

Lepanthes felis

LUER & R. ESCOBAR

AMER. ORCHID SOC. BULL. 52(12): 1264 (1983)

Type: Colombia. Antioquia: Frontino, Alto de Cuevas, alt. 2050 m. 14 May 1983. *R. Escobar & E. Valencia 2605* (Holotype: SEL).

Illustrated specimen: Colombia. Valle del Cauca: Municipality of El Cairo. Cerro El Inglés Nature Reserve, 2200 m. 21 November 2018. *S. Vieira 052* (LCDP voucher).

Epiphytic, caespitose *plant*, up to 9 cm long including the inflorescence; *roots* slender. *Ramicauls* suberect, slender, 3–5 cm long, enclosed by 7–9 minutely ciliate along the ribs lepanthiform sheaths with ciliate, acuminate dilated ostia. *Leaves* suberect to spreading, coriaceous, elliptical, acute, 2.8–3 × 1.5–1.8 mm; the base cuneate into a petiole 2–3 mm long. *Inflorescence* a congested, successively several-flowered, raceme up to 5 mm long, borne by a filiform peduncle 15–18 mm long on top of the leaf; pedicels 2 mm long, persisting. *Ovary* muricate-crested, shallowly winged, ciliate, 4.5 mm long. *Sepals* red, suffused with orange-yellow at the base, margins ciliate-aciculate. *Dorsal sepal* broadly ovate, concave, 5-veined, connate to the lateral sepals for *ca.* 5 mm, to form a deep sepaline cup, the apex caudate, 16 × 10 mm. *Lateral sepals* ovate, oblique, caudate, 2-veined, connate basally and concave below a transverse fold between the middle and basal thirds, deflexed above the fold, 14 × 6 mm. *Petals* emerald green, transversely bilobed, the upper lobe erect, thick, narrowly oblong, triangular in cross-section, acute, the lower lobe as a minute tooth at the base, 1.25 × 4 mm. *Lip* dull green, transversely bilobed, 1.5 × 2 mm expanded; the lobes triangular, acute, embracing the column, the apex transversely rounded, cleft, the cuneate base connate to the column above the base. *Column* 1.5 mm long, the anther and stigma apical. *Anther cap* lanceolate-ovate, deciduous, 2-celled, 1 mm long. *Pollinia* 2, clavate-pyriform.

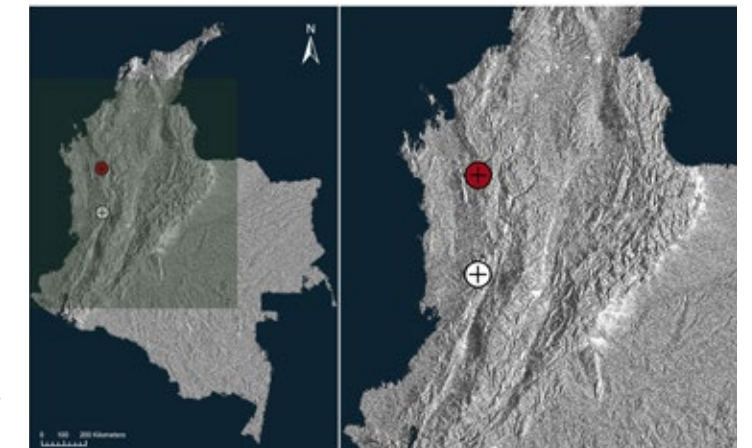
Etymology: From the Latin *felis*, “cat”, in reference to the fancied illusion of the flower.

Lepanthes felis is an endemic species from the Western and Central Andes of Colombia. It belongs to subgenus *Marsiphanthes* Luer, section *Felinae* Luer, and is distinguished by large, variably red

flowers borne far beyond the tip of the leaf, concave sepals that are connate into a deep sepaline cup, a bilobed lip with triangular, obtuse lobes surrounding the column and its distinctive green petals, with an erect, thick and fleshy upper lobe and a vestigial lower lobe. It is because of the resemblance of the shiny green vertical petals inside the cup-like flower with the eyes of a cat, that this species gets its name.

References:

Luer, C.A. & Thoele, L. 2012. Icones Pleurothallidarum XXXII, Lepanthes of Colombia (Orchidaceae). *Monogr. Syst. Bot. Missouri Bot. Gard.* 123: 1–296.



LCDP: *Lepanthes felis* Luer & R. Escobar. **A.** Habit. **B.** Flower. **C.** Dissected perianth. **D.** Ovary with column and lip. **E.** Lip, expanded. **F.** Anther cap and pollinia.

