Y
ears ago, for Pretoria students, it was quite a romantic outing to drive along Johan Rissik Drive on the Klapperkop koppie to the south of the suburb Groenkloof, to admire the city lights and the illuminated Union Buildings, or watch the fireworks on the 5th of November. The best time was October. To see the entire city clothed in the purple haze of flowering jacaranda trees from a higher vantage point, was something not to be missed. That was before the invading wattles took over, and crime became a serious problem. Drastic measures had to be taken, and finally the Friends of the Groenkloof Nature Reserve in conjunction with the City Council and the Working for Water Project started clearing the wattles and other noxious weeds. Now, travelling on the scenic drive is not a risk anymore, and one can safely visit the Military Museum housed at the Klapperkop Fort. The fort dates back to the Boer War, and is situated on top of the koppie. After some early spring rains preceded by a veld fire, the north-facing quartzitic ridges of this area were transformed into a wonderland! The monkey's tails were in bloom! As Sima Eliovsen writes in her book *South African Wild Flowers for the Garden*, 'Few people who have seen what looks like a charred group of stumps in the dry veld can imagine that these produce posies of showy, sweet-scented flowers in early summer after rains'. Competing with the jacarandas, *Xerophyta retinervis* or monkey's tail or bobbejaanstert. This plant was an impressive 90 cm tall. Photo G. Hesse.