



ORTHOLOPHA

The Newsletter of the Aloe, Cactus and Succulent Society of Zimbabwe

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Hi Everyone,

The best time of year and it is non-stop botanising at the moment at all sorts of venues with the most interesting of people, plants and propositions.

Don't fall by the wayside, get out and see what is on offer at every opportunity, the world is literally your oyster but if the current politics of America and Europe are anything to go by, it is clearly ending soon for normal people.

On the 14th August we will be taking the Society to Paradise Pools near Bindura to see the wonderful *Aloe excelsa* flowering. A separate e-mail will be sent out to members so that you have directions and instructions for even the slower-thinkers, on how to get there with friends. It will be an all-day event with members bringing their own food, chairs, drink and conviviality, which is essential to the success of such an outing. Braais will be provided. Reaching the aloes and other plants will be relatively easy, but the wounded warriors, armed with binoculars, will be able to do it from the comfort of a deckchair, well-positioned.

Cheers Mafungi

Your Committee

Chairman - Doreen Richards
0772 255784

Vice-chairman – Rob Jarvis
0783 383214

Committee members:

Malcolm Thackray - 0772 516644
Ros Houghton - 0772 115364
Caryl Stutchbury - 0772 611756
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Anne-Katrin Maseko - 0772 440131
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Monthly Meeting : OUTING Sunday 31st July 2016

This month's Meeting is at **24 Newbold Road, Greystone Park**, the home and garden of Aude Rheiner and Pierre Nicolas. This is the home of "Crystal Passions" jewellery studio, so be prepared not only to witness a magical garden, but also some gorgeous creations with precious & semi-precious stones.

PLEASE remember to bring a delicious plate of eats to share. Don't forget to bring your chairs and hats, as well as a labelled plant or other contribution for the raffle.

The time: 10.00am for 10:30am

Directions: Coming down Harare Drive from Enterprise Road, turn RIGHT into Gaydon Road. Continue up the hill. Just over the top, turn RIGHT into Newbold Road (the next road after the church.) Number 24 is on the LEFT hand side.

If you need further directions whatsapp Aude on 0772 235 313.

Flowering Plant: JULY

What is this, on the right?

Send your knowledgeable and considered opinions to bo.hoom52@yahoo.com.

The respected judge's decision is final and the winner will get a box of choice Belgian chocolates, provided they are shared.

June entry was *Aloe vanbalenii*

**The lucky winner in July was a joint win by Rob Burrett and Hans Wolbert!
Well done Bulawayo and Harare!**

You can claim your prizes at the next ACSSZ Outing on 31st July 2016.

You can win a box of chocolates!!!

Send your entries to Mafungi at bo.hoom52@yahoo.com



The plant above is the July entry.

What is it? A clue if it was in a crossword it would be cryptic.

Photograph taken by Mafungi



Next month we feature Norman Conlon's beautiful garden on the ridge above Lake Chivero. Don't miss this opportunity to see how man, nature and imagination meld together to make near perfection on a rocky ironstone hillside.

Annual Membership: Members are encouraged to make payment for 2016 as soon as they can, thanks to all those that have already paid.

If you haven't paid your membership for this year - you will not have received a copy of *Ingens* 54.

If you have paid but haven't received your copy of *Ingens*, please e-mail and let us know and we will get a copy to to you.

Membership is \$20 per person/couple per year. Make payment to a committee member, or the CABS account:

CABS Platinum: Aloe, Cactus and Succulent Society

Acc #: 901 649 1871 Reference: kindly include your names as a the deposit reference.

Alternatively send \$21-00 through EcoCash to **0783 911314**



Last month I promised you a picture of the cliff face on the banks of the Zambezi just downstream from the Msuna Resort at the very upper end of Lake Kariba. Well here you are, not one, but three photos taken by the beautiful and able and willing Judy Cumming. She and her husband Larry run the resort and she organised the recent hike where we ambled amiably from Victoria Falls to Msuna over a very pleasant four days. A distance of 126,5 kilometres through beautiful rolling Zambezi Valley countryside.

Each day you walk about 30 kilometres, split very neatly into three equal parts, with sit-down breakfast, then lunch and finally the campsite!

Photos taken by Judy with boating by Larry.

The catering was second to none, with slap-up breakfasts followed by light lunches and then a big evening meal with your feet well-up in camp. By then the spirits are truly flowing as are the big yarns and with no urban lights visible for miles around, the starstruck will gaze in wonderment from the firmament to the very Heavens themselves. Judy organises this trip every June or July and part of the proceeds goes towards local schools and churches one encounters along the route. A lick of paint, new rooves and pens, pencils and stationery make a huge difference to the local populace! The aloe of course is the ubiquitous *A. chabaudii* whose bright splashes of colour enlighten Zimbabwe from border to border now.





Forgotten Places in Zimbabwe: Sebakwe

I lived for fourteen years in a town called Kadoma, south-west of Harare, hot dry and dusty. Although we once visited Ngezi Dam National Park, we almost never ventured deep into the Midlands of this country. Great pity, because there are real gems lurking in the misty wastes that surround the major cities of the Province, not least of which is the Sebakwe Dam National Park. Only an hour from Kwe Kwe, the park is characterised by vast woodlands of *Brachystegia tamrindoides*, the mountain brachystegia and towering amongst these beautiful trees are numerous sentinels of *Aloe excelsa*. Not of goodly height, but supreme athletes that spring up through the canopy and soon will be displaying their floral finery to the denizens of the tree canopy and birds of the air. Mere mortals like us will get cricks in our necks if we try to peer up from immediately below.

Parks run a neat establishment with three lodges nestling in the rocky hills overlooking the crystal blue waters of the lake below. Impala bound up and down the exposed lake-bed, black rhino lumber menacingly through the thick bush of a nearby conservancy. You can camp in the miombo woodland on the foreshore, water comes out of the taps, firewood abounds and there is complete serenity.

Of course in this august Society we are mainly pre-occupied with the Xerophytes and this tantalising view of a rocky hilltop told my untrained eye that there is much to discover in these magnificent rocky hills towards the southern extremity of the Great Dyke of Zimbabwe. Dassies or rock rabbits abound and with such plump protein in abundance you will be well advised to tread carefully in the rocky fastnesses. Their arch predators the Verreaux' or Black Eagle and the deadly Black Mamba will not be far away. But pray, do not tarry, go and visit this wonderful place in August and double or quadruple the signings in the voids in the visitors' book. The slowest in the party should always walk in front! It's safer. Stapeliads, sanseverias, euphorbias, aloes all can be seen in profusion.



Those of you who have been married for scores of years might want to take advantage of the honeymoon-suite lodge and reaffirm your vows before your union runs aground on a rocky patch. What better place to do this than under the dappled shade of the mountain brachystegias of Sebakwe? At only US\$30 per night for the lodge it is cheaper than living at home and the spouse can relax from the normal hewing of wood and hauling water duties because this is all arranged by management here. Instead they can concentrate upon threading worms on hooks, popping beers, buttering marmite-laden toast, foot massages and any other idiosyncracies that bring such comfort to loved ones.



Gardens of Harare

June and July are the months when all the grand gardens of Harare, and Zimbabwe generally, bring forth their floral wonders and especially of the aloes, that peculiarly African and Arabian family of plants that grow, flower and thrive in the most unlikely places. This month we look at the Stutchburys of Sunlands. Here an enthralled group of plant enthusiasts listen in rapt attention as Caryl Stutchbury reveals her deepest secrets. She transformed her miombo woodland from a dry dusty backyard (in the front yard) to a beautifully landscaped Pandora's Box-load of diversity.

Of course once you take the landscaping route, you must then guide visitors gently from one treasure to the next and Caryl has managed this through an intricate series of bricked walkways, each path surrounding a special group of plants, either flowering together, from the same geographical centre of origin, or more commonly, just because they look good together. Luckily husband Glenn has taken an avid interest in the project and other than signing up for evening, night and early morning jobs in addition to his normal day job to keep the flow of shiny lucre rolling in to finance the projects, his life carries on pretty much as normal. The paths also keep insatiable plant collectors well away from the real treasures, known to only a select few, that hide deep in the beds.



Those of you with young families, whether of the current generation or grandchildren are well advised to fill your garden spaces with plants of wonder. This agave group pictured at Ewanrigg National Botanic Gardens is in the masterclass for broadening the imagination of young, malleable minds. A well-concealed adult, having tied invisible fishing line to the bases of these floral parts and gently swaying them in the wind, can have kids staring in abject fear or wonderment depending upon the time of day or night.

Our own kids still talk, despite being in or near their thirties, of the amazing Jungle Bunny who made whole forests sway to the rhythm of Africa back in the day. Pachyderms left tracks on the fresh dew of the front lawn frequently and the roar of wild baboons often woke them, and the entire neighbourhood, early on Sunday mornings.



The Health Corner:

Not too much on the health front this month, none of us have had any turns, nor is anyone any younger, but reading the internet and hearing that our good friend Obety Baptista from Mozambique is down to a bout of malaria, we have the solution for you to keep those pesky blood sucking varmints well away from your blood-red nectar. Almost unbelievably you must sleep with live chickens in your bedroom, or take your sleeping bag into the co-op and nestle into the straw and the odours from the chickens will keep the horrible malaria-carrying Anopheles mosquito well away from your vital bits.

If you don't believe me look it up on the Internet and you will see that some scientists working with Ethiopians have found this to be true. Isn't it just terrible that millions of people around the world have succumbed to malaria just because they didn't know that you have to sleep in close proximity to, but not necessarily with, chickens.

The Zimbabwe Olympic Committee is considering issuing two live chickens to each of our athletes in Rio to protect them from the Zika virus!

So there you go another month, another day in this crazy life of ours in sunny Zimbabwe, not much, but perhaps everything, somehow, has changed!!! And we have no Power, or do we? Tick as appropriate.

Cheers, Mafungi!