



ORTHOLOPHA

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

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Issue 19-9 September 2019

Hi Everyone,

The end of October and mid-November this year will be full of huge excitement for our Society! For the first time for many years we will be doing a Spring Rare Plant Show this coming Sunday 27th October. This will be held 10 am to 4.30pm, at the beautiful home and garden of Ray and Morag Flight at 62 Broadlands Road in Emerald Hill. The very best plants owned by your members will be displayed and you will all have the chance to see and learn how to produce and present your plants to maximise their visual effect!

And two weeks later on Saturday 9th and Sunday 10th November it will be the Rare Plant Sale, run bi-annually by the Society at the National Botanic Gardens in Harare. For the first time this event will run over two days, thus allowing the hallowed and the unforgiven to come and buy on the day that suits best. On the Saturday the sale will open at 11.00 am and close at 5pm and on Sunday open at 8 am and close at 1pm.

Our Health Advisor, the indomitable Elizabeth Small takes us deep into the realm of anti-oxidants and probiotics. Make sure you read and digest it all, we don't want to be doing autopsies on those who have passed on for neglecting to read the Small print in the Newsletter. Let's hope your plants are smoking hot like this one (right).

Cheers, Mafungi.



Your Committee

Chairman – Hans Wolbert
- 0772 653110

Committee members:

Rob Jarvis	- 0783 383214
Doreen Richards	- 0772 255784
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
Lorraine Regadas	- 0772 416024

Monthly Meeting Sunday October 27th 2019

Definitely bring a chair! There will be some refreshments available and on sale as well as the usual teas. Bring a plate and a friend or neighbor. 62 Broadlands Road in Emerald Hill, turn right onto Belfast if coming from town on Lomagundi Road, turn right into Broadlands and no 62 is on the left. Look for the banners.

If lost, phone Morag 0772 238 807

Spring Rare Plant Show

Sunday October, 27
10 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.
62 Broadlands Road,
Emerald Hill, Harare

Spring

You are invited to come to

our Spring Rare Plant Show

Absolutely Free Entry!

Judges Review at 4pm

Teas and Snacks available

Convenor: Morag Flight
Telephone: 0772 238 807
E-mail morag@zol.co.zw

**Bring a chair and
relax in beautiful
surroundings in
Emerald Hill!**



Aloe, Cactus and Succulent
Society of Zimbabwe

Interesting Plant: October

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.

Not surprisingly last month's flowering plant has not been identified and even the Wizards of Flora of Tropical Africa remain flummoxed.



This is an extremely rare cactus. Photograph taken by Mafungi

Clue: Facebookers have a chance to ID it.

You can win a box of chocolates!!!

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



Periodically around Zimbabwe and in neighbouring countries, an outbreak of what appears to be a black sooty mould infection of baobabs is reported. As far as I know it hasn't deteriorated yet to the extent that whole populations are being wiped out, but rather that a few individual trees are noticed with ugly, dark, black –infected areas on their stems. They may or may not die as a result. Recently we visited a home in Rolf Valley where a large baobab had been infected. The symptoms were distinct and started from what appeared to be fresh puncture holes in the bark which were yellowy-orange and seemed to be exuding gum. These then turned black and soot-like. They were almost exclusively on the north-facing aspect of the stem. We shall watch the tree with interest and see if the disease develops any further. For the owners, should the tree die, it will be a huge tragedy as it was brought in from the farming areas on the back of a 10 tonne truck, a fully grown (OK not quite) tree and transplanted

into the Harare suburban garden to celebrate thirty years of marriage. Let's hope the tree does outlive the life of the marriage and those of many generations to come as well. Should the tree die, all of us baobabophiles will be quaking in our boots, mine are only 500 metres away, but showing no sign yet!!!!

Annual Membership: Are due in January each year. Those of you who haven't paid yet, it is time to reform and be good!!!! Remember for your \$20 per year, you get a monthly Newsletter, free issues of Ingens as they are printed and you get invited to at least 11 choice venues each year. Big-time Bargain Bonanza! This year there will also be the Grand Rare Plant Exhibition in October.

Membership is \$20 per person/couple per year. Children \$5 per year. Foreign membership US\$40 per year. Make payment to a committee member, **CABS Platinum: Aloe, Cactus and Succulent Society**
Acc #: 1002616336 Reference: kindly include your Surname as the deposit reference or through EcoCash: 0774 257 791 (Doreen Richards) Note this is a new number.



Guardians of the Mountains

For an adventure recently we went for the game count in Gona re Zhou and then exited Zimbabwe at Sango/Chicualacuala, drove down the power lines from Cabora Bassa in Mozambique, crossed the very empty Limpopo on sandy tracks and then entered South Africa at Pafuri. The road then wends its way through the heart of northern Kruger Park and we exited at Phalaborwa Gate, slept in Hoedspruit before driving all the way back to Zimbabwe on the hell run through Beitbridge. It truly was an adventure. Only back in South Africa on the road to Louis Trichard did we see the legions of *Aloe marlothii* photographed above. Like Zulu warriors they guard the approaches to the mountain passes in these parts. Once over the border it was getting late so we checked into a much neglected Lion and Elephant at Buby River and enjoyed the rays of the setting sun on the red flowers of the

scrambling fire-bush combretums which grow along the river banks. A quiet moment indeed.



However although we saw endless game, for free, in Kruger, it left me very disturbed. Waterholes are being discontinued, the vast majority of the bushveld is clearly degraded and there is no doubt that the animals are very stressed. Shade is at a premium, only a few big trees remain and when they are gone, what will the animals do? See right.





Meanwhile once home we made another pilgrimage to Hwedza Mountain, only about 2 hours drive from Harare. One of the great pleasures of this journey is the compulsory stop at Surrey Butchery to buy one of their delicious steak and onion pies. Thus fortified, no mountain is invincible. The mountain and its views did not disappoint and we had a very pleasant hike through the wonderful miombo woodlands that still clad this massif thankfully. There are signs of tree extraction for firewood, but not too serious. When I first visited some years ago I saw a population of *Aloe excelsa* on the same peak, but this time we missed it, so could not follow up on the twin-stemmed plant I photographed then.

However *Scadoxus* was out in all its glory, even though the conditions were boilingly hot and dry and no sign of any early rain yet. See photograph above. Around the Musasa trees where we rested and recuperated, having lunch, there was a beautiful little succulent plant which was identified for me by Bart Wursten of Flora of Tropical Africa on Facebook as *Delosperma mahonii*. A little was liberated, for scientific reasons, because I am sure it will make an excellent hanging basket specimen. So watch this space as the months progress!

On the right we see the beautiful structure and form of *Brachystegia tamarindoides*, and for sure if I was 40 years younger and just starting my tree planting career, I would have planted many more of these trees.



Healthy Habits 5.

By Lizzie Small

Hi Everyone,

Another month has whizzed by as we rapidly approach our Spring Rare Plant Show and Rare Plant Sale. I hope everyone is getting all those healthy plants ready for November. Meanwhile we continue on our journey through nutrition basics. Once we have covered these (already half way through the dull stuff!!) then we will be translating them into actual food, meals, interesting recipes etc. This month, a subject that we hear about all the time on our televisions as the advertisers try to persuade us to rush out and buy their products. Let's look about antioxidants and probiotics.

Antioxidants

There is a group of vitamins, minerals and enzymes called antioxidants that help protect the body from the formation of free radicals. Free radicals can damage cells, impairing the immune system leading to infections and degenerative diseases such as heart disease and cancer. Excess free radicals can alter the way cells code genetic material and this is thought to be part of their role in cancer.

Some free radicals occur normally from biochemical processes but we also make them as a result of pollution, eg. exposure to radiation, tobacco smoke and motor exhaust fumes. Diet can also contribute, a diet high in fats can increase free radicals and cooking fats at high temperatures, eg frying in oil, especially old oil, can produce large numbers.

However not all free radicals are harmful, those produced by the immune system help destroy viruses and bacteria. Others are involved in the production of hormones but if there is excess, damage to the cells and tissues can result. They are normally kept in check by free radical scavengers that occur naturally in the body. These scavengers neutralise free radicals and are helped by some nutrients including Vitamins A, C and E and Selenium. By destroying free radicals, antioxidants help to detoxify and protect the body.

Probiotics

Probiotics are defined as micro organisms (bacteria) that are similar to the beneficial ones in the human gut, the 'friendly' or 'good' bacteria.

Probiotics come in various forms, they can be pharmaceutical preparations and are also found in some foods. Examples of foods with probiotics in them are yoghurt, fermented milk, juices and other foods and yeast. It has been found that breast-fed babies have much better protection from their immune systems because of the 'friendly' bacteria in their guts, proving that probiotics are beneficial to general health.

Probiotics are not new. In ancient times food was often preserved by fermentation, hence naturally in the diet. However the amount we spend on probiotics nowadays has tripled in the last 20 years. There are several reasons why. Our environment and each one of us are full of bacteria – an average person has 2-3Kgs of bacteria living quite happily on our skin, in the gut and other orifices. (1Kg in your gut alone!). We have realised that the friendly ones are essential to our immune systems, preventing disease and for an efficient digestive and absorption system. However everyone's mix of bacteria is different and interactions can be crucial to that person's health. This fine balancing act can be thrown out in two ways:-

By antibiotics - they kill friendly bacteria in the gut as well as the unfriendly. Some people use probiotics to offset the side effects of taking antibiotics and similarly, some use them to ease the symptoms of milk intolerance or allergy which can cause colic, bloating and diarrhoea.

'Unfriendly' micro-organisms such as disease-causing bacteria, yeasts, fungi and parasites can also upset the balance. Researchers are exploring whether probiotics could halt these unfriendly agents and/or suppress their growth and activity.

Taking probiotics – If there are side effects they are usually mild. If you wish to try them you should first tell your Doctor and monitor the situation as effects are different in everyone. Of course if you notice side effects STOP until you know what is going on.

In conclusion:

As I have mentioned many times before, nutrients from food are better absorbed than pharmaceuticals. Although there is a wide range of 'over the counter' products available they are expensive and when you can get them from fresh food, why pay for the fancy package. Again the wider the variety of foods one consumes the better the nutrition.



Again in search of adventure we joined the Nyanga game count at the end of September and for the first time in four years had a wonderful two nights on the high plateau just below the peak. The rain mercifully held off and we were able to ramble around the grassy hanging valleys of the Gairezi and Nama Rivers, see vast distances with the naked eye and binoculars and saw a surprising amount of game, in particular antelope with kudu predominant, klip-springer (which we expected) duiker and bushbuck. The kudu population goes against all bush-lore logic because they are renowned for being browsers and hiding in the bush thickets of lower altitudes. On Nyangani Mountain they wander around the grassy slopes, sleep openly during the day, seeking what little shade there is and were plainly active during the early morning when we spotted most of them grazing happily.

On the left you see the quite stunning flowers of a posy of *Helichrysum*, the everlasting plant. One of our party, Bruce Cowley noticed that the baboons that frequent the mountain were plucking the flowers, stripping off the hairy

grey outside layer of bark and munching the crisp green stems within. Delicious as we all subsequently found out later. And perhaps life-saving if you disappear in one of those time-warps that plague the mountain and you are wandering aimlessly in another dimension and feeling hungry. In the photo below right was another succulent-type plant, which I haven't had identified yet, but it is clearly edible to something and one day we will perhaps give it to someone expendable to see if it is also edible to us bipeds.

Below left we see one of many colonies of *Aloe arborescens* that occur on the rocky outcrops on the upper plateau of the mountain, but you have to come much earlier in the year to catch them in flower. They are frequently found in and around ancient fortifications built by generations of past Zimbabweans but this may be chance and an indicator of fire avoidance and not that they were gardeners!!!



**So Everyone,
Hope you enjoy our little Newsletter as much as I do writing it. In these trying times when our stomachs are on fire with emptiness, the ambient temperatures are rocketing up and global warming is blistering our faces, just look what the rampant fires in Mozambique and Zimbabwe are doing to our sunsets! Not clouds but sooty layers of dust, smoke and haze!!!! See you on Sunday at The Spring Show and at the Rare Plant Sale on the 9th or 10th November, - your choice! Cheers Mafungi**

