



ORTHOLOPHA

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

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Issue 20-9 September 2020

Hi Everyone!

It is quintessentially Zimbabwean to think fondly of the pastel shades of new spring growth on our *Brachystegias* and allied trees of the miombo woodlands of Central Africa. There is no finer place on God's Planet to admire these than at a little known place labelled by L. J. Mullins in his book



Historic Trees of Zimbabwe as the Walt Disney Trees of Shigodora (Page 20). For some reason these Musasas have strange distorted trunks and branches that twist and turn, defying gravity and common sense. Unfortunately they are surrounded by a eucalypt plantation and invasive outriders from these man-made plantings are now springing up amongst these wonderful trees. Men armed with chainsaws have little respect for trees of aesthetic value, and for sure the gums will be felled and create absolute mayhem amongst the Musasas. Wreaking havoc. In the valley below the little ridge where these Musasas can be found, there is a stunning view down into the upper reaches of the Burma Valley. At the time of our visit, man's other favourite pastime during the dry season, burning, was in rampant evidence with the whole valley full of smoke from out of control fires. Sad times indeed. Visit the musasas next September because they may not be with us much longer.



Your Committee

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Hi Everyone, We have tried our best to get the exciting issue of Ingens 60 into the hands of all our local members. However we are having one final crack at the effort by hosting a September Monthly Meeting on October 4th at the home of Rob and Sheila Jarvis at 3A Rockyvale Close in Rolf Valley. There is still concern for Covid 19 and we ask that everyone brings their own chair and cups. There will be two talks, one on a *Euphorbia millii* by Manfred Spindler and the second a practical demonstration of floral arranging, using the plants that our Society looks to for inspiration and this is being organised by Mike Caulfield. 10am for 10.30 start. Be there!

Directions:- From Borrowdale Road turn into Whitwell which goes past Borrowdale school. Pass the traffic lights on Ridgeway North, you are now on Addington Lane which winds past Ballantyne Park and then becomes Rolf Avenue. After crossing the dip at Willowmead Junction, go up the hill past the ZUMA Service station on your left, and then from Rolf Avenue turn right into Rockyvale Close and park somewhere in the Close. The meeting will be in the woodland behind the industrial glass house right in front of you. Allow space for those with ambulatory problems to park their cars inside, nearer the venue.

Nature gives us many inspirations and the two accompanying photos on this page illustrate this. Many ask how to fertilise and look after their aloes. At the top you see slow release pellets from Red rock rabbits feeding a healthy aloe and right *Aloe cameronii* and sedges make a perfect, naturally-coiffed, slug or snail.

Cheers Mafungi



Interesting 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.

Last month's winner was Imani Kujeke!
Well done Imani!



Photograph taken by Mafungi

Clue: This species has a clear gel in the leaves useful as a topical ointment. You must get the precise species correct however.

You can win a box of chocolates!!!

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

Mike Caulfield our Treasurer, is making an impassioned plea for members to use a reference when subscriptions are being paid. Or send an e-mail or WhatsApp to confirm. We end up with payments that cannot be allocated against a member's name and especially if you are paying on behalf of someone else.

Who knows what this flower right is?



Red Alert: Pay your subscriptions before 30 September and it will only cost you ZWL\$300 per couple. Thereafter we shall move to a US\$ subscription of US\$10 per person. US\$12 for a couple, US\$2 for a junior and US\$5 for a senior.

The magazine now to hand, Ingens 60, will only go to fully paid-up members.

Annual Membership: Are due in January each year. Renewal is long overdue. Remember for your US\$10/12 per year, you get a monthly Newsletter, free issues of Ingens as they are published and you get invited to at least 11 choice venues each year. Big-time Bargain Bonanza!

Membership is US\$10 or US\$12 per person/couple per year. Children US\$5 per year. Foreign membership US\$40 per year. Make payment to a committee member, or

CABS Platinum: Aloe, Cactus and Succulent Society Acc #: 1002616336

Reference: kindly include your Surname as the deposit reference or through

EcoCash: 0772 255 784 (Doreen Richards) Note this is her own number.



This is definitely the Bvumba issue and largely centred around trees. However we make no apologies for this as August/September is a special time in Zimbabwe when the Miombo woodlands come out in their spring finery. Many of you may be new home-owners and have quite bleak yards that need developing. Choosing the right trees and placement thereof can make or break your garden aesthetics as time goes on. Plan for 40 years down the line, even if you are no longer there someone will appreciate trees that you allow to grow or plant around your house. Be aware of just how big they can get and what sort of statement they will make in time. The two on this page are of exceptional ficus species, one on Oak avenue in Mutare's Murambi suburb above, which has spread through the dropping of aerial roots from its widely spreading branches. The footprint of the tree overall probably is close to a full acre of ground. Never plant a tree like this close to your house, pool or other buildings and never on the northern side of the house. The owner of the land, as can be seen has tentatively started building his house, but seems to have run out of courage at this stage.

However if you have a couple of hectares of rambling deep soils you might be tempted to plant a number of figs of varying species that can have full freedom to exhibit their growth characteristics and on the right we see a fig in the forest belonging to Madraguda Lodge in the Bvumba Mountains. This has become a cathedral of a tree, first strangling its host, which has long since disappeared and the fig has dropped sufficient supports to hold itself up.

In the shade of such a giant, we are definitely mere mortals. However in the overall scheme of things, these figs make wonderful sources of food for a huge range of birds, insects, primates and the like. The nooks and crannies they have in their myriad branches and root structures provide sheltered nest sites and living quarters for frogs, reptiles and Almost every type of living creature.

At night of course, even the spirits will be hereabouts.



Healthy Habits No 12 by Lizzie Small

Hello all. As promised, I am going to write this time about being a vegetarian. Most of the world's population is vegetarian. There are many reasons, often it is not a choice but because of economic circumstances eg. in many places there is no refrigerator and so plant foods keep better than meats or fish.

There are several types of vegetarians. **Vegetarians** do not eat meat, poultry or fish but they often eat eggs and dairy products. These are lacto-ovo vegetarians. **Pescatarians** eat fish but not animal flesh while **Vegans** eat only foods of plant origin.

A good vegetarian diet can outdo a typical western diet in terms of health benefits, but the emphasis is on a balanced vegetarian diet. Simply cutting out meat is not true vegetarianism, meals in which the animal component is replaced by vegetables, which provide the missing nutrients. This is a common mistake made by teenagers and the usual motivation is to lose weight – not a sound reason to change. So let's look at some of the health benefits, which can be derived from eating the vegetarian way.

Studies show that vegetarians suffer less heart disease, stroke, diabetes, bowel problems and cancer. This is probably because their diets have less fats and more fibre. The increased fibre content of a vegetarian diet helps the food to pass through the digestive system efficiently, making them less likely to have bowel problems.

It has been suggested that the lower incidence of cancer in vegetarians is due to the increase of plant foods, rather than the absence of meat. It is often true that vegetarians lead a healthier life style ie more likely to drink less alcohol, be non-smokers and exercise more and they also tend to be slimmer as the diet is bulkier and less calorie dense.

In practice it is easier to be a lacto-ovo vegetarian but a vegan diet which has a wide variety of foods and vegetable proteins is healthy too. Today one can buy vegan sausages, burgers etc etc but actually they can be made at home using beans and, if correctly spiced, are delicious. The homemade ones avoid all the additives that manufacturers put in for flavour.

Pregnancy and vegetarianism. It is perfectly safe for a pregnant woman to be vegetarian as long as she includes the same nutrients outlined below.

Here are some nutrients which may be at risk in an unbalanced vegetarian diet. These include calcium, iodine, iron, omega 3 fatty acids, Vitamin B12, and zinc.

Calcium helps build and maintain strong teeth and bones. Milk and dairy foods are highest in calcium. However, dark green vegetables, such as collard greens, kale and broccoli, are good plant sources when eaten in sufficient quantities.

Iodine is a component in thyroid hormones, which regulate metabolism. However, just 1/4 teaspoon of iodized salt provides a significant amount of iodine.

Iron is a component of red blood cells. Dried beans, peas, lentils, cereals, whole-grain products, dark leafy green vegetables and dried fruit are good sources. Because iron isn't as easily absorbed from plants, the recommended intake of iron for vegetarians is almost double that for nonvegetarians. To help your body absorb iron, eat foods rich in vitamin C, such as strawberries, citrus fruits, tomatoes, cabbage and broccoli, at the same time.

Omega-3 fatty acids are important for heart health. Diets that do not include fish and eggs are generally low in omega-3 fatty acids. You may want to consider supplements.

Protein is essential for growth and repair. Eggs and dairy products are good sources, and you don't need large amounts to meet your needs. You can also get sufficient protein from plant foods if you eat a variety throughout the day. Plant sources include soya, legumes, lentils, nuts, seeds and whole grains.

Vitamin B-12 is necessary to produce red blood cells. This vitamin is found almost exclusively in animal products, so it can be difficult to get enough B-12 on a vegan diet. Vitamin B-12 deficiency may go undetected as the vegan diet is rich in folate, which may mask the deficiency. For this reason, it's important for vegans to consider vitamin supplements.

Zinc like iron is not as easily absorbed from plant sources as it is from animal products. Cheese is a good option if you eat dairy products. Plant sources of zinc include whole grains, soya, legumes, nuts and wheat germ.

So you can see that with the right balance, a vegetarian diet should not become deficient in any nutrient.

The key to a healthy vegetarian diet — like any diet — is a variety of foods. No single food can provide all the nutrients your body needs. The more restrictive your diet, the more challenging it can be to get all the goodness you need. With a little planning, however, you can be sure that your diet includes everything your body needs.

Next time how to plan a vegetarian diet with a couple of menus and instructions.



The Bvumba Mountains are a strange contrast between benign rolling grasslands, steep mountain slopes and valleys clad in true, almost equatorial jungle. On the fringes there are miombo woodlands often perched atop granite massifs that hang over the valleys far below. For our members they can be the perfect inspiration for how to develop and maintain indigenously-themed gardens wherever you are in the country. The western slopes of the Bvumba are dry rain-shadows, whereas the eastern, southern and northern ones generally have dense forests where the soil accumulates and the rain percolates into the ground.. Walking in a Bvumba forest is like bouncing on a trampoline, the soil has a spongy texture and because it is so absorbent and full of organic matter, the streams almost never dry up. All around you will find aloes, cacti and succulent plants like *Bulbine latifolia*, *Xerophyta*, *Cras-sulas* and the like. In the picture above I would wager that a mudslide some decades ago resulted in an area of disturbed soil and rock. Allowing trees to take hold and became the start of a small forest. There is hope that such succession may result in new areas of forest in due course in areas where Cyclone Idai had such a devastating effect last year in March. Of course many landholders in the Bvumba over the years have preferred the bright colourful gardens splashed with colour by azaleas, hydrangeas and the like. They do very well here.

So Everyone,

Enjoy your week and we hope you have enjoyed getting your copies of Ingens 60. let's hope that going forward we have some form of normalcy in our lives although obviously we must temper our behaviour with common sense. Hugging and kissing should be reserved for close family members, handshakes are probably a thing of the past, and washing of hands a normal part of every day, multiple times. If you must cough, do NOT cough-up! Rather do a furtive cough down into your elbow or tissue. If you feel at all crook, stay at home, don't bring and share.

But do bring and share eats for the meeting this Sunday!

Cheers Mafungi