



ORTHOLOPHA

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

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Hi Everyone,

These months come around a little too quickly and in trying to keep ahead of the Stutchbury's I have had to travel to the four corners of Zimbabwe, both for work and pleasure. It's tough, but has to be done.

Judy Cumming of Msuna sent her band of plant hunters into the rocky ridges of the upper Zambesi and in no time they had uncovered a stapeliad, which hopefully when it flowers, will be the very one sought after by Darrel Plowes, after he was given a bedraggled specimen back in the 1970's. *Stapeliads* or pigs-ear plants were known by everyone, but now they are apparently *Huernias* or *Orbeopsis* spp so us mere mortals are completely lost in the classification wildernesses. Luckily we have dedicated professionals,

like our own Darrel Plowes, trying to bring order to disorder. *A luta continua!*

We visited Paradise Pools near Bindura last weekend and although a great outing it just illustrated the importance of timing in the plant world. The *Aloe excelsa* we were so looking forward to observing in habitat had all but given up the ghost and broken inflorescences and seed pods told a story of brief flowering and attractiveness of the floral nectar to simians and other beasts of the woodland and of the airways. A week earlier and they were in their prime.

Cheers, Mafungi!

Your Committee

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Committee members:

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Monthly Meeting : OUTING Sunday 28th August 2016

This month's Meeting is at No 8 Ashbrittle Crescent, Mount Pleasant, the home and garden of John and Yvonne Fynes-Clinton. John will be doing a show and tell about orchids..

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: Go down the Chase just after the Ashbrittle shops, going towards Gateway Junior School. Look on the left for Ashbrittle Crescent.

If you need further directions contact John on +263 772 369 239

Flowering Plant: August

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.

July entry was *Aloe cryptopoda*!

The lucky winner in July was
Mike Fox!

You can claim your prize at the next ACSSZ Outing on 28th August 2016.



You can win a box of chocolates!!!

Send your entries to Mafungi at

The plant above is the August entry.

What is it? A clue, it is definitely not *A. excelsa* despite being bought as one from an otherwise reputable rare plant dealer!



This is how last month's *A. cryptopoda* eventually flowered. Sorry about the picture quality in the original posting, but we expected an Olympian effort from members given the time of year. It is surprising that this species does not feature more in members collections given the fine buffalo-horn sweep of its leaves and the bright inflorescence.

Don't forget that Bill Kinsey is still maintaining the Society's Seed Bank and there are many species of Aloe and other plants available from him. Quite often the best way to grow a desired plant is from seed rather than cuttings because they seem to adapt better to your own peculiar conditions if they have sprouted of their own free will in your soil and climate. Contact Bill in the first instance at aloe143@gmail.com to place your orders! Remember also that there is an Aloe Fundi award of US\$100 to the first person to bring *A. polyphylla* to flowering from seed.

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**



The Conlon Garden

Clinging to an ironstone cliff near Lake Chivero we have watched Norman Conlon's garden grow from strength to strength over the last few years. A perfectionist, as the quality of his plants at the bi-annual Rare Plant Sales testify, Norman has landscaped a steep slope into wondrous areas of flowering aloes, pachypodiums, adeniums, euphorbias, sanseverias and all sorts of other plant species in between.

Where the rocks he wanted did not exist, he created them from concrete and wire reinforcing, but adding various oxides to achieve a completely natural look. Stupendous and

humbling for us mere gardening mortals.

Of course the work is never finished, for once the gardening bug bites there is no cure! Now he is adding an *Adenium* section which will be ablaze with riotous colour as you enter the property down the steep driveway. For now our senses are shocked by the bright pinks, reds and yellows of the winter-flowering aloes. They bring life, contentment and assuage our thirst for beauty as the picture right clearly shows! Birds are happy, dogs are happy and people relax despite the normal wears and tears associated with life in our beautiful country.



Our imagination is transported back millions of years by the ponderous stems of the Pachypodiums in the purpose-built forest, (see below right). Driftwood, fossilised logs and animal bones and tracks bring authenticity. A night spent under the open stars in this garden will definitely get the adrenaline coursing through your veins! Owls will hoot, swallows entertain with continuous circling and the plaintive cry of fish-eagles are all testimony to the absolute near-perfection of this garden only a 40 kilometre stone's throw from Harare.

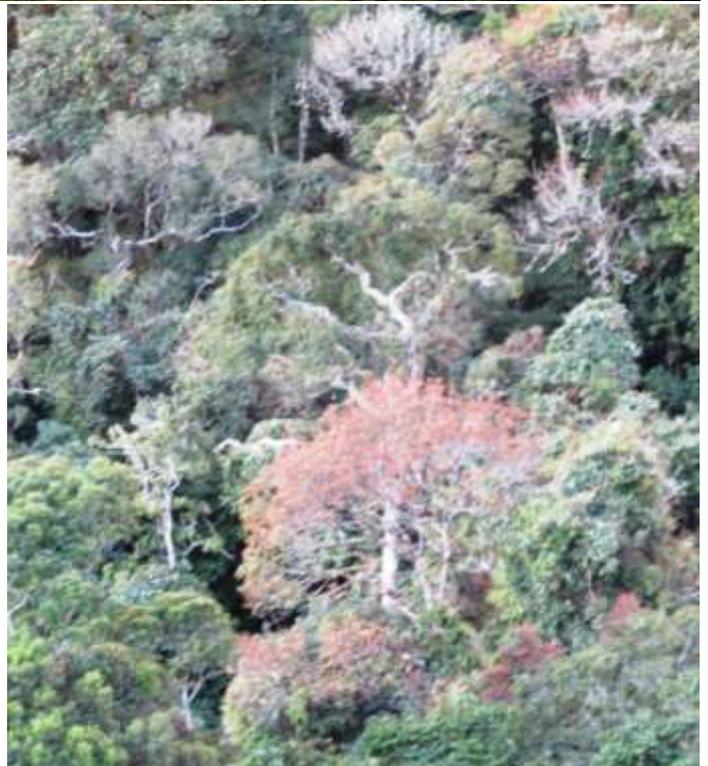




The Final Frontier

The rocky fastnesses of the Chimanimani Mountains on the border between Zimbabwe and Mozambique are undoubtedly one of the places where new plants have yet to be discovered. Over the long weekend in August when most of you were probably down on bended knees paying homage to your Heroes and Ancestors, we, rather irreverently, ventured on a mission to the northern ramparts of these mountains to see if there was a route through the Peza Forest down to the Musapa Gap and thence up to The Corner. In April next year a large group of South African Mountaineers will gather in Chimanimani for their annual convivial. We will be honoured to host them in Zimbabwe and there is no finer place than the Chimanimani to do so.

Peza Forest, right, is an almost impenetrable natural blanket on the northern slopes of Peza Mountain and nestles in the valleys at the base of its cliffs. Access is by a little used poacher's path which disappears completely when in the forest. We camped in the forest and the accumulated leaf litter on the floor gave the sleeping bags an orthopaedic mattress-like effect for the weary bones after a day-long hike to get there. The forest is entirely in Mozambique, but inaccessible to them and the whole range has been a TransFrontier Peacepark long before they became fashionable in the rest of the World. The pink tree, right is not a transgender!



There is no doubt that new plant species will be discovered in these rocky ramparts as people access them more and more in the years ahead. And especially those who derive fun by clinging to finger-nail holds on perilously craggy cliffs.

We stayed one night at the Outward Bound School which is extremely well run and doing brisk business taking youngsters from our schools on leadership courses. The next two nights were spent on the mountains.

On the left is a *Euphorbia* spp. which may not be *E. rugosiflora* a Chimanimani endemic found some years ago in The Corner. Expert advice is required!!! Below Proteas!!!





The plant left is *Bulbine latifolia*, which I have seen on many of the wetter mountain ranges of the Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe. It grows usually where moisture is close to hand, near shady rocks and streams, the leaves are much broader than the common *B. frutescens* that we have talked about before. The amazing thing about its gel, when the leaves are split open is that it is significantly colder than the outside of the leaf and general surroundings would suggest.

A calming balm, to be freely and renewably, applied to any wounds, suppurating sores and lost limbs and the like that you might encounter on the mountains. One of our party had embedded fibre-glass splinters annoying her fingers. Miraculously her affliction was cured! Pastor-hood and untold riches, beckon!

The Health Corner:

Knowledge is all-powerful! Recently I gave a little talk at the Nyanga Garden Club's monthly meeting and it suddenly struck me that the gathering consisted mainly of single elderly folk. How many knew of the contents of this much thumbed little book that I carry around in my knowledge bag, the equivalent of Google Heavy? When asked, there was much shifting of positions, eyes cast askance and general guilty behaviour all around.

So Beware, that totally innocent-looking Granny or Grandpa that families roll out of the cupboards at Christmas and weddings may have more lethal weapons, knowledge and intent, than knitting needles and briar pipes would otherwise indicate.

On a positive note when we were rambling around the Northwestern corner of the Chimanimanis a couple of weeks ago, I felt sorry for those of fairer complexion who were repeatedly lathering themselves with 50-factor sunscreens. Along the way we chanced upon

little colonies of *Bulbine latifolia*, a close relative of the Bulbine we have told you about before. I had forgotten my own fleshy leaves at home so rapidly split open some leaves of this *B. latifolia* and applied the lovely cool gel onto sunburnt skin, open wounds and abrasions. Full recovery was effected!

So there you go another month and an armchair ramble to points inaccessible in Zimbabwe! Please do not let us find some empty chairs at our next meeting because some of you decided to implement the recipes in the above book! If you do pass on, do so in full health! Cheers Mafungi!

