Two interesting Brachystelmas

Ralph Peckover

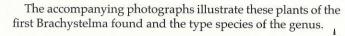
These two Brachystelmas, as illustrated by R.A. Dyer (1983), are of historical interest. One is the first Brachystelma to be discovered and the other is the first plant to be named a Brachystelma. R.A. Dyer, in his book on these plants (1983) gives his classification of these two plants which is supported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



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.



Reference

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



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*.