



ORTHOLOPHA

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

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Issue 20-11 November 2016

Hi Everyone,

At last the rains have come! It has been a tough few months and the horror of watching our own gardens dry up ferociously is rapidly replaced with the euphoria of new growth everywhere. Even the brown lawns are miraculously sparking green. It won't be a fortnight and we shall be mowing again.

Weeds are inevitable, especially if you have top-dressed with kraal manure. Termites are flying, straight into the mouths of hungry birds, reptiles and amphibians! The succulents are swelling, refilling the precious gel reserves that sustain them through the long hard dry season that will come inevitably.

And it is Christmas, that time of genuine cheer and giving when loved ones converge from the four corners of Mother Earth. Be especially kind to them all, practice your hugging now and totally envelop those you haven't seen for a while. Eat well and slowly, savouring every moment, spicing your mealtimes with audacious stories of past fun and better times to come. Bond with notes in unexpected places, like for the Granny slip a few greenbacks into her chain-link purse. For the men in the house a thoughtful paste-it comment on the underside of the toilet seat will definitely catch their attention. **Be Good!**

Your Committee

Chairman - Doreen Richards
0772 255784

Vice-chairman – Rob Jarvis
0783 383214

Committee members:

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Monthly Meeting : OUTING Sunday 27th November 2016

This month's Meeting is at the home of Barbara Butterworth: **8A Berkshire Road, Emerald Hill**

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: Take The Chase, cross over The Chase /Golden stairs traffic lights. Going through Ashbrittle shopping Centre. Follow The Chase towards Gateway Junior School (go over a few tar humps) Look for Berkshire Rd on your left, then go about half way down Berkshire Rd and the Butterworth's will be on your right. Barbara's mobile number is 0772 256 874

Mystery Aloe: November

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.

October entry was *not quite sure and I haven't had a chance to talk to the owner yet to find out*.

The lucky winners in October were come to the meeting to find out!

You can claim your prize at the next Outing on Sunday 27th November 2016



You can win a box of chocolates!!!

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

The plant above is the November entry.

What is it? Photograph taken by Bill and Lyn Kinsey near Beaufort West in South Africa



How anyone gets lost on Mt Nyangani is a mystery to me. So many plants point the way to the summit, like this *Kniphofia*! A bright flaming standard that glows day and night!

One must respect the mountain, don't take unnecessary risks. Start early and leave early. Use the guides provided by National Parks. Stick to the paths. Never walk alone.

Annual Membership: Members are encouraged to make payment for 2017 membership as soon as they can, thanks to 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

CHRISTMAS PARTY

- DATE** • Sunday 11 December 2016
TIME • 11h00 - end
VENUE • Thetford Game Reserve
COST • \$5 per person
BRING • Chairs, Hats, Brolles, Drinks, and a Bring & Share lunch

FATHER CHRISTMAS • bring a wrapped Christmas gift to the value of \$10. Only those who bring a gift will be eligible in the gift swap (if your gift is specifically for a lady or man, kindly gift-wrap it appropriately!)

DIRECTIONS

Head out of town on the Mazowe Dam Road (NOT the old Mazowe Road.) 6 km after the Toll Gate, turn RIGHT (towards Christon Bank - there is a big green PROPAK billboard currently.) Proceed another 6km and turn RIGHT at the Thetford Game Reserve sign. Proceed 4km along gravel road and cross the Mazowe River. Turn LEFT at the Thetford Game Reserve sign. Proceed to the gate on tar and the guard will direct you to the Christmas Party venue.

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On a recent visit to the Ziwa Site Museum north of Nyanga Village we chanced upon this *Monadenium* sp. growing on the dolerite rocky walls of an ancient settlement. They seemed to be concentrated around one group of circular walls and if you stand still and close your eyes you can imagine that this part of the site was probably occupied by the local spirit medium and that these plants were being cultivated for various magical properties that they possess. The white milky saps of the *Euphorbiaceae* have purgative properties and are known by the common name of sparges. In Africa and Madagascar these plants fill the ecological niche filled by cacti in Central and South America.



In the picture, left, some bright fruiting bodies of *Crinum* lilies light up the landscape. The colours of the fruit are undoubtedly a warning of poisonous attributes because none had been eaten, nor even tried. These plants were photographed on the approach to the ancient Dare or meeting area on Nyahokwe Mountain, near Ziwa.

Nyahokwe is famous in the botanical world for being the only place where one can find a lone juniper tree *Juniperus procera* in the whole of Zimbabwe! If you have a copy of L.J. Mullin's book, *Historic Trees of Zimbabwe*, you will find it on page 27. The next tree is 900 kms away in Nyika, Malawi.



Maybe not quite a succulent but definitely a plant that endures, these everlasting flowers highlight the way to the top of Mt Nyangani, highest point in Zimbabwe.

Helichrysum spp. are common world-wide but are classified as vulnerable due to habitat loss.

Some are much used in traditional medicine in Southern Africa for their anti-inflammatory and anti-bacterial properties. Sleeping in a bed of these can be very comforting.

The Health Corner:

The Internet is full of information about wonder plants that can make you fat, thin, healthy, intelligent, hyperactive or whatever. One of these is *Hoodia gordonii* which is an endemic succulent in Southern Africa and has reputedly been used for thousands of years by the San people to suppress appetite. It follows that if you don't eat much, you probably won't put on weight. A weight-loss natural ingredient in this modern world of ours is a God-sent opportunity for the pharmaceutical giants. So be wary of something that sounds too good to be true, where rights are bought up by one Giant and then handed back to the original patent holder, only to be sold again to the next Giant. You see the San probably used this plant every now and then, like when they wanted to go on a long journey with little food available. But to start taking it every day as a tried and tested supplement is something else. The San at their peak probably had a life-expectancy of 40 years if they were very lucky. There are very few left alive now.

Modern people like us, expect to live until our nineties if you are sixty now and our grandchildren can probably expect to live until they are 110-120. All your bits need to be working and one of the organs that is most difficult to manage throughout such a long life is the liver. So until there is a large body of peer-reviewed scientific evidence showing unequivocally that the extracted ingredients of *Hoodia* actually have no long term deleterious effects on your organs, tread carefully!

Of course I don't follow my own advice sometimes and the placebo effect is always a factor. If you really believe that something is good for you and you have a warm-glowy feeling every time you apply, eat or drink it, then it probably will be. But learn to take stock from time to time and be prepared to change radically. I was reminded of this just yesterday when having a haircut with a young apprentice at a Chisipite salon. "You have a very shiny head" she says to me. "Thanks," I say, looking at her quizzically. Can I really tell her that my secret is a daily drink and shampooing with a cocktail of fresh fruit juices based mainly upon beetroot, watermelons, papayas, pineapple, in-season berries, fresh lemon juice, honey and cinnamon? Or that whilst driving I split leaves of *Bulbine* and apply the fresh gel frequently to all sun-exposed areas. Or that after eating bananas, I rub the inside of the banana skin vigorously, on my face and pate, to polish them! The result is a shiny patina, a combination of life-long weathering, rubbing with banana dubbin, salving with bulbine gel and the inside-out fruit cocktail treatment. A mischievous thought enters my mind. Maybe I'll just tell her about the beetroot juice. She remains at best, partially informed. In the internet age and when your hair is beautifully blonde, you need to check your information. There are devils about!!!! Stay safe people!

So there you are Folks another year is all but done and dusted. See you this weekend at the Butterworth residence and then out at Thetford for the Christmas Party on the 11th December! We will have a rollicking good time! Cheers, Mafungi