

## FIELD NOTES ON STAPELIEÆ COLLECTED IN THE LAIKIPIA-SAMBURU DISTRICT OF KENYA.

By R. O. Hennings.

The following notes refer to stapelieæ collected by the writer and his wife, or by Mr. and Mrs. E. H. Rundgren of the Game Department during 1945 and 1946 in Laikipia-Samburu District, or, in a few cases, in the adjoining region of Mukogodo. Some of the specimens were collected in the course of day or week-end outings, but most were found on safari, in strolls round camp, or in roadside halts for lunch or for mending punctures. Indeed the most fertile periods for finding succulents, so far as the writer is concerned, have been while punctures were being mended.

These notes of course, make no pretence to being scientific, but it is hoped that the descriptions, based on Mr. Bally's pamphlet on Stapelieæ (June 1942) may be of interest to collectors. No less than 21 different species were collected, of which five do not seem to be recorded by Bally (Nos. 2 with 3 varieties, 5 and 11 below); two others have not yet flowered and remain unidentified. (Nos. 3 and 18).

### CARALLUMA.

#### Group *Eucaralluma*.

1. *Caralluma* sp. nov. near *priogonium*, similar to Bally's Fig. 3. A most attractive flower,  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch across; corolla lobes curving back like a miniature Martagon lily, maroon darker at base; tube pure white with maroon spots; corona yellow with white centre. Plant stems up to 9 inches with flower stalks rising to 24 inches. Fifteen or more stems growing upright from the single root. Collected by the writer on 25/4/46 on rocky ground a few miles north of the Seya Drift in Samburu Low Country, altitude about 4,500 ft. Cuttings sent to Coryndon Museum.

2. *Caralluma* sp. nov., near Bally's S.63, three "spidery-flowered" species. All three varieties were collected within a ten miles radius of the junction of the Uaso Narok and the Uaso Nyiro in North Laikipia, by Mr. and Mrs. Rundgren. The form of the flower is of the "spidery" type like Bally's S.63. To the lay eye the shape appears the same in all three species, but the colouring in the three is quite distinct, although they grow close together.

Species A; corolla lobes maroon in front and plain greenish white at back, corona maroon.

Species B; corolla lobes maroon in front and greenish white speckled with maroon at back; corona maroon but with inner horns white.

Species C; corolla lobes pale yellow in front and greenish-white at back.

In all three the corona is set on an elongated pedestal, and the inner horns of the corona are elongated.

The plants grow in low clumps, much branching and procumbent, usually in the partial shade of thorn bushes, or entangled in clumps of grass or herbage, in the manner of *Edithcolea*, so that they may pass unnoticed unless one actually pries into the clump. Stems with many branches, each one being seldom over 9 inches long. The writer collected several plants apparently similar at Dadavu, below the Leroghi Escarpment, which have not yet flowered. Specimens sent to Coryndon Museum.

3. *Caralluma* sp. nov. habit similar to Bally's S.27. Has not flowered yet. Twenty stems up to 6 inches high growing upright from one root. A single plant was collected by the writer on 25/3/46 on a rocky kopje some miles south of the Seya Drift in Samburu Low Country, altitude about 4,500 ft. A *Eucaralluma* similar in habit, perhaps the same, was collected in June 1946, by Mr. Rundgren in North Laikipia. Cuttings sent to the Coryndon Museum.

4. *Caralluma* sp. nov. near Bally's S.61. Single plant collected by Mrs. Rundgren in Mukugodo in April 1946, altitude about 5,000 ft. Flowers distinctive in shape, similar to Bally's S.61. Found half way down the Mukogodo Escarpment. Plant growing well at Kampi-ya-Simba, near Rumuruti.

5. *Caralluma* sp. nov. not described by Bally. Oddly shaped and brightly coloured, perhaps nearer to Bally's S.61 than to any other species in shape of corona and corolla. The corolla lobes dangle loosely like S.61, but are doubled back longitudinally to form a double thickness demilune in shape, showing the front or inner surface of the lobes, yellow speckled with maroon. Corona yellow with staminal apertures red. Collected by Mr. Rundgren in June 1946 near Soisian springs in North Laikipia.

Group *Umbellata-Europeæa*.

6. *Caralluma retrospiciens* found at scattered localities throughout the area and quite common in some places. The writer collected one plant some ten miles from the shore of Lake Rudolf in the Sirima area, growing in a sandy pan among lava ridges. When dug up, it was sheltering a snake, fortunately somnolent, among its roots, which called to mind the old print reproduced as the frontispiece of the one-volume White and Sloane.

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| <p>7. <i>Caralluma tombuctuensis</i><br/>       8. <i>Caralluma speciosa</i><br/>       9. <i>Caralluma foetida</i></p> | } | <p>Differences between these three species are not very obvious and identification is made more difficult by variations between neighbouring plants. But pretty certainly all three have been collected in the area. Most of them seem markedly and unpleasantly smelly. This characteristic is not mentioned by Bally but might provide an easy means of identification.</p> |
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Group *Ango*

10. *Caralluma Dummeri*. Found throughout the area from Rumuruti to El Barta. Next to *Huernia keniensis*, the commonest stapeliad in the district.

11. *Caralluma* sp. nov., apparently between *C. subterranea* and *C. Baldratii*. The flowers are bright, gem-like, and a dozen or more may come into bloom together on one small plant. Corolla lobes crimson up to an inch in diameter; corona golden-yellow with white centre. The flowers are indistinguishable in photograph from Bally's fig. 14 *C. Baldratii*, but the habit of the plant is quite different, being not more than 3 inches high. In shape and mottling the plant is similar to *C. subterranea* as illustrated by Bally, but no underground rhizomes have been noticed. Collected in May 1945 by Mrs. Hennings a few miles north of Rumuruti, growing in loose moss under a thick bush; collected again by the writer growing in full sun in open grassland further north, and again at Sugota Naibor in North Laikipia, in stony ground. It seems to be widespread in North Laikipia and if unrecorded it might suitably be named "Laikipiensis." Specimens sent to Coryndon Museum.

12. *Caralluma vibratilis* collected among grass in vlei-land near Rumuruti and on farms towards Nanyuki.

13. *Caralluma tubiformis*. Known previously only from Archer's Post, this species was collected by the writer in April 1946 in Samburu Low Country on the road between Swiyan and Barsaloi, altitude about 4,500 ft. Stems with roots, freshly pulled and in flower, were found strewn along the road evidently by some child from the solitary manyatta in the neighbourhood, a reminder that the Samburu, Dorobo and kindred tribes habitually eat some species of stapelieæ.

#### EDITHCOLEA.

14. *Edithcolea grandis*, collected in areas as wide apart as Lower Narok farms (altitude 5,500 ft.) and El Barta (altitude about 4,000 ft.), and in some localities extremely common. Passing in a lorry through a region of *Edithcolea* at certain seasons, the traveller may be startled by what appear to be the pale ears of scores of rabbits cocked up among the low bushes. Closer inspection will reveal that these are the fully developed seed-pods of *Edithcolea*.

#### STAPELIA.

15. *Stapelia semota*. The writer found the dark maroon variety flourishing in the garden at Rumuruti, but has so far failed to find it growing wild in the district.

#### HUERNIA.

16. *Huernia keniensis*. Undoubtedly the commonest stapeliad in the district and can be found on almost any patch of rocky ground from Rumuruti to El Barta. The large variety *nairobiensis* abounds, with trailing stems three feet and more in length, and flowers over an inch across, bowl-shaped rather than bell-shaped, pale greenish with raised veins outside.

#### ECHIDNOPSIS.

17. *Echidnopsis Sharpei* is growing in the garden at Maralal, where it was presumably planted by H. B. Sharpe in 1937. The writer has searched in vain for it near the camp at Baragoi where it was originally found.

18. *Echidnopsis* sp. unidentified, stems upright, up to three inches high, with ten angles; possibly *E. angustiloba*, but has not flowered yet. Collected by the writer on 6/6/45 growing by the roadside in the shade of a stone on the North Marte (Lava) Plateau north of Maralal, altitude about 5,000 ft. Specimen sent to the Coryndon Museum.

19. *Echidnopsis* sp. nov. pretty certainly the same as Bally's S.49. Collected on the northern escarpment of the North Marte (Lava) Plateau north of Maralal altitude about 5,000 ft., perhaps forty miles from the locality previously recorded, Mt. Nyiro. A dozen or more plants were found growing among lava boulders within a radius of a hundred yards. Most were in flower, and the purplish-red tube and lemon-yellow lobes shaped as shown in Bally's Fig. 30 make it pretty certainly the same plant. Full grown stems about the same size and proportions as a man's finger.

NOTE: In addition to specimens sent to the Coryndon Museum, most of the above plants are established in the District Commissioner's garden at Rumuruti and in Mr. Rundgren's garden at Kampi-ya-Simba, a few miles to the south.

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