

March 8, 2024

A New Species of *Zootrophion* Luer (Orchidaceae) From the Department of Choco, Colombia is Described.

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Abstract

A new species of *Zootrophion* Luer, *Zootrophium mejiae* Uribe-Velez & Sauleda is described from the department of Choco, Colombia.

The genus *Zootrophion* was established by Carl Luer in 1982 (Selbyana 7(1): 80) to accommodate flowers with lateral sepals fused and a dorsal sepal with the tip fused to the tip of the synsepals leaving a small opening for the pollinator to enter. There are 29 recognized species with 13 reported for Colombia (WCSP, 2018).

A plant of *Zootrophion* was exhibited by Esperanza Mejia at the orchid exhibition of the Asociacion Risaraldense de Orquideologia (2023) in Pereira, Colombia. The plant was exhibited as *Zootrophium aguirrei* P. Ortiz. However, the general consensus was that it was not *Z. aguirrei* but an undescribed species. Prior to the plant being exhibited in Pereira by Esperanza Mejia the plant was observed in cultivation (2022) in her greenhouse in Salento, Colombia. At that time material was collected to be studied and was used to make an icon.

The plant of Esperanza Mejia was discovered by Cristobal Papiernik, in the department of Choco, Colombia. We here describe this plant as a new species.

Zootrophion mejiae Uribe-Velez & Sauleda, sp. nov.

TYPE: Colombia, Departamento de Choco. From cultivation. Collected by *Cristobal Papiernik, s. n.*, July 2017. Specimen made March 2022. (Holotype, HPUJ).

Etymology

This species is named in honor of Esperanza Mejia de Moreno who made this species available to us for study. A native of the municipality of Salamina, Caldas, she has been growing ornamental plants since very young and has dedicated herself to the department of Quindio. Her passion for orchids and the department of Quindio lead her to create the book *Orquideas del Quindio* an excellent reference work with all the species photographed by her. In addition she is a national orchid judge and has one of the finest collections of orchids in Colombia.

Diagnosis

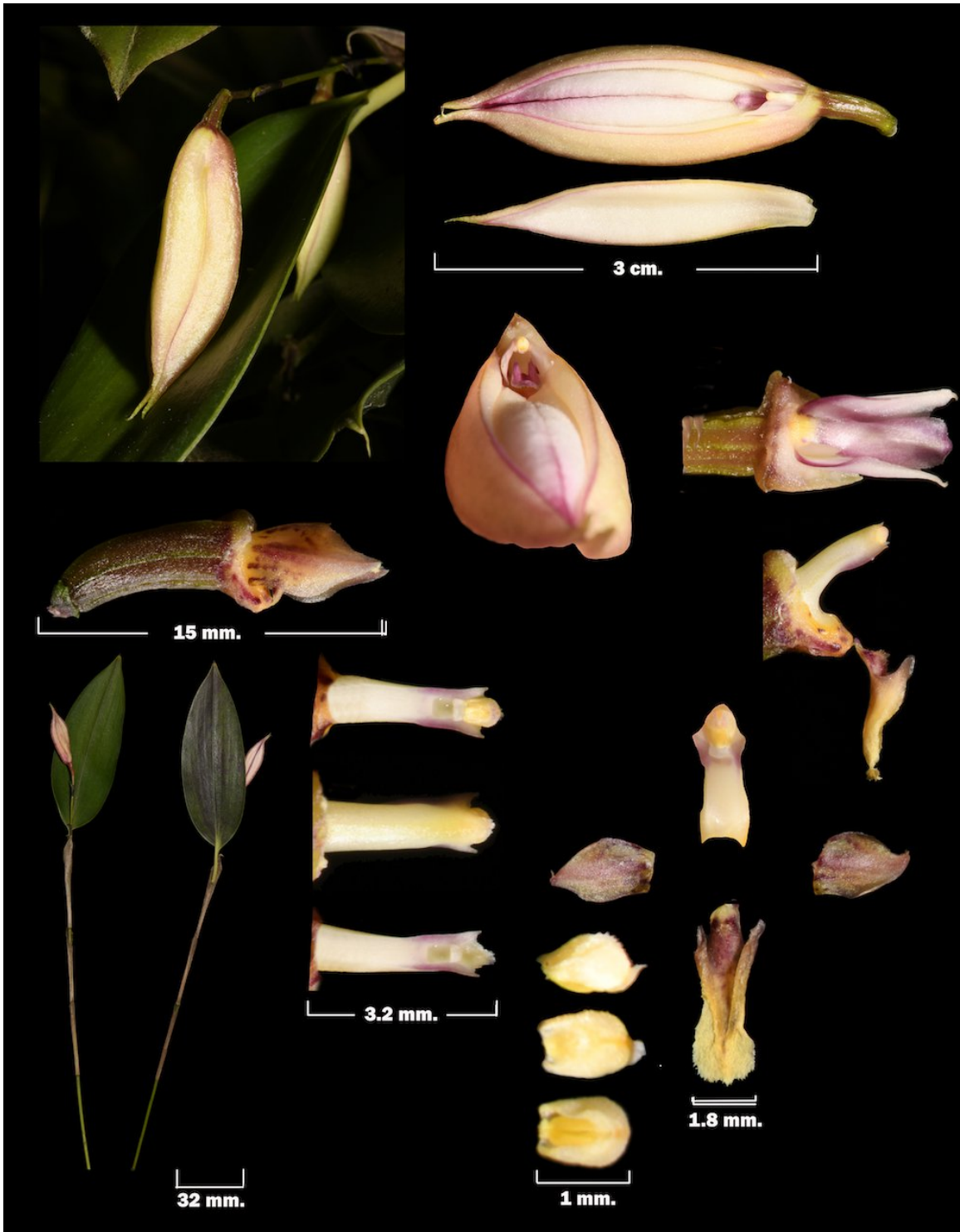
Zootrophion mejiae Uribe-Velez & Sauleda resembles *Zootrophion aguirrei* P. Ortiz (Colombia) but *Z. mejiae* is easily differentiated by the the lack of spots. The dorsal sepal of *Z. aguirrei* is linear obtuse, *Z. mejiae* differs in having an elliptic acute dorsal sepal. The apex of the labellum is acute in *Z. aguirrei* where *Z. mejiae* the apex is obtuse and recurved. Vegetatively they differ in that *Z. aguirrei* has orbicular leaves and *Z. mejiae* has lanceolate leaves.

Description

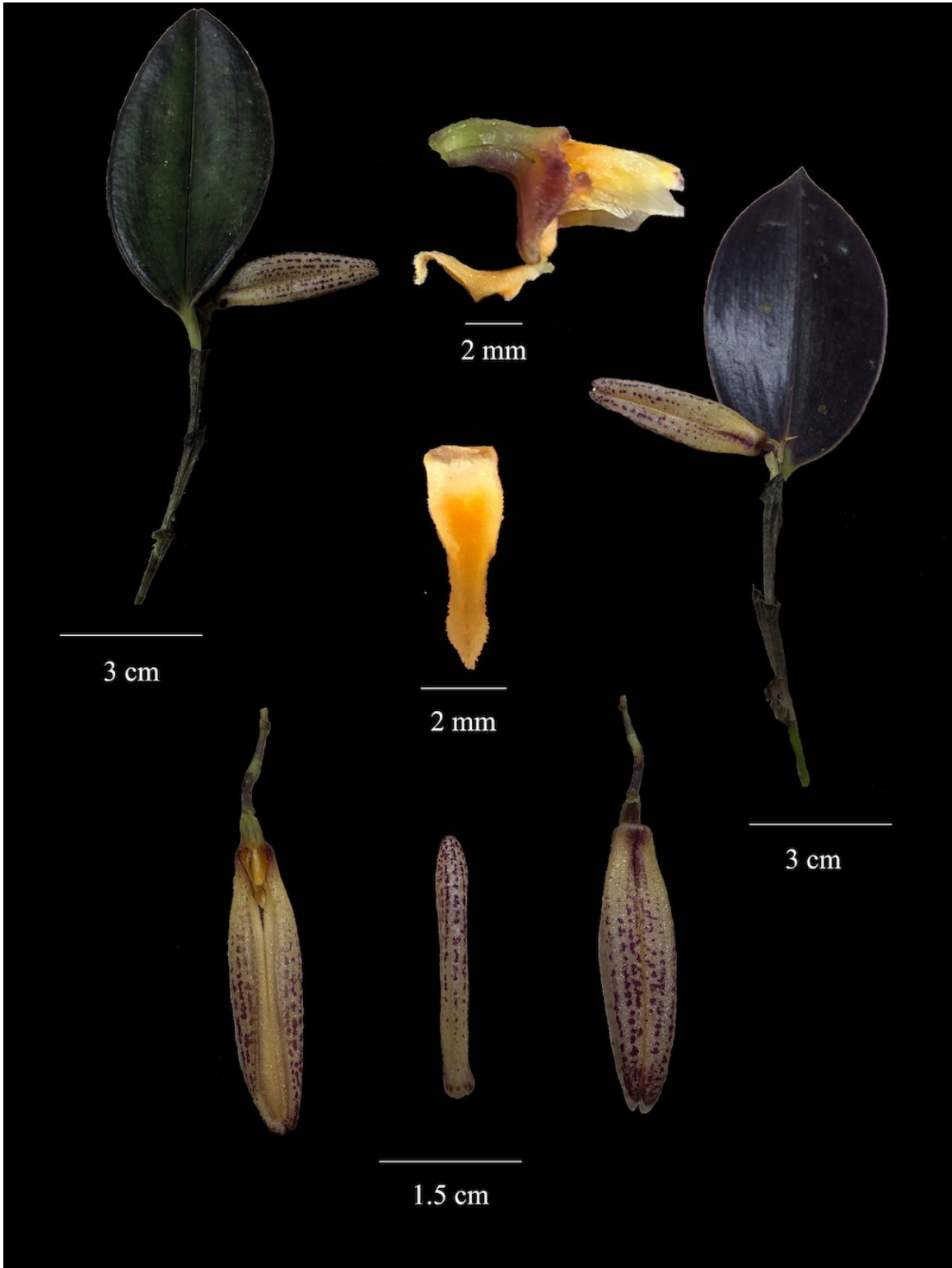
Plants epiphytic, to 26 cm tall; caespitose; ramicauls slender, to 16 cm tall, rooting from base, enclosed by 5 close, tubular, acute sheaths, to 5 cm long, 5 mm wide; leaves erect, to 15 cm long, 3.5 cm wide, coriaceous, lanceolate, abruptly acute, base rounded to broadly cuneate, base contracted into a petiole to 5 mm long; inflorescence a solitary light beige flower lacking spots, borne by a slender, erect peduncle, to 4 cm long; floral bract, to 3 mm long, acute; pedicel smooth, to 8 mm long, 2 mm wide; sepals glabrous; dorsal sepal to 3 cm long, 1 cm wide unexpanded, elliptic, concave, acute, terminal 4 mm connate to the synsepal; lateral sepals connate into a concave, elliptic synsepal, to 3 cm long, 1 cm wide, unexpanded; petals ovate, truncate, acute, to 1 mm long, 1 mm wide; labellum yellow apically becoming basally brown, to 4 mm long, 2 mm wide, linear oblong, obtuse. lateral margins crenulate, with two parallel thin wavy keels converging at apex, crest on labellum ovate, apex obtuse, yellow with crenulate lateral margins; column yellow, to 3,2 mm long, 1 mm wide, apically suffused with pink, linear with two thin pink acute wings; anther obovate, yellow, to 1 mm long,



Zootrophion mejiae Uribe-Velez & Sauleda.



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Zoothropium aguirrei P. Ortiz.



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Zoothropium aguirrei P. Ortiz.



Zootrophion mejiae Uribe-Velez & Sauleda
Dorsal sepal.



Zoothropium aguirrei P. Ortiz
Dorsal sepal.



Zootrophion mejiae Uribe-Velez & Sauleda
Labellum.



Zoothropium aguirrei P. Ortiz
Labellum.

Literature Cited

WCSP (2018). World Checklist of Selected Plant Families.
Facilitated by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. Published on the Internet.