



# ORTHOLOPHA

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

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Issue 17-05 May 2017

Hi Everyone,

It's Plant Sale time again and we look forward to meeting up with you all again at the Botanical Gardens on the last Sunday of May.

Plant prices have come down over the years but the variety and high standard of plants on offer goes up every year. Sellers have to resort to every trick in the book to get members of the public to part with their hard-earned cash.

We know it has been a good rainy season, but do not let this fool you. Africa always has a way of hitting back at you when you least expect it. The weather is rigged! Your money is in bondage. The groundwater reserves are still dropping alarmingly. No meaningful changes are taking place on the city council stored supplies.

You still need to convert from water-guzzlers to waterwise options. Cheers, Mafungi

## Your Committee

Chairman - Rob Jarvis  
0783 383214

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## Committee members:

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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 28th May 2017: 9am - 1pm

Harare Botanic Gardens HERBARIUM entrance

## Flowering Plant: May

### 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.

**The lucky winner in April was  
Doreen Richards**

**You can claim your prize at the Plant Sale on  
Sunday 28th May 2017**



**The Aloe above is the May entry.  
What is it?**

**Photograph taken by Mafungi**

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

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



**This little floating island of vegetation on Mt. Dombo has much of interest. But of more interest to you the armchair-bound members of the ACSSZ, is the road far below that leads to places yet to be discovered. To true treasures on the African landscape. Do not let it meander alone.**

**Annual Membership: Thanks to all the members that have already paid. If you haven't yet paid, please do.**

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 #: 1002616336 Reference: kindly include your surname as the deposit reference.**



## Rock Mystique

The next four to five months are the best times for you to be visiting the Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe both to see various species of aloes in full flower and as the end of August approaches and September bursts upon us, the Musasas and other trees of the Miombo woodlands come into their full spring glory. It is a sight not to be missed. Recently we did a whirlwind two-day tour, starting near Marondera at Ruzawi School zig-zagging through the farmlands lying to the north of the Rusape/ Nyanga road, climbing Mt. Dombo on foot, sleeping amongst the Hidden Rocks of Juliasdale and finishing at the famous rock near Bonda Mission where *Aloe cameronii* var *bondani* holds court. Rain is more or less likely to hold off during these months and provided you are warmly wrapped and out of the wind, you should be more or less OK! Of course for us it bucketed down as we set off to clamber up the mountain, but we had deadlines to meet.



*Aloe cameronii* can be found everywhere on the granite-based mountains of these areas. There are many forms of the species, some with long inflorescences like those pictured left whereas a couple of specimens had capitulate flowers like neat little mops on the top of the flowering stems.

On Mt Dombo (left) these aloes were in full flower whereas at Hidden Rocks and the Bonda Mission rock, they were still to open and should be at their very best in early June.

We even saw one which had a hint of *A. ortholopha* about it, see below.





**With tongue-in-cheek I advised you not to venture up these mountains if it is wet. These slopes are like ice when covered with a thin film of water. You certainly shouldn't take up your aging wheelchair-bound relatives, nor those with rickety hips and knees. Unless you think it is termination time for them! We had no losses, but there were only four of us and we were experienced mountaineers. However in September the view from this exact spot will be spectacular as the Musasa forest just visible at the top of the picture, but obviously at the bottom of the cliff, will be out in all its pastel glory then. You can easily lean over the precipice and snap digital photos to your heart's content.**

**Mt Dombo is the highest point in Zimbabwe outside the mountains that run up the eastern border. Way back in 1893 the intrepid explorer Frederick Courtney Selous failed to climb this mountain because of its slippery nature. He took a sniper's bullet to the temple, in the then Tanganyika, which put paid to any further ramblings he may have wished to do. Mountains can be very deceptive and although these two trees look as though they are right at the top of Mt Dombo, if you go back to the first photo in this article, you can make them out about halfway up the rocky fastness. So there you go a little adventure like this can be organised at a moment's notice. Always take a raincoat, some warm clothing, some water and some food. Make sure someone knows where you have gone, and never travel alone.**





Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could transport this little collection of sedges, xerophytes and rocks and set them up again at the Chelsea Flower Show? I am sure that it would be a Gold Medal Winner!

Throw in a few Aloes, Sanseverias, Huer-nias and the like and you would have a combination very difficult to beat.

But what about your own garden? If you don't have the natural rocks you could make them out of reinforced concrete and make up special mixes of coloured oxides to mimic nature.

The plants of course you will find at our Society' Rare Plant sale at the end of this month.

Sunday 28 May,  
National Botanic Garden.

### **The Health Corner:**

**For your health we have decided to do a couple of things to help you relax and get a more meaningful perspective on life. In June there will be a dedicated weekend for you to visit Open Gardens of the ACSSZ around the City on the Saturday immediately before the monthly meeting which will remain on the last Sunday of the month.**

**In July we will be visiting a wonderful venue out of town and your society has arranged a bus to carry everyone so you won't be bothered by the police and other worrisome types. There will be Karaoke, a short church service as we arrive at the venue for those spiritually inclined and after touring some magnificent gardens and bushveld, we will play croquet and the winners will be transported back to Harare. Note the dates now so you don't miss out on these wonderful opportunities to engage. Costs will be announced in due course.**

**If you are really lucky one day soon we may even take the Society to see some Pink Elephants. They had eluded me for years but we finally tracked them down last weekend. That's a Vow that even Diana could keep. Enjoy your week and we will see you on Sunday 28th!!!!**



**Cheers, Mafungi**