



# ORTHOLOPHA

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

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Issue 18-07 July 2018

Hi Everyone,

Winter is fast drawing to a close, thank goodness! We were struck down by a dreaded flu/cold combination which laid us low for 10 days! One of the worst we have ever had. Hopefully next season we shall miss these afflictions. Read the small print in the Health Column.

Our grand tour of the south and east of Zimbabwe went extremely well, although there were many kilometres covered. One of the highlights for us was to meet up with nearly thirty Mutare folk at a home at the foot of Cecil Kop in this, the most blessed of cities in Zimbabwe. At 1 200 metres above sea level, Mutare is much warmer than Harare and frosts are very rare and gardeners can grow almost any plants that tickle their fancies. We were treated to a beautiful garden, great people and an excellent meal before we retired to the grounds and rooms of La Rochelle, over Christmas Pass for our night's rest. The huge swathes of aloes in full flower in those magnificent gardens near Penhalonga were a sight to behold!

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 29th July 2018

This month's **Meeting** is at Irene Smit's home - **2855 Davids Way in Bluff Hill**. This garden set in the rocky Bluff Hill and has a magnificent collection of aloes and succulents.

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:** Head towards **Bluff Hill**, get onto **Lorraine Drive**, about halfway between the intersection of (Lorraine Drive and Harare Drive) and (The Westgate roundabout on Lomagundi Road) is **Davids Way**. If you are travelling from Harare Drive side Davids Way is on the left, from Westgate its on the right. Once on Davids Way, look for No 2855.

If you need directions call Irene on 0778 750379

## Flowering Plant: July

### What is this, on the right?

Send your knowledgeable and considered opinions to [bo.hoom52@yahoo.com](mailto: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 June will be announced at Sunday's meeting.**



**You can win a box of chocolates!!!**

Send your entries to Mafungi at  
[bo.hoom52@yahoo.com](mailto:bo.hoom52@yahoo.com)

The plant above is the July entry.

**What is it?**

Photograph taken by Mafungi at the foot of Gurunguwe, near Penhalonga.

How we wish we could accomplish all the things we have ever dreamed about! Our great aloe expedition took us to the stunning gardens of La Rochelle on the way home. Five of us ventured up and down the treacherous route to the foot of Gurunguwe Mountain. No fewer than 36 hairpin bends await the unwary on the way down to the river at the base of this mountain. We managed to track down our guide from earlier expeditions and his home is as close as one can get to the cliff that rises up 1200 metres. We were looking for an arch in the rock, but only spotted a tiny one near the top. Our guide, Martin however had told us that he was the custodian of hundreds of plants of *Encephalatos mannikensis*, one of only three cycad species to occur naturally in Zimbabwe. To our amazement this was true!!! As far as the eye could see along the base of this mountain there were cycads growing! Some planted by this strange character, who has burnt his hut down and now lives in a rickety platform amongst his banana plantation. It takes all types to make this World. But he is clearly a plant lover so we can tolerate such idiosyncracies.

**Annual Membership: 2018 memberships are now due, thanks to member that have already paid.**

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 : If the payment is not from your own EcoCash Account, please follow the payment with an SMS with member's name.



## The Great Aloe Expedition

In July we took a combined group of Aloe Society and Mountain Club of Zimbabwe members to see the various aloe colonies that flower in the winter months across the length and breadth of Zimbabwe. First stop was Norma Jeans in Masvingo, right on the banks of Lake Mutirikwe. As pleasant a spot as you can find anywhere in the World. Lovely green lawns, a range of accommodation options from bunk beds to luxury villas, but with most of us opting for camping. The showers and ablutions were first class and the meals served in the quaint restaurant excellent. Great Zimbabwe was just up the road and the picture above shows the amazing *Aloe excelsa* and *Euphorbia ingens* that guard the entrances to The Great Enclosure.

On the Saturday, armed with directions from Manfred Spindler we set off to track down the elusive *Aloe tauri*, which reputedly only occurs on three mountains on the edge of the southern Lowveld regions. A fantastic drive which meandered through the communal areas west of the main Masvingo/Beitbridge highway soon found us at the foot of Mt. Shonga Nebuli. The mountain itself did not disappoint and four of us clambered up the precipitous ridge from the southern end right to the cross and then to the beacon at the peak itself. As you can imagine this inselberg towers above the surrounding countryside and is characterised by bare expanses of solidified magma that welled-up out of the inner regions of the Earth millions of years ago. From the top we could see Buchwa Mountain a few kilometres to the northwest. In every direction there were mountains and rivers of every description, but we had come to see *Aloe tauri* and sure enough in the hard-scrabble, barely vegetated scrub on the knife-edge ridge we could find plants growing in the shelter of sedges and euphorbias. Here and there we found some small plants of *Pachypodium saundersii*, the Lundi Star.

On the way in, John Hibbert had spotted a colony of these pachycauls near a small river and the plants were the size of oil-barrels. We had also spotted some Sabi Stars, *Adenium multiflora*, living up to their name, and they had been gathered by the locals and were protected in home gardens and flourishing!!!!





The top of the mountain had a splendid population of ***Aloe chabaudii*** which was in full flower and was the centre of attention for swarms of busy bees and butterflies. The whole journey from Harare through Masvingo to Birchenough and then Mutare and La Rochelle, we were blessed with the sight of pockets of this ubiquitous aloe in full flower. Some had orange flowers, but most were pinky-red and a number had the dense inflorescences seen in the picture right. This was taken about half-way between Masvingo and Birchenough.



Our quarry, ***Aloe tauri*** did not disappoint and flowering plants were there to be seen with a spear-like rich yellow spike. Unfortunately yours truly, in my rush to speed up the mountain, forgot my camera and only have somewhat wishy-washy cellphone images of the sights we saw at the top of the mountain. I just have to go back and would like to explore the surrounding mountains and map exactly where this Zimbabwe endemic aloe actually does occur. One day we will post a picture of ***Aloe tauri*** and see which of our more astute members can identify it in flower.

## The Health Corner:

Wellness retreats are all the rage these days and there could be no calmer place to spend some of your time than at Norma Jeans in Masvingo. The view, right was taken in the early morning from the front lawn outside the restaurant. There is no way the grouchiest of us would not be calmed by such a view first thing in the morning. There are excellent walks thereabouts and in winter for plant lovers there are many treasures to be found in the granite mountains and green valleys around Great Zimbabwe and Lake Mutirikwe.



***Aloe chabaudii*** is everywhere. On the granite, the red leaved ***Aloe cameronii*** can be seen and along the roads you can find ***Aloe greatheadii***, ***A. parvibracteata***, ***A. cryptopoda***, ***A. aculeate***, ***A. globuligemma***, and many others. Pachycauls are few and far between so treasure any sightings. At your feet you will chance upon ***Huernias***. These are the sort of plants that make our members glow with happiness. It is healthy to feel good!!!! Pile the Family into a car and race them down to Masvingo and Mutare for a treat,

By the way an Indian researcher Kamal Meattle has found that growing just three different kinds of houseplants can clean up the air in your house or office and if you go to <http://www.ted.com> and search for Clean air at home, you will find the Ted Talk where he explains just what miracles these plants can perform. Maybe one of the reasons that we all feel a bit crook and couch-bound from time to time is the quality of air we breathe. There is absolutely no harm in growing indoors the plants recommended to boost the internal oxygen levels and remove the serious toxins generated by plastics and other man-made materials. Two of the three are from plant groups that your Society claims as its charges. A palm, ***Areca***, a ***Sanseveria*** and an ***Epipremnum***. ***That's all you need!!!!!! One or two plants in each of the key rooms of the house, lounge, bedroom and bathroom.***

**There you go Folks, next month spring is in the air and there is absolutely no reason not get out and about. Of course it is going to be an exciting week for all of us Zimbabweans and We hope that the election goes smoothly for all of you!!!!**

**Cheers, Mafungi**