



ORTHOLOPHA

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

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Tree tomatoes thriving in a sunhemp/*Dolichos* complex planting

Hi Everyone,

The Annual General Meeting was successfully held at the end of March at the home of Rob and Sheila Jarvis out at ART in Pomona. Although the garden did not have much to offer members in terms of succulent plants, some interesting ideas were on show as far as regenerative agriculture is concerned and the similar principles that apply to establishing a forest/food garden.

One concept that should be of interest to everyone is the idea of growing leguminous plants around the edge of the planting hole traditionally dug for fruit trees. At ART these had tall-growing sunhemp planted at the corners and sometimes, lush, bushy clumps of lab-lab (*Dolichos* beans), grown at one or more edges. Sunhemp helps to force the new fruit tree to grow upwards firstly and the rhizobium thriving in nodules on their roots, fix nitrogen and slowly make it available both to the host plant and to any others growing in the neighbourhood. In the picture above you can see the target plant in this case *Tree tomato*, benefitting from the lab lab, foreground and the taller sunhemp back and right with yellow flowers. There is no reason why this concept cannot be used when establishing any plants initially. Later living mulches of red clover, peas, maybe Lucerne and the like can be introduced.

In winter the legumes can be used as a living structure for frost protection either by weaving grass between the stalks or old sacks.



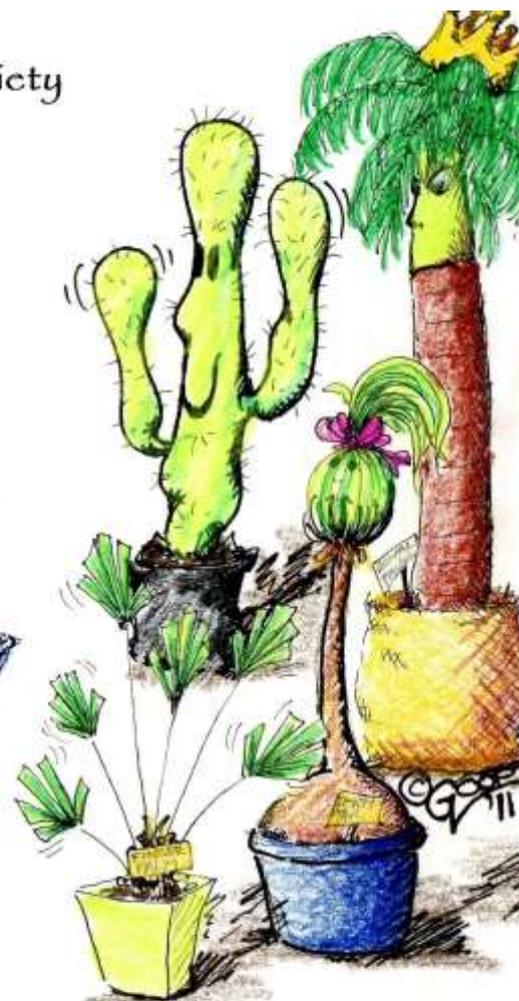
February-planted
Moringa shooting up
with help of sunhemp.

Aloe, Cactus, Cycad, Succulent and Palm Society
car boot/trailer sale

Saturday, May 1
8am to 2pm



Members US\$20 to sell
(\$10 donated to Mukuvisi Woodlands)
Free entry for buyers



Mukuvisi Woodlands
Hillside Road
Harare

Your Society is holding the first of its Rare Plant sales tomorrow, Saturday 1st May at the Mukuvisi Woodlands from 8 am to 2 pm. The next one will be in September.

Please share this with all your friends, neighbours and anyone you know that will be interested in buying rare, water-wise plants for their gardens. If you haven't done so already, this is the time to completely retool your garden so that it no longer depends upon copious watering to keep it looking fresh and vibrant.

Last season's abrupt cut-off to the rains in Late February/early March should have convinced everyone that relying upon lawns, flower beds and the like just does not make sense anymore. The City of Harare has not expanded its stored water source one bit since 1980. The City has spread in every direction and boreholes are now plummeting down to the very depths of the Earth. By the time the City does do one of the many planned dams, it will have spread even further afield. Every new building, road, gutter and parking area just guarantees further rapid run-off and reduced infiltration to feed the aquifer. Breaking point is not far off. Many boreholes have already died, and many more will dry up.

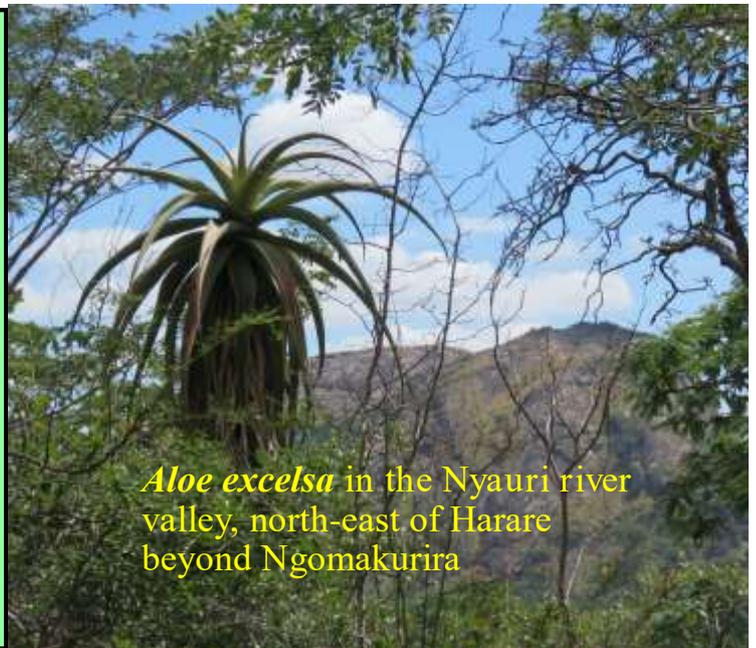
Don't delay come and get your water-wise plants this weekend and ensure that at least your patch of Africa does have its hard-wearing, succulent plants, conditioned to grow when there is rain and abundant moisture and programmed to store the precious commodity in fleshy leaves, bulky stems or even in underground tubers, bulbs, corms, roots and the like. You have no choice, it is not a matter of when, but of Niking, **Just do IT!!!!**

Your Committee

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Aloe excelsa in the Nyauri river valley, north-east of Harare beyond Ngomakurira

PAYMENT OPTIONS FOR SUBSCRIPTIONS TO ACSSZ.

The payment options for subs to ACSSZ are as follows:

Payment in USD cash to me at; 24 Southam Rd, Greystone Park. This is off the Harare Drive, just up West of the large traffic circle. Please phone ahead or e-mail the day and time to insure that this is convenient.

Payment into the Nostro account in the name of M. Caulfield at

CABS, Nostro: Account number, 1125376759

Please use ACSSZ as the recipient. Also notify me that a payment has taken place.

The amount is US \$10 for those under 65 or US \$5 if older or a junior. This covers individuals or the family.

BOND or ZWL

Payments can now be made in ZWL (Bond), the amount is ZWL1 200

Or Zwl 600, if you are 65 or older , or a junior.

ZWL payments can be made to

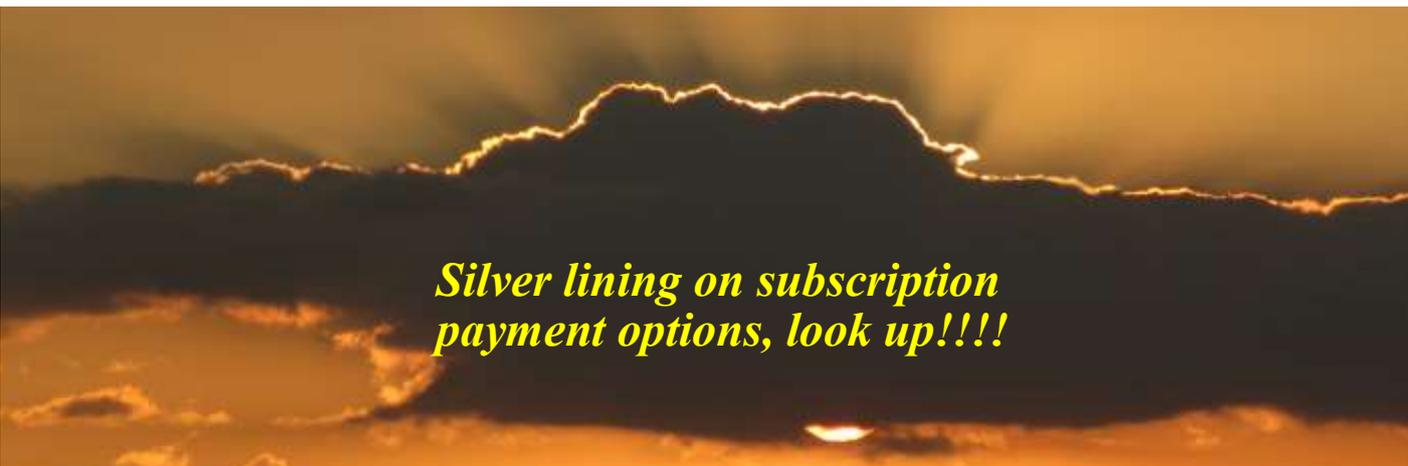
CABS account 1002616336

The Aloe, *Cactus & Succulent Society*.

Or Eco Cash (Mike Caulfield) number 0772 241 286.

Please notify me of ANY payments , Thanks

Mike Caulfield Treasurer / Secretary Phone 0772 241 286.



Silver lining on subscription payment options, look up!!!!

Interesting Plant: January/February

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.

No-one has identified last month's aloe yet. The competition remains open.



Photograph taken by Mafungi
Clue this aloe is not quite flowering yet and they are very common in the Eastern Districts.

You can win a box of chocolates!!!

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



Hi Everyone,

A plea from the Editorial team of Ingens 61, we need articles from new authors for the next issue of Ingens due to be published towards the end of the year.

Each issue going forward we would like to have at least one topical article about the various plant groups that we cherish as a Society, so one on aloes, one on cycads, cacti, palms, euphorbias, sanseverias, stapeliads, cotyledons, adeniums, pachypodiums etc. To do this we need you! To become authors. Famous authors, known worldwide. Renowned.
Send contributions to bo.hoom52@yahoo.com.

Red Alert: US\$ subscription of US\$10 per person/couple.

US\$2 for a junior and US\$5 for a senior.

Foreign members US\$40 per person

We need to replace our US dollar stocks to enable the Society to continue functioning effectively. See previous page for payment details.

Annual Membership:

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

See the previous page to find out what payment options there are for you to keep up to date with your subscriptions.



The mountains just north and north-east of Harare around Musana and Masembura Communal Lands are ideal habitat for quite a few species of aloe.

Many years ago there probably would have been prolific colonies of the giant ***Aloe excelsa*** pictured left. Now only a few remnant populations survive scattered around in the hidden, mainly miombo woodlands that carpet the valleys between the huge granite monoliths of the area.

Some have fallen prey to unscrupulous plant poachers who have removed and sold them to townfolk. Others have been burnt and destroyed as burgeoning human populations struggle to make a living. Young plants are often uprooted by cattle, goats and baboons as they search for food.

For us it was a pleasure a couple of weeks back to find quite a large population still thriving in a beautiful valley along the Nyauri river which flows northwards along the eastern edge of the granite areas.

They cohabit with ***Euphorbias***, ***Sanseverias*** and the principal trees of the miombo woodlands, ***Brachystegia*** spp. (musasas mainly) and ***Julbernardia*** (munondo). Everything has its place and everything appears just right for the environment.

Up on the mountains you can find still intact colonies of the strangely tufted ***Xerophyta*** spp. These amazing plants are battle-hardened to withstand the double-edged sword of fire and terrifyingly long dry seasons which can last 8 months or more. Their delicate flowers appear with the first rains as do their new leaves and everything is geared to flush quickly and then hunker down until the next rainy season.

Man and beasts, very similar habits! See below.



Healthy Habits no 19

Culinary uses of herbs..... by Liz Small

To continue our series on herbs let's look at some of their uses in the kitchen.

When used in cooking the plant tips tend to be classified as herbs whereas the dried extracts of bark, buds, roots, fruits and seed are known as spices. It is important to remember to use just enough to enhance the dish not so much that they overpower the dish. Fresh herbs have the best flavor and use twice the amount you would of the dried equivalent. As a general rule ground spices lose their flavour quickly and so are best added within the last 20 minutes before serving. The most common herbs that we use are as below.

Garlic – *Allium sativum*. A little more pungent than onion it goes well in all manner and description of savoury dishes including marinades and of course mixed into butter for garlic bread.

Parsley- *Petroselinum crispum*. Parsley is one of the herbs we use most often. The stalks have a stronger flavor than the leaves and are good to use in stews and marinades. As a garnish it adds colour and texture.

Chives – *Allium schoenoparasum*. Chives give a mild onion flavor and once picked should be added immediately to get the full flavor. This herb is useful in many savoury dishes and as a garnish for colour.

Dill – *Anethum graveolens*. Dill has a slightly anise flavor and the leaves are useful in salads, vegetable dishes and fish dishes.

Cilantro – *Coriandrum sativum*. Cilantro has a very pungent aroma loved by some and disliked by others, always check. The leaves and seeds can be added to a wide variety of dishes including curries.

Fennel – *Foeniculum vulgare*. Fennel is a little stronger than dill but with the anise flavor. It goes particularly well with fish, particularly the oily types.

Bay leaves – *Laurus nobilis*. Bay has a strong spicy flavor and is good in all meat dishes.

Basil – *Ocimum basilicum*. Basil leaves give a peppery flavor to food and the leaves should be torn not chopped. Try it in soups, fish, egg dishes and with rice, vegetables and pasta during cooking.

Rosemary – *Rosmarinus officinalis*. Rosemary is a strong, aromatic herb. Use with lamb or chicken dishes or any meat stew.

Sage – *Salvia officinalis*. Sage also is a strong flavor and is slightly bitter which helps it to go well with fatty food. It stimulates the flow of bile that aids fat digestion.

Sweet marjoram– *Oreganum majorana*. This herb has a sweet and spicy flavor and is very versatile in cooking in meat and vegetable dishes.

Oregano – *Oreganum vulgare*. Oregano belongs to the same family as marjoram but has a stronger flavor. It is tasty in salads and pasta dishes.

Thyme – *Thymus vulgaris*. Another versatile herb the chopped leaves of thyme may be added to all kinds of savoury dishes, even bread mix.

If you like to experiment in your kitchen and cook well, a wide range of herbs is essential. If you are choosing a basic range start with parsley, sage, bay, garlic, coriander and oregano. Experiment and you will find what you and your family like best.

On the right we see **Rosella, *Hibiscus sabdariffa*** growing in a swathe of other herbs and legumes. Juice or tea from Rosella is good for the blood and as a general tonic. **Editor's note.**





Although not strictly to do with our plants, a broad-based knowledge is helpful to everyone and to finish this newsletter lets look briefly at lichens. I am sure that we are all aware that they are complex organisms consisting of algae growing upon fungal substrates. Multi-coloured they can be very bright, like the greens seen above on Nyaungwi Mountain near Juru. On the same mountain, presumably exactly the same rock, but a different aspect you can find orange ones as well, as illustrated below right. Quite often the preponderant colour depends upon aspect, with the greens found on the side of the mountain where moisture is most likely to be deposited and the orange in open, dry exposed areas. The typical grey lichen that we all know so well is foliate, or leaf-like in appearance. You can see some small patches of it on the right. Lichens are recognised worldwide these days as good bio-indicators of air quality. Disturbed they die quickly and completely and may take decades to recover, if they do ever again. One mountain, Domborem-budzi, which subtends from the Mutoko Road about 45 kilometres from Harare has large distinct white stripes that extend from the ridge crest right down to valley floor level. These were caused by local villagers cutting trees down in the hidden valley behind the mountain and the bark, stems and leaves on the fallen trees have stripped the lichen off the rocks as the trees tumble down to be used as building material or firewood way below. **Challenge stripes, how do we make it better?**



So that is it Folks,

Let's see you all tomorrow 1st May at the Rare Plant Sale at Mukuvis Woodlands and at the end of May we shall resume our monthly meetings as hopefully, some normalcy creeps back into our lives. No doubt the most vulnerable of us have had our two vaccinations by then and we shall then face limited risk of contracting Covid-19 going forward.

Who knows?

Cheers, Mafungi