



ORTHOLOPHA

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

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Hi Everyone,

It is going to be a busy month, no doubt about that. Today if you rush you can make the garden design and expo show at Parklands just off the Borrowdale road beyond the Village. A must-see for all of you who love the feel of grit beneath your fingernails. Be sure to go to Peter Piper's stand and see his heirloom bonsai baobabs that his mother planted nearly 60 years ago!

On the 30th we shall have our normal meeting at the usual time with details posted below. The Ridge in Avondale is a special place in Harare, do not miss this one. We look forward to seeing you there and in good form. The same day you can attend the St John's Spring Fair!!! The following Sunday 7th will be our second Bi-annual Rare Plant sale at the National Botanical Gardens venue. Predictions are that El Nino is firmly in place and this will be your last chance to stock up on xerophytes and pachycauls to ride out the dry seasons that loom like malevolent dust clouds over us. Palms and cycads are good too!!!!

Cheers,
Mafungi.

Your Committee

Chairman - Rob Jarvis
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Vice-chairman - Hans Wolbert
0772 653110

Committee members:

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Monthly Meeting : Sunday 30th September 2018

This month's **Meeting** is at **Kate Von Deventer** home at No **30 Ridge Rd.** in **Avondale**. Kate is a very keen gardener and an avid orchid collector, a meeting not to be missed.

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 are coming out of town on Prince Edward St., turn left at the traffic lights onto Argyle Rd., and then right into Ridge Road. If you coming from the Northern suburbs, from Lomagundi Rd. turn into King George Rd., that changes into Connaught Rd., turn right at the traffic lights onto Argyle Rd., and then right into Ridge Road, No 30 is on the left.

Flowering Plant: September

What is this, on the right?

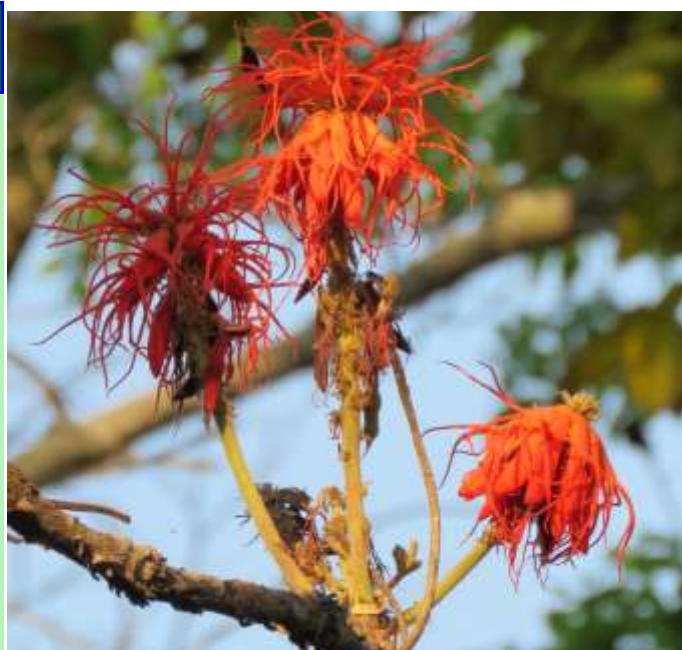
Send your knowledgeable and considered opinions to bo.hoom52@yahoo.com.

The respected judge's decision is final and the winner will get a box of choice Belgian chocolates, provided they are shared.

So far no lucky winner in August!!!! Keep trying!!!! And if you are lucky, you can claim your prize at the next Meeting on Sunday 30 September 2018

You can win a box of chocolates!!!

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



The plant above is the September entry.
What is it?

Photograph taken by Mafungi



Aloe, Cactus & Succulent
Society of Zimbabwe

Plants for our Future



ALOES, SUCCULENTS, CACTI, SABI STARS, BAOBABS, PALMS & CYCADS

RARE PLANT SALE | SUNDAY 7th October 2018: 9am - 1pm

Harare Botanic Gardens HERBARIUM entrance

Annual Membership: 2018 memberships were due in Jan.18, thanks to members who 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 Devastation of Fire

We were recently fortunate enough to spend a weekend in the magical Bvumba Mountains just south of Mutare. There is no other way to describe these mountains than the word magical. They are a combination of natural tropical forest, planted eucalypt, coffee, protea and pine plantations, wide-open grasslands and scrambled granite kopjies. Nestling in amongst this natural and man-made glory, are picturesque cottages and holiday homes and even quite large hotels. Here and there there are little outposts of Miombo woodlands and scattered throughout you can find aloes of many descriptions, but the most frequently seen are large colonies of *Aloe arborescens*. If you ever go to the famous Leopard Rock Hotel you will find them everywhere, in the gardens, the golf course and of course in the forest and mountain behind.

The picture above was taken on the summit of Castle Beacon, the highest point in the Bvumba and we scrambled up its slopes after partaking of a lavish tea at Tony's Coffee Shop. Bvumba residents have spent some time in recent years trying to discourage uncontrolled burning, but this fire was out of control and wreaked havoc. What will be interesting will be to go back next year and see if this particular specimen actually survives this onslaught by fire. There is no doubt that the underburden of dry, flammable (as Americans would say) matter had accumulated to an extent that fire once started, becomes unstoppable.



The Bvumba Mountains really are a special place. And often views that one would think are definitely evening shots are from the early morning and vice versa. However what is crucial in all our plant-loving and collecting skills is that we give some thought to what a particular scene will look like in years to come. Perhaps even long after we have gone, Heaven Forbid! Above we see the early morning sun trying to emerge from the grey and brown smog that innumerable wildfires in Mozambique and Zimbabwe have laden in the skies. The view is much improved by the framing branches of a naturally occurring wild Lavendar tree. *Heteropyxis dehniae* is the name of this special tree. Its leaves when crushed have a definite lavender scent.

But by far the biggest attribute of the tree is that it is deciduous and in winter the warm sun will blaze through its bare branches and warm your cold bones and stiff joints into a fully-functionable state early in the morning. Similar trees include the sterculias, baobabs and the white stinkwood. In summer they are laden with leaves and provide ample shade, but in winter is when you want the tree to be drawing as little water as possible, but allowing life-giving warmth to permeate every corner of your property.

Of course not all the trees in your garden should be deciduous. You do need some shade year-round and in these uncertain times we should always consider the well-being of others in planning our little oases of serendipity. Below we see a promiscuous fig and a well-positioned jerry can in its branches gives an idea of the future holiday-home pub for this secluded corner of the Bvumba, The Fig'n Fuel. Undoubtedly it will be a place where night-fighters hang out, some winged, like bats, others with a spring in their steps and big red eyes like the night-apes. Birds too, will flock.



Finally with the advent of drones, extremely powerful telescopes, binoculars and camera zooms you have no idea of who is looking at your little haven and from where. Be sure to give them something to remember because in this fast-paced life of ours today, there are no secrets, and no time to make amends. So our last little thumbnail below shows a stunning dam at the bottom of the Bvumba, seen at a distance of about 10 kilometres through the handheld lens of a fully extended 65x magnification camera.

Luckily someone planted a tree that is backlit by the morning sun's reflection on the dam surface and you could swear it is a Japanese cedar in a Zen Garden and not a gum!



Another great tree to consider for any garden is the ubiquitous **Erythrina** or coral tree. They never fail to please with the bright red flowers on an oak-shaped tree, without a leaf in sight. The bark of these trees is special being almost cork-like and can provide a firm anchor for orchids, lichens and other tree-dwelling plants. Birds love to nest in them, with shrikes and thrushes thriving in the forks. Woodpeckers and barbets find the old dead branches easy to hammer out their homes.

However perhaps the greatest thing about these trees is that if you find you have a hole in your garden structure and it need filling urgently, then you can easily chop a huge truncheon off an existing tree and plonk it in the ground and only if you are a completely hopeless gardener will the tree not take.

I have yet to meet someone who has failed.



The Health Corner:

This week we have attended memorials for two people who passed on long before their time. Its almost at the stage where you daren't open the Bambazonke Newsletter in case you find your own name there before you knew it. Again they are not members of our Society and so, deprived of this Health Corner, they were probably doomed. Personally I have suffered from high blood pressure since the halcyon days of my 20's. Much of it is probably alcohol-induced as we know that the stresses of living in Zimbabwe over the past few decades have had anything but a calming influence upon our lives.

I happened to chance upon a vain request from a similarly afflicted individual who posted on Zimvine seeking advice on how to reduce his blood pressure which is already hovering around 169/110. There are really practical people out there with excellent advice and along with the conventional wisdom of the snake-oil vendors, which list garlic, ginger, honey, lemon juice, paw-paw pips, sweet potatoes and the like as dead-cert cures, there were two contributions bordering upon genius. The first, cut your throat and let it bleed for 15 minutes, reduces pressure significantly. I can go along with this physical cure option and there are certain individuals and even relatives that I would definitely like to see it applied to with vigour. And then secondly, do not worry at all, soon your BP will be 0/0 and the average is around 85/55 which is nice and low.

So there you are folks, great advice from people who should know better!!!!

Hopefully this newsletter will get to you before the end of gardening business today. If at all you can go to the Garden and design Show at Parklands just beyond Borrowdale Village, it is quite amazing to see the talent and ingenuity available in this country.

Cheers, Mafungi