



# ORTHOLOPHA

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

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Issue 16-09 September 2016

Hi Everyone,

The Rare Plant Sale looms! You had better be there and everyone I know, who is anyone, will be there. Spending freely!!!! Getting rid of your hard-earned US dollars before they turn into worthless Bonds. Even Mafungi, apparently, will venture out of his Alice in Wonderland-like near-normal existence and join in the Madcap fun. Wearing his new orange hat. Is there any other kind?

Have a great week and see you in the Sun-day fun next week

Cheers,  
Rob Jarvis

## 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  
Hans Wolbert – 0772 653110  
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Aloe, Cactus & Succulent  
Society of Zimbabwe

*Plants for our Future*



ALOES, SUCCULENTS, CACTI, SABI STARS, BAOBABS, PALMS & CYCADS

RARE PLANT SALE | SUNDAY 25th September 2016: 9am - 1pm

Harare Botanic Gardens HERBARIUM entrance

# Flowering Plant: September

## What is this, on the right?

Send your knowledgeable and considered opinions to [bo.hoom52@yahoo.com](mailto: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.

August entry was *Aloe rupestris*

The lucky winner in August was a mystery winner and if you come to the Plant Sale on Sunday you will get your prize!

You can only claim your prize at the Rare Plant Sale on 25 September 2016. Be there!



## You can win a box of chocolates!!!

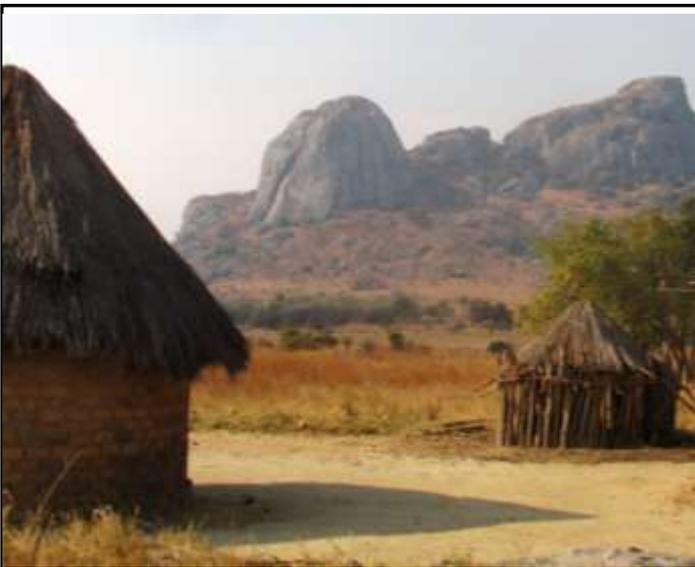
Send your entries to Mafungi at [bo.hoom52@yahoo.com](mailto:bo.hoom52@yahoo.com)

The plant above is the September entry.

## What is it?

A clue, it was seen in a garden in Highlands! Which is no clue at all.

Photograph taken by Mafungi



## The Madness of Africa

On the way to the Guruve side of the Mvuradonha you will chance on scenes such as this. Traditional huts and the enduring granite of Gondwanaland, considered amongst the oldest rocks on earth. And the most stable, the ground rarely quakes here in Zimbabwe. But on this very farm, known as Siyalima on the way to Mvuradonha, the ground once did quake as the owner decided he wanted elephants and not horses to ride around on. So his eccentricity still stands as huge stables with wide barn doors and tips on how to clean the trunks! Not much else stands.

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

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 Magic of the Mvuradonha Mountains!!

Like a giant hook at the end of a geological scythe, the Mvuradonha Mountains perch at the northern end of the Great Dyke of Zimbabwe. Geologically it is one of the richest and most interesting places on the planet. Vast deposits of chrome, platinum, nickel and other metals lie embedded below the rolling grassland mountains and tree-carpeted valleys of the Dyke. The Mvuradonha itself is a mix, with incursions of granite-based rock interspersed at right angles to the Dyke bedrock. The latter is more often than not open grasslands where unusual plants like the *Aloe ortholopha* that we have made the mainstay of our Society logo, occurs. Where the granite predominates there is a clear line and the Miombo woodlands that we all love so much, dominate the landscape. In the well-watered river valleys the most prominent trees are huge specimens of the water-bessie, *Syzigium cordatum* and although they tower over all other riverine trees, even they are dwarfed by the huge lance-like fronds of the raphia palm, *Raphia farinifera*. This palm is reputed to have the longest leaf rachis of any plant in the world and the midrib is of such strong construction that it is often used as a pole for buildings, especially to hold up rooves and the like. There are two places where one can access the Mvuradonha, one to the east of the main road from Centenary to Muzarabani and the second by turning right near Guruve.



In both areas there are beautiful lodges, one with bare essentials on the Muzarabani road but within easy striking distance of some exceptional hikes either to the top of the range at Banarembizi and to the bottom of the hot humid Musengezi River. On the Guruve side a lodge known as Kopjie Tops perches on a bend above the Chingwa river. This is where we went a couple of weeks ago to enjoy the special magic of the Mvuradonha. This is typified by the shiny nuts of the raphia palm and I am happy to report that the population in this section of the mountains seems to be in good health with older trees in the process of flowering and dropping their fruit and quite large areas under the riverine trees, where young palms have been well established and are on their way to springing out of the forest canopy.

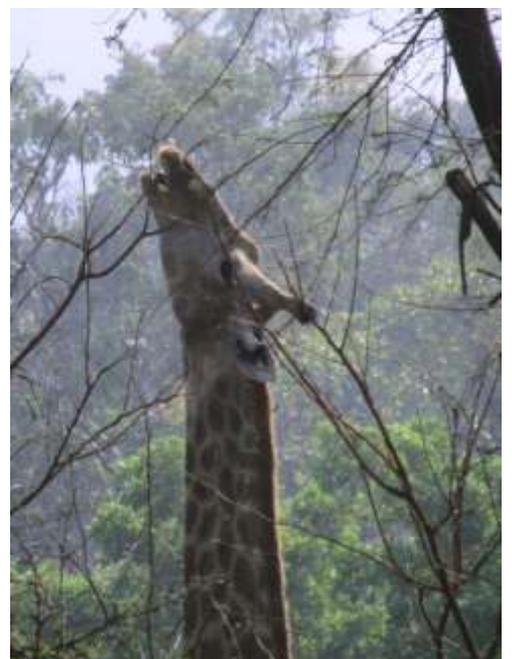


**I make no apologies for including this picture above which has not a single identifiable member of the aloes, cacti, succulents, palms, cycads, adansonias, sanseverias, stapeliads, pachypodiums, adenums and adeniums that we claim as our own. However it does portray the real magic of some of our countryside where the verdant green of the riverine trees in the foreground, just coming into their full spring colours, merge into the pastels of the Brachystegias and Munondos of the granite and in the far background, all but lost in the fire-induced haze of dry-season Zimbabwe, are the granite and Dyke mountains clad in trees or grasslands respectively. Fire is an important agent and in its path at this time of the year, it is all-consuming and there is no doubt that plants growing in the grasslands will be fire-resistant. If not, they will only thrive in the open spaces on the solid granite or in the shelter of nooks and crannies that the granite boulders provide.**

**So this is some of our habitat and in amongst it, you will find plenty of specimens of the plants we claim and if you are tempted to grow them at home, bear in mind just how they survive in nature and try and simulate that in garden environment. And guess what, between about mid-April and early November, it does not rain!!!! Plants can survive without water and often look at their very best at the height of the dry season. How, I don't know, but in time man and science will tell, but let's enjoy it in the finding out! Frost, fire and feistiness!!! A call to arms by the miombo and savannah fire survivors.**



**There is some speculation that the raphia palms follow man's wanderings in Africa, mainly because of the utility of the fronds and the nutritional qualities of the nuts. Whether that, or like our good friend the giraffe, pictured right, also seen in the Mvuradonha, living in a niche, the palm just needs exactly the right combination of perennial running water, shade when young and room to fly when old. And then room to die, where elephant, palm-nut vultures and all manner of simians and bi-pedals spread the seed, embed it in the river bank mud and in time it germinates and starts all over again.**



**ALL PAID UP MEMBERS  
ARE ENCOURAGED TO  
COLLECT THEIR COPY  
OF THE NEW**

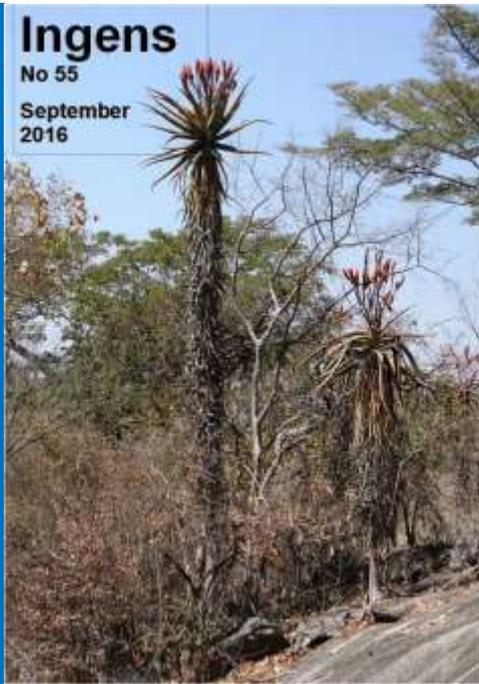
# **INGENS 55**

**FROM THE  
ACSSZ MEMBERSHIP  
STAND  
AT THE PLANT SALE ON  
25 SEPTEMBER 2016**

**Ingens**

No 55

September  
2016



**There you go, you lucky members  
of our prestigious Society!  
Where else in the World would  
you get a monthly full-colour  
Newsletter without fail and two  
issues of an extremely informa-  
tive bi-annual publication In-  
gens? And all of this is provided  
at a cost of only US\$20 per an-  
num!!!! And if you are clever  
enough to join as a couple, either  
married, partnered or as dimwits  
in arms, its \$10 each!  
No wonder none of you are  
popping off, nor leaving for  
easier climes to make a  
proper living!!!!**

## **The Health Corner**

Well I had a bit of a turn last week and a black spot on the top of one of my wing-nuts was of such a size that even chance friends commented upon it. So I went to the family doctor, was referred to one of the specialists in skin problems and in no time was under the knife at another, who decided to take a big chunk out of the offending ear. Along the way you are given detailed explanations about how these things can be much more problematic than you would think. So resistance was a non-starter. Part of the fun is that you are given the offending chunk in a specimen jar and told to take it to a laboratory for analysis. The ear bleeds profusely and a relatively small chunk missing needs to be bandaged up as though you have just come out of the trenches at the Somme in WWI. Of course between the doctor's surgery and the laboratory the calming effects of the anaesthetic injections start running out of steam.

A throbbing and thick ear was the net result and when home, my trophy wife, who never has these sorts of problems was most intrigued. When the bandage came off a few days later she lovingly inspected the thick ear and said "I have always wanted to give you one of these!"

So in the interests of being honest I thought I would share this with you. If you are of fair complexion, don't be tempted to fight the hot African sun without the aids of the various plants that we have recommended in these columns. Concoctions from the sausage tree, *Kigelia africana*, *Aloe vera* and *Bulbine frutescens* all help. But wear a hat and sunscreen otherwise you may well end up with a thick ear unnecessarily.

Or no ear.

So I share with you the photograph right which when listing my various assets I am forced to admit that where I had been conscientiously ticking 2 Grade A wingnuts

I now list

1 Grade A wingnut and 1 Thick, potentially handsome, ear.

You have to look on the Brightside! And don't believe everything you read in print but pay attention to your health! Wear a hat! Cheers!

