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# A NEW CATASETUM FROM SOUTHERN VENEZUELA (ORCHIDACEAE)

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ABSTRACT. *Catasetum merchae* G. Romero, sp. nov. from southern Venezuela is described. Its closest allies are *C. bicolor* Klotzsch and *C. boyi* Mansf., from which it differs in the fimbriation of the labellum.

This paper and others in preparation precede the publication of a taxonomic revision of the *Catasetum* species of the Venezuelan Guayana (Romero, in prep.). The new species treated here belongs to the *Catasetum bicolor* Klotzsch alliance, defined here as a group of species having staminate flowers with a sacciform, tri- or pentalobate labellum, with two linear-lanceolate, basal calli. The alliance, prior to this publication, included *C. bicolor* Klotzsch and *C. boyi* Mansf. (see key to species in *Catasetum* subsection *Isoceras* Mansf. in Mansfeld, 1932).

**Catasetum merchae** G. Romero, sp. nov.
FIGURE 1.

*Cataseto bicolori* Klotzsch similis, sed labello marginibus fimbriatis differt.

TYPE. Venezuela, Territorio Federal Amazonas, Río Cataniapo, cerca de Gavilan, epífita, poco frecuente, 23 Abril 1986, *G. Romero 1275* (VEN, holotype; TFAV, isotype).

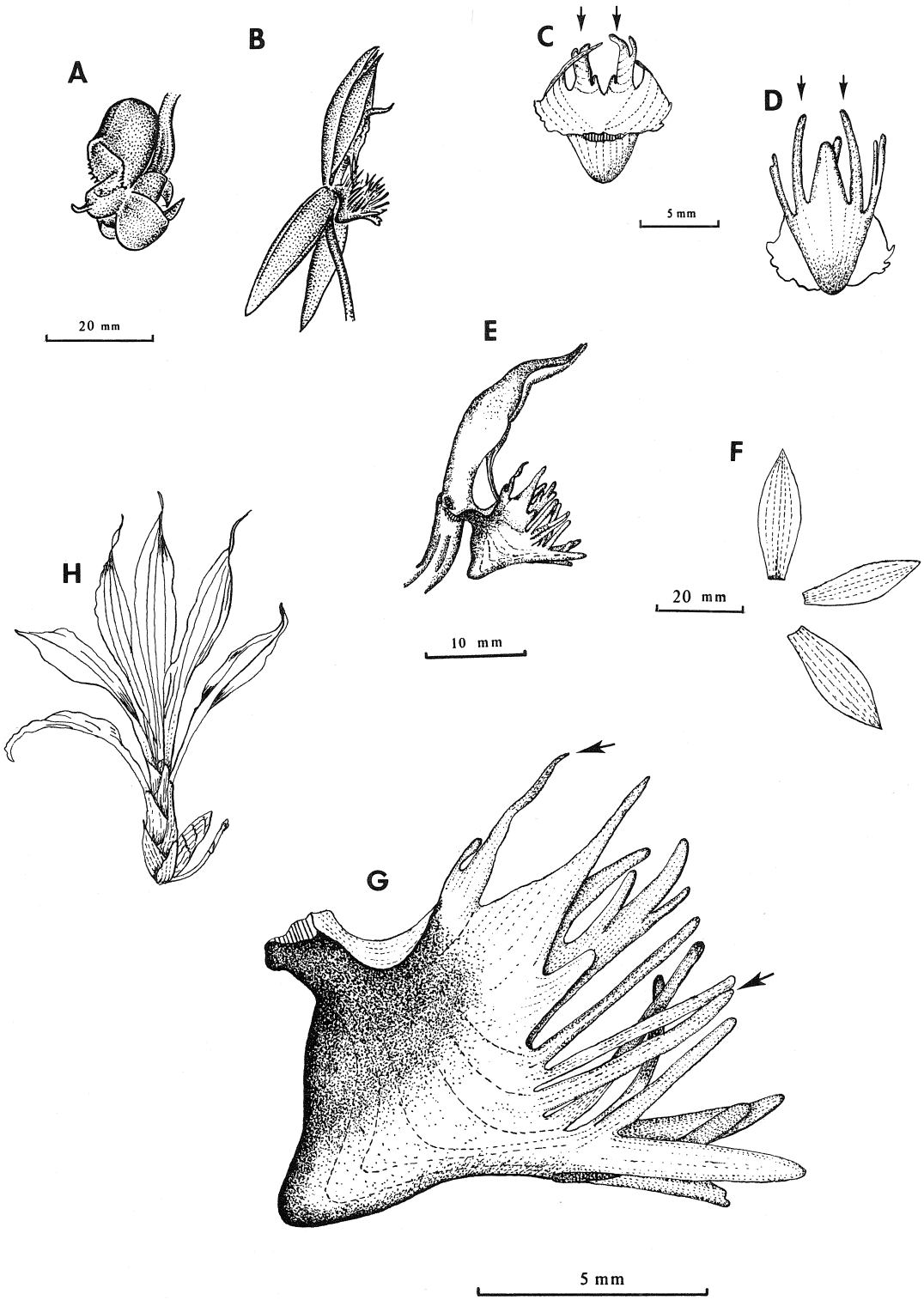
Plant epiphytic, indistinguishable from other members of the genus. Staminate inflorescence erect to lightly arcuate, racemose, up to 15-flowered; peduncle green, 18–29 cm long. Pedicel elongate, slender, 35–40 mm long, including the rudimentary ovary, almost four times as long as the concave, scarious subtending bract. Sepals subequal, concave, lanceolate to oblanceolate, acuminate, green with maroon purple dots, 28–29 mm long, 9 mm wide; dorsal sepal erect, lateral sepals reflexed. Petals lanceolate, obliquely acuminate, green with maroon purple dots, 25 mm long, 7 mm wide, erect. Labellum sacciform, the apex complexly trilobulate, light green, maroon at the margins, 12–14 mm long. Lateral lobes erect, deeply fimbriated, fimbriae white to light green, 2–4 mm long. Midlobe trilobulate, 8–10 mm long, 4–5 mm wide at the base; lateral lobes gladiate, bifurcate or trifurcate, 5 mm long, 1 mm wide. Midlobe triangular, 4 mm long, 2 mm wide at the base, with 1 to 3 fleshy hairs on its inner surface. Calli two, on the inner surface of the labellum, linear-lanceolate, bifurcate or trifurcate at the apex, each at the inner base of the main lateral lobes, 3–5 mm long. Column semiterete, slender, erect, rostrate at the apex, green at the base with maroon dots, maroon at the apex, 19–22 mm long and 4–6 mm wide, with a pair of elongate, converging, light maroon antennae, 8–10 mm long, tapering to a point, the points resting between the calli on the inner surface of the labellum base. Anther pale green with some maroon dots. Pollinia two, waxy, yellow, compressed, more than twice as long as wide, attached to a light yellow green stipe with a white, adhesive viscidium. Pistillate inflorescence an erect raceme of up to 5 flowers; peduncle green, 14–29 cm long. Pedicellate ovary elongate, 35–40 mm long, almost four times as long as the concave, scarious subtending bract. Sepals subequal, elliptic-lanceolate, acute, yellowish green, reflexed, 20 mm long, 9 mm wide. Petals elliptic-lanceolate, acute, yellowish green, reflexed, 18 mm long, 9 mm wide. Labellum fleshy, calceiform, light green to yellowish green, 18 mm long, 16 mm wide; column short, stout, green, 8–9 mm long, 6–7 mm wide, without antennae.

SPECIMENS EXAMINED. **Venezuela.** Territorio Federal Amazonas, Río Cataniapo, cerca de la desembocadura del Río Gavilan, *G. Romero 1283* (AMES, K, SEL).

PHENOLOGY. New growths appear from February to March; inflorescences have been found in the field from April to August.

HABITAT AND DISTRIBUTION. This species has been collected growing on trees along moist tropical forest streams, at elevations between 60 and 80 m; it is restricted to southern Venezuela.

RELATIONSHIPS. This species is allied to *Catasetum bicolor* and to *Catasetum boyi*. It differs from *C. bicolor* in the fimbriation of the labellum lobes and in the color and the larger size of the staminate flowers. It differs from *C. boyi* in the labellum of the staminate flowers with many elongate, marginal processes and with a tridentate middle lobe. It bears some resemblance to species in the *Catasetum barbatum* (Lindley) Lindley complex, but it has two calli in the base of the labellum (FIGURE 1C), instead of the single callus typically found in species of the *C. barbatum* complex.


A
B
C
D
5 mm
20 mm
E
F
H
20 mm
10 mm
G
5 mm

NAME. Named in honor of Mercedes González de Romero, my mother, who has patiently cared for my *Catasetum* plants.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## LITERATURE CITED

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FIGURE 1. **Catasetum merchae.** A, pistillate flower. B–G, staminate flower: C, labellum base viewed from above (arrows indicate the two calli; labellum lobes not fully shown); D, labellum viewed from below (arrows indicate the lateral lobes of the labellum midlobe); E, side view of column and labellum; F, sepals and petals; G, side view of the labellum (note the deeply fimbriated labellum side lobes between the arrows). H, habit (plant with young inflorescence).