



ORTHOLOPHA

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

PO Box CY300, Causeway

aloesocietyzim@gmail.com

www.aloesocietyzim.com & www.facebook.com/ACSSZ

Issue 19-5 May 2019

Hi Everyone,

Winter is all but over, we just have to see out the first half of August and spring will be here! Exciting times. The Society is putting together a Succulent Show where we will be asking members to start preparing plants for exhibition at a suitable venue. We really would like each and every one of you to bring a favourite plant and compete in one of the categories that are being set up. It will be fun and hopefully we shall get ideas from our fellow members on what plants really work in a display environment and how best to show off their attributes to advantage. This is an opportunity to bring youngsters into the fold and you can encourage your kids and grandkids to take part and engender a lifelong interest in the plant kingdom. Details will follow!
Cheers, Mafungi.

Your Committee

Chairman – Hans Wolbert
- 0772 653110

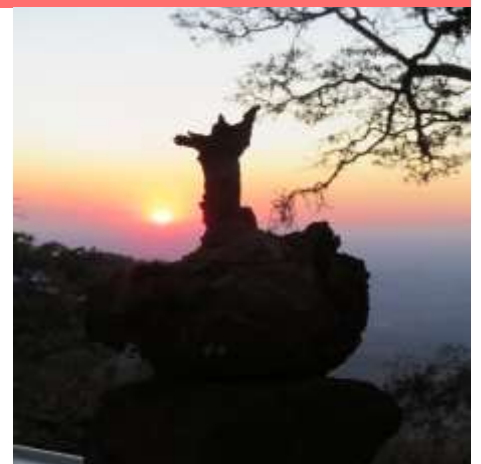
Committee members:

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 July 28th 2019

The meeting this month is at the home of Madu and Eric Morris, at 66 Princess Drive, in Highlands. Turn second left off Glenara Avenue after the Glenroy shopping centre, if coming from the Samora Machel side, onto Princess Drive and proceed down the road until you see the Society's banner on the left. If coming from Enterprise Road, turn onto Glenara and then second right into Princess. There will be a talk on cycads by Malcolm Thackray. Meeting is at 10.00 for a 10.30am start. Bring a plate of snacks to share, a hat for bald pates, your chair and a prize for the raffle.

There are many ways to inculcate interest in the natural world around us. And there is no doubt that there is going to be increasing pressure upon all of us to get our youngsters interested in the great wide outdoors and not be intensely pre-occupied with the hidden dangers of their smartphones. Who knows what the trigger will be, it might be writing, photography, love of wood and trees, the allure of succulents or maybe just a wild imagination? Like the wood-rose I found on the right which is a deformed gall from a musasa tree that has now been expelled from the main body of the tree trunk. I thought it looked a little like the Statue of Christ on the Cross, from the mountain in Rio de Janeiro, especially when photographed against the setting sun. You too can do this!



Interesting Plant: July

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.

I am afraid that last month's flowering plant has not been correctly identified, so no winner yet at the time of writing.



You can win a box of chocolates!!!

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

The plant above is the July entry.

What is it?

Photograph taken by Mafungi



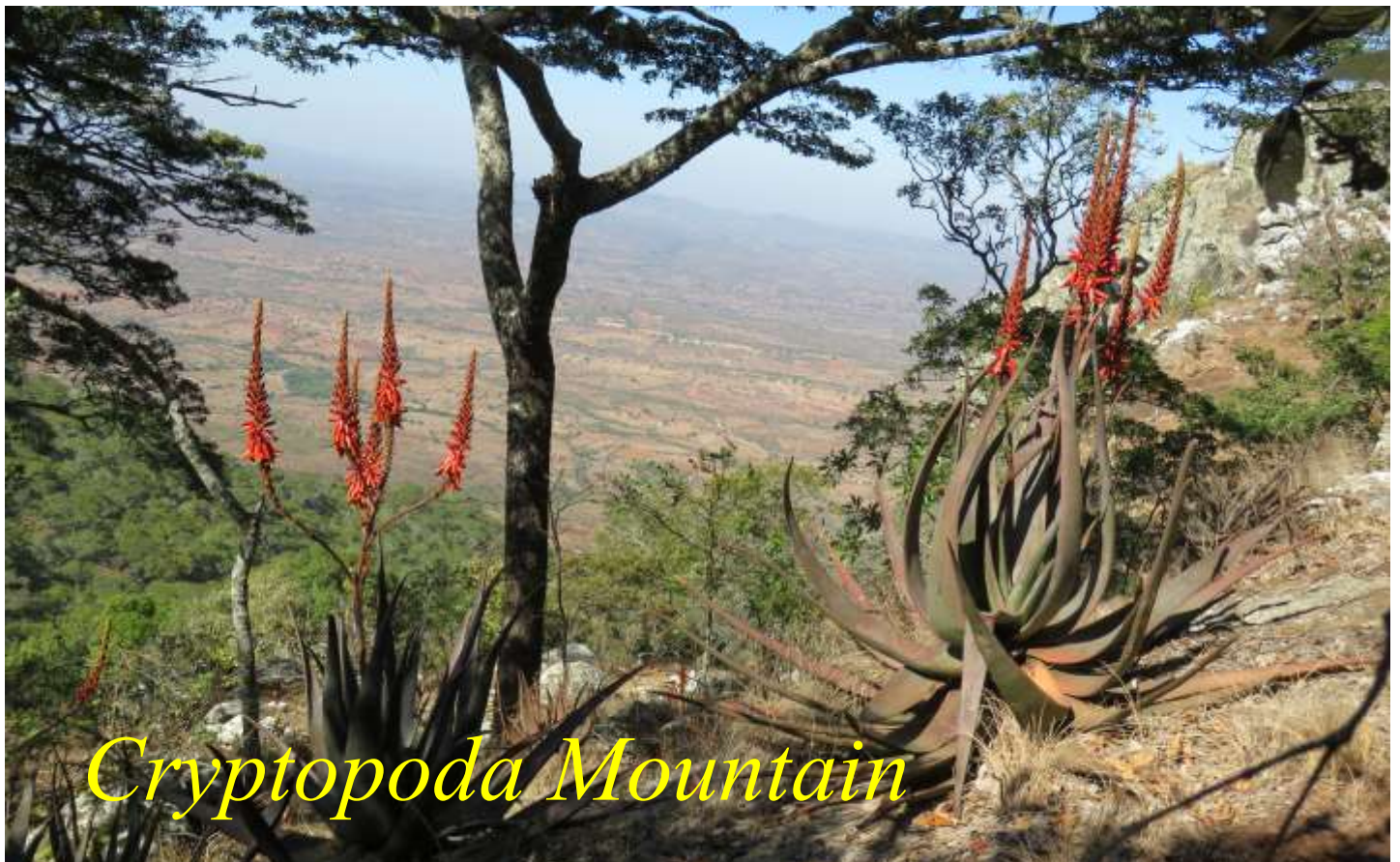
Eyes and ears should always be open and when visiting a recent Design Expo in the leafy Northern suburbs of Harare we chanced upon this combination of aloes and cacti in the garden area leading into the displays. Drama, colour, architecture and even complimentary shade are all there in a single photograph. When planning your gardens always allow for maximum expansion vertically and width-wise for any trees that you plant or that are already there. So many gardens start off as one theme and end up completely different because the trees have taken over and shade becomes the dominant feature of the space. I know that we

have just had to be ruthless in our front yard because we have always been so proud of our north-facing aspect for winter sun and woke up one day this winter to find that it had almost been completely obliterated by the shade of too many trees! We were huddling in a small patch of sunlight in our back lawn when we realised what we had lost. Crash, down they came! And now we have options throughout the day to bask in the warm winter sun. Like lizards, sunning and perhaps no longer stunning.

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.



Cryptopoda Mountain

Recently we went to a mountain almost due north of Mount Darwin and on through Dotito. The range hangs above the Zambezi Valley and looks down over former floodplains of the Zambezi River as it prepared to dive down through the terrible gorges of Cabora Bassa. Literally translated it was the end of work, because teams engaged to row, pummel and push boats up the Zambezi could reach the rapids that emerged from the mountains that now encircle the neck that contains Cabora Bassa Dam. Once there, the boats had to be abandoned and inland routes pioneered to get to the riches of Monomatapa. To this day these riches remain an elusive dream, as we all well know. Enjoyed only by an elite few.

We had hoped that this range which is termed Mvhuradonha, might contain some remnant colonies of *Aloe ortholopha* which is not only our flagship aloe, but also is renowned for only occurring on the serpentine soils of the Mvhuradonha north of Centenary and northeast of Guruve. However this adjunct range which stretches for more than 20 kilometres to the east of Muzarabani is made up of rock of a different composition altogether to the heavy metal-laden soils of the main Mvhuradonha and there was absolutely no sign of any aloes other than *A. cryptopoda*, which occurred in frequent colonies wherever rock and aspect ensured that fire did not disrupt the growth of this aloe. There was the odd specimen of *Euphorbia* as well, see right.





In amongst the infrequent rocky outcrops there were tiny populations of *Sanseveria* spp. We looked high and low, but could not find any other species of aloe. We were expecting groups of *A. ortholopha*, *A. chabaudii* and perhaps some other species that might occur on this range that rises up from the valley floor to the altitude of Harare at close to 1 500m amsl. But *Aloe cryptopoda* was there in profusion, wherever the effect of fire was broken by rocky outcrops or large shaded areas under the cathedral musasa and munondo trees. So we named the mountain Cryptopoda Mountain. *Cryptopoda* as you all know from the Latin you so studiously studied at school means “*hidden-foot*” and indeed the reason for the proliferation of this species of aloe to the almost complete exclusion of every

other species just did not make logical sense. Especially when one considers that *A. chabaudii* occurs over the length and breadth of Zimbabwe and at this time of year should be flowering profusely, so there is little chance of missing any naturally flowering outcrops. We saw none. And in fact the only other aloe we found was the lone plant pictured below right which showed absolutely no signs of flowering and was growing in miombo woodland on the topmost ridge of the mountain in deep shade. It may be *Aloe christianii*, but on the other hand it may not. It needs to be seen when flowering. Of course in the same area we spotted the faeces of a large carnivorous feline and loitering unnecessarily in the vicinity was considered imprudent. Especially as a close inspection of the large cat’s scat, reveals that it likes to lick the hairs off its prey before devouring it completely. When your own body corporate is hirsute in the extreme one tends to exercise caution when there is a risk of encountering a big, hungry carnivorous cat that just loves to lick hairy beasts right down to the bone.

The cat’s sole sign of existence, laid firmly on the track we were following, is shown below.





Perhaps some of the most heart-warming things to see on this mountain are the large areas where dominant, cathedral-like brachystegia and munondo woodland occur. Fortunately the communal leadership of the area have decided that the woodlands of the mountain range should be preserved for eternity. There is a rough and ready all-weather road up the mountain to service the three telecommunications towers at the highest point, giving year-round access. Thankfully there is almost no evidence of rampant tree-cutting that is so prevalent in other areas of the country where the cultivation of tobacco, requiring many kilojoules of energy to cure, is grown. The musasa tree pictured above had one of the largest galls we have ever seen and quite how these cankerous galls form, and why they don't completely debilitate the tree is a mystery.

There was a little game to be seen on the mountain, and on our last morning an early start enabled us to see the sun rising through the various layers of smoke-laden air that threaten to entrap the sun forever. As far as we could determine the smoke comes from Mozambique or further afield, because at this time, the veld fires have not yet taken hold in Zimbabwe.



The Health Column

Healthy Habits 2.

Burrrr!!

I hope everyone is coping with this cold winter and the challenges of the rather intermittent supply of power.

This month we are discussing what is meant by 'A balanced diet'. In order to explain I have to give you some basic nutrition facts which most of us are familiar with, but usually only superficially. This is an extensive subject, in constant flux as nutrition and medical research move forward. The information one finds in magazines, on the internet and via hearsay can be very confusing. My aim is to clarify this muddled picture and give some guidelines which are easy to follow for us all.

Due to the amount of information I wish to impart I will have to break the subject down into parts in order not to overwhelm you and to make it more 'digestible'!!

The nutrients required by most plants and animals can be divided into two main groups, macronutrients and micronutrients. As the names imply the macronutrients are the bigger elements in our diets and conversely the micronutrients are smaller substances but also very important to our well-being. So here we will go into the macronutrients. Then next month we can address the micronutrients.

So, are you sitting comfortably? Then let us begin.

The macronutrients include proteins, carbohydrates and fats; proteins for growth and repair, carbohydrates and fats for energy, both immediate and in storage. Needless to say that is a gross simplification and to make it clearer I have to delve deeper into each in turn.

Proteins can be animal or vegetable in origin i.e. meat, fish, eggs, dairy products from animal sources and pulses, grains, and plants giving us protein from vegetable sources. All proteins are made up of smaller units called amino acids, some of which we can make ourselves from the digestive process and some which we have to consume in our food. All animal sources have the entire range in them but most of the vegetable sources are incomplete. This is the reason why people following a vegetarian diet have to have a good mixture of proteins, ideally at each meal ie beans with sadza or rice is a more complete set of amino acids than either one on its own. However both choices of proteins are healthy for humans.

Of course these foods are not 100% protein. Think of a cut of meat it has protein in the form of the muscle, but also fat and a little fibre in the gristle. Likewise beans have protein, carbohydrate and a lot of fibre. However it is not too difficult to eat sufficient for the body's needs and in most societies we actually consume more than we really need.

The carbohydrates include all starches and sugars. There is no carbohydrate found in protein foods or in fats so they are a stand alone nutrient. There is a lot of confusion as to the value of carbohydrates in our diets but I hope to clarify that later. All carbohydrates are broken down to glucose during digestion and then can be used immediately for energy or stored in our muscles and liver for use later.

As I said above, fats are also used for energy. We all know about the storage of fats (look down at your tummy !!) but if necessary they can be used for immediate energy if carbohydrate is not available, called ketosis. Again they can be found in animal sources like fat on meat or in dairy products and from vegetable sources like vegetable oils.

So folks that is a very brief overview of the macronutrients. Next month I shall cover the micronutrients which include minerals and vitamins. They are found in the macronutrients, not in isolation and all are essential to our well-being, although in very small quantities. In the meantime keep warm, healthy and positive. Speak next month.

Liz

Unfortunately we shall miss this month's meet but I can assure you that the Morris garden on Princess Drive in Highlands is well worth seeing. There is something endlessly calming about sitting in the shade of well-grown palms, each perfectly sited.

Cheers Mafungi