

# ORTHOLOPHA

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



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Well the rains are here with a vengeance! Exciting times as plants explode into full summertime growth and seeds emerge and shoot out the ground.

Of course with the better weather all the pests and diseases raise their ugly heads too and start munching your plants and attacking the leaves, growing points and roots.

Vigilance is the order of the day, catch the problems early and they can be literally nipped in the bud. Try the soft options first of washing scale insects off with soapy water and squashing snails underfoot. Chemicals have a downstream effect on all living things so they should be carefully applied, for the right target and with due precautions. Be responsible! Read the label!!!!

### Your Committee

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### Chairman's Christmas Message

What a wonderful year we have had as a Society! The highlight was undoubtedly the Xerophytica Congress held in June where more than 80 people attended both days of an extremely interesting programme largely put together by Bill and Lynn Kinsey. Speakers came from all over the world and the congress was followed by several tours to interesting habitat on the Great Dyke, Nyanga and on the long arduous road to the Chimanimani Mountains through the Southeastern lowveld. June is a wonderful month to see aloes in particular in flower and we were not disappointed. Shortly afterwards a new species, *A. haroniensis* was identified, described and published. This aloe has only been found in the gorge of the Haroni river at the southern end of the Chimanimani Mountains. Who knows what else will be found as our members respond with renewed enthusiasm to the treasures hidden in the far corners of Zimbabwe? We included a write-up on it in Ingens.

Of particular interest was the commercial value in a number of indigenous plant species that is starting to be exploited within our country and the region. Baobabs have fruit with astounding amounts of vitamin C and potassium and other nutrients. Sustainable harvesting will be possible for thousands of years and value to local people will guarantee protection, replanting and individual care. Great news for the ecology of otherwise fragile environments. I must thank my whole Committee and all of you members for your enthusiastic support throughout the year.

Have a Merry Xmas and New Year and travel safe!

Malcolm Thackray

## Flowering Aloe: December

We will be posting pictures each month of a flowering Aloe for this time of year, both to encourage you all to look to your roots when deciding what plants to include in your gardening plans and secondly because ecologically and from a preservation of plant diversity point of view it is a good thing to do.

**What is this aloe, photographed at the beginning of December and about to flower?**

**Photo by Caryl Stutchbury**

Send your considered opinions to [bo.hoom52@yahoo.com](mailto:bo.hoom52@yahoo.com). The judge's decision is final and the winner will get an invitation to a prestigious Chameleon Safari in January 2015 when they kick-off.



Last month's Aloe was correctly identified as ***Aloe tauri*** by **Shayn Dorward**. She wins the coveted place on a Chameleon Safari early in the New Year.

November's yellow-flowering version of *Aloe tauri*, These aloes will flower several times a year and are a great attraction to sunbirds in the garden. Put a massed bed of them outside your bedroom window.  
Photo by C. Stutchbury



At the Christmas Lunch held at Amanzi Restaurant on the 14 December, members were encouraged to bring a succulent display that reflected the spirit of Christmas. This is one of the better exhibits that had the judges oohing and aahing!!!

The proprietors of Amanzi are starting a nursery, so very soon you will be able to satisfy both your gnawing hunger and that for plants by visiting this top-of-the-range Restaurant along Enterprise road.



Nursery at Amanzi



Photos by Mafung

#### Indigenous tree:

The Baobab *Adansonia digitata* is one of the largest trees to be found in Zimbabwe and definitely the oldest too, by a couple of thousand years!!! They occur in the low-lying areas of the country but can be found growing naturally, but surprisingly close, to major settlements on the Highveld too. There are many successfully planted in public and private gardens in Harare, with the best known being at the

Botanical Gardens on 5<sup>th</sup> Street Extension and another huge specimen in Greenwood Park most easily seen from the 8<sup>th</sup> Street side. Baobabs grow quickly and thrive only on well-drained, frost-free sites. If you want to secure lasting value for your property, plant a baobab now for future generations. Climbing on them and exploring their hidden cavities and watching in wonder as the flowers open at night, may make your descendants less likely to become computer-bound blobs. Kadoma has its own Baobab just out on the Bulawayo Road, and it fell on its side some years ago, but it is still growing happily! From an environmentally friendly point of view baobabs are undoubtedly one of the best trees to plant because virtually all parts have some use but they are useless for firewood, so they won't succumb to senseless felling without replacement.



Photo by Mafungi

Enjoy your Festive Season and we look forward to seeing you at the January end-of-month function for the start of another cracking year in 2015!

Mafungi