

# Two interesting Brachystelmas

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These two *Brachystelmas*, as illustrated by R.A. Dyer (1983), are of historical interest. One is the first *Brachystelma* to be discovered and the other is the first plant to be named a *Brachystelma*. R.A. Dyer, in his book on these plants (1983) gives his classification of these two plants which is supported by the author.

*Brachystelma caudatum* is one of only two species which occur in the winter rainfall area in fynbos. *B. caudatum* was probably common on the Cape Flats two hundred years ago. This plant was noted by Thunberg around 1770 in this area but he called it *Stapelia caudata*. N.E. Brown subsequently incorporated it into *Brachystelma*.

*B. tuberosum* is the type species of the genus. It was named by Robert Brown in 1822. It occurs from around Knysna, along the eastern shoreboard to north of East London. It was also observed inland by J. Victor at high elevation at Elliot.

The accompanying photographs illustrate these plants of the first *Brachystelma* found and the type species of the genus.

## Reference

Dyer, R A. (1983). *Ceropegia*, *Brachystelma* and *Riocreuxia* in Southern Africa. A.A. Balkema, Rotterdam.



*B. caudatum* flowering near Kraaifontein on the Cape Flats. The flower is up to 80 mm in diameter. Note the long thin corolla lobes and terminal flowers.



*B. tuberosum*, a flowering plant of which the flowers are borne in sets of two or four at the leaf nodes. Note the hairs along the edges of the corolla lobes. The flowers are up to 30 mm in diameter.



The staminal column (corona) of *B. caudatum*. It is speckled and quite prominent.



The black staminal column of *B. tuberosum*.