



# ORTHOLOPHA

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

PO Box CY300, Causeway

[aloesocietyzim@gmail.com](mailto:aloesocietyzim@gmail.com)

[www.aloesocietyzim.com](http://www.aloesocietyzim.com) & [www.facebook.com/ACSSZ](http://www.facebook.com/ACSSZ)

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Hi Everyone,

Christmas is finally here and thank goodness the rain came in time to help us celebrate it! We had a desperate month between the lone storm on the 20th November and the almost daily downpours we are experiencing this week.

Hopefully those of you who are going away for the Festive Season will travel safely and return plump and happy! Just like one of our favourite succulents, the Sabi Star. Think about using alternative routes if travelling by road in Zimbabwe. Some of the bye-ways are less busy and there is hardly any of the dangerous heavy-duty truck and bus traffic that plague the Beitbridge to Harare and Chirundu routes. Don't travel after dark! From all of us on the Committee from our glamorous Chairperson Doreen Richards right down to the lowly Mafungi we say Cheers! It's been a great year and there are only better ones to come, especially with our Page 3 Health Advice.

### Your Committee

Chairman - Doreen Richards  
0772 255784

Vice-chairman – Rob Jarvis  
0783 383214

### Committee members:

Malcolm Thackray - 0772 516644

Ros Houghton - 0772 115364

Caryl Stutchbury - 0772 611756

Hans Wolbert – 0772 653110

Debra Wolbert - 0772 515436

Gaudencia Kujeka - 0775 376600

Anne-Katrin Maseko - 0772 440131

Mike Caulfield - 0772 241286

Annah Pasipanodya - 0772 572044

**Monthly Meeting :**  
There is no monthly meeting in December.



## Flowering Aloe: November

If you remember the November competition was that pictured right:-

*Aloe africana* .

Lucky winner for November will be announced at the January outing.

We had a bit of fun with this competition and it highlighted that with common aloes, we are all experts, but with the little known ones, entries were few and often completely wrong! And with a clueless quizmaster, everyone was often in the dark.



We have put the Guess the Aloe on hold for a while. It will probably return in some other format, perhaps involving a different plant family but one of those we hold jurisdiction over in our Society.



A scene near the summit of Romwe Mountain, the highest point in the Lowveld. If you have any sort of rock features in your garden, *Ficus*, *Commiphora*, *Sterculia*, *Erythrina* and *Albizia* trees compliment our succulent brotherhood very well. Plant them today! Here we see a copsis of *Ficus* and *Commiphora*.

**Annual Subscriptions:** If you haven't yet paid, please do, there are a small number of members not yet paid for 2015.

Subs are only \$20 per person/couple. If you don't see one of the committee members, you can pay the CABS account:

**CABS Platinum: Aloe, Cactus and Succulent Society**

**Acc #: 901 649 1871 Reference: kindly include your full names as a reference in any deposit.**

Alternatively send \$21-00 through EcoCash to **0783 911314**

# The Health Page



In this issue of Ortholopa we are in the Lowveld so let's stick with the iconic Baobab for our health lessons this month. The elephants wreak such havoc on these trees because they know just how wonderful they are for a host of ailments.

Rupert Watson in his book *The African Baobab* lists various decoctions of the leaves (rich in vitamin A and calcium) as treatment for *diarrhoea, dysentery, asthma, colic, eye infections, general fatigue, fever, inflammations, earache, kidney problems, urinary infections, insect bites, digestive and respiratory problems, sweating, tumours and wounds*. The vitamin C-rich pith around the seed makes a refreshing and healthy drink, extracts from the bitter bark was once commercially marketed under the label *cortex cael cedar* (heavenly blue bark) and you can bathe children with rickets and other problems and steam away colds and flu. Tooth-aches can be treated too. If you are unlucky enough to be shot by a Bushman with a *Stropanthus*-poisoned arrow you might just be saved by an extract from the Baobab seeds, containing a suitable alkaloid. Oil extracted from the seed is now sold in little bottles and you rub it on yourself and your babies and they come out looking very shiny. The marketers say that it is the only non-oily oil, which does not make you feel hot and bothered.

Our own Ralph Stutchbury in his book titled *Baobab* mentions that the seed contains more protein than groundnuts and each kidney-shaped seed has plenty of good healthy fibre, fats and oils. If your teeth are strong enough, you can chew the whole seed and pith together and this is obviously the roughest, toughest fibre you could possibly ingest. The elephants have known this forever but they have wrinkled skin but smooth ears!!!!





Gona-re-Zhou National Park in the southeast Lowveld of Zimbabwe is a very special place. You can just imagine how beautiful this scene will be when the *Adenium multiflorum* in the foreground is flowering with pink and white blooms in June and July of each year

Equally beautiful and interesting is the special micro-environment on top of the iconic pillar of the Chilojo Cliffs. There are numerous grey blobs just visible in this photograph which are of the Lundi star, *Pachypodium saundersii*, which at some stage flowers a brilliant white colour. Here these plants only grow on this pinnacle where they are totally protected from marauding elephant and other browsers, the main cliff-top is devoid of the plants.



Soon after the main gate entrance to Chipinda Pools there is a right turn-off to Chivililla Falls. For a budding botanist this is really worth investigating despite the quite rough access road. You can camp at the bottom and it would be worth visiting in the height of the rains when the falls on the Runde would be raging. But the plants are intriguing with *Adenium*, *Adenium*, *Pachypodium*, *Huernia*, *Aloe* and *Euphorbia* conspicuous.



**Elephant populations put huge pressure on the Baobabs and there are no small trees, only these huge ones that are showing extreme levels of damage. The damage also to the Mopane woodland in the background is clear.**

**National Parks and various co-operating agencies, have resorted to surrounding the trunks of Baobabs with sharp rocks and/or logs of hardwoods with pointed branches to try and limit the access to the trees by the pachyderms. Time will tell whether this strategy will protect the trees sufficiently for them to recover. Of all the trees in the plant kingdom however the Baobab is the most likely to be able to recover because of its innate ability to repair damaged bark and trunk tissue.**



**Unprotected the Baobabs will end up like this, where everything has been consumed and the stump has little hope of survival. There are no small trees and once these Goliaths are gone the character of the Lowveld will change forever. Let's hope the intervention by man works!**

**Cheers, Mafungi**