



ORTHOLOPHA

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

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Hi Everyone,

This strange season is fast drawing to a close and you should all be polishing up your plants for the big sale at the end of May. New vendors are always welcome and old hands will still be plying their trade. If you haven't already booked your space, get hold of our new Chairman Hans Wolbert, phone number on the right and check in. Sellers should bring their own wheelbarrows and at least one gardener (spouse or pliant teenager) to help with the plant movement to cars to supplement what we do as a Society.

I am quite annoyed at this rainy season because I seem to have missed it somehow. Apparently last week we had two good dollops of rain but by the time we returned from the Easter Holidays it was all over. It seems that it is going to be a long hard haul to next November, when hopefully El Nino will have dissipated and normal seasons prevail. We look forward to seeing you on Sunday!

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

Monthly Meeting Sunday April 28th 2019

This month's **Meeting** is being held at the house of Mieka and Ant Manning at 12a Gilmour Drive Hogarty Hill. Go down Borrowdale Road until just before Hatcliffe, turn right into William Powlett go up a long way to T, turn left on the Y, go down through dip and as you cross the rise, turn left into Tudor which becomes Gilmour, go down to very end gate on left. Otherwise you can go down Crowhill Road, turn left into Hogarty go up steep side, see Scripps on right which then hits Gilmour and turn right and go right to end. Mieka's phone number in case of difficulty is 0772265775. Remember to bring a plate of eats to share, a plant or something similar for the raffle. The meetings will have a technical discussion and this month Hans Wolbert will be discussing the raising and care of Echevarias.

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

Directions: It will be highlighted with the Society's flag.

Interesting Plant: April

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 was June Goss of Mutare. She will get her prize by special delivery.



You can win a box of chocolates!!!

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

The plant above is the April entry.

What is it? A clue, it is not an aloe, and maybe not even a succulent.



Your Committee has agreed that we should encourage members to bring problems and success with our plants to the attention of all and initially this will be done by using our Facebook Page as a launching post.

On this position in the Newsletter we will highlight key topical issues that have been aired in the previous month so that all members get to see what pests and diseases may be relevant, what control methods have worked and anything else of a technical nature that may be of interest.

Please feel free to submit whatever problems or answers you may have so others can share in the wisdom. To start it off here is a way to make good use of palms to bring balance into your lives.

Annual Membership: Are due in January each year. Those of you who haven't paid yet, the alarm bells are ringing 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.



The Lala palms of Humani Ranch in the southeast Lowveld of Zimbabwe form a perfect backdrop to this delightful pan near the Save River on the eastern edge of the ranch. Our Society, as you know, claims palms as one of the groups of plants that we treasure and you will probably not find a healthier population of these palms anywhere in Africa. There are vast stands of healthy adult trees, plenty of young copses growing vigorously and getting ready to launch their mainstems skywards, and with the late rains associated with Cyclone Idai, there are many many recently germinated young saplings. A healthy future is guaranteed.

In the pans and dams there are glowing populations of lilies like the two seen below. Our group spent every spare minute sitting by the side of a pan just a few hundred metres from our camp and watched the action. Surprisingly the white flowers on the left open in the mornings and the lilac ones on the left, open as the sun gets higher and the afternoon shadows creep in. A biological clock of sorts and if your Alz-



heimers is very bad you can tell the time of day just by flower colour! Amazing hey! Lilies are sort of succulents, even though they grow in water. They have a tuberous root system and can survive long dry periods and grow when things are good. The leaves are fleshy too.





Of course a visit to the Lowveld is not complete without checking the largest succulents of them all. *Adansonia digitata* thrives on the deep alluvial soils of the Save Valley and if they receive a modicum of protection from the attention of rapacious elephant, they grow to gargantuan proportions. The largest in Zimbabwe occurs on an adjacent ranch, Makore and although we did not see it on this trip, the ones we did visit were absolute cathedrals of the Tree World. This one on the left is completely hollow inside but can only be entered if the midriff is of manageable proportions.

Of course baboons and other fauna just love baobabs for their nightly roost and their home-training skills leave a lot to be desired so crawling through a narrow entrance can result in getting covered with baboon poop. Be gentle, always let others go in first to clear the way.

The baobab below is the reputedly the oldest baobab on the planet, measured by a Polish President of the World Baobab Society. It was probably apt that we visited these giants on the Easter weekend, where the death of Jesus Christ is celebrated, because that date could quite easily be when this baobab germinated and started growing to this huge size. With all the problems going on in the World between fanatical adherents to the Great Religions, it perhaps wouldn't do any harm for the zealots to lie under the shade of such trees and reflect upon their individual insignificance in the overall scheme of things, before they perpetrate any more atrocities on people or places of worship.

This baobab is not far off the main road down through the ranch to Mkwesine so it is easily reachable and definitely a simple bucket-list addition for those of you nearing the end of your time on this Fair Earth. In actual fact they say that the tree is a fusion of five baobabs over time and in recent times, say a hundred or so years ago, the baobab in front died off and left the interior exposed. Whatever the case it is a moving experience to see such grandeur.



On the underside of the huge branches were growing these indigenous orchids. Not in flower, so I haven't had confirmation of the species, but such orchids are definitely in line for the criteria of xerophytes, because for a large part of the year they are on exposed, dry branches with no access to water at all.





Those of you who frequent the great game parks of Zimbabwe, Hwange, Mana Pools and Gona-re Zhou and others, will undoubtedly have seen the damage wreaked by elephants mainly, but also other game on the baobabs of the eco-system. The damaged baobab above left seen at a watering point on the western side of Humani is one of the rare specimens we saw with significant damage. I guess it is one of the dangers of setting up a watering point where nature had none and amiable elephant like the big bull above right who spent an hour or more feeding around the waterpoint probably is one of the biggest contributors to this damage.

However tempting although it may be to jump in a car and go down to see these botanical treasures of the Lowveld, please on no account do it without suitable permission and escort. We had a fascinating talk from a group involved in preventing rhino and other poaching and the enthusiasm and professionalism that they clearly had for their task would make Aloe Society members easy meat if mistaken for poachers. The ranches down there have a mix of accommodation and camp options and it is very affordable.

In our youth my Old Man used to take us hunting buffalo on the eastern side of the Save River directly opposite Humani and the other ranches. There is no sight more likely to get the adrenaline pumping than chancing upon a herd of buffalo, when you are ambling aimlessly around the bush, unarmed and clueless. The only advice I can give you is just climb a tree, because nothing else will save you if the buffalo decide to take some points back from the human race. It would be handy if the tree looked a little like this Goblin Baobab below, but unfortunately fate decrees that the nearest tree when you are in a sorry predicament is usually a very thorny, unforgiving wait-a-bit acacia.

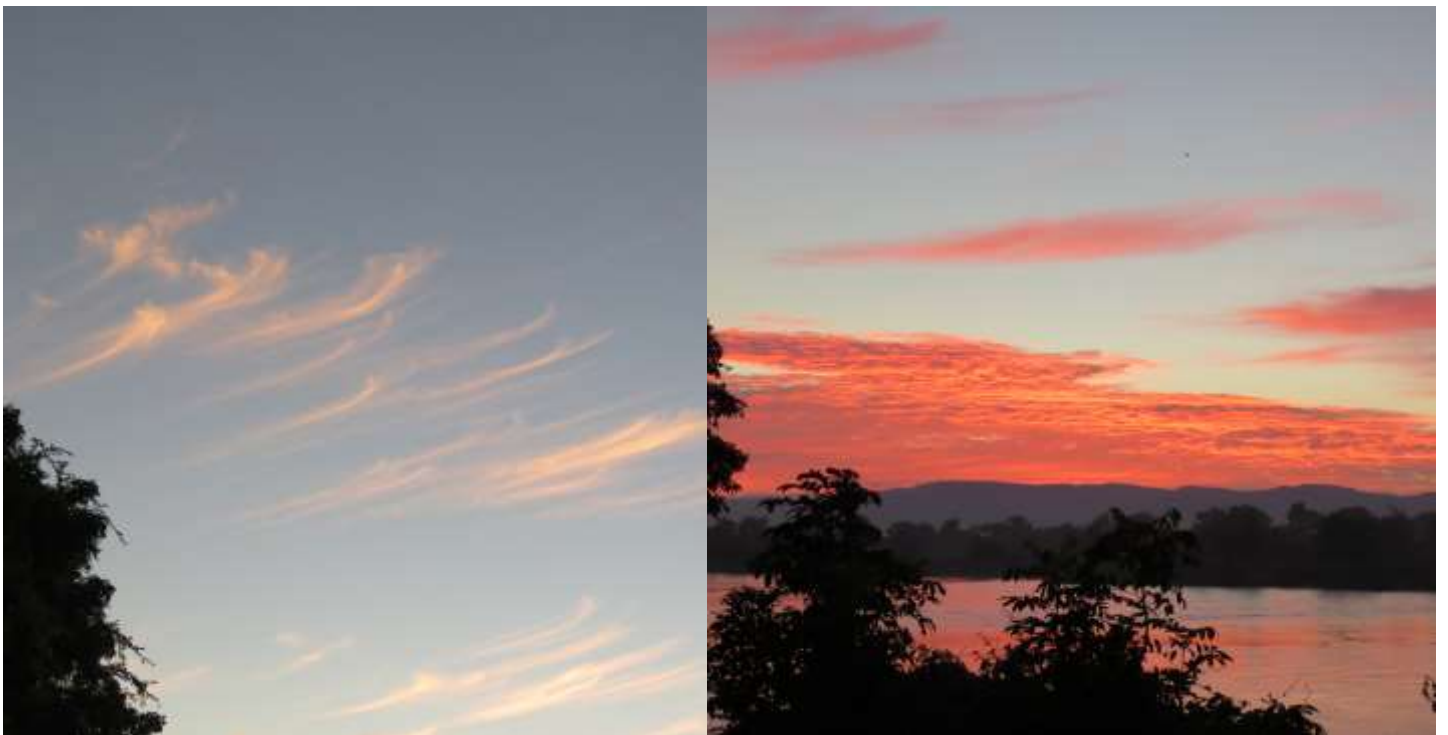
I guarantee you will still climb it, but your body will be shredded anyway. So do the honourable thing and help pay for this wonderful conservation area. Take an armed guide.





Health Column

This month it is sheer therapeutism! Just gaze at these photographs of morning scenes on the banks of the Save River and do yourselves a favour and get out to similar spots, or the same one, wake early, sleep late, drink everything but water sparingly and rest your souls. Talk to your Family and Friends!



So there you go Folks the sun will soon rise on yet another month and we look forward to taking our Society to greater things in the months and years ahead.

Keep strong, don't worry too much about the elusive rtgs dollar, it was illusory all along. Maybe start growing vegetables outside the kitchen door and be prepared to convert to vegetarianism.

Cheers Mafungi