



ORTHOLOPHA

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

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Hi Everyone,

June and July are the months for us to get out and about to enjoy the aloe season in Zimbabwe. If you remember some decades back cities like Mutare used to celebrate The Aloe Festival at this time of year. This third Covid lockdown may interfere with this, but we hope you appreciate the images posted in this issue of Ortholopha for your enjoyment.

Our recent visit to Buchwa Mountain re-emphasised to us just how fragile are our lives in this haphazard World. Initially we cancelled the trip, then almost overnight we decided it was on again and off we went. The mountain itself was once work and home to a workforce of three thousand people mining the iron ore and sending it off to Redcliff, far away in the Midlands so that giant factories could forge steel. Then circumstances changed the mine stopped, the giant conveyor ground to a halt and the mountain is reverting back to a wilderness. Let's hope it does in the fullness of time. Cheers, Mafungi



At this time of year the aloes and various other plants are at their most beautiful out at the Ewanrigg Botanical Garden, about 40 kilometres from the centre of Harare in the Enterprise Valley. The flowering goes on for about two months with different species taking centre stage dependent upon the time you visit. When we went just before the middle of June the *Aloe arborescens* was in full bloom but you could see the new buds of *Aloe globuligemma* about to come out in the valley below the main gardens.

Old Age pensioners get in for half price and kids and dogs are also cheap so throw everything you have at home into a car and drive out for a totally relaxing Saturday or Sunday in the warm winter sun. Everything that is potentially rabid should be on a leash so ensure you have enough for the grumpy old folks as well as the tail-wagging canine friends. The toll just on the outskirts of Harare is sometimes a little painful, but if you miss peak times it doesn't normally take longer than ten minutes or so. We always take bond cash and at least then there are no hiccoughs because the card-reader is down.

Be sure to have a look at the herb garden at the top of the hill, there has been a marked improvement in its layout and maintenance of late.

The water features are working and the staff are tidying up the rampant weed-effect upon the pathways and flowerbeds. However they are getting there and Ewanrigg is full of surprises like the tall aloes and cacti seen on the left, just outside their restaurant area.

One area of disappointment to us was to see the confiscated *Aloe ortholopha* plants, taken from poachers plundering the Great Dyke. It was clear that these plants, programmed as they are to grow on the chrome-rich soils of the Dyke, do not fare well at Ewanrigg. So remember if you are ever tempted to buy from a vendor, such plants, you are almost subjecting them to certain destruction unless you get soil from habitat for them to grow in as Nature intended. And plant them in the full sun, which Ewanrigg hasn't done.



But the overall forte of Ewanrigg is the massed display of aloes in full flower! Sit still and watch the sunbirds come in their jewelled finery to sip the nectar from the flowers.

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Tree aloe

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 ensure 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 ZWL\$1 200

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.



Interesting Plant: June

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.

The winner for May was Imani Kujeke who correctly identified last month's flower.



You can win a box of chocolates!!!

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

Photograph taken by Mafungi Clue although photographed on Buchwa Mountain, this was the only leaf seen, so extremely rare.

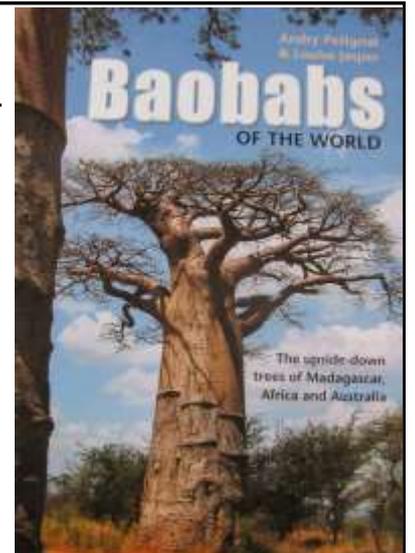
Hi Everyone,

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 aloe, 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.

So that you can then move on to write books, classics, like the one on the right.

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.

Buchwa: *The Mountain That God made First*



Buchwa is a mountain massif to be found in south-central Zimbabwe somewhere between Zivashavane and Rutenga. It is a mountain island paradise, covered in an almost untouched miombo woodland for the most part with an understory of *Aloe arborescens* and mosses and ferns. The rocks that the mountain was literally forged from, are banded ironstones and breccia. Both equally beautiful in their own way. Many of the older Musasas are absolutely festooned with clumps of vigorously growing orchids. Somehow the *Aloe arborescens* has also found purchase in some of these orchid clumps and about a month ago, i.e. at the end of May/Early June they could be found flowering up in the trees. We only found one flowering. A very strange sight indeed. On the right is a tiny colony of Stapeliads, which we found in two different places.



Below right is a lone *Aloe aculeata* we photographed on the way up nearby Shonganebuli, home of the endemic and characteristically red-leafed *Aloe tauri*. Enmeshed in the sedge/euphorbia thick vegetative beds growing on Shonganebuli there were also a couple of very unexpected pachypodiums, *P. saundersii*, the Lundi Star. And at the base of these mountains, were baobabs. **Iconic!**



Culinary uses of herbs.

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.

*Remember, a meal without spice, is like a
Sunset without clouds.
Everything needs to be there,
At the right time,
In proportion
For perfection.*

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 schoenoprasum*. 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 – *Salvia rosmarinus*. 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– *Origanum 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.



Zumbani

**Shonganebuli and his Brudders,
home of *Aloe tauri*.
In winter the sun never shines on his
southern side owing to the steepness of the
cliffs.
Here it is photographed at great distance
from the top of Buchwa.**

And so we move past the winter Solstice and the days are already getting longer. It seems that other than a few frosty-morning cold days in June that winter has almost passed us by, is it Global Warming? Or just a natural fluctuation of the weather cycles. In Canada they are experiencing record breaking scorching temperatures, like 44 degrees hot! Surely that is not normal. In Western Australia the winter rainfall areas are less than 30% of normal rainfall. For sure later in the year they will be reporting big fearsome fires. So you better find something to do in the lockdown with no outside shared activities allowed. Mike and Doreen have been busy making beautiful tiled signboards for the various sections of their garden. The first to roll off the production line is that for the new aloe gardens Mike has planted. Great! You are only getting this Newsletter because the fire below didn't manage to take down the pole holding up our internet cable, be thankful.



**So that is it Folks,
We shall keep in touch through this means until the fearsome Covid situation is under control and hopefully much clearer than it is now. So keep planting and make sure that everything you do is eco-friendly in case that fire to burn off the brush from the bottom of your garden is the one to tip the Whole Earth into Global Warming for real. Keep warm! Be waterwise. Grow with ambition. Scent for the true sense in everything you hear, read and see.**

Cheers, Mafungi