A NEW SPECIES OF *PORROGLOSSUM* (ORCHIDACEAE, PLEUROTHALLIDINAE) FROM COLOMBIA

MARTA KOLANOWSKA¹ & DARIUSZ L. SZLACHETKO

Abstract. The Neotropical orchid genus *Porroglossum* Schltr. is one of most poorly recognized genera within Pleurothallidinae, partly due to an insufficiency of herbarium material. An examination of material collected recently in the Colombian department of Putumayo revealed the existence of a new species of *Porroglossum* which is described, illustrated and placed within a key to identification of Colombian *Porroglossum* species.

Key words: Andes, biodiversity, Neotropics, Putumayo, taxonomy

Marta Kolanowska & Dariusz L. Szlachetko, Department of Plant Taxonomy and Nature Conservation, University of Gdańsk, ul. Wita Stwosza 59, 80-308 Gdańsk, Poland; e-mail: martakolanowska@wp.pl

INTRODUCTION

The genus *Porroglossum* Schltr. was proposed in 1920 by Rudolf Schlechter to encompass species characterized by their apical anther and elongated, curved column foot with the free apex previously classified under *Masdevallia* Ruiz & Par. The author transferred to the new taxon just two species: *P. colombianum* Schltr. [currently classified under *P. mordax* (Rchb. f.) Sweet] and *P. muscosum* (Rchb. f.) Schltr., but further studies on Pleurothallidinae (Luer 1987) resulted in many additional species transfers from *Masdevallia*.

Despite the ongoing discussion on the delimitation of genera within Pleurothallidinae (Pridgeon *et al.* 2001; Luer 2002), the taxonomic separateness of *Porroglossum* is not in doubt. Plants of the genus are characterized by sepals connate to near the middle, forming a sepaline cup, with apices usually contracted into tails and small cartilaginous petals (Luer 1987). *Porroglossum* species developed a remarkable pollination system. The lip snaps shut when stimulated by an insect, thereby pushing the pollinator against the column and ensuring that the pollinia will be attached to its body. This lip movement is made possible by the relaxation of its long strap-like claw, thereby

reflexing the lip backward. Although this reproduction mechanism has been precisely described by scientists (e.g., Bean 1887; Oliver 1888; Luer 1987), no such event has been recorded in nature (Merino *et al.* 2010).

Currently *Porroglossum* includes 43 species whose distribution is limited to the Andean region. The geographical range of the genus extends from Colombia and Venezuela to Bolivia and Brazil, with the greatest diversity observed in Ecuador (Pridgeon 2005; Merino *et al.* 2010; Luer 2011). With 10 species reported so far (Ortiz Valdivieso & Uribe Vélez 2007), Colombia is considered to have the second-highest concentration of *Porroglossum* species (Merino *et al.* 2010).

During the course of study on Orchidaceae occurring in the Colombian department of Putumayo, a distinct *Porroglossum* species was found. It is described here as new.

DESCRIPTION OF THE NEW SPECIES

Porroglossum medinae Kolan. & Szlach., *sp. nov.*

Figs 1 & 2

Species similar to Peruvian *P. meridionale* P. Ortiz and *P. peruvianum* Sweet, from which it differs by its short-petiolate leaf, single-flowered inflorescence, oblong

¹ Corresponding author

Fig. 2. *Porroglossum medinae* Kolan. & Szlach., *sp. nov.* A – flower (front view), B – flower (back view), C – leaves; D – leaf apex. Photos by R. Medina. Scale bars: A, B & D = 1 mm; C = 10 mm.

2* Inflorescence a few-flowered raceme	3	8* Leaves not reticulated	9
3. Peduncle pubescent	4	9. Tails of the lateral sepals thickened	
3* Peduncle glabrous	6		<i>P. nutibara</i> Luer & Escobar
4. Apex of the synsepal acute	<i>P. parsonsii</i> Luer	9* Tails of the lateral sepals slender	
4* Apex of the synsepal indented	5		<i>P. olivaceum</i> Sweet
5. Tails of the sepals clavate-thickened		10. Dorsal sepal ovate	<i>P. sergioi</i> P. Ortiz
	<i>P. echidna</i> (Rchb. f.) Garay	10* Dorsal sepal transversely oblong-ovate	
5* Tails of the sepals slender			<i>P. actrix</i> Luer & R. Escobar
	<i>P. muscosum</i> (Rchb. f.) Schltr.		
6. Dorsal sepal verrucose, not contracted into a tail			
	<i>P. mordax</i> (Rchb. f.) Sweet		
6* Dorsal sepal not verrucose, contracted into a tail	7		
7. Tail of the dorsal sepal slender, shorter than the blade	8		
7* Tail of the dorsal sepal slender or stout, subequal or longer than the blade	10		
8. Leaves reticulated	<i>P. rodrigoii</i> Sweet		

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