



ORTHOLOPHA

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

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Hi Everyone,

Having threatened everyone with dire consequences during the last few months for not converting completely to succulent-filled waterwise gardens, it just had to rain!!!! And it has done so incessantly for January with many gauges measuring close to 1 000 mm already this season and it is only half done.

But don't fret, the amazing thing about all our aloes, cacti, succulents, *Adeniums*, *Adenias*, *Adansonias*, *Sanseverias*, *Huernias* and the like, is that they are designed to ride out just these sorts of seasons. They grow, swell, stockpile the nutrients and juices and flower profusely and then set magnificent pods, bursting with fresh seed. Your job as the avid collector

and gardener is to give them every opportunity to do so and think beyond the moment of this season. Fertilise the plants well now so they can stock up for the dry months that will inevitably come. Replant and re-arrange whilst you have time to refocus the eyesores and make new focal points that draw the eye to better things. You can do this!

Start preparing your choicest plants now for the first Rare Plant Sale of 2017 which looms in May. I make no apologies for including some advice on how to handle baboons in the following pages. One of the biggest problems we all face, is dealing with the Great Apes of our Families. They may share 98.4% of our human genes, but deep down, at heart they are still on their own mission of climbing the evolutionary ladder. Help them all you can!

Your Committee

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Committee members:

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Monthly Meeting : OUTING Sunday 29th January 2017

This month's Meeting is at the home of Colin and Kate Hopley: **312 Ard-na-Lea Close, Glen Lorne.**

PLEASE remember to bring a **DELICIOUS PLATE OF EATS TO SHARE.**

Don't forget to bring your chairs and hats (& raincoat, wellies and umbrella!), as well as a labelled plant or other **CONTRIBUTION FOR THE RAFFLE.**

The time: 10.00am for 10:30am

Directions: Travelling out of town on Enterprise Road, turn left into Ard-na-Lea Close. Colin's mobile number is +263 774 540 473

Flowering Plant: January

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.

November entry was *Aloe claviflora* and you have to come to the monthly meeting this Sunday to find out who won.

The lucky winner in November was
Come to the meeting to find out!



You can win a box of chocolates!!!

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

The plant above is the January entry.

What is it? Photograph taken by Mafungi at Chivalila Falls, Runde River, Gonarezhou.
A Clue: It is not flowering in December!



The horrible bugs, left, are commonly seen on our aloes in this country and they leave ugly pock-marks all over the leaves. A special prize will be awarded to the member who submits the most practical, sustainable method of controlling these pests. As part of your answer you need to name and shame the bugs. Photo taken at The Farmhouse, Chimanimani Village on a dense cluster of *A. swynnertonii*.

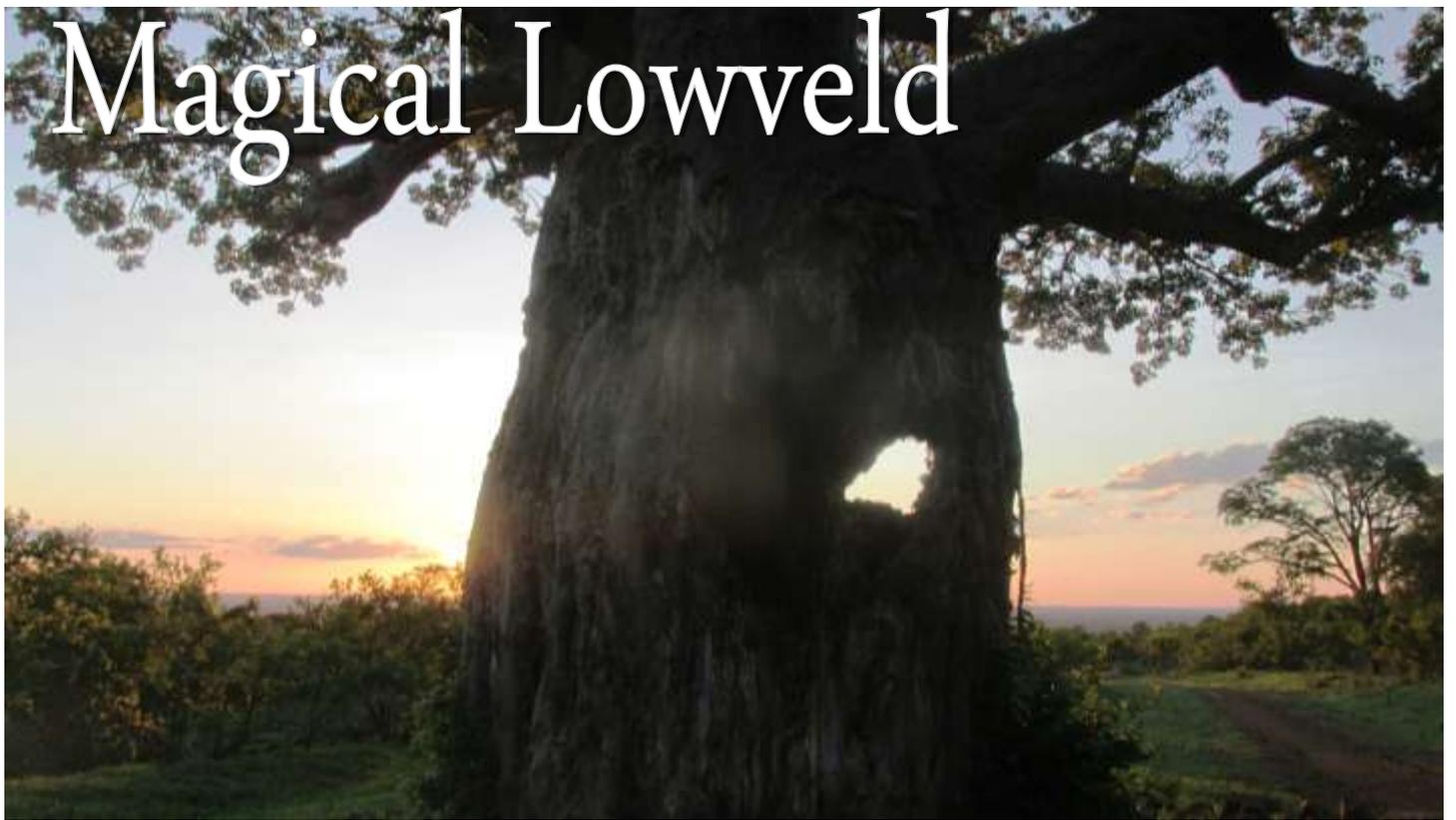
For those of you who missed the Christmas Lunch out at Thetford we were graced by the presence of Father Christmas himself!!! A big thank you to the ACSSZ Committee for a wonderful fun-filled year where we visited at least a dozen gardens, we produced two issues of Ingens and eleven Ortholophas. Despite our health column we only lost one member, Darrel Plowes who passed on at 92! And we have friends everywhere!!! Africa, Europe, Asia, America, Australia, Arabia!



Annual Membership: Members are encouraged to make payment for 2017 as soon as they can, thanks to all those that have already paid.

Membership is \$20 per person/couple per year. Children \$5 per year. Foreign membership \$40 per year. Make payment to a committee member, the CABS account, or through Ecocash: **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 : kindly include a reference.



Magical Lowveld

We were lucky enough to make a return visit to Gonarezhou National Park in the southeast Lowveld, just before Christmas. This time there had been plenty of rain and the whole Park was beautifully green. Game was abundant and relatively tame and had not dispersed dramatically like it does along the shoreline of Kari-ba once the rains set in. The dramatic baobab above is a few kilometres into the park and to be seen as you climb the first sandstone ridge just after Chipinda Pools. We were limited in where we could go because crossing the Runde River was no longer possible but ambling, in the car, to the Chilojo Cliffs, Chivalila Calls and everything that you encounter along the way makes it all worthwhile. Unfortunately our two nights there were all too short but staying in the tented camp at Chipinda Pools is excellent, relatively inexpensive and provided you have a strategy to counter the baboon threat, a most enjoyable experience.

Baboons are very like us, as you well know and often the only distinguishing feature between them and some of our more simian members is the tail, or tale they tell. They are inquisitive, enjoy the view, try to blend in



with the local environment and like us are largely omnivores. So anything goes that they can ravage, loot or devour around your camp. If your party consists mainly of female members, with small kids, then they become quite brazen and possibly even aggressive. So tread carefully in their territory. As the picture below shows, they may even have entered the digital age.



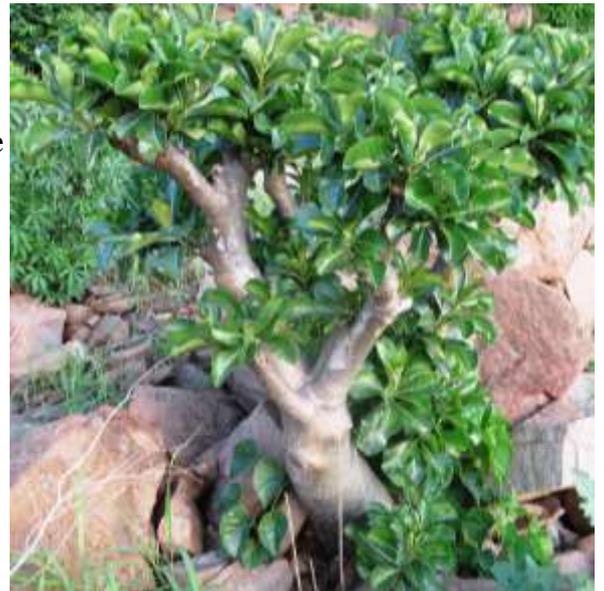
Apparently one of the things that does deter baboons from entering your tent is a brightly coloured rubber snake (left). I can't wait to get back to Gonarezhou and see if this tactic included in the overall lockdown strategy does work.





With these brazen baboons, why would anyone want to visit such a hostile environment? Well the plant life is quite interesting and as well as our January Guess the Aloe picture on page 2, Chivalila Falls is home to some pretty impressive specimens of both *Adenia* and *Adeniums*. After the early rains they are lush and vegetative and easily passed by, unless you know where to look. Here and there *Sanseveria* and *Euphorbia* spp. can also be seen. Some of the latter quite straggly but a great source of nectar when flowering for a host of bees and other insects.

So there you are, Chivalila Falls and its environs are a hot-bed of plant-life much of which we would struggle to grow to a similar size in our gardens. In the rains the gorge in which the Falls are found is just bearable, in October it must be like a furnace. Somehow these plants cling on, the stems swell with moisture and optimism and the leaves glisten with waxy good health when the rains come and they all survive through the arduous dry season to the next rainy season. Right now with the tremendous rains we have experienced this season, I would not be surprised to find that some of these plants are actually under water. Imagine that, last season it hardly rained at all in this area, probably less than 200mm all told and this year they are being inundated. The adaptation of these plants to this environment is quite exceptional!!!!



So the lowly *Euphorbia* looks well positioned to avoid predation by herbivores. Bristling with spines, the green stems loaded with poisonous di- and tri-terpenoids. Perched in tiny cracks where there has been an accumulation of soil and organic matter, they thrive where others perish. Beware getting the milky latex onto any mucous membranes, such as inside your nose, throat or eyes!

However nothing quite matches the majesty of a baobab, *Adansonia digitata*, in its full Lowveld greenery at the start of the rains. These trees have certainly survived centuries of drought, flood, severe attack by elephants and others, including by man himself. There is no better shade and the comfort of a 16 metre diameter bole has no equal in the relaxation stakes. By day, the tree will be visited by baboons, monkeys, all manner of birds, pachyderms and butterflies. At night it will be the realm of bats, moths, genets, night-apes, owls, nightjars and even the occasional leopard may be spotted. Of course there will be the odd snake or two and many skinks, leguaans, chameleons, agamas, frogs, toads and geckos just love these trees. Learn to share with them. You haven't lived until you have spent one full twenty-four hour period under one of these trees. Do it soon!



Of course this Society is not just about the plants we lay claim to, it is also about spreading your wings and trying to fit in with the community around you. Some things are very transitory, like this copse of mushrooms, and others flit in for one night to visit, but learn to appreciate them all.



The Health Corner:

I didn't know what to write about for this health column, but a chance remark at a lunch engagement today revealed an unlikely source of health advice. More or less along the lines of an apple-a-day keeping the doctor at bay. Apple cider vinegar apparently will put almost everything right in your body from acne, dandruff, high sugar levels, maybe even the dreaded cholesterol, bad breath, hiccupping, stuffy noses, bruising, gas bloating, and excessive weight. In the case of the person passing on this advice it completely cured a bone spur problem that had her hobbling, with unbelievable pain, to a normal completely painless heel. My own brother-in-law had a terrible problem with kidney stones a few years ago and his affliction was cured by a three-day diet of just apple juice. With his acerbic wit, the juice no doubt turned to vinegar in his vast stomach regions and then started its magical work. So I take no responsibility whatsoever passing on this advice but just the caution that you should always research anything new you are about to do thoroughly before converting. You can drink it, gargle it, wash in it and rinse your hair with the elixir!!!

Apple cider vinegar is rich in potassium which reduces mucus accumulation and the anti-inflammatory and anti-fungal and -bacterial effects of the acetic acid it contains helps with all manner of infections. Don't delay and convert today to a daily dose of the vinegar with a tablespoon of honey and fill the glass up with warm water and you will look as though you have stepped right out of the pages of Cosmopolitan and into world of real life without undergoing the digital slaughter of Photoshop to smooth out the rough edges. And remember the first advice of any dedicated health practitioner, try it out on the spouse first before risking anything on your precious body!!!!

So there we go Folks, we are now well and truly into 2017. Let's make it a cracker of a year.

Cheers, Mafungi