



# ORTHOLOPHA

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

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The trees are trying to tell us something  
this year

Hi Everyone,

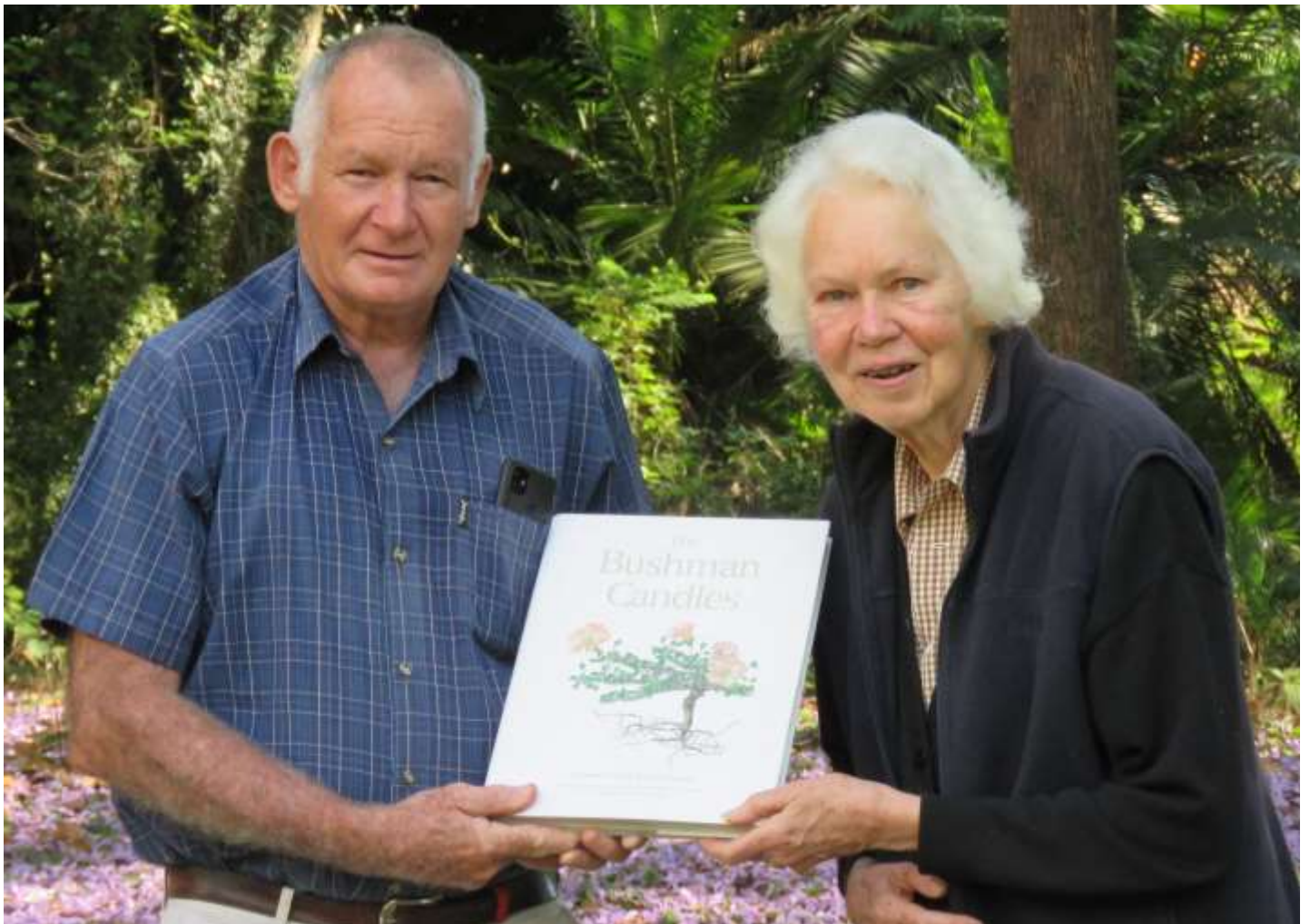
A visit recently to the National Botanic Gardens really brought home the need to protect the treasures that Zimbabwe has in its public spaces. Over the past few years some very determined efforts have been made, by concerned citizens in the main, to wrench back wetlands, parks, green belts and the like from avaricious developers and land barons.

However we are seeing irreparable losses taking place and the activity in Borrowdale Vlei is one that we will all live to regret. If you drive around the suburbs you can see huge developments taking place, usually conversion of low density housing to office/commercial spaces or the cutting up of large urban plots into cluster developments. The inevitable consequence of this will be to have much increased run-off of precious rainwater, reduced percolation into the below-ground natural reservoirs and the drying up of streams and rivers. And we are all frantically watering lawns, drilling boreholes and digging wells to drain the water resource even faster.

The approaches to Harare, where they pass close to the high density developments are showing all the signs of a collapsing eco-system. You can see for miles now around the townships as every last tree has been harvested for firewood. Run-off will be massive, the downstream reservoirs will silt up even quicker and one day the spectre of totally empty taps, city-wide, will be inevitable.

So we had better all start making our voices and our inherent voting power heard. As campaigning starts for the 2023 election let's demand answers on policies to protect and defend our public spaces.





### Great News for ACSSZ Members

Nina Bauer, partner of the late Darrel Plowes who was a well respected botanist, naturalist and even wildlife film-maker has decided to donate the book seen above to the Society. This is a beautifully crafted book printed on top-quality paper was jointly written and edited by Charles Craib and John Lavranos, based upon their extensive knowledge of the genus *Monsonia*, formerly known as *Sarcocaulon*. The book is a work of art in itself and the pages on each of the 15 species there is a description, identifying features, distribution map, preferred habitat and even some historical artwork featuring the species. Only 1 000 signed copies of the book were ever produced and so this copy that used to belong to Darrel Plowes is indeed a treasure.

For those who knew Nina, she still lives happily in Mutare and does some investigative work for various societies and institutions going through historical issues of The Umtali (Mutare) Post and other sources. Nina is seen above handing over the book to committee Member Rob Jarvis who happened to pass through Mutare recently. *Photo by Jill Rickard*. Editor's note Nina is still reading so she has the copy and we shall alert members when it is in our Library.

### Rare Plant Sale

Chairman Hans Wolberg has secured the Mukuvisi Woodlands for a Summer Rare Plant sale on Saturday 4th December 2010. This is good news indeed as the last sale went very well and once again the timing will be from 8 am to 2pm. Potential sellers should contact the Chairman to book their selling space.

As usual it will be US\$20 for a table and Half of that goes to the Society and half to the Mukuvisi Woodlands Association. There is no charge for buyers to enter and refreshments will be on sale.







On a recent visit to the National Botanic Gardens on 5th Street Extension I chanced upon the above colony of the *Stapelia gigantea*. At this time of year the fruiting pods are splitting and the seeds being borne off by the wind to find a new place to establish a colony. Stapeliads are one of those special plants that can perform a “nurses” role in the plant ecology. Other dry-scape plants often find a little micro-climate amongst the fleshy stems of the stapeliad where their seed can fall and there is sufficient poisture to take root and get established.

#### The Great Baobab Edition

The month of October is when the largest succulent of them all takes a deep breath, reaches right into the water –storing trunk and long roots usually prominent on the surface of the soil and sends life-giving juices to the new buds and leaves that can burst forth almost overnight. Early rain helps a lot and this summers we have been blessed with some strange unseasonal weather that brought the baobabs of the Zimbabwe Lowveld into leaf very suddenly.

I must admit that there is no more welcome a sight to animals and bird-life that has spent the latter half of the dry season panting and gasping the hot dry air of the Lowveld, than a fully matured baobab fresh in its new livery. The phot on this page is of a fair-sized tree in the National Botanic Gardens but overleaf is a collage of many different specimens we saw in the Lowveld, mainly at Gonarezhou National Park from mid-October onwards.

These are special, special trees, absolutely essential to the well-being of many mammals, birds, bats and insects and even reptiles and frogs. Although the baobab is renowned for being able to take some punishment and the numerous trees around the Nyanyadzi irrigation Scheme between Hot Springs and Birchenough bridge are testament to this, every now and then a gargantuan specimen takes a tumble and falls to the ground. Within a year its fibrous wood will have disintegrated, rotted and all that will be left is some dust to be blown away in the Gukurahundi winds of spring.

But even in death the tree, as it rots provides a home to all kinds of wildlife and one we saw near Machiniwa Pan had a freshly dug warthog den underneath its trunk.

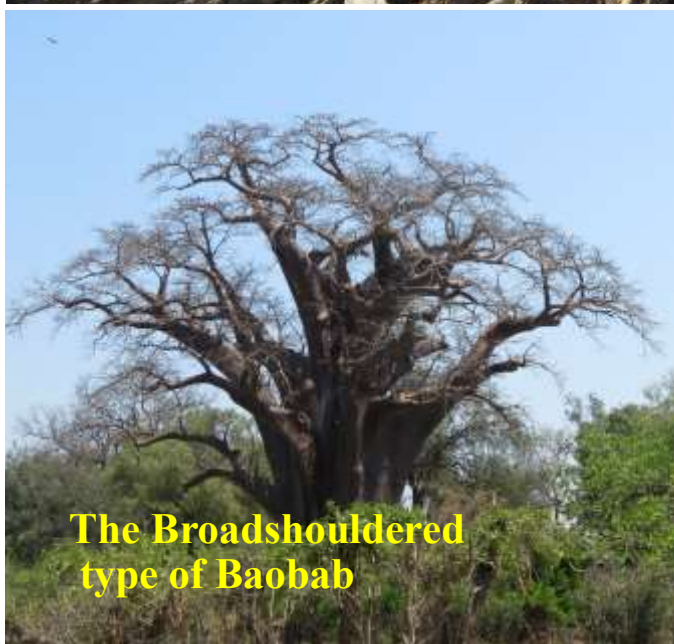
The shape of our baobabs has always intrigued me and some are stout of form with upward reaching branches, others have the bedraggled look of an inverted brush. In between there are all manner of shapes.







**A colossus has fallen!  
Dust to dust in months  
will be the result**



**The Broadshouldered  
type of Baobab**



**Baobab with  
an external appendix**



**A light shower of rain and  
the Baobabs spring into leafy shade**



### Your Committee

Chairman –  
Hans Wolbert -0772 653 110

### Committee members:

Rob Jarvis	- 0783 383 214
Doreen Richards	- 0772 255 784
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Mike Caulfield	- 0772 241 286
Rodwika Muzhuzha	- 0712 860 119
Isabel Bandason	- 0774 186 757

**The Itching Post  
Fallen Lala palm  
has a cosmetic use.**



## PAYMENT OPTIONS FOR SUBSCRIPTIONS TO ACSSZ.

The payment options for subs to ACSSZ are as follows:

Payment in USD cash to me at; 24 Southam Rd, Greystone Park. This is off the Harare Drive, just up West of the large traffic circle. Please phone ahead or e-mail the day and time to ensure that this is convenient.

Payment into the Nostro account in the name of M. Caulfield at

**CABS, Nostro: Account number, 1125376759**

Please use ACSSZ as the recipient. Also notify me that a payment has taken place.

The amount is US \$10 for those under 65 or US \$5 if older or a junior. This covers individuals or the family.

BOND or ZWL

Payments can now be made in ZWL ( Bond) , the amount is ZWL\$1 200

Or Zwl \$600, if you are 65 or older , or a junior.

ZWL payments can be made to

**CABS account 1002616336**

The Aloe, *Cactus & Succulent Society*.

**Or Eco Cash (Mike Caulfield ) number 0772 241 286.**

Please notify me of ANY payments , Thanks

Mike Caulfield Treasurer / Secretary Phone 0772 241 286.



## Interesting Plant: September

### What is this tree, 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.

Last month's plant had not a single entry, not even a wild guess, so no prizes!

**Our Readership is clueless!**



Photograph taken by Mafungi  
Clue. Photo taken in Harare

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

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

Hi Everyone,

It looks like we now have a full magazine and so Ingens 61 will be able to go to print very soon. A big thank you to all those of you who contributed to its contents. We have a couple of new authors and some very enthusiastic ones who are prepared to go to the ends of Zimbabwe and even further afield to get copy and material for our magazine.

Well done to all of you!

Cheers

Mafungi



**Red Alert: US\$ subscription of US\$10 per person/couple.**

**US\$2 for a junior and US\$5 for a senior.**

**Foreign members US\$40 per person**

**We need to replace our US dollar stocks to enable the Society to continue functioning effectively. See previous page for payment details.**

### Annual Membership:

Are due in January each year. Renewal is long overdue. Remember for your US\$10 per year, you get a monthly Newsletter Ortholopha, free issues of Ingens as they are published and you get invited to at least 11 choice venues each year. Big-time Bargain Bonanza!

See the previous page to find out what payment options there are for you to keep up to date with your subscriptions.





*Artist Judy Garter proudly displays her stunning artwork to connoisseur Mike Caulfield before publication*

The Aloe Cactus and Succulent Society has produced a Birthday/Events calendar that will be on sale at the Monthly Meetings and at the Rare Plant Sale on the 4th December 2021. Each calendar only costs US\$5 per copy and it will last you for a lifetime. The idea of an Aloe Calendar came from Society stalwart Charles Waghorn veterinarian and a friend of his Judy Carter from Bulawayo who is a renowned botanical artist, She undertook the prodigious effort to produce 12 beautiful depictions of various aloe species to be found in Zimbabwe.

There is one conundrum in the pictures and the lucky calendar purchaser who finds this and points it out to me at the following e-mail address [bo.hoom52@yahoo.com](mailto:bo.hoom52@yahoo.com) will win a beautiful Adenium hybrid pot plant. So buy your calendar, spot the anomaly and you could be a winner!!! Judy will be using the same pictures to produce her own annual calendar for 2022 so you could buy both for just US\$10! We should have copies of both versions at the Rare Plant Sale at Mukuvisi on the 4th December.

Below when we were visiting Nina Bauer we spotted a neat little succulent calendar produced for 2020. This is why we opted for a Birthday calendar, because with such beautiful artwork it seems a shame to have to toss the publication away when the year ends.



Judy intends selling prints of her aloe pictures and if anyone is interested in purchasing these we can take orders on her behalf. At the time of going to print we do not have costs however but will keep you informed in due course.

In a change to the format of the newsletter we have decided to put the notice of the monthly meeting in the accompanying e-mail so those of you who are rushed for time will immediately see the venue, date and directions to find the meeting. The Newsletter will be used to convey articles, news and information to members.

## Food Forest and Islands of Prosperity Concept in Environmentally Friendly Gardening



Health comes largely from the food and liquids that we consume. There is no better way to ensure that everything you eat or drink is the very best than to grow your own and make sure that harmful pesticides are preferably not ever applied or at worst, applied with the correct dosages, time lapses before harvest and cleaned off the surfaces of the produce. Mixed beds of vegetables with brassicas, solanaceous plants, alliums, herbs, and young fruit trees are the key to success, we try not to dig, keep living roots throughout and add compost and mulch to preserve nutrient levels, moisture and ensure quality ve

Mentally too, your gardening efforts should lead to places of tranquility, where you can relax, be surrounded by the peace and quiet and where you can unwind from the fast-paced world that we live in.

There is no greater pleasure than to pluck fruit and vegetables from a home-grown bed or plot or pot and munch them juicily, with full confidence that your product is absolutely not contaminated with synthetically produced chemicals or fertilisers.

Those of you who came out to see our efforts at A.R.T. farm some time back will be pleased to hear that we are now almost self sufficient in vegetables and fruit with not one speck of such synthetics playing a role in our gardening. It has been an absolute pleasure to get to where we are today.

On the traditional gardening side we like a broad expanse of meadow in front of the house with broad views right down the Mazowe valley. We don't like the idea of having to water endless flower beds and lawns, because water is short. However a bit of greenery and colour year-round adds to the visual pleasure and to let the wildlife have some respite from the hot dry months as the rains approach. So we have come up with what we call islands of Prosperity and Diversity (IPaD). The moles have bought into the concept and wherever they dig and bring up freshly turned soil we chuck in our mix of cereals, legumes, sunflowers, even maize and the like, water it and wait for the IPaD to grow.

So you can see in the photograph below right, this concept in action, the moles dig, we scatter some seed on their working, scuff the seed in with our bare feet, water and then a little green island of mixed herbiage springs up. In no time the wildlife come hopping in to give their stamp of approval! The moles, without any prompting from us, move on and we start again in their next spot. The same idea can be applied to any soil disturbance that you might have, say from removing lantana or other noxious weeds, just have some seed handy, scuff it into the soil and let Nature take its course. Seed from these islands will spread through the whole area where we have our meadow and in time the most suited will prosper and we hope come up naturally as the years and seasons pass. Virtually no effort, no weeding, no lawn cutting and a host of wildlife!



So that is it Folks, We look forward to seeing you on Sunday 31st at Sekai's house and garden out at Manresa Park and then later on Saturday 4 December at the summer Rare Plant Sale at Mukuvisi! Enjoy the rains when they come.

They always do.

Cheers, Mafungi

