



# ORTHOLOPHA

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

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Issue 20-2 February 2020

Hi Everyone,

What a rainy season this has been! From desperately dry to short, sharp bursts of plenty. Of course in this part of Africa we know only too well if we don't get our annual dose of life-giving rain, then the months ahead will be bleak, awaiting the next season. So even late rains will be more than welcome and I hope you don't mind me including a few photos of the fungi that spring up all over the place when the rains are here, the humidity and temperatures are up and there is some organic matter either in the soil or on the surface for these very flighty plants to show their spectacular beauty. On the right we see one of the few palm species to be found in this country, the Lala palm, showing every sign of good health, with the tree now in its vertical growth phase, having set the foundations up with a wide base, the plant is heading for the Heavens! The lesson for us all in these trying times is that every plant, micro-flora and -fauna have their place in the fragile eco-systems we are part of and each one of us must do our bit to let them inter-act and perform their specific and inter-linked roles. The green lawn of yester-year is all but dead and buried! 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
Lorraine Regadas	- 0772 416024

### Monthly Meeting

Look out for Society banners. Meeting will be at home of Mrs May Surtees, 10 Hurtsview Road Ridgeview, Harare. Telephone 0712404160. Get onto Bishop Gaul Avenue from Samora Machel, from town, turn left at Showground onto Rekayi Tangwena, then first right onto Bishop Gaul. Second road on left is Hurtsview Road follow this round a long bend and you will see no 10 towards the end.

Sunday March 1st 2020, 10.00am for 10.30 start. Bring chair, snacks, hat.

## Interesting Plant: February

### What is this, on the right?

Send your knowledgeable and considered opinions to [bo.hoom52@yahoo.com](mailto: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 winner of last month's competition will be announced at the monthly meeting this Sunday.

**You can win a box of chocolates!!!**

**Send your entries to Mafungi at  
[bo.hoom52@yahoo.com](mailto:bo.hoom52@yahoo.com)**



**Photograph taken by Mafungi**

**Clue: You are bound to have a B..... If you have this aloe in your collection!**

On the top of Castle Rock in Umfurudzi, can be found this quite large baobab which makes a perfect foil for the view down to the Mazowe river humming along in the river bed below. The same view just over a century ago would have been very different as man had not yet come along with giant earth-moving equipment and ripped the guts out of the riverbed to extract that dangerously malleable metal called gold, that turns men and women, inexorably into greedy collectors.

In fact somewhere hereabouts, on this very river, in the 1890's Frederick Courtney Selous recorded shooting a Zambezi Shark in the crystal clear waters of the Mazowe. He would need the x-ray vision of Superman to do such a deed today. The shark too would need a modern GPS to find his way up, in the mud-clouded waters, from the sea. *A luta continua!*



**Annual Membership:** Are due in January each year. Now is the time to renew. Remember for your \$100 per year, you get a monthly Newsletter, free issues of Ingens as they are published and you get invited to at least 11 choice venues each year. **Big-time Bargain Bonanza!**

Membership is ZWL\$100 per person/couple per year. Children ZWL\$20 per year. Foreign membership US\$40 per year. Make payment to a committee member,

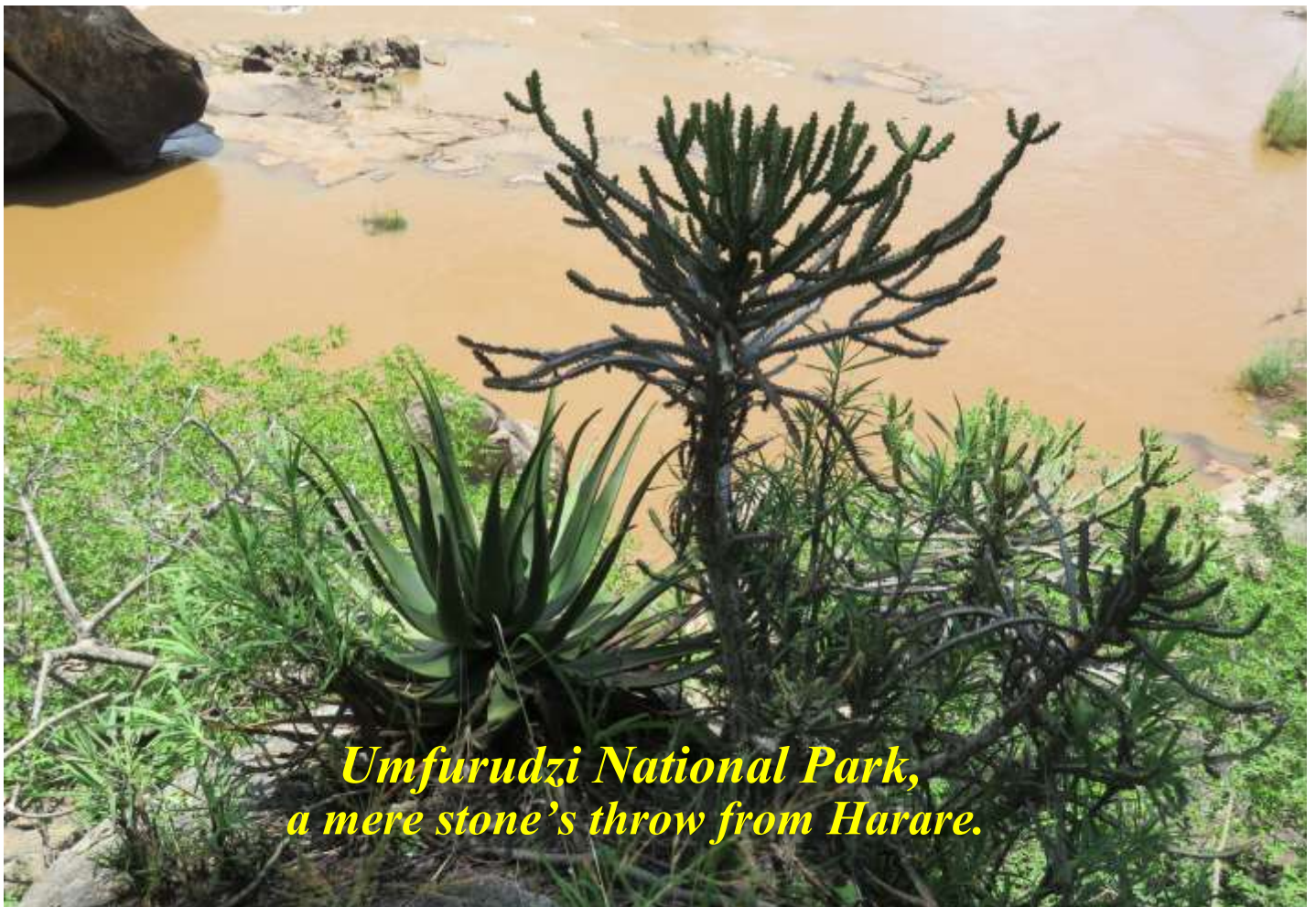
**CABS Platinum: Aloe, Cactus and Succulent Society Acc #: 1002616336**

**Reference:** kindly include your Surname as the deposit reference

or through

**EcoCash: 0774 257 791 (Doreen Richards) Note this is a new number.**





*Umfurudzi National Park,  
a mere stone's throw from Harare.*

We really are lucky in Zimbabwe, there are few towns and cities that are more than a couple of hours away from true wilderness areas. For those from the Capital, one of the easiest places to visit is the Umfurudzi National Park, only about 2 hours drive, largely on good tar roads, little traffic, through stunning countryside, and you are there. You head out on the Mutoko Road, turn left just after the toll gate and just go straight down the road, Enterprise, Shamva and then right at Madziwa mine. There are two destination options, one the Hippo Pools Resort on the Mazowe River and the second, a newer establishment the Umfurudzi Lodge on a large tributary of the Mazowe, the Umfurudzi river itself. The proprietors here have restocked this area with elephant, buffalo, giraffe and wildebeest and various other plains game. I deliberately delayed sending out this newsletter knowing we were going on an expedition to this area. Our plan to climb two large mountains,

Black Rock and Chizinga Mountains. In typical Zimbabwean fashion we climbed neither, made a plan and found an unnamed but perky little peak to climb instead and drove to Castle Rock on the Mazowe to see the unending views from the top of this prominent feature.

However on the un-named peak I was starting to get a little worried. Our Society is the Aloe, ..... Society of Zimbabwe and not one aloe was to be found anywhere near this peak. **Not one.** Fortunately there were some quite amazing lichen-covered rocks, superb trees and both destinations had quite outstanding views of the surrounding countryside and had been used by mankind for centuries as vantage points to watch out for marauding enemy armies. We faced no such threat.







However on Castle Rock we had a lot better luck with the aloes, although there was really only one species visible. The dark green buffalo-horned leaf shape of *Aloe cryptopoda* is a dead give-away even when not flowering. Growing happily in deep shade or full sunshine this aloe seems to thrive on this particular kopje and grows right down to the banks of the Mazowe river immediately below. However those of you who have tried to cultivate the aloe at home will well know, it is very difficult to do in an urban garden and keep healthy. On Castle Rock the plants grow to immense size and other than natural senescence of the older leaves, there is very little sign of the black-rot that frequently and almost inevitably, tears the plants asunder in the urban environment.

If you look at the two pictures below we did find one plant showing signs of the deadly rot and yet nearby there were plenty of plants in the very best of health, showing only signs of expected, old-leaf senescence.

We need to better understand the epidemiology of these sorts of diseases and get a better grip on what makes the natural populations healthy and disease-free, for the most part. Are they spread by very wet-weather and the fungal attack occurs on insect-damaged leaf tissue or is the trigger some deficiency of micro- or macro-nutrients making the plants susceptible to fungal spores germinating and getting a foothold?

The top of Castle Rock has an unbelievable view up a stretch of the Mazowe and after a sharp right-angled turn, a long way down to the north-east as the river heads towards its inevitable destination with the Zambezi in Mozambique. A great tragedy of the modern era is that the river almost never has clean water these days and rampant dredging of the alluvium in the river bed and on the outside curves of the river in the relentless search for gold, is the order of the day. So the Mazowe flows brick-red, with untold but inevitable damage to the flora and fauna along its banks and Zimbabwe's riches undoubtedly are accumulating in the Indian Ocean in the great tentacles of the Zambezi Delta reaching far out into the sea.



# Healthy Habits – No 8.

## *By Lizzie Small*

Hi All.

Hope everyone is having a Happy New Year as we face and overcome the trials of life here.

In this article , having given you the basics for a 'healthy diet' I thought we could break it down to a more practical level and go through a typical day in the life of.....

So let's start at the very beginning and talk about breakfasts. As the old saying goes breakfast is the most important meal of the day. After our 'overnight fast' unless you have been raiding the fridge for a midnight feast, for most of us it will be at least 9 hours since we last ate. The result of this is that our blood sugar levels first thing in the morning are the lowest of the day. This is not dangerous but it does mean that we are simply not as alert nor do we concentrate as well. There have been many studies done, mostly on college students and it has been proved that those who ate breakfast and consequently had a higher blood sugar were able to concentrate better and did better in simple tests. The situation was rectified when the group with the lower blood sugars had something to eat. Hence it shows that blood sugar levels affect mental alertness and ability to solve problems. This is especially important for school children, especially those who have a long walk to get to the school and who need energy to start the school day. There are now some schools in rural areas where they feed the children a breakfast when they arrive to overcome this problem.

Breakfast does not have to be a huge meal but it is important to choose the foods wisely to maximize their effectiveness for us mentally. Here again pops up the well worn phrase – a balanced meal. Of course this means a good balance of the basic macronutrients; protein, fats and carbohydrates. A common and balanced meal, quick to prepare and generally well liked is a good quality cereal / porridge with fruit and milk or yoghurt. One word of caution here the sugar coated cereals are choc a bloc with sugar and while it will elevate the blood sugar quickly it is not sustaining. A better choice would be a wholegrain cereal, muesli or a good old fashioned porridge made with mealie meal or oats. For those who want a bigger, more substantial meal eggs are an excellent form of protein and are quick to prepare. Paired with a slice of toast or bread that is also a sustaining breakfast.

Then there are those people who say they just can't face a meal early in the day. Fair enough but then make a smoothie and sip it on the way to work or school and included are some recipes. An alternative is to take a packed breakfast ready to eat when you have reached your destination. A bacon and egg sandwich or a peanut butter sandwich would fill the gap. If you add some fruit an even better more satisfying meal. Muffins are very tasty and paired with a yoghurt a good start too. If you are fortunate enough to have some facilities like a fridge or microwave at work then keep some suitable food therein ready for you when you get to work. Be prepared!!

So with food in your stomach and an alert brain you are ready to start the day and excel.

### **BREAKFAST SMOOTHIE**

**2 servings.**

**Ingredients:**

**1 cup chilled fat yoghurt or low fat yoghurt**

**1 cup chopped soft fruit (e.g. banana, melon, mango, berries, kiwi fruit, peach, plum)  
– chilled overnight in the fridge/freezer**

**2 Tbsp. raw oats**

**1 tsp. honey**

**Method:**

**Place all ingredients in a blender and blend well until combined.**

**Serve chilled**



## **BRAN MUFFINS - MAKES 36 IN THE FULL RECIPE**

½ cup soft brown sugar, 2 eggs, 75ml oil  
½ cup pureed (tinned) apple or 1 apple, grated  
1 large or 2 medium carrots, grated  
2 cups wheat bran/oat bran  
2½ cups brown or wholewheat (Nuttiwheat) flour  
2 cups low fat/skimmed milk  
2½ tsp. bicarbonate of soda  
½ tsp. salt  
1 tsp. vanilla essence  
1 cup raisins

1. Beat sugar and eggs together. Add oil and mix well.
2. Mix the rest of the ingredients and beat well.  
Spoon mixture into small greased muffin pans.  
Bake at 180°C for 15-20 mins

## **BANANA MUFFINS.**

50 grms butter, 75 grms brown sugar, 1 egg, 225 grms wholemeal flour  
2 mashed bananas, pinch of salt, 1 tsp baking powder, 1 tsp vanilla essence  
5tbsp skimmed milk

Combine all the ingredients in a large bowl.  
Spoon into 10 non-stick bun tins or paper cases.  
Bake at 190°C / 375°F . gas mark 5 for approx 20 minutes.

## **PEANUT BUTTER MUFFINS.**

100grms crunchy peanut butter 100grms honey  
2 eggs 1 tsp vanilla essence  
3-4 tbsp (45 – 60 mls) milk 25grms plain peanuts  
225grms ½ wholemeal - ½ white, self raising flour

Combine peanut butter and honey.

Add eggs vanilla essence, flour and milk.

Spoon into 10 bun cases and press a few peanuts into the top of each muffin.

Bake at 190°C./ 375°F/ gas mark 5 for 25minutes.



## **HOME MADE MUESLI**

1 kg (2 lb 4 oz) thick milled rolled oats

100 g (3½ oz) macadamia nuts, chopped (alternatively, you can use pecans or cashew nuts)

100 g (3½ oz) sunflower seeds

100 g (3½ oz) pumpkin seeds

50 g (1¾ oz) linseeds (flaxseeds)

100 g dried fruit if preferred

Preheat oven to 170°C (325°F).

Mix all the dry ingredients and spread on baking trays (you might need 2 or 3) so that the muesli is no more than 1 inch thick.

Bake muesli, stirring every 10 minutes. The nuts have a high oil content so you have to watch that they don't burn.

After 30 minutes, when there is light colour on the muesli, turn the oven off and leave the trays in there overnight, or until cool.

Transfer to an airtight container.

**Serve with plain yoghurt, honey if desired and fruit.**



## **What not to eat in the bundu!**

All those delicious meals given to us above can make one very hungry, however there are tell-tale signs in the bush that indicate whether something that can look very tasty, may in fact not be very good for you at all. All fungi are edible, at least once. Just be very careful that you only eat the ones that are edible every time you eat them. The selection on this page, I would wager, are definitely not edible at all, despite their appetising colours and beautiful forms. Top left, something liked the herbaceous plant in the top right corner, but nothing has gone near the lovely brown egg! Similar signs in the two pictures immediately below.

**Beware!**





Of course when you find a plant that has been neatly cropped at more or less the same height, there is some guilty party that can be identified along the way. On top of our unnamed mountain we found this small colony of probably crinum-lilies. Each and every one had been eaten! Usually these plants are only attacked by a rather gaudy-looking caterpillar, which inevitably wreaks havoc. However these plants I suspect were eaten by something like a leopard tortoise or perhaps a red rock rabbit. We found one of the former and only signs of the latter, but the damage had been done some time ago so there is no way of knowing who is the guilty party.



As an aside, there are plenty of ways to bring colour into our gardens and on the right we see a fairly plain looking flower still has the ability to inject colour into an otherwise drab scene. As soon as I find out the name of the plant I shall let you know and you can plant great swathing beds of them to bring sunshine flitting into your lives!



#### **AGM**

**The Annual General Meeting of the Aloe Cactus and Succulent Society of Zimbabwe will be held at 11 am on Sunday the 29th March 2020.**

**Please mark this date in your diaries. The venue will be announced in due course and of course it coincides with the monthly meeting of the Society. So the gathering time remains 10am for a 10.30 start.**

**Volunteers to join the Committee will be very welcome.  
Hans Wolbert, Chairman**

**So Everyone,**

**The rainy season has gone past the halfway stage, let's hope it finishes with a bang. There is a lot of healthy advice and recipes from Lizzie Small, our healthy nutritionist. I think we need to recruit a contributor who can produce similar articles about the plants we love to collect, grow, hopefully landscape and perpetuate. You don't even need to blend in like this *Brachystegia tamrindoides* on the right. You can be your usual erudite self. Any volunteers?  
Cheers Mafungi**

