



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 20-7 July 2020



Welcome to the Publisher's Edition of Ortholopha! July and August are the months to see ***Aloe ortholopha*** in flower at the only place in the Whole Wide World, where it occurs, the northern Great Dyke of Zimbabwe! Why Publisher's Edition? Well our monthly Newsletter is called **Ortholopha**, our periodic magazine is **Ingens** and the Scientific Journal we used to produce was called **Excelsa**. And on the way out to The Dyke, we saw all three iconic species.

And two were very kindly flowering!



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
Rodwika Muzhuzha	- 0712 860119
Isabel Bandason	- 0774 186757



Hi Everyone,

Tighter lockdown conditions make for a tough situation in Zimbabwe. Many of us are tiring from being largely restricted to home and garden for the past four months. The Pandemic did not seem to take hold like we had been warned it would, why is anybody's guess. It certainly has been cold enough. Our neighbours have much greater numbers affected than we do. Cross-border traffic by large articulated trucks is as prolific as it has ever been. Apparently at the Buby Bridge on the way to Beitbridge you can count up to 100 trucks an hour! In and around our cities the distancing and isolating rules apply to the favoured few, but if you live in the high density townships or in the rural areas of Zimbabwe there is token adherence at best to regulated and recommended behaviour.

We managed to breakaway using the pretext that we are checking the health of one of our iconic species, *Aloe ortholopha* and which also happens to be part of our Society logo. It has been under threat from mining and plant and rock poachers who rip the guts out of these magnificent mountains.

We had a great story prepared for officialdom but no-one even asked and we were waved through roadblock after roadblock. Our consciences are clear, other than the perfunctory exchange of crisp ZWLS notes at tolls our human to human contact was zero. So we did not spread the virus, nor did we bring it back.

We are happy to report with great confidence that *Aloe ortholopha* is alive and well. The populations are strong and vibrant and even increasing on the disturbed soil and crushed rock from mining activities! Our timing was perfect and every direction we looked on the serpentine soils of The Great Dyke, we found *Aloe ortholopha* growing, flowering in bright red or orange horizontal racemes and seeding. Of course once the mining conglomerates have finished their extraction processes, there will be new kopjes covered in these beautiful plants. They may even become a tourist attraction on their own right. Let's hope we survive Corona to see the day!

Interesting Plant: June

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.

Last month's winner was Hans Wolbert, Chairman of our society. The tree behind the *Adenium* was of course a mopane.



Photograph taken by Mafungi

Clue: Quite a number of our best growers have taken to this exotic, prickly cactus, but in the right light it looks quite cuddly. From Brian and Barbara Terry's Greystone Park garden

You can win a box of chocolates!!!

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

The right tree, in the right place will attract either a goodly sort of gardening enthusiast, or in these enlightened times when the Environment is all important, a decent sort of wild-life. There can be no greater contribution to environmental tidiness than the Hammerkop, a fairly large brown bird that mates for life and is renowned for building these huge nests, usually in the fork of a tree above water or near a river. They pick up all sorts of detritus to make their nests and the structures are used for years afterwards by other birds and animals for homes, nests, resting and feeding places. This one used a *Sterculia quinqueloba* to build its nest. As I have repeatedly mentioned, a modern Zimbabwean garden should not be designed without its own *Sterculia* for the sunshine-friendly winter effect.



Red Alert: Pay your subscriptions before 31 August and it will only cost you ZWL\$200 per couple. Thereafter we shall move to a US\$ subscription of US\$10 per person. US\$12 for a couple, US\$2 for a junior and US\$5 for a senior.

The magazine in process, Ingens 60, will only go to fully paid up members.

Annual Membership: Are due in January each year. Renewal is long overdue. Remember for your \$200 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\$200 per person/couple per year. Children ZWL\$20 per year. Foreign membership US\$40 per year. Make payment to a committee member, or

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.



Gus and Ellen Spartas still missing. Since Sunday 21st June 2020. It is a very sad situation to report, more than five weeks after their disappearance, that Gus and Ellen are still missing. Their vehicle has been found gutted by fire on a cul-de-sac, in a very open area just beyond Borrowdale Brooke. No sign of them thereabouts. What is astounding is that no-one saw it fit to report the incident of a vehicle being driven to that site at the dead of night, burnt quite loudly and openly, until four weeks later!

Rest assured that a huge effort is being made to try and find out exactly what has happened to them. Neighbours friends and relatives are doing all they can to help the CID and other investigators in their quest for answers. Their three youngsters, Danyel, Sabreene and Tao are safely at school/college in the United States and our thoughts and prayers are with them in these most trying of times.

Gus and Ellen are gardeners with supreme talents and their collection of absolutely amazing plants, rocks and driftwood on a very steep, very dry, rocky hillside overlooking Greystone Park area is testimony to this. They have no water to hand on site. Every drop is outsourced and lovingly doled out to deserving plants. Cleverly Gus decided from the outset to grow mainly xerophytic plants that can take the harsh punishment of a waterless dry season stretching from April to November. Some of these plants are absolute treasures and every arrangement, whether a tree in the ground, a succulent grouping, in a miniature garden or even as a strategically placed bonsai, are a tribute to their great care and attention.

We hope that they are indeed safe. Anyone with any information please report to Hotline 073 333 3331 and in particular with the regard to movements of the vehicle, a white Toyota Hilux Reg ADF 1463, between the morning of Sunday 21st June and that night when it was probably burnt.





Long time founder-member of ACSSZ, Brian Terry, saunters nonchalantly past a bed brimming with orange-flowered *Aloe chabaudii*. He and Barbara have successfully combined a love for aloes with other plant kingdom interests, like cacti and succulents, African violets, orchids, water lilies and even annual flowers and bright breezy hanging baskets. Brian is an expert on making compost and recently delivered a workshop, in Shona, to a group of 20 gardeners near Ridgeway North who had been burning their fallen leaves!

These are the sorts of people upon whom the foundations of great Societies are built.

Societies like the Aloe, Cactus and Succulent Society of Zimbabwe.

So Everyone,
Pay attention to your health and safety, follow common sense and practical guidelines, have care for your Flowers, Family and Friends and tread lightly in this World because it is increasingly fragile. "The only measure of success in your life is whether you will be remembered fondly by those you love." Wise words indeed, and apologies to Warren Buffet! Money has no limits as we know only too well in Zimbabwe, but behaviour does, so spend your time wisely. Defend freedom. Above all, defend freedom.
Cheers Mafungi

