



## *Cyphostemma mendesii* (Vitaceae), a new species from Angola

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### Abstract

A new species of *Cyphostemma* (Vitaceae) is here described: *C. mendesii*, a succulent geophyte from the Namibe region in southern Angola.

**Key words:** Africa, geophyte, Namibe, succulent, taxonomy

### Introduction

The family Vitaceae was treated for Angola in *Conspectus florum angolensis* (Exell & Mendonça 1954) and more recently enumerated for *Plants of Angola* by Retief (2008). Five genera of Vitaceae occur naturally in the country (*Ampelocissus* Planch., *Cayratia* Juss., *Cissus* L., *Cyphostemma* (Planch.) Alston, *Rhoicissus* Planch.), while *Vitis vinifera* L. is recorded as an escapee from cultivation (Retief 2008). The genus *Cyphostemma*, was previously included in *Cissus* as section *Cyphostemma* (Planchon 1887). It was elevated to the rank of genus by Alston (1931: 53), a classification later adopted by Descoings (1960). *Cyphostemma* comprises ca. 150 species (Mabberley 2008) and is widely distributed throughout tropical Africa. In Angola it is represented by 20 species, of which nine (including *C. mendesii*) are endemic.

Representatives of *Cyphostemma* are easily distinguished from species included in the most closely related genus *Cissus*, by their constricted flower buds and nectary disk of four glands, which are free from each other (Descoings 1960). The majority of species are erect, prostrate or climbing perennial herbs or shrubs, with or without tendrils (Wild & Drummond 1966). Several species of southern African *Cyphostemma* are thick-stemmed succulents or have succulent leaves, giving them horticultural interest among collectors (Smith *et al.* 1997, Figueiredo & Smith 2009).

In the course of an investigation of *Cyphostemma* in Angola, we came across material of a geophytic succulent species that differs significantly from other known succulent species in the genus. This new species, *Cyphostemma mendesii*, is here described from material collected by Eduardo Mendes in 1955, during botanical exploration of Angola.

### Materials and methods

Herbarium specimens of the new taxon were compared to the collections at LISC and LISU. Material was examined under a Carl Zeiss binocular microscope. Coordinates were retrieved from 1:10000 maps using the information from field notes. Maps were constructed using ArcView 3.1.