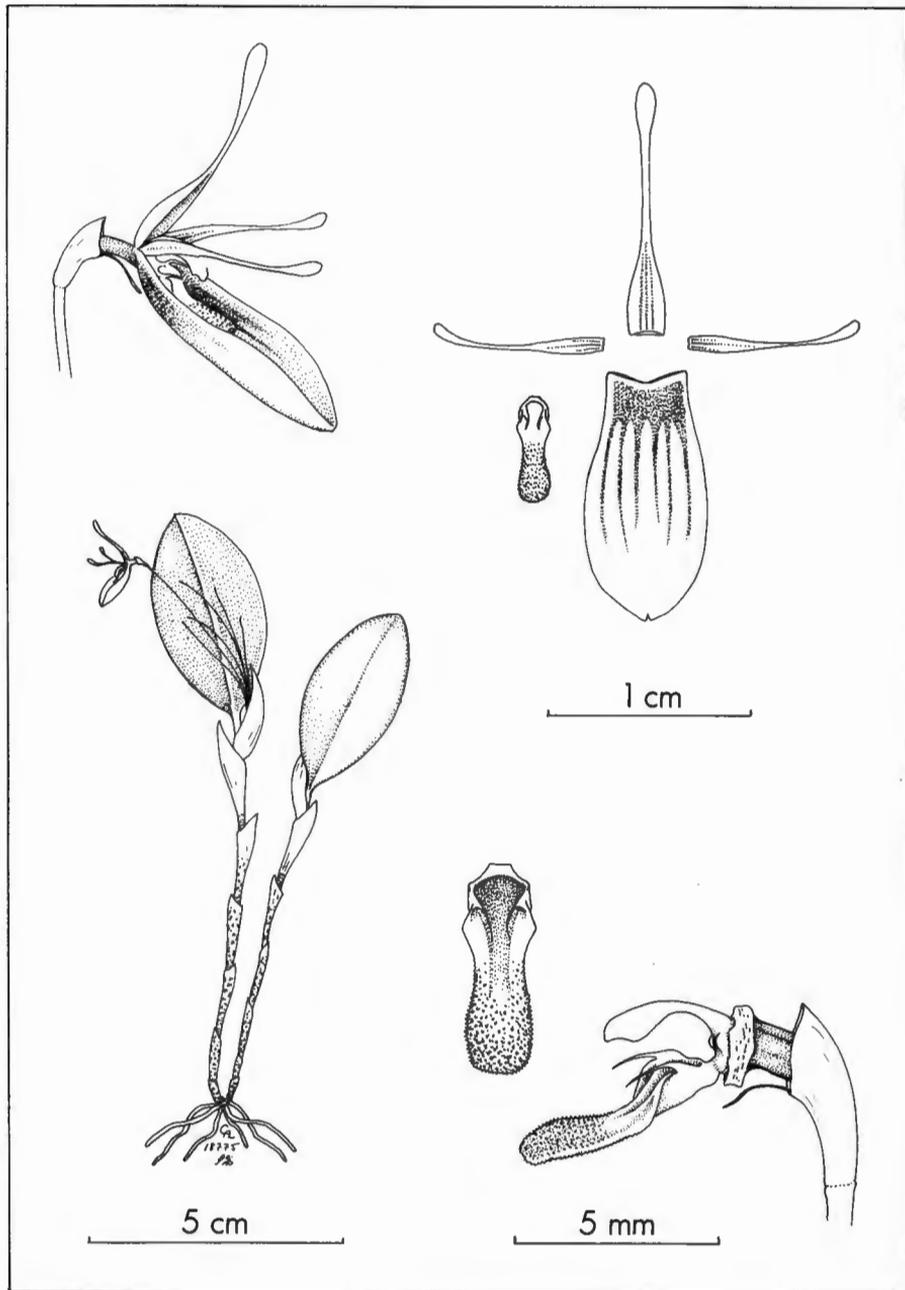


Plate 64. *Restrepia piperitosa* Luer