

*Pleurothallis pseudosphaerantha* K.W. Holcomb, *sp. nov.*

Plant small, 5.25 to 8.25 cm tall, epiphytic, caespitose, roots very slender.

Ramicauls 5 to 8 cm long, very slender, suberect, enclosed by a thin tubular sheath below the middle and another at the base.

Leaf 3.5 to 4.25 cm long, spreading, thickly coriaceous, rigid, ovate, acute, the base sessile, deeply cordate.

Inflorescence a fascicle of successive, single (occasionally two), resupinate flowers, 7 mm long, borne from a 7 mm long spathaceous bract at the base of the leaf.

Labellum (Lip) 4 mm long, 2.5 mm wide, red, yellow, or red suffused with yellow, ovate-oblong, dorsal surface glabrous with a shallow sulcus starting at the base to just above the apex, a small callus just above the base, folded down the middle, acute.

Dorsal Sepal 3 mm long, 4 mm wide, red, yellow, or red suffused with yellow, glabrous, 5-veined, broadly ovate, concave.

Synsepal 4 mm long, 2 mm wide, red, yellow, or red suffused with yellow, glabrous, 4-veined, folded down the middle, acute.

Petals 4 mm long, 2 mm wide, red, yellow, or red suffused with yellow, glabrous, 1-veined, oblong, entire, typically held flat against the leaf, but occasionally incurved below the middle to the apex, acute.

Column 2 mm long, 1 mm wide, terete, the anther and stigma ventral.

Etymology: From the Latin *pseudo*, “similar to”, *sphaero*, “sphere”, and the Greek *anthos*, “flower”. Referring to the superficial similarity to the flowers of *Pleurothallis sphaerantha*.

ECUADOR: Without collection data. *K. W. Holcomb (Holotype: GEO 18304)*

Diagnosis: *Pleurothallis pseudosphaerantha* has long been considered a form of *Pleurothallis sphaerantha*. Based on photographic evidence from various internet sources, it has been circulating in the horticultural trade for more than a decade as *Pleurothallis sphaerantha* “Red”. Vegetatively, *P. pseudosphaerantha* is practically indistinguishable from *P. sphaerantha*. However, there are significant differences in the floral morphology of the two species. (Fig. 2.)

- *Pleurothallis pseudosphaerantha* has a longer lip, 4 mm compared to 2.5 mm in *P. sphaerantha*, with a well-defined, depression down the middle. The depression appears only as an outline in the lip of *P. sphaerantha*.
- The lip of *P. sphaerantha* has a well-defined glenion which has been replaced by a small callus in *P. pseudosphaerantha*.
- *P. pseudosphaerantha* has a 5-veined, broadly ovate dorsal sepal, whereas *P. sphaerantha* has a 3-veined, orbicular dorsal sepal.
- The petals of *P. pseudosphaerantha* are oblong compared to the narrower, oblique petals of *P. sphaerantha*, and are typically held flat against the leaf. Occasionally they are slightly incurved.
- Finally, *Pleurothallis pseudosphaerantha* is most easily recognized by its longer, folded synsepal compared to the concave, bowl-shaped synsepal of *P. sphaerantha*.



Fig. 1. *Pleurothallis pseudosphaerantha*  
Photos taken of the same plant used to prepare the holotype material.

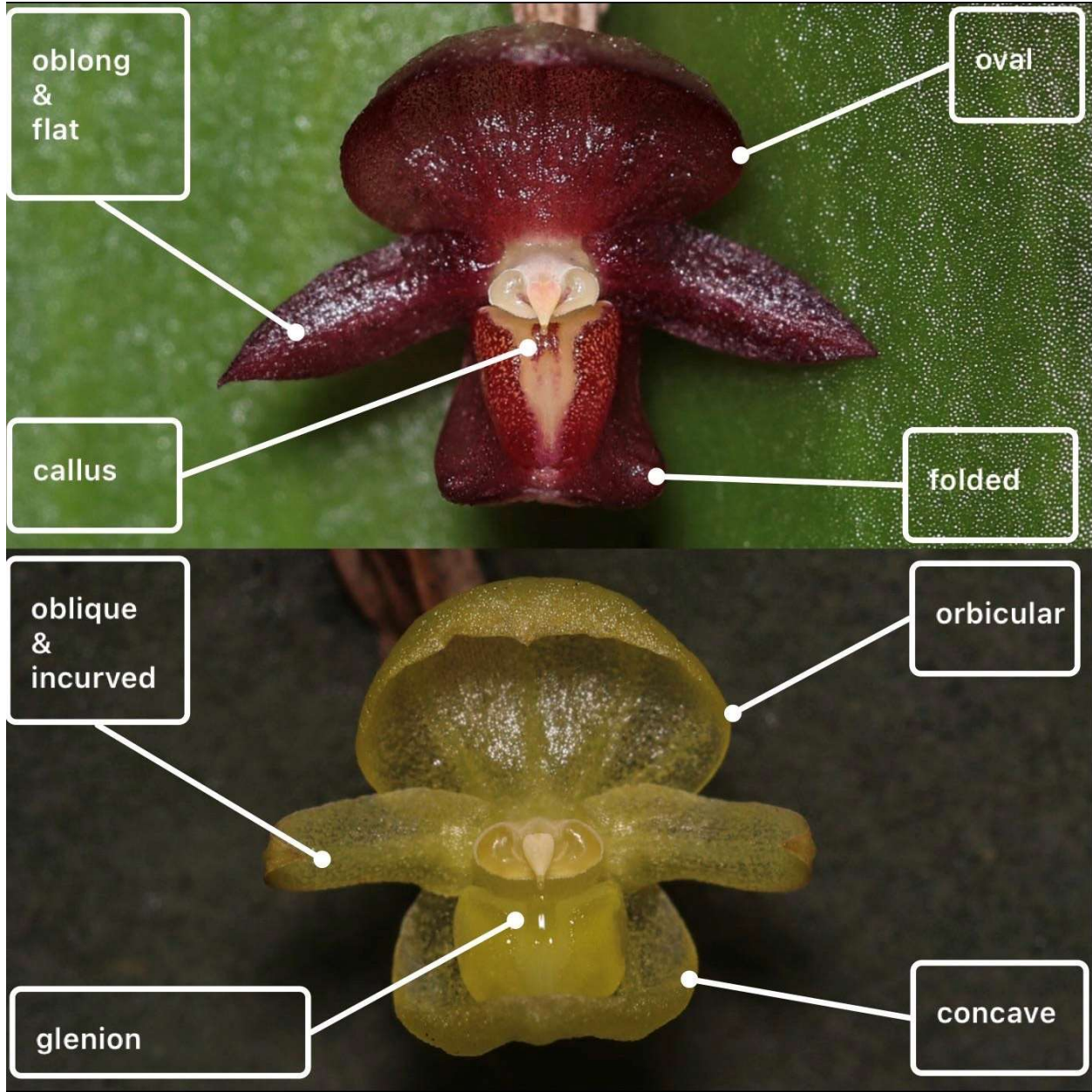


Fig. 2. *Pleurothallis pseudosphaerantha*, top; *Pleurothallis sphaerantha*, bottom. In addition to the obvious differences in the lip, the flowers are different in other significant ways. Photos of plants grown by the author, including the plant used to prepare the holotype material.

References

Luer, C. A. (2005). *Icones Pleurothallidarum XXVII: Dryadella and Aconia section Macrophyllae-Fasciculatae*. Monographs in Systematic Botany from Missouri Botanical Garden, 103, 1-311