**Dracula** Luer

ETYMOLOGY: Latin for dragon. Refers to the bizarre sinister and fancied shape of the flowers. Romanian Mythology. A reference to a fictional vampire, Vlad Tepes, known as the Count Dracula (l43l—l476), a prince of Wallachia. He is known for his gruesome and bloody atrocities committed during his many regnal periods.

TYPE SPECIES: *Dracula chimaera* (Reichenbach f.) Luer

(*Masdevallia chimaera* Reichenbach f.)

One hundred eleven tufted, sympodial commonly epiphytes or terrestrials are found mostly in shady, low to upper elevation, woodlands and montane cloud forests of southeastern Mexico (Chiapas) to northern Peru with the center of diversity found in Colombia and Ecuador. These plants have short stems, each with long, somewhat thinly textured leaves that have a prominent mid» rib and taper toward the base. The solitary to few flowered inflorescence has bizarre, flat to bell-shaped flowers. The large lateral sepals are joined for a third or more of their length, are shortly hairy on the inner surface. Each sepal is covered in a dense mass of hairs, warts or nodules and as long tails. The small to minute, warty petals flank the small, short column. The small, two part lip, hinged to the base of the column foot, has a fleshy, oblong, clawed hypochile, and a roundish, shell shaped, sac like or flat epichile adorned with radiating grooves or is veined. The flower provides an allusion of a small face appearing outward toward the viewer.