



ORTHOLOPHA

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

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Issue 19-1 January 2019

Hi Everyone,

Apologies for the late issuance of this Newsletter. I have been involved in a very small way in the relief efforts at Chimanimani for the past ten days and only returned late on Thursday evening. It looks like things will get back to some sort of normality as the road down from Skyline Junction was close to reconnecting when we left.

Anyway this weekend is our AGM and we look forward to a good turnout at the meeting at the Balneaves' house in Ballantyne Park. AGM's in the Aloe Society are usually a quick affair and lets hope Sunday is no exception. Rob Jarvis will be standing down as Chairman, although he is prepared to continue to be responsible for publications and Hans Wolbert, the Vice-Chairman, has agreed to take over. Ros Houghton is moving to Bulawayo and the new committee will be looking for a venue coordinator. Otherwise all other members are prepared to continue serving.

Cheers, Mafungi.

Your Committee

Chairman - Rob Jarvis
0783 383214

Vice-chairman – Hans Wolbert
0772 653110

Committee members:

Doreen Richards - 0772 255784
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

Monthly Meeting and AGM Sunday March 31st 2019

This month's **Meeting** is being held at the house of The Balneaves, at 9 Troon Lane, Ballantyne Park. Directions turn off Borrowdale road at the school Remember to bring a plate of eats to share, a plant or something similar for the raffle.

The time: 10 for 10.30am start. Gate will open from 9.45 am.

Directions: Coming from Borrowdale Road turn into Whitwell at the junior school, proceed down the road which winds and becomes Rolf Avenue. Turn left into Blair, turn left off Blair into Staley just after the park and then first right into Troon. Look out for the Society's flag to indicate No.9.

If coming from the other direction you obviously turn right into Blair.

Interesting 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 March will be announced at the monthly meeting on the Sunday April 2019.

February's winner was Philippa Marrett who correctly identified *Albizia tanganyicensis*.



You can win a box of chocolates!!!

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

The plant above is the March entry.

What is it? A clue, it is an aloe and not quite flowering yet..

Photograph taken by Mafungi

Much as people have been traumatised by the events of Cyclone Idai, one hopes that some scientific work will also take place to gather data on how stream valleys and mudslides recover from this catastrophe.

For instance in this massive sea of rock and mud, swept clean of trees, grass and crops and left as a jumble of rocks and detritus, what will be the first plants to establish a foothold? Which trees and shrubs will be the pioneers? At the bottom end of the Rusitu and Haroni Valleys, are the endemic aloes still surviving in pockets or have they been swept away?

There is no doubt that people who have lost everything, will need counselling and guidance to get over the trauma generated by such a violent storm. But there will also be advice to pass on to residents, how to make their homes less prone to destruction, which plants may protect them, what will grow after the mud has settled? It struck us that on the hillsides around, thatched traditional huts withstood the storm better than modern brick and corrugated-iron dwellings?



Annual Membership: Are due in January each year. Those of you who haven't paid yet, the radar is starting to beep and errant members will be struck off soon! In this day and age it is very easy to become digitally dead, Don't risk it! 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!

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.



We spent the last ten days helping the 4x4 Club with deploying doctors, paramedics, medicines, food-stuffs, pots and blankets to the disaster zones created by the violence of Cyclone Idai. If, as many people believe, these super storms are going to be an increasing part of our lives due to the cumulative effects of global warming, then there are some lessons to take to heart. The real damage in Chimanimani was done by the terrible effect of torrential rain over a very short space of time. The soil became super-saturated, with anything up to 700 mm of rain in 24 hours. Mud and rock slides were triggered and these avalanches came rushing down slopes taking all before them. However in one slide in the valley on the opposite side of Nyandungu Township we saw this copse of *Acacia abyssinica* which survived the onslaught. Perhaps if there had been more trees higher up the slope, they might have held the mud. On almost all other mud-slides, like the picture bottom left, which are the ones that swept through Heaven Lodge in the Village, there is a complete removal of trees and plants. If I lived in the Eastern Highlands, I would plant numerous copses of these trees, above and around my house to deflect the worst of future mudslides.





A reminder that old is not always bad. Luckily some old hands in Chimanimani knew the route of the old road that led to the then Melsetter Village. Without this route being opened up for 4x4 vehicles Chimanimani Village would have remained cut off completely, by road, for 2 weeks. However the difference between wet conditions, shown above and just a few hours sunshine were immense. The journey up shown above took five hours, the journey down a few hours later, laden with supplies from the Econet Sponsored tent warehousing at Silverstreams took only 1 hour 30 minutes. The next morning we shot out and away from the village in 45 minutes after 24 hours of dry weather. Power and water supplies have been completely disrupted.

Perhaps one of the greatest things from the crisis has been the chance to meet with new people and share ideas. The group above were from the Base Church on Enterprise Road and luckily one of their members was dissuaded from bringing his caravan. For sure he would not have brought it back! The eternal optimism of Zimbabweans was something to behold and the moment the road opened, owners of Honda fits and the like started plying the route. A touch of rain and they would sludge to a stop. Local residents in Mutare, Chipinge and Chimanimani opened up their homes and resources to the many volunteers that rushed to help.

We (about 12 of us) were privileged to stay at a huge farmhouse just outside Chipinge that had quite a good collection of cycads around the house. See picture right. Thank you the Kotze's, however botanising was not high on our agenda.

Perhaps the most distressing thing we learnt was that virtually all government hospitals in Zimbabwe are without permanent running water. Add a humanitarian crisis of the magnitude generated by Cyclone Idai and you have a recipe for water-borne diseases to proliferate. Luckily that hasn't happened yet.

I have no health advice for you this month, except Stay High and Dry! Keep your innards wet and your outers dry. Trade pessimism for optimism and your future will be bright. Realists often get stuck in the mud, whereas we should all be aiming for the stars.

Stay strong and we look forward to seeing you at the AGM.

Cheers, Mafungi.



