

ORTHOLOPHA



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

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Issue 13-9 September 2013

IT'S SPRING PLANT SALE TIME!

It has already been a very busy month for some of us—hence the later-than-usual mailing of the Newsletter. The special trek to the Eastern Highlands provided a good number of us with a great beginning to September. More on this below and in an upcoming issue of *Ingens*. There will of course be no regular outing this month because of the Plant Sale.

This issue of the newsletter also repeats the news of the innovative feature being introduced at the upcoming plant sale.

And there is a repeat plea for seed stocks so the seed bank can start in October with fresh stocks.

Your Committee

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Sunday, 29th September 2013—The Plant Sale

As advised last month, this year's Spring Plant Sale features an innovation in Zimbabwe—an auction dedicated to the sale of some very special cycads. *Cycad* auctions are fairly common in South Africa, but this will be a first for us. Included will be seedlings, off-cuts and mature plants.

The auction will take place as a separate event during the plant sale, and it begins at 11.00 sharp. Potential bidders will need to arrive early, as they will have to obtain bidders' cards and make a refundable deposit.

If you are interested in auctioning some of your cycads, contact Hans Wolbert, Malcolm Thackray or Manfred Spindler in the next week. Sellers of other species should also be well underway with their preparations for the sale. Please note that **all** sellers will have to check in their plants on Saturday the 28th. Overnight security will be provided. Because of major problems with late arrivals on the Sunday in the past, the Committee has made the decision that sellers will **not** be allowed to arrive on Sunday.

All ACSSZ members have been emailed a copy of the flyer advertising the Plant Sale. Do support your Committee and forward the flyer to all your plant-loving friends.

A Very Special Outing

The first weekend of the month provided a good number of our members with a very special opportunity to explore a part of the country relatively few people have a chance to visit. Together with members of the Mountain Club and the Tree Society, we made up a 10-tent camping expedition, and our numbers rose to some 30 on the Saturday when the day-trippers from Chimanimani Village joined us for a day hike up the gorge.

Of course, we were looking for examples of the vegetation that is unique to this area. We did find a few of the endemic Aloes but, since very few were in flower, this was not easy. And we were disappointed not to find more.

Nevertheless, what we found overall was truly impressive...starting with trees so heavily covered in orchids that they seem to be wearing shaggy cloaks. And the Mountain Acacia in full leaf colour were truly stunning.

Getting over the ridge and into and out of our camp site, which was lulled by the sound of a waterfall, was an adventure in itself. And some of us learned a useful lesson in camping light.

A few hardy souls even managed brief swims in what still felt very much like winter's water.

Huge thanks to Rob Jarvis for a great effort in organizing the outing and to Tempe and Doug van der Ruit of Chimanimani for serving as guides to the terrain that they know so well.

The sentiment surely has to be: We'll be back!

An Aloe Mystery

At Victoria Falls, on Cataract Island opposite viewpoints 5 & 6, is a large colony of Aloes. For the most part, these grow not on the island but on the vertical gorge walls—extending more than halfway down—and their roots must anchor themselves in cracks in the rock. Unusually for Aloes, they grow in a very wet environment. They are constantly bathed in mist and spray and, at times, they must actually be covered by running water. But what are they? Some were in flower this month, and the flower is capitata. But ID using binoculars was impossible. They are certainly not *Aloe vera*, as we heard them identified by one Parks guide to a group of tourists. Either it was the only *Aloe* he knew, or he assumed it would be the only *Aloe* the tourists would know.

Does anyone know the identity of this *Aloe*?

Seed Bank

The Seed Bank, which has been dormant, will be back in action from late October. But fresh seed is in desperately short supply. Please check your gardens and keep your eyes peeled for seeds on your outings. Place whatever seeds you find in an envelope labelled with the species and whether collected in a garden or in the wild and pass them to a committee member.

Make the most of the sale.

Lynn & Bill