

Celtis africana

Sterkfontein Country Estates August/Augustus 2016

Good day Celtis friends,

One almost does not notice it, but the sun does rise a wee bit earlier and goes down a little later – however winter is not over by a long shot! And boy did we have some funny weather! We have had anything from hailstorms, rain and frost, to tornadoes - it seems like we had the worst of the worst weather-wise! However, according to SA Weather it is not all that uncommon for South Africa to get tornadoes – we only hear about the ones that cause havoc!

Not much is happening in the veld, some flowers jumped out to show their faces after the rain, just to make a quick disappearance when the cold renewed its force.

One of the plants that do not seem to be fazed by the cold is the *Kalenchoe thyrsiflora*, also known as the Paddle plant or Flapjacks. Ours is standing tall and proud and full of its lovely little yellow flowers in the veld. The fabulous sweet smell of the flowers is enough to make one happy if it grows in your veld! Seeds from a previous season has fallen on the ground around it and some new plants appeared - one of which I have taken and planted in my garden. The genus (or family) Kalenchoe occurs throughout Africa, Madagascar, Cyprus, Indochina and Malaysia, but this specific one is **endemic** to South Africa only. Read more about it in the **Celtis of August 2014** under Downloads on the website.



Paddle plant or Flapjacks (*Kalenchoe thyrsiflora*) (Cellphone Photo: Elmarie Krige)

Another plant, which is happily flowering all over in patches in the veld, is the *Helichrysum caespititium*. This inconspicuous little plant, which has either pink or white flowers, is one of the most interesting plants of our area. It grows flat, in a carpet-like way on the ground. It seems to have huge potential as a natural antibiotic – read the **Celtis of September 2014**, where I wrote all the interesting facts I could find about this little plant.



Helichrysum caespititium (Cell phone Photo: Elmarie Krige)

According to garden centres, winter is the right time to plant trees, so that when spring and summer comes along, they can just spread out and grow! Trees are not only beautiful to look at, but provide food and shelter to wildlife and the flowers attract bees and butterflies to our gardens, which is essential for pollination.

Research has shown that patients recover quicker when there are trees to look at outside the hospital windows. Trees in a landscape relax us, lower our heart rate and reduce stress. One study in the UK showed that people who live in areas with lots of trees need fewer prescriptions for antidepressants! Studies have shown workers to be more productive when there are trees to look at outside the office windows!

Trees absorb more carbon than they release; they also absorb carbon dioxide and releases oxygen back into the air. Carbon dioxide build-up in the atmosphere can cause climate change. Trees are also natural filters for water and thus provide clean drinking water to us. There are many more excellent reasons for planting trees, which benefit our health and that of the planet. But who needs all kinds of reasons? I say just plant them - they are beautiful!

We love watching the birds in our garden during winter. As food is rather scarce, we put out fruit for them and it is so interesting to see how they interact with each other. We have never seen that one bird will come and sit and gorge itself till there is nothing left. There is some sort of pecking order, but each one will always leave some for the next lot to come and enjoy. Usually the Grey Go-away-bird will arrive first to be followed by a Crested Barbet and next come Dark-capped Bulbuls, the mouse birds and then followed by anything that has wings and a taste for papaws, apples and oranges!



Grey Go-away-bird stuffing himself with paw paw (Photo: Elmarie Krige)



Coming in for the landing while his mates are already feasting. Mouse Birds taking over the food bowl (Photo: Garfield Krige)

Folks, that's all from me for this month. Although not much is happening in the veld, August of 2016 has got to be the most exciting month of this year! Yip, the Olympic Games are here, my seat is "booked" in front of the TV and the popcorn is stacked in the cupboards. And, should you hear some screams from this side, no need to alert Conserv Security - it is only me, egging our team on to bring home some medals! Enjoy the games and to help you stay warm, a few funnies about the Olympics:

A reporter meets a man carrying an eight-foot-long metal stick and asks, "Are you a pole vaulter?"

"No," says the man, "I'm German. But how did you know my name is Walter?"

Why isn't sun tanning an Olympic sport? Because the best you can ever get is bronze!

A Scotsman, an Englishman and an Irishman want to get into the Olympics but they haven't got tickets. The Scotsman picks up a manhole-cover, tucks it under his arm and walks to the gate. "McTavish, Scotland" he says, "Discus", and in he walks. The Englishman picks up a length of scaffolding and slings it over his shoulder. "Waddington-Smythe, England," he says, "Pole vault," and in he walks. The Irishman looks around, picks up a roll of barbed wire and tucks it under his arm. "O'Malley, Ireland," he says, "Fencing."

Goeie dag Celtis vriende!

Mens kom dit amper nie agter nie maar tog kom die son so klein bietjie vroeër op en sak ook so klein bietjie later, maar die winter gaan verseker nog lank by ons wees. En het ons omtrent vreemde weer gehad sover! Eniglets van haelstorms en reën, ryp en tornados – dit voel soms of ons die ergste winter die jaar gehad het. Tog, volgens die SA Weerdiens is tornados blykbaar nie so ongewoon nie, ons weet net altyd van die wat erge skade aanrig!

In die veld is maar min aan die gang en hoewel 'n paar blomme hul gesigte gewys het na die reën, het hul net so gou weer verdwyn toe die koue opnuut toeslaan.

Van die plante wat nie snars omgee oor die weer nie is ons eie Meelplakkie (*Kalanchoe thyrsiflora*) ook bekend net as plakkie. Ons s'n staan trots en regop en vol geel blommetjies in ons veld en van 'n vorige seisoen se saad het langsaan opgekom en ek het van die plantjies in my tuin geplant. Die blommetjies het die lieflikste, soet geur, genoeg rede om bly te wees as hulle op jou plot groei! Alhoewel hierdie genus (familie) oral in Afrika, Madagaskar, Ciprus, Indo-Sjina en Maleisië voorkom, is

hierdie **spesifieke** plakkie endemies net aan Suid Afrika! Lees gerus meer oor die mooi plant in **Celtis van Augustus 2014** onder “Downloads” op die webwerf.



Meelplakkie (*Kalenchoe thrysiflora*) (foto: Garfield Krige)

‘n Ander baie geharde plant is die *Helichrysum caespititium* met sy mooi pienk of wit blommetjies. Hierdie beskeie plantjie is een van die heel interessantste plante van ons Estate. Die plantjie groei op die grond en lyk soos ‘n matjie met hul wit of pienk blommetjies. Navorsing het bevind dat dit oor groot natuurlike antibiotiese waardes beskik en julle kan gerus weer die **Celtis van September 2014** lees wat ek alles omtrent hierdie plantjie uitgevind het!



Helichrysum caespititium (Selfoon foto: Elmarie Krige)

Tuinsentrums vertel mens graag om bome huis in die winter te plant sodat, as die lente en somer kom, hulle net kan laat waai en groei! Bome is nie net mooi om na te kyk nie, maar verskaf ook skuiling en voedsel vir wildlewe en hul blomme lok bye en skoenlappers wat noodsaklik is vir bestuiwing.

Studies het bewys dat pasiënte gouer genees as daar bome buite die hospitaalvensters groei om na te kyk. In 'n landskap laat bome mens rustig voel, mens se hartklop is stadiger en so verminder mens stres. Minstens een studie in die VK het gewys dat mense wat in boomryke areas woon, minder voorskrifte vir antidepressante aanvra! Ander studies het weer aangetoon dat personeel meer produktief is as daar bome is om na te kyk buite kantoorvensters!

Bome verbruik meer koolsuurgas as wat hulle vrylaat en hulle neem ook koolsuurgas op en laat suurstof vry in die atmosfeer. Koolsuurgas wat opbou in die atmosfeer kan klimaatverandering teweegbring, dus help bome om klimaatverandering te beveg! Bome is ook 'n natuurlike filter en help dus om skoon drinkwater aan mense te verskaf. Hierdie is maar net 'n paar van die uitstekende redes om bome te plant – nie net vir ons eie gesondheid nie, maar ook vir die van die planeet. Maar wat, hoekom moet mense redes he – ek sê plant hulle net! Wat is liefliker as 'n paar groot bome in die tuin?

In die winter wanneer kos skaars is, sit ons graag bietjie vrugte uit vir die voëls. En dis oulik om dop te hou hoe mededeelsaam hul is; nie een sal nou kom sit en elke liewe krieseltjie opvreet nie, intendeel elkeen eet net 'n paar happies en maak dan

plek vir die volgende outjie. Die kwêvoël is die grootste en kom eet eerste, gevvolg deur die kuifkopkhoutkappers, dan die tiptolle en muisvoëls. Daarna kom enige ander geveerde wat van 'n happie appel, lemoen of papaja hou.



Kuifkop Houtkapper by die vrugtefees (Foto: Elmarie Krige)



Rooivlerkspreeu by die vrugtebak (Foto: Garfield Krige)



Ek het tog die grootste stuk gekry. Muisvoël met papaja (Foto: Garfield Krige)

Nou ja liewe vriende, dis nou eers al van my kant want alhoewel daar nie veel in die veld gebeur nie, is Augustus 2016 een van die opwindendste maande hierdie jaar! Jip, dis die Olimpiese Spele, my sitplek is “bespreek” voor die TV en die springmielievoorraad wag in die kas! En as julle ‘n vrou hoor gil hoef julle nie Conserv Security te bel nie, dit sal net ek wees wat ons span luidkeels aanmoedig! Ons hoop hulle kom met’n hele paar medaljes huis toe, so tot volgende maand groet ek julle – bly warm en geniet die Spele!

Sportgrappie vir sommer net:

Jan en Koos speel ‘n rondte golf. ‘n Begrafnisstoet kom verby en Koos sit sy golfstok neer, haal sy hoed af, buig sy kop vir ‘n minuut en slaan daarna weer af.

Jan: “Koos dit was darem nou ‘n mooi gebaar van jou gewees.”

Koos: “Wel, ons was darem 20 jaar getroud!”

Totsiens, goodbye, adios, ciao, yia sas en do svidaniya!



Bonne/References: Care2.com; Treepeople.org; earthshare.org