



ORTHOLOPHA

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

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Hi Everyone,

Talk about a season turning on its head! We were complaining about the drought and now, three weeks into February and we would probably all like to see a little bit of sun!!!! I was trying to type this out on our back verandah where my thoughts are usually that much clearer, but I ended up shivering and have retreated back inside. All I can say is that I am just amazed at the way the plants we call our own, rode out the dry spell and have responded to the life-giving rain and almost everything is sending out new growth. Flowers are bigger and better than ever before, diseases on hold and even the plagues of insects that are normally associated with the summer rains are in check. My pomegranates are excellent.

But out there we still see errant gardeners sweeping up their leaves and burning them, road verges being dug up and planted to new lawn, the Dyke continues to yield its rocks to rampant poachers and avaricious gardeners and its plants are devastated along the way. Precious plants that grow nowhere else on Planet Earth but on our own Great Dyke.

And in town, new housing developments in clear wetlands!!!

One day we may wake up and ask: Just What Were We Thinking????

Cheers, Mafungi.

Your Committee

Chairman - Rob Jarvis
0783 383214

Vice-chairman – Hans Wolbert
0772 653110

Committee members:

Doreen Richards - 0772 255784
Malcolm Thackray - 0772 516644
Ros Houghton - 0772 115364
Caryl Stutchbury - 0772 611756
Debra Wolbert - 0772 515436
Gaudencia Kujeke - 0775 376600
Anne-Katrin Maseko - 0772 440131
Mike Caulfield - 0772 241286
Annah Pasipanodya - 0772 572044
Lillian Pswarayi - 0772 516 441

Monthly Meeting : Sunday 25th February 2018

This month's **Meeting** is at Gail Beamish home in Highlands – **33 Montgomery Rd., Highlands**. Gail is both a Floral and Horticultural Judge and has an amazing garden.

PLEASE remember to bring a delicious plate of eats to share. Don't forget to bring your chairs and hats, as well as a labelled plant or other contribution for the raffle.

The time: 10.00am for 10:30am

Directions: If you coming from the Norther suburbs get onto Ridgeway South, cross over Arcturus Rd. onto Montgomery Rd. and follow it down to where the road bends to the left and No 33 is on the right. If you coming from Glenara Ave. (about halfway between Enterprise Rd. and Samora Machel Ave.) turn into Glen Shee Ave. and follow to the road to the T junction with Montgomery turn right and No 33 is on your right.

If you need directions call 0772 337 794 or 497730.

Flowering Plant: 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.

The lucky winner in January was Doreen Richards



You can win a box of chocolates!!!

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

The plant flower above is the February entry. What is it?

Photograph taken by Mafungi



A Call to Arms!!!

We are alerting members now that the 50th anniversary Celebratory Congress of our Society will take place in Late June/Early July 2019!!!!

Plenty of time to plan ahead and join us as we hold another Xerophytica Congress and exciting post-Congress tours. Do not miss this opportunity to get to know your plants and your country better. These Xerophyta plants are so excited they have burst into a green extravaganza!!!!

Annual Membership: 2018 memberships are now due, thanks to a few members that have already paid. If you didn't renew your membership in 2017 you will soon be removed from the mailing list.

Membership is \$20 per person/couple per year. Children \$5 per year. Foreign membership \$40 per year. Make payment to a committee member, the CABS account, or through EcoCash:

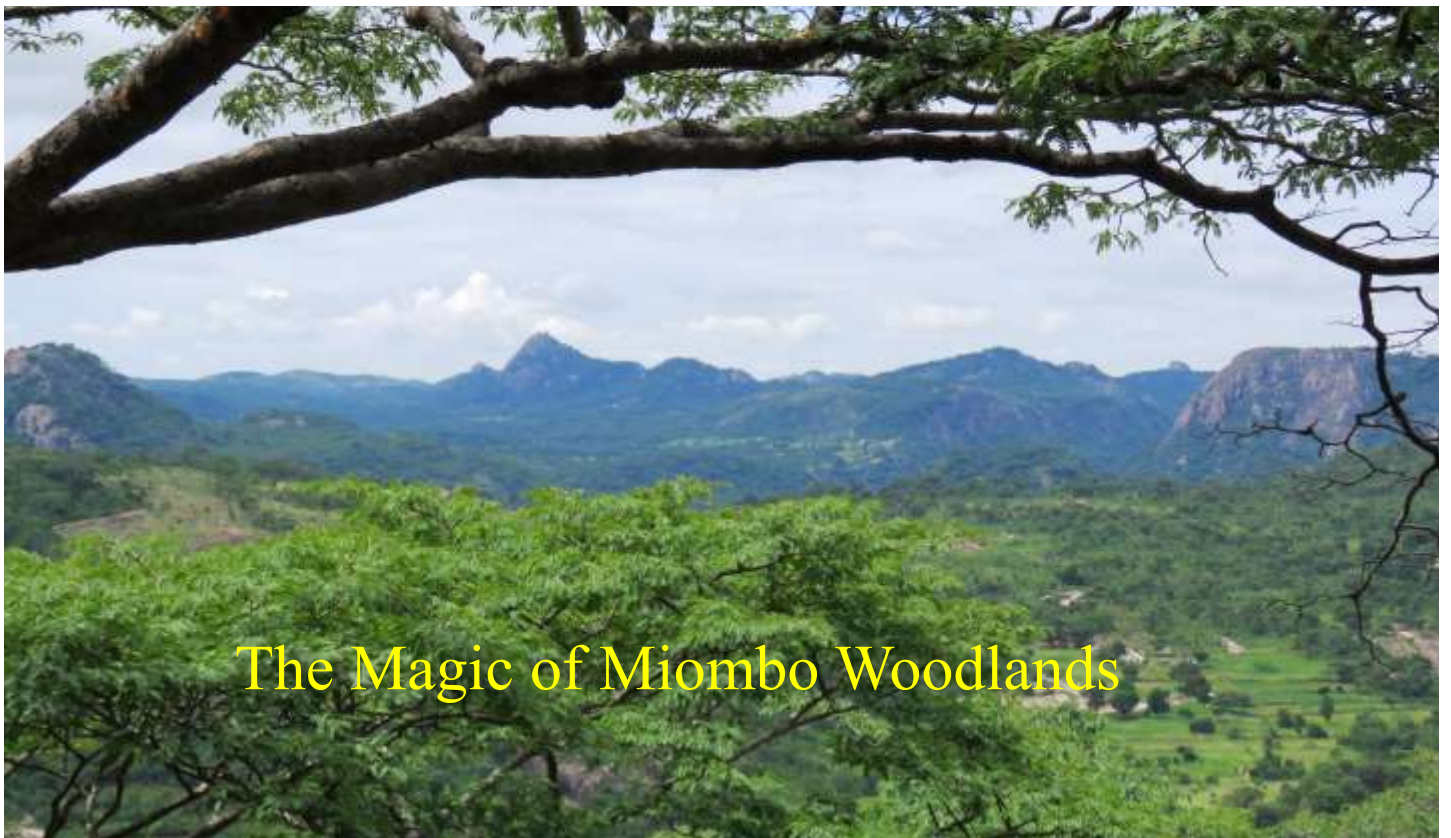
CABS Platinum: Aloe, Cactus and Succulent Society

Acc #: 1002616336 Reference: kindly include your surname as the deposit reference.

Alternatively send \$21-00 through EcoCash to 0783 911314 : kindly include a reference

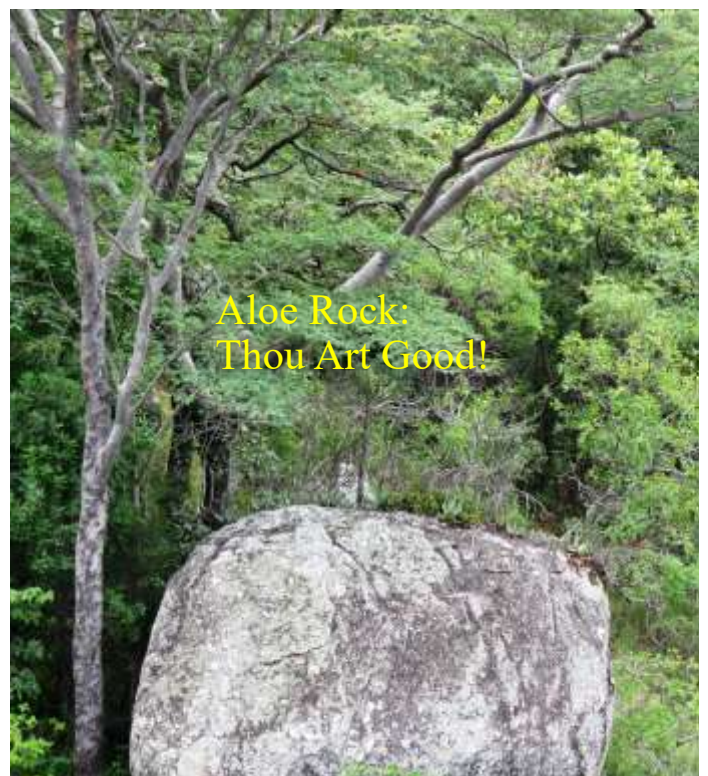
We have a few payments with no reference of the member who have paid:

- On 9 Jan.18 to EcoCash, via Faith Manditsera, please let us know who this is for.
- On 19 Jan.18 transfer into CABS, please let us know who this is for.



The Magic of Miombo Woodlands

This month I'd like to return to one of my favourite topics— just how beautiful is the granite or dolerite and miombo woodland combination that naturally covers much of Zimbabwe? However during the long dry spell we had between mid-December and late January we were probably all wondering if anything at all would survive. I know in my own garden for the first time, ever, we had to water the little patch of maize we grow every year. First time in 38 years!!!! Meantime the internet and news agencies were full of stories about how Cape Town was rapidly approaching the equivalent of a water apocalypse. I wonder how many of us thought about the Harare situation in the same light. What if the rains held off for another month or two? It doesn't take a genius to work out that we are skating on extremely thin ice when you realise that there is not a single new body of stored water feeding our ever-expanding city. The existing major water sources, Chivero and Manyame are silting up rapidly. The main pipelines that feed into the suburban reservoirs spring leaks with gay abandon. Our own taps have not had a single drop of water out of them in 15 years. Harare now stretches from Norton to Goromonzi and all these new developments feed off the same water supply. Lucky if you live in Norton or on the way into Harare from there because they are probably drawing water that used to go out to Greendale or Glen Lorne. Unlucky if you bought land and built in Ruwa or thereabouts. I know that in the early 1980's we experienced three consecutive years of drought. 1981/82, 1982/83 and 1983/84. If we had a similar run today I am afraid our water situation would be just as perilous as that of Cape Town. Luckily for Zimbabwe in 1983/84 a dangerously dry season finished off with some pounding rains in March and April. Everybody heaved a sigh of relief and then it was back to normal-watering the lawns and verges!!!! **Are we crazy???????**



Miombo woodlands are fragile eco-systems that evolved over millions of years. This past weekend we went to the top of a long ridge called Zhenji in the Chinhamora Communal Land, about 20 kilometres beyond Domboshawa. Rainfall has been plentiful in the last two weeks and there is little sign that we went through a horrendous dry period at all. There is a magical symbiosis between the dominant trees of the miombo woodlands, mainly *Brachystegias* and *Julbernadia* (Munondo) and the fungi and micro-flora and fauna of healthy soil. It starts and ends with a thick mulch of leaf matter and dehisced pods. Old trees that have died are also rendered down by the combined action of fungi, insects and even birds. Miraculously all the plants survive these dry spells, even if they persist through the whole rainy season. Next year will be better. All plants know this. So think twice before you start hacking down any indigenous trees that you have in the garden. And remember that if you



Perfectly Matching Pairs



Fungi growing along Musasa root lines.

are lucky enough to have some woodland, that it survives because of the thick leaf mulch and guess what, the plants we love, aloes, euphorbias, sanseverias, and stapeliads love to live in harmony with these magical woodlands.



The Great Decayers

The Health Corner:

A healthy life is made up of feel-good moments. The more you have, the more oxytocin there is racing around your blood vessels and the happier you will be and the less likely to fall to some dreaded affliction.

Here is young Sean Gurira, whom you may all remember organised our big bus expedition to Ruzawi School last July. He received his Learning Knights Award from the school and has since moved on to Peterhouse. Expect great things from this young man as he moves on in life!

If you don't do anything else today, laugh your head off about something, great advice from the Kinseys as they prepare to move!!!!



There you go Folks, another month gone and Zimbabwe seems to be a changing place. Familiar political faces are disappearing fast and the only things that are steadfast are our collective gardening skills, and wisdom. Let's be sure to share, and ensure succession!!!! Cheers, Mafungi