

Celtis africana

Sterkfontein Country Estates January/Januarie 2017

Good day folks!

And here we are in 2017 – and what a lovely start to the New Year with lots of very welcome rain! Poor Malmani Road certainly took a knocking with potholes galore and topsoil having been washed away, but then, what the heck - the veld looks so beautiful! The intoxicating smell of the earth after rain and the play of sun and shade when clouds pass over – man, what a blessing to be free and to be living out here!

With the rain there are lots of little and big mushrooms popping up everywhere! I got some photos from Corné Els of Zwartkrans of some really beautiful fungi she spotted on their property.



Fungi (*Laschia thwaitesii*, synonym *Favolaschia thwaitesii*) (Photo: Corné Els Zwartkrans 34)

These are the *Laschia thwaitesii* (synonym *Favolaschia thwaitesii*) and, sorry guys, I could not find a common name but according to my guide it is worth finding these little jewels, as they are not all that common. So, Corné, lucky shot for you and thanks for this! They usually appear on the trunks of rotting oaks or on other indigenous trees in very wet areas. Now we do not live in a very wet area, but because of all the recent rains, Mother Nature decided to be generous and show us these little beauties. Be careful though, according to my guide it is not known whether these are poisonous or not – make sure the kids don't try to taste it!

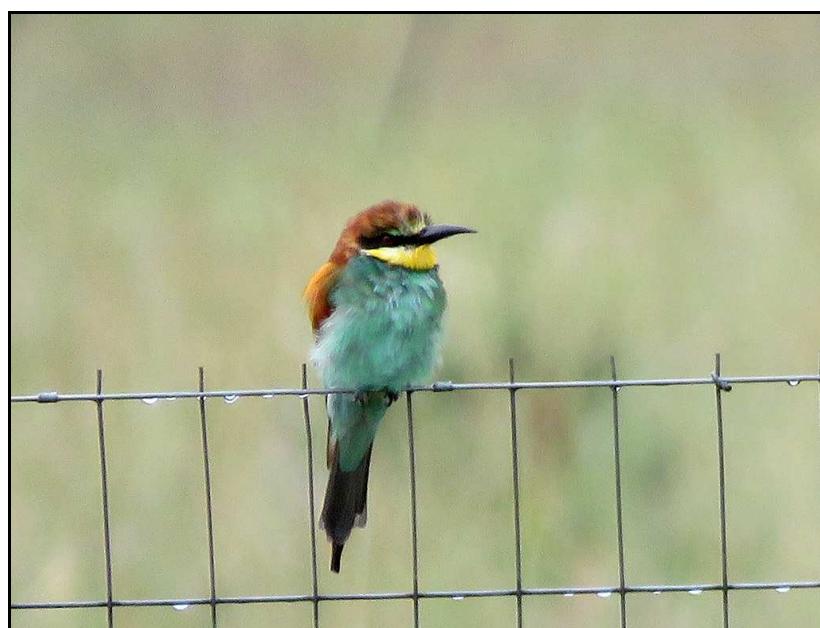
Near the entrance to our Estate, the “Chicken of the Woods” (*Laetiporus sulphureus*, *S. Polyporus sulphureus*) fungus that appeared a couple years ago (have a look and read all about it in the Celtis of March 2015 on my website) in a crack in a tree has

re-appeared. See this year's photo in the Afrikaans section. Also have a look on the website under Photos – Interesting Fungi, for amazing photos we took on our property of some beautiful fungi. Yes, I know, we need to identify them, but one does not always get to things like this when life is as busy as it is!



Another wild fungus that popped out of the ground, looking very alien-like, is the *Kalchbrenneria (Lysurus) coraloccephala*. This fungus is known for its bad smell resembling that of rotting meat and is poisonous (a pity not for the flies it attracts!). It is considered rare to occur in our predominantly dry region. (Photo: Garfield Krige)

The rain also brought about lots of insects emerging and the swifts are having a field day. Jenny Johnson (SCE 126) was lucky enough to get a photo of the European Bee-eater (*Merops apiaster*) and send it to me – how cool is that! We hear and see them all the time flying about, but they are so fast and to catch one of these lovely colourful birds on film is just great. Very exciting - so thanks a ton Jenny!



European Bee-eater (*Merops apiaster*) (Photo: Jenny Johnson SCE 126)

These migratory birds are not uncommon. According to my guide, two separate populations have been identified in South Africa; the one population is non-breeding and the other breeding, but it is non-distinguishable in the veld. They fly in swarms of between 20 to 100 birds. The European bee-eater feeds mainly on bees, wasps and termites. Breeding is monogamous, in colonies and its' nest tunnels are dug into river walls and dongas.

Some of our plants flowering at the moment:



Striga asiatica, Witchweed/Rooiblom (Photo: Elmarie Krige)



Lantana rugosa (Bird's Brandy). This is an indigenous Lantana, not to be confused with the orange or orange-pink invasive species from Tropical America (Photo: Elmarie Krige)

And as it is back to school for the kids, how about this – just for a laugh:

Teacher: If you had 13 apples, 12 grapes, 3 pineapples and 3 strawberries, what would you have?

Billy: A delicious fruit salad!

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Teacher: Johnny, can you tell us where the Declaration of Independence was signed?

Johnny: Yes, ma'am - at the bottom.

*

Mom: What did you do at school today?

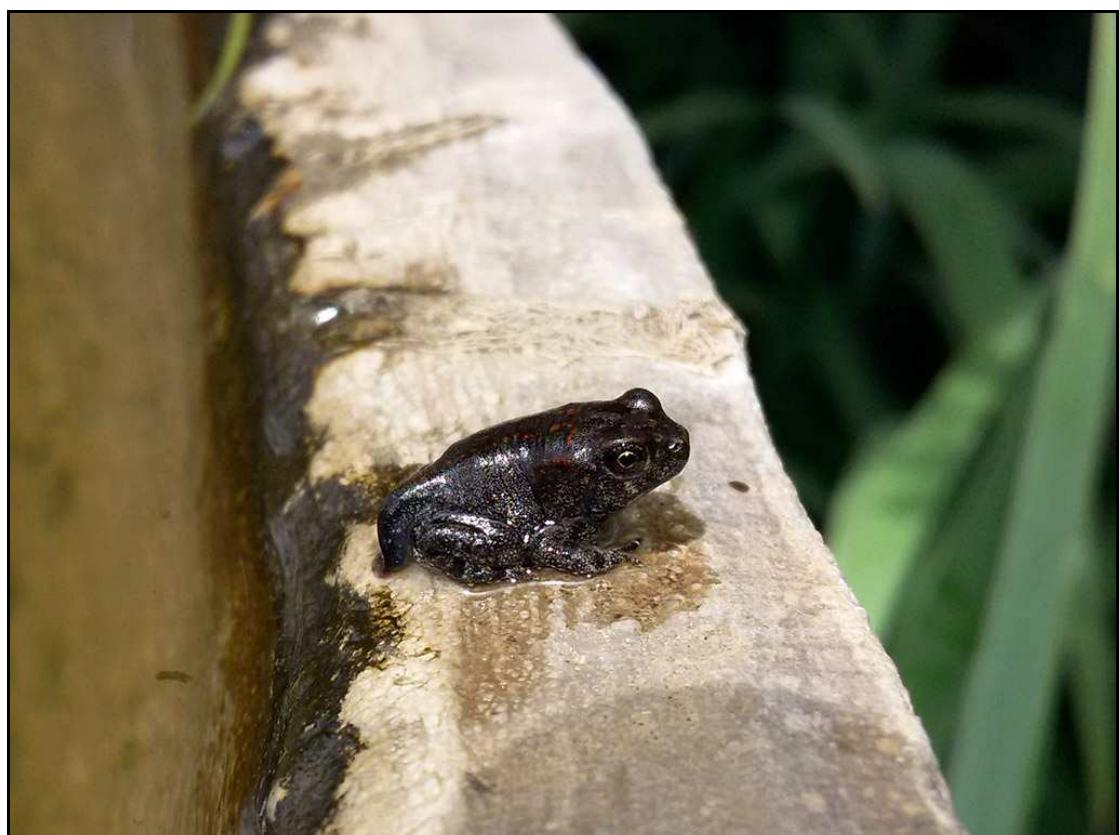
Johnny: We played a guessing game.

Mom: But I thought you were having a math exam?

Johnny: That's right!

That's it from me for this month. All the very best for 2017 to all of you!

Recently spotted/onlangs gesien:



With a small section of tail still pointing towards the water environment where he was a tadpole, and the dry terrestrial world in front of him; this little oke is making the big leap into the real world!
(Photo: Garfield Krige)



Hierdie pieklein outjie het twee dae agtermekaar in ons huis kom kuier! (Foto: Garfield Krige)



A Robber fly with a bee look-alike as its prey - more in next month's Celtis. 'n Rowervlieg met sy prooi - meer in volgende maand se Celtis (Foto: Garfield Krige)



"My plot lyk pragtig na al die reën, né!" (Rooimeerkat) (Foto: Elmarie Krige)

Goeie dag mense!

Die nuwe jaar het sommer wonderlik begin met lieflike, welkome reëns en alhoewel arme Malmaniweg vol gate en slote is en baie bogrond weggespoel het, kla ons beslis nie! Die veld is so pragtig en die geur van nat grond en die speling van lig en

skaduwee wanneer die wolke verby die son skuif, laat mens besef hoe geseënd en vry mens is om hier buite die stad te kan woon!

Met al die reën is dit baie klam en hope wilde sampioene het hul verskyning gemaak – groot en klein! Corné Els van Zwartkrans het vir my sulke interessante foto's van pragtige kleurryke sampioene wat sy op hul eiendom raakgesien het, gestuur – foto's in die Engelse gedeelte.

Hierdie is die *Laschia thwaitesii* (*sinoniem Favolaschia thwaitesii*) en, jammer mense, ek kon glad nie 'n gewone naam vir die klein juweeltjies opspoor nie. Volgens my veldgids is hulle inderdaad juweeltjies, kom nie te algemeen voor nie en dus die moeite werd om op te spoor! Dit kom gewoonlik op verrottende eikeboom stamme of die verrottende stamme van inheemse bome in baie nat areas voor. Alhoewel ons nie noodwendig in 'n baie nat area woon nie, het Moeder Natuur besluit om na die baie reën bietjie vrygewig te wees en vir ons die helderkleurige "presentjies" te stuur. Dankie Corné, dis regtig asemrowend mooi! Kinders is mos nuuskierig, so keer tog dat hulle nie dalk wil proe nie – die eetbaarheid (of dan of dit giftig is al dan nie) is nie bekend nie!



Swaelrakswam langs Malmaniweg, by die vlei (Foto: Garfield Krige)

Naby ons ingang het die Swaelrakswam (*Laetiporus sulphureus*, *S. Polyporus sulphureous*) wat 'n paar jaar gelede die opwagting gemaak het, weer in dieselfde boom verskyn. Op die webwerf (Downloads) het ek in die Maart 2015 weergawe van die Celtis uitvoerig oor die sampioen geskryf – so gaan loer gerus weer! Onthou ook onder "Photos – Interesting Fungi", op die webwerf, is heelwat foto's wat ons al op ons eiendom afgeneem het en ja, ek weet, ons moet nog name bysit. Ag tog Herklaas, mens kom ook nie by alles uit met die gejaagde lewe van vandag nie! Ons sal nog daarby uitkom, ons **sal** nog!



Nog 'n fungus wat na die reën uit die grond opgeskiet het is die *Kalchbrennera (Lysurus coralocephala)*. Hierdie onwelriekende fungus (baie soos verrottende vleis) is giftig - ongelukkig nie vir die vliëe wat dit lok nie! Dis glo nogals skaars in ons droër gebied. (Foto: Elmarie Krige)

Natuurlik het die reën ook meegebring dat miljuisende insekte die swaeltjies baie gelukkig maak – hulle het omtrent 'n fees! Ons het al die Europese byevanger gesien en gehoor soos hulle tekere gaan in die lug bo ons plot, maar was nog nooit gelukkig genoeg om hierdie vinnige gevlerktetjies te kon afneem nie. En daar stuur Jenny Johnson (SCE 126) vir my 'n foto wat sy gelukkig genoeg was om te kon kry van een van die kleurryke voëltjies! Baie dankie Jenny – altyd lekker om so iets in my inkassie te kry! Kyk bietjie boontoe na die foto in die Engelse gedeelte.

Hierdie trekvoëls is taamlik algemeen en kom in swerms van tussen 20-100 voor. In ons land is twee aparte bevolkings geïdentifiseer – die een bevolking is nie-broeiend terwyl die ander bevolking wel broeiend is. Die verskil is egter nie merkbaar in die veld nie. Die Europese byevanger is monogaam en broei koloniaal. Hul nestonnels word uitgegrawe in rivierwalle en dongas. Hulle leef oorwegend van bye en perdebye asook termiete.

Net 'n paar van ons veldplante wat nou blom:



Een van die Anthericum spesies van nabyafgeneem. (Foto: Elmarie Krige)



'n "Veldtuin" vol Ipomoeas – hulle is darem pragtig vir my! (Foto: Elmarie Krige)

En siende dit terug-skool-toe is vir die jongklomp, hier is 'n paar kortetjies - net vir die grap!

MA : En hoekom het jy so 'n lae punt vir die toets gekry?

JUNIOR : As gevolg van afwesigheid.

MA : Wat? Was jy afwesig vir die toets?

JUNIOR : Nee, die outjie wat langs my sit was.

*

ONNIE : Wat het ek as ek sewe lemoene in die een hand het, en agt in die ander?

KOSIE : Vrek groot hande meneer!

*

ONNIE: Gert, waar is Schweizer Renecke?

GERT: Ek weet nie, Meneer. Hy is nie in ons klas nie.

Celtis groete van my kant af – laat ons 2017 vasvat en met baie gelag kafdraf!

Bronne/References: ‘n Veldgids tot die Sampioene van Suid Afrika - Levin. H;

Rappoport. S; Mitchell. D

Robberts Voëlgids – Hugh Chittenden

Wild Flowers of the Highveld – Braam Van Wyk; Sasa Malan

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

