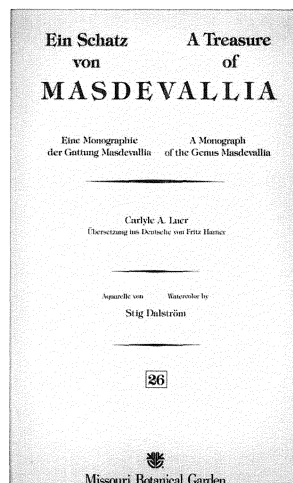


BOOK REVIEWS



A TREASURE OF *MASDEVALLIA*: A MONOGRAPH OF THE GENUS *MASDEVALLIA*, VOLUME 26

CARLYLE A. LUER

2001. 34 p. \$60. Elephant-folio format. 30 illustrations. Missouri Botanical Garden Press, St. Louis, MO. ISBN 1930723075.

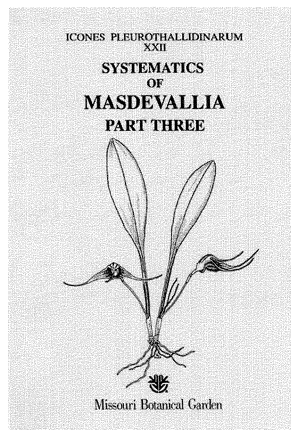
The genus *Masdevallia* is one of the most popular genera of orchids in cultivation. Many species are relatively easy to grow, and their flowers are usually very colorful and of fascinating shapes. This latest volume in the series is a great addition to the library of orchid enthusiasts and institutions.

This volume or fascicle is in the same format as the preceding 25, of which 20 appeared as *A Thesaurus Masdevalliarum*, which treated ca. 300 of the ca. 420 species in the genus. The last eight fascicles have appeared as *A Treasure of Masdevallia*, a series designed to treat the remaining species.

This fascicle (Vol. 26) contains 18 species, each with a natural sized and beautifully rendered watercolor painting by Stig Dalström. The German translation of the text was prepared by Fritz Hamer, author of *Orchids of El Salvador* and *Orchids of Nicaragua* in the *Icones Plantarum Tropicarum* series published by the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens. Also included in the fascicle are distribution maps, specimen citations, and at least one line drawing of each species.

Carlyle Luer, the specialist on the miniature pleurothallid orchids, is founding and current Trustee of the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens and founding editor of *Selbyana*, to which he continues to contribute orchid taxonomy articles. With undergraduate and medical degrees from Washington University–St. Louis, he first developed an interest in orchids after moving to Sarasota, Florida, in 1953. He was philanthropist Marie Selby's surgeon and recruited Calaway Dodson as first director of Selby Gardens. Luer's books include *The Native Orchids of Florida* and *The Native Orchids of the United States and Canada*. After leaving the Selby Gardens staff in 1983, he wrote, edited, and illustrated the *Icones Pleurothallidarum* series and the *Thesaurus Dracularum* series published by the Missouri Botanical Garden, where he is a Senior Curator.

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ICONES PLEUROTHALLIDINARUM XXII: SYSTEMATICS OF *MASDEVALLIA*, PART THREE

CARLYLE A. LUER

2001. 277 p. \$59.95. Softcover. 1 color photo, 133 line drawings, 110 maps. Missouri Botanical Garden Press. www.mobot.org/mbgpress. ISBN 1-930723-06-7.

This is not the latest installment of *Icones Pleurothallidarum* (I.P. XXVII was released in 2005), but it had not been reviewed for *Selbyana* before. This volume maintains the high standard of the series, whose objective is to provide taxonomic revisions for all groups in the subtribe Pleurothallidinae, the largest among Neotropical Orchidaceae. It also represents the third part (from a total of five) of a complete revision of *Masdevallia* (as known at the time of publication), the most horticulturally important genus in the subtribe.

Here, two groups of subgenus *Masdevallia* are revised: the large subsection *Masdevallia* of section *Masdevallia*, and the small section *Minutae*. Together, these taxa include 105 species, four of which are described as new, and another one is newly proposed to be a natural hybrid. In addition, five species that belong to groups of *Masdevallia* treated previously are included at the end of the volume, one of which is newly described.

As in all previous installments of the series, there is a brief introduction to each group treated, followed by a list of the binomials attributable to that group and a dichotomous key to the species. An introduction to section *Masdevallia* and a key to its five subsections is also given. The treatment for each species includes full synonymy and etymology, a detailed description, a list of examined herbarium specimens, a distribution map, and a short to medium-sized discussion. Luer's intimate knowledge of each species becomes apparent through his detailed notes.

Each species is illustrated by a fine line drawing that depicts the plant habit and all the important floral parts. A few species are illustrated

more than once to show their morphological variation. All of the drawings are prepared by Luer himself, and many of the most recent ones have been inked by Stig Dalström. All these elements are sufficient for a proper identification in most cases, provided that you have correctly narrowed down your plant to either one of the groups treated. I wish many other taxonomic revisions were as complete as the ones produced by Luer.

A nice photograph of *Masdevallia laevis* in the frontispiece is the only color illustration. This is unfortunate, but color photos would be very hard to get for every species, and would significantly increase the cost of the volume.

Being part three of Systematics of *Masdevallia*, the page numbers start with 519 and run through 780. The extra species described at the end of the volume have page numbers that correspond to either inserts or replacement pages for their respective sections published previously; these pages can be detached and inserted in their corresponding treatments if so desired. The drawings are not on the page that faces the corresponding text, but instead are on the reverse side of the same sheet, to facilitate this insert system. Additional species that belong to the taxa treated here have already been described in I.P. XXIII and XXVI, and their page numbers have been similarly numbered. This mode of pagination is convenient for those that want to keep the descriptions of related taxa together (easily accomplished in the loose-leaf edition), but it is somewhat confusing for those of us that prefer to keep our glue-bound edition intact. What I do in these cases is to write a note somewhere in the previous volume to indicate the

subsequent one in which an insert or replacement has been published.

Another case of unusual pagination is found in *Icones Pleurothallidarum XIV*, which is divided in three parts plus an appendix, and each part starts on page 1. This makes it difficult to reference some parts of the text with standard citation formats.

A very useful tool to “navigate” through the entire *Icones Pleurothallidarum* series is a comprehensive index, compiled and periodically updated by Peter Wondergem, and freely available as a PDF document from <http://www.inhico.net/pleurothalliden/icones/eicones.shtml>. The latest version covers *Icones Pleurothallidarum I* through *XXVII* and is 55 pages long.

Despite my minor criticisms, I consider this an outstanding piece of work and an indispensable instrument for anyone wishing to study this diverse group of marvelous plants. The same applies to the rest of the I.P. series.

Carlyle Luer is Senior Curator at the Missouri Botanical Garden Orchid Herbarium (MO) and the leading author on pleurothallids. He earned undergraduate and medical degrees at Washington University-St. Louis, and in 1953 moved to Sarasota, Florida, where he combined an interest in orchids with a medical practice. Dr. Luer was a founding member of the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens Board of Trustees. In 1975 he established the research journal, *Selbyana*, devoted to articles pertaining to epiphytic plants. He served as editor of *Selbyana* for 8 years (1975–1982). Over the years, he has written and illustrated 36 articles for the journal on orchid taxonomy. Among his books, in addition to the *Icones Pleurothallidarum* Series, are *Native Orchids of Florida* and *Native Orchids of the United States and Canada*.

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