

Epidendrum polythallum

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Type: Colombia. Antioquia: Municipio de Urrao; Cordillera Occidental, camino entre Urrao y el Carmen de Atrato (Chocó), Alto de la M, La Fragua, 2500 m, 26 June 2015, *E. Domínguez Vargas 396* (holotype: JAUM; LCDP voucher).

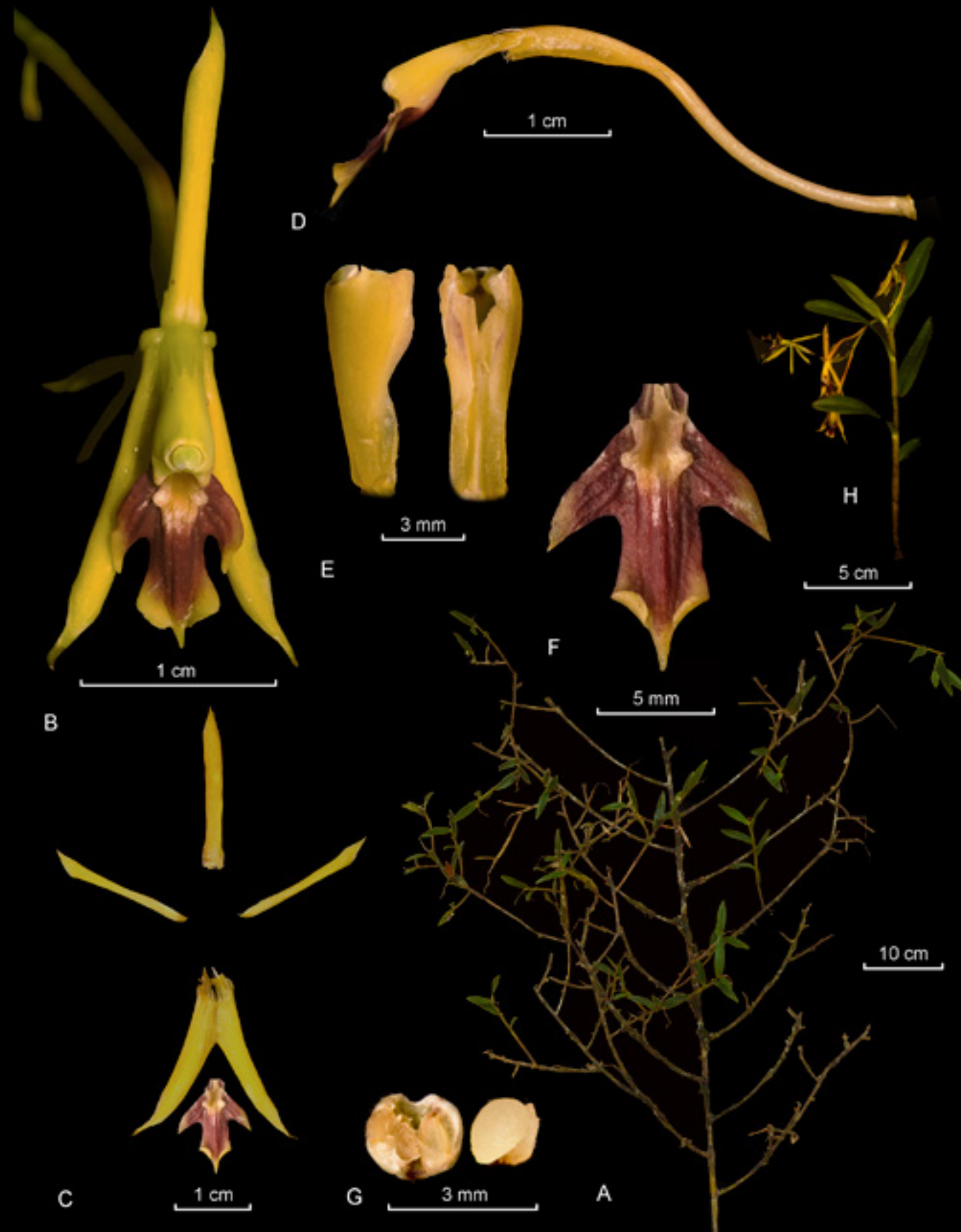
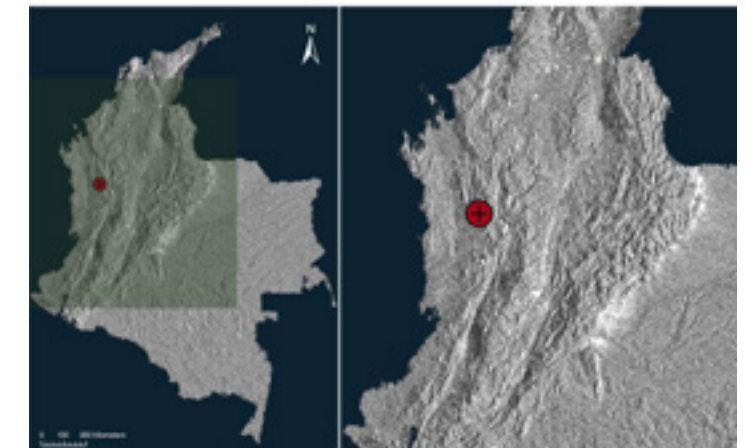
Epiphytic, monopodial, branching *herb*, 130–150 cm tall. *Roots* basal, thick. *Stems* cane-like, terete; *primary stem* 130–150 × 0.8–1.0 cm, rigid, erect; *secondary stems* 40–70 × 0.4–0.6 cm, alternate, distichous, ascendant, *tertiary branches* 3–25 × 0.3–0.5 cm, base covered by rugose, non-foliar sheaths. *Leaves* 2–6 only on tertiary stems 2.3–6.5 × 0.4–1.4 cm, oblong, apically unequally bilobed, chartaceous, upper surface rugose, 4 pale-green veins on each side of the mid-vein; underside smooth, pale green. *Inflorescence* 4.0–5.5 cm long, apical, racemose, pendant, nodding, lax; peduncle 7–8 × 1.5 mm; rachis 3.2–4.7 long, thin, laterally compressed. *Ovary* 20–38 mm long, terete. *Floral bracts* 4 × 3 mm, triangular, acute. *Flowers* 3–4, simultaneous, resupinate, pale yellow, lip wine-red except for the calli and the apices of the lobes which are pale yellow; fragrance none. *Sepals* acute, strongly revolute; *dorsal sepal* 20 × 4 mm, free, oblong-elliptic, 5-veined, reflexed; *lateral sepals* 20 × 6 mm, narrowly ovate, oblique, connate at the base, partly spreading, 5-veined. *Petals* 18–20 × 2.5 mm, free, reflexed, narrowly elliptic, acute, strongly revolute. *Lip* 12 × 7 mm, deeply 3-lobed, base cuneate; bicallose, calli prominent; disc with 5 prominent, elevated ribs, parallel, converging towards the apex; lateral lobes 2.7 × 6.8 mm, obliquely triangular, margin revolute; mid-lobe 5.4 × 4 mm, rectangular-oblong, truncate, with a prominent apiculum. *Column* 11 × 3 mm, straight, thin, dilated towards the apex. *Clinandrium-hood* reduced. *Anther* sub-spherical, puberulent, white. Pollinia 4. Rostellum apical, slit. *Nectary* narrow, penetrating 2/3 of the ovary, with a prominent callosity in front of the stigmatic cavity.

Epidendrum polythallum is recognized by the much branched stems, with a tall primary stem, numerous secondary and tertiary stems, the nodding inflorescence bears only 3–4 pale yellow

flowers, lip wine-red except for the calli and apices of the lobes which are pale yellow, sepals connate at base, narrowly oblanceolate, petals linear, obliquely acute at the apex, lip deeply 3-lobed, with 5 parallel ribs on the disc and a pair of radiating shorter ribs on the lateral lobes which are obliquely triangular. The flowers are reminiscent of *E. amplexirisaraldense* Hágsater & E. Santiago, but the plant habit of that species is not branched, the new stem originating from a sub-apical internode of the previous stem; flowers are greenish. The plant habit of the new species is reminiscent of *E. paraguastigma* Hágsater & García-Cruz which also has a tall primary stem, numerous, progressively smaller secondary stems and numerous smaller tertiary stems, but that species has 7–9, simultaneous, concolor, white flowers, sepals 6.5–7.6 mm long, and an entire, cordiform lip with a “Y” shaped callus. It is known presently only from Colombia, Antioquia, along the summit of the Cordillera Occidental, near the border of the Chocó, epiphytic near the base of a bush at the edge of a wet montane forest, on cliffs and road-side slopes, at 2500 m elevation. Flowering was recorded in February.

References:

Dominguez, E., Moreno, J.S., Hágsater, E & E. Santiago, 2016, *Epidendrum polythallum* in E. Hágsater & L. Sánchez S. (eds.), The Genus *Epidendrum*, Part 11, *Icon. Orchid.* 15(2): t. 1593.



LCDP: *Epidendrum polythallum* Est. Domínguez, J. S. Moreno, Hágsater et E. Santiago. A. Habit. B. Flower. C. Dissected perianth. D. Ovary with column and lip. E. Column, side and dorsal view. F. Lip. G. Anther cap and pollinia. H. Flowering branch.

