# *Celtis africana*

Sterkfontein Country Estates Desember/December 2016

Good day Celtis friends!

And here we are, right in the festive month! Unbelievable how time flew and this month my letter will be short and sweet as there are a million things waiting to be done before 2017!

First of all thanks to the Zwartkrans people who come up with amazingly interesting photos and questions – they really participate in helping to make the Celtis interesting! Dave Coleman was lucky enough to capture some unusual photos, so have a look further on.

Louise Nell also sent a photo of red roman for identification. Now, as I mentioned in a previous Celtis, although it is commonly referred to as a spider, it is in fact more closely related to scorpions than spiders. They lack spinnerets and silk and thus cannot spin webs.

These animals are known by a host of names, including red romans, *haarskeerders* ("hair cutters") and *baardskeerders* ("beard cutters"); the latter two relating to the belief (or urban legend!) that they use their formidable jaws to clip hair from humans and animals to line their subterranean nests! Because they move quite fast, they tend to frighten people but their speed, size and appetite and lethality have been greatly exaggerated. They can certainly deliver a painful bite, but no studies ever have proofed even one species to be venomous. They help control other critter populations like termites; other ground dwelling arthropods as well as certain beetles. Mother Nature has her ways of keeping balance in nature!

After the recent rains, the veld is certainly looking lush and green and wild flowers are popping up everywhere.

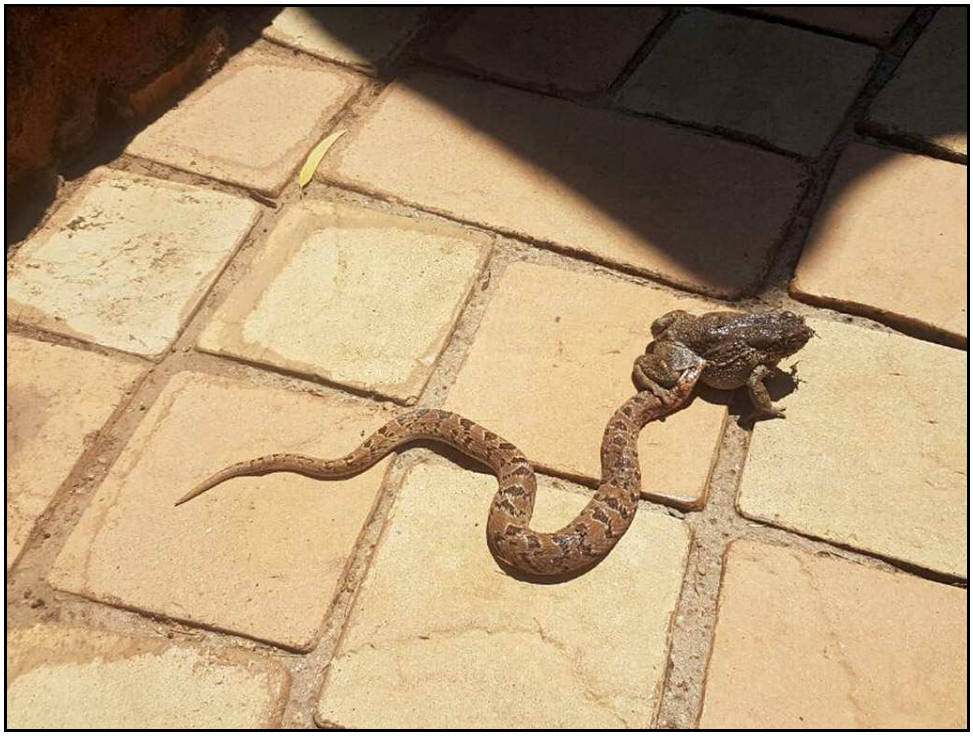
We were so lucky the other day to see our eagles flying over our property, keeping their eyes open for a juicy snake or two. Garfield dashed in to grab his camera and was lucky enough to get some amazing pics. They move so fast and to get a clear picture whilst they are in flight is no mean feat!

**Just for a laugh:**

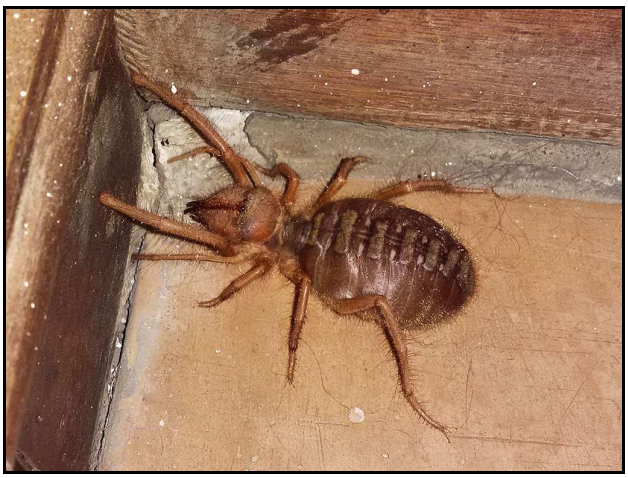
**Kids, remember: The best way to get a puppy for Christmas is to beg for a baby brother!**

**Mother: "Sweetie, make a Christmas wish."**
**Little girl: "I wish that Santa will send some clothes to all those naked girls in daddy's computer"**

Folks, that's all from me for this year. Hope the festive season is peaceful and relaxing and for those who go on holiday, be safe on the roads!



**A Night Adder which has just caught a Guttural Toad… eventually both ended up in the pool!**
**'n Nagadder met sy skurwepadda prooi - en toe eindig albei in die swembad! (Foto's/Photos: Dave Coleman Zwartkrans)**



**Red Roman/Rooi Romanspinnekop (wat nie 'n ware spinnekop is nie!) Foto/Photo 1 Louise Nell Zwartkrans, Foto/Photo2 Garfield Krige SCE 129**

**Dung Beetle with its …er…find! Miskruier met sy …er… vonds! Foto/Photo Garfield Krige SCE 129**

***Oxalis obliquifoia* (Wild Sorrel) (Wilde suring) Foto/Photo Elmarie Krige SCE 129**

***Polygala amatymbica*** **- that's how small some of our wild flowers are - and yet so pretty! Kyk hoe klein en tog so mooi! Foto/Photo Elmarie Krige SCE 129**

**Fresh from the Fiscal Shrike's pantry - poor weaver!/Vars uit die laksman se spens - arme vink! Photo/Foto Garfield Krige SCE 129**

**Yep folks, it is the same butterfly! The Scarlet Tip. Ja mense, dis beslis een en dieselfde skoenlapper! Skarlakenpuntjie (*Colotis danae annae*) Foto's/Photos Garfield Krige**

**Our beautiful Black-chested Snake Eagles in flight above our Estate. Top Henrietta the female and below, Kgosi, the male. Ons eie grasieuse Swartborsslangarendpaarin vlug bokant ons Estate. Bo, Henrietta die wyfie en onder, Kgosi, die mannetjie. Foto's/Photos Garfield Krige SCE 129**

Dagsê Celtis vriende!

Hier is ons reg in die feesseisoen – hoe het die tyd nie gevlieg nie! Hierdie is ‘n baie kort brief want daar is mos altyd ‘n duisend-en-een dinge om klaar te maak voor die Nuwe Jaar aanbreek.

Eerstens dankie aan die Zwartkrans mense wat ongewone foto’s en vrae stuur – julle help beslis om idees te gee vir my brief en natuurlik om dit meer interessant te maak! Kyk bietjie hierbo die foto’s hierbo van Dave Coleman – dis nou wraggies ‘n gelukskoot dat hy dit kon afneem.

Louise Nell het ook ‘n foto van ‘n Rooi Roman gestuur vir identifikasie en alhoewel ek voorheen kortliks oor dit geskryf het, hier is weer so bietjie inligting.

Alhoewel mense geneig is om dit ‘n romanspinnekop te noem is dit nie ‘n spinnekop nie, maar nader aan die skerpioen familie. Dit beskik nie oor sy en ook nie die orgaantjie wat sy kan spin en kan dus nie ‘n spinnerak maak nie.

Die diertjie is bekend onder baie name in die volksmond naamlik rooi roman, baardskeerder of ook haarskeerders. Laasgenoemde name is as gevolg van die ouvroustories dat hul met hul skerp kloue jou hare en/of baard kan afsny om hul ondergrondse neste mee uit te voer!

Omdat hul so vinnig kan beweeg, is hul nogals skrikaanjaend. Maar daar is hope opgemaakte stories oor hul grootte, spoed en sogenaamde dodelike byt. Hul kan wel ‘n baie seer byt toedien maar nêrens deur talle navorsing is daar enige bewyse gelewer dat hul giftig is nie. Hul help natuurlik weer om termiete en sekere ander torre en goggas se getalle te beheer – Moeder Natuur het mos haar eie manier van beheer en balans hou!

Na die lekker reën die afgelope tyd lyk ons veld darem regtig mooi en groen! Heelwat veldblomme is ook oral te siene.

Ons was gelukkig om nou die dag albei ons Swartborsslangarende oor die Estate te sien vlieg. Met hul skerp oë was hul sekerlik besig om uit te kyk vir ‘n sappige slang of twee! Garfield het blitsig sy kamera gaan haal en alhoewel hulle so vinnig vlieg het hy daarin geslaag om ‘n paar pragfoto’s van die twee te kon neem! Hy was regtig gelukkig dat hulle ‘n paar draaie bokant ons huis gesweef het op soek na ‘n happie, want as mens nie vinnig is nie, is hulle meteens kilometers weg!

**Sommer net ietsie om jou te laat glimlag:**

**Die dominee gaan besoek 'n ou dame in die hospitaal net voor Kersfees. Op die bedkassie staan 'n bakkie met grondbone waaraan hy peusel terwyl hy gesels. Toe hy besef dat hy die bakkie alleen opgeëet het, vra hy groot omverskoning. "Als reg dominee, dit sou net daar bly staan het. Sonder my tande suig ek net die sjokolade af!"**

**Brakpan skool juffrou: Jan, jou opstel oor jou hondjie is woord vir woord dieselfde as jou boetie s'n! Jan: Natuurlik juffrou, dis dan dieselfde hond!**

Nou ja, mense, van my kant is dit al die maand, kort en klaar! Dis fees seisoen en almal wil rustig wees. Geniet die fees seisoen en bly veilig!

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