

*Pleurothallis forceps-cancri f. rectapetala* K.W. Holcomb, *f. nov.*

Plant medium in size, epiphytic, caespitose, roots very slender.

Ramicauls up to 20 cm long, very slender, suberect, enclosed by a thin tubular sheath below the middle and another at the base.

Leaf 7.5 cm long, 2.25 cm wide, coriaceous, ovate, acute, the base cuneate, sessile.

Inflorescence a single, successive, resupinate flower, 6 cm long, borne from a spathaceous bract at the base of the leaf.

Labellum (Lip) 3 mm long, 2 mm wide, peach with yellow margins, triangular with a well-developed orbicular glenion, trilobed, basal lobes erect flanking the column, apex acute.

Dorsal Sepal 30 mm long, 5 mm wide, 3-veined, peach colored, membranous, glabrous, ovate at the base, concave, acute, acuminate.

Synsepal 30 mm long, 5 mm wide, 3-veined, peach colored, membranous, glabrous, ovate at the base, concave, acute, acuminate.

Petals 27 mm long, 4 mm wide, 3-veined, peach colored, descending, minutely ciliate, elliptical, subsigmoid, oblique, acute, acuminate.

Column 2 mm long, 1 mm wide, semiterete, the anther and transverse stigma apical.

Etymology: From the Latin *recta* “straight” and *petalum* “petal” a reference to the extremely long, straight petals.

COLOMBIA: Without collection data. *K.W. Holcomb 18280 (Holotype: GEO)*, *K.W. Holcomb 18281 (Isotype: GEO)*.

*Pleurothallis forceps-cancri* (Luer 1981) is identified by its falcate (sickle-shaped) petals which cross over the synsepal giving the appearance of a crab claw or pincer. Analysis of the preserved flowers of the holotype specimen (SEL 612A) indicates that this trait is not influenced by environmental conditions, such as temperature or humidity (Fig 1.). In addition, the dorsal sepal of *P. forceps-cancri* is 25-percent longer than the synsepal (20 mm vs. 16 mm).

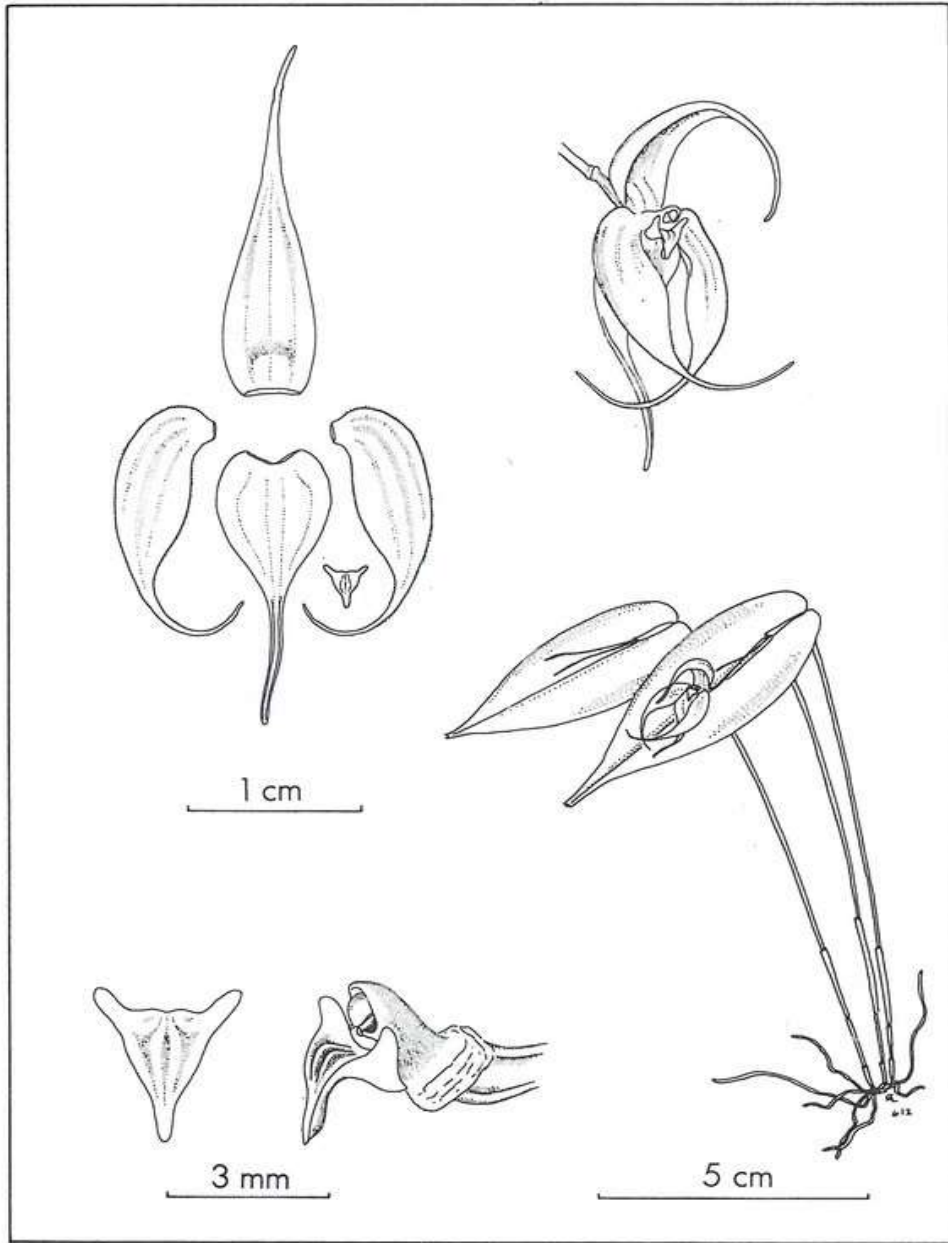
*Pleurothallis forceps-cancri f. rectapetala* is distinguished by its extremely long, straight petals which sometimes touch or cross over the synsepal, as well as its dorsal sepal and synsepal which are the same length. The flowers are also significantly larger than the typical form of *P. forceps-cancri* (6 cm vs. 3.6 cm).

It has been suggested that *P. forceps-cancri f. rectapetala* may be a separate and distinct species. However, analysis of the holotype material for *P. forceps-cancri*, particularly the morphology of the lip, confirms it is merely a variant of that species.

To date, two color forms of *P. forceps-cancri f. rectapetala* have been documented *in situ*. Based on photographic evidence, both color forms are equally common. A peach-colored form is the largest with flowers 6 cm long, and a red-colored form is 25% smaller with flowers 4.5 cm long. The flowers of both color forms are significantly larger than the 3.6 cm long flowers of *P. forceps-cancri*.

Since its description in 1981, there have been no additional field observations of a specimen of *P. forceps-cancri* with falcate petals. However, *P. forceps-cancri f. rectapetala* has been observed and documented on multiple occasions. Two observations are referenced in this article (Figs 5 & 6). This suggests that *P. forceps-cancri f. rectapetala* is the most common form of this species, and the specimen used to describe the species in 1981 was possibly an aberration.

Recognition of this form of *P. forceps-cancri* will help botanists and naturalists better understand and consider the variability of a particular species when working in the field.



**Fig. 32. *Pleurothallis forceps-cancrici***

Fig. 1. Illustration of *Pleurothallis forceps-cancrici* (1981)

Courtesy of Missouri Botanical Garden Press



Fig. 2. *Pleurothallis forceps-cancri* (SEL 612A)

Photo courtesy of Selby Gardens Herbarium



Fig. 3. *Pleurothallis forceps-cancri* f. *rectapetala*

Photos taken of the same plant used to prepare the holotype material (GEO 18280).



Fig. 4. *Pleurothallis forceps-cancri* f. *rectapetala*

Photos taken of the same plant used to prepare the isotype material (GEO 18281).



Fig. 5. *Pleurothallis forceps-cancri* f. *rectapetala* photographed *in situ* SalvaMontes Reserve, Colombia.

Photo courtesy of Sebastian Vieira-Uribe.



Fig. 6. *Pleurothallis forceps-cancri* f. *rectapetala* photographed *in situ* SalvaMontes Reserve, Colombia.

Photo courtesy of Sebastian Vieira-Uribe.



Fig. 7. The two different color forms of *Pleurothallis forceps-caucris* f. *rectapetala*.





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Fig. 8. *Pleurothallis forceps-caucris* f. *rectapetala* at the Atlanta Botanical Garden, Atlanta, Georgia.



Fig. 9. *Pleurothallis forceps-cancri* f. *rectapetala* at Andy's Orchids, Encinita, California.



Corporación SalvaMontes (SalvaMontes Reserve) is a coalition of people with special interests in orchids, birds, and magnolias endemic to their region north of Medellín near the town of Yarumal. SalvaMontes protects nature in the extreme north of the Tropical Andes hotspot, through research, the development of conservation strategies and coordination with different sectors of society.

Learn more at: [www.salvamontes.org](http://www.salvamontes.org)



*Pseudolepanthes bricenoënsis*, *Specklinia campylotyle*, and *Lepanthes golondrina*  
Photographed *in situ* SalvaMontes Reserve, Colombia.

Photos courtesy of Sebastian Vieira-Uribe.

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