

Celtis africana

Sterkfontein Country Estates March/Maart 2016

Good day Celtis friends!

I love this time of the year as we are slowly, but surely, moving into cooler weather. Mother Nature is revealing one last flush of summer flowers in the veld and it is a joy to be outside!

Lately we have heard the most beautiful birdcalls, which, at first, we thought might be more than one species. We were not able to identify it by just the calls alone and luckily my daughter popped around one morning and she immediately identified it as the Black-crowned Tchagra. At first glance in our bird guides, it looked a lot like one of the sparrow family. So we may have caught a glimpse of it amongst the leaves not realising it is not a sparrow! We haven't managed to get any photos yet, but we hear its sweet song all the time. It has so many different sounding calls, no wonder we thought there were more than one "new" species of bird in the area!

Have a look at this weird looking fungus I captured on my cell phone one morning. On the website, under "Photos" (Interesting Fungi), there is another good photo of it. It usually appears after a few days of rain. This is the coral stinkhorn (*Kalchbrennera corallocephala*) and stink it is! It has a horrible smell of rotting flesh. The coral stinkhorn is a poisonous mushroom; so if you do encounter one and maybe touched it, you should wash your hands thoroughly!



Coral Stinkhorn (*Kalchbrennera corallocephala*) Afr: Koraal Stinkhoring (Cell photo Elmarie Krige)

Last month I wrote a bit about recycling and re-using. Well, I recently came across this scary “forecast”, if you will: “New studies have found that by 2050 there will be more plastic in our oceans than fish!” Of course there are ways to prevent this and also to clean it up; there is now a solar powered ship that can suck up to **22 million kilograms** of plastic a year and a small number of them could clean up the entire Pacific garbage patch in just ten years!

This “garbage patch” is a floating island of “landfill” if you wish, in the Pacific Ocean. But of course these ships costs money, and yes, unfortunately the environment hardly ever takes priority in any government’s budget. Anyone interested in the environment surely knows about this “patch” – otherwise, have a look on this link: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Pacific_garbage_patch
This is amazing in the most revolting, negative way!

You may ask what this has to do with you, the average Joe Soap, as by 2050 you might be a goner and you certainly can’t sponsor one of these ships. Actually there is a website whereby one can donate; but what I am trying to bring across is for us to think ahead. What heritage do we leave behind for our children and theirs?

The wind blows around plastic bags left lying about into rivers and eventually it end up in the ocean. They have found that plastic eventually degrades into smaller pieces, clogging up mouths, gills and airways causing death of all marine life. Don’t litter, rather re-use what you can - set an example by your actions. My motto is: don’t just leave footprints – blaze a trail! Blaze a trail by educating your kids and workers (and make it interesting – if you nag, you know what happens!) by telling them what can happen and how pollution eventually affects us all.

Other sightings on our property:



Indigofera comosa (Photo: Garfield Krige)



Rain (or wandering) spider *Palystes superciliosus* Afr: Reënspinnekop (Photo: Garfield Krige)



Tephrosia longipes (Photo: Elmarie Krige)



Wahlenbergia caledonica (Photo: Elmarie Krige)



Rufous-naped lark (Afr. Rooineklewerik) *Mirafrja africana* (Photo: Elmarie Krige)



Flap neck chameleon *Chamaeleo dilepis* (Afr. Verkleurmannetjie) (Photo: Elmarie Krige)



Toad (or porcupine) flower *Huernia hystrix* (Afr. Ystervark-huernia) (Photo: Elmarie Krige)

Have you guys also wondered how does a snake make its hissing sound? Well, I have - I am always interested in learning new things! A snake breathes through an organ in its throat, just behind the tongue, and it is called the glottis. Normal breathing will cause the glottis to open and close into the trachea (windpipe). The snake's glottis (unlike those of mammals) always remains closed, thus forming a vertical slit, until the snake takes a breath. Snakes can forcibly expel air from the glottis; making a small cartilage piece just inside the glottis, vibrate. And this is how a snake makes its characteristic hissing sound! Amazingly the glottis can be extended out the side of the snake's mouth while consuming large prey, thus allowing the snake to breathe.



Red-lipped snake (*Crotaphopeltis hotamboeia*) (Cell phone photo: Garfield Krige)

Something to think about:

Any man who thinks a woman's place is in the kitchen – remember this is where the sharp knives are kept!

That's all from me for this month folks. Have a lovely March and until next month stay happy!

Goeie dag Celtis vriende!

Hierdie tyd van die jaar is vir my altyd lekker, want stadig, maar seker word die weer bietjie koeler en Moeder Natuur sorg vir oulaas vir pragtige somersblomme oral in die veld.

Die afgelope tyd het ons die mooiste voëlsang gehoor en kon net nie sien watter voël sulke mooi geluide maak nie. Gelukkig het my dogter een oggend hier ingewals en dit dadelik geëien as die Swartkroontjagra. In ons voëlgidse lyk dit maar baie na een of ander mossie spesie en dis geen wonder ons kon dit nie identifiseer nie; heel moontlik het ons dit wel raakgesien tussen die blare en gedink dit is maar net 'n mossie! Ons kon nog nie slaag daarin om 'n foto te kry nie, maar ek moet sê die

verskeidenheid klank wat die voëltjie voortbring is pragtig en klink sowaar of dit verskillende voëls is!

Kyk bietjie na hierdie eenaardige sampioen wat ek met my selfoon een oggend afgeneem het (in die Engelse afdeling). Dit word genoem die Koraal Stinkhoring (*Kalchbrennera corallocephala*) en boetie kan hy stink - die ene vrot vleis! Kyk gerus op die webwerf onder "Photos" (Interesting Fungi) waar daar ook 'n mooi foto is. Dit kom gewoonlik voor na'n paar dae se reën. Die sampioen is heel giftig, so was jou hande goed as jy dalkies een hanteer het.

Foto's van nog interessantheide wat ek die maand op ons plot gesien het:



Tongklappertjie *Barleria macrostegia* (Foto: Elmarie Krige)



Wahlenbergia caledonca (Foto: Elmarie Krige)



Rooineklewerik *Mirafra africana* (Foto: Elmarie Krige)



Bitterbos (Eng. Wild scabious) *Scabiosa columbaria* (Foto: Elmarie Krige)



Reënspinnekop *Palystes superciliosus* (Foto: Garfield Krige)



Verkleurmannetjie *Chamaeleo dilepis* (Foto: Elmarie Krige)



Ystervark-huernia *Huernia hystrix* (Foto: Elmarie Krige)

Verlede maand het ek bietjie oor herwinning en hergebruik geskryf en onlangs lees ek hierdie, nogals skrikwekkende, voorspelling: Na onlangse navorsing voorspel

kenners dat ons teen 2050 meer plastiek as vis in die see mag hê! Natuurlik is daar maniere om dit te voorkom en ook skoon te maak; daar is alreeds 'n sonkragaangedrewe boot wat die gemors op die see-oppervlak opsuig – tot **22 miljoen kilogram** plastiek en gemors per jaar, en 'n paar van hierdie bote kan die sogenaamde “Pacific garbage patch” in die Stille Oseaan in net tien jaar heeltemal tot niet maak. Maar natuurlik kos dit geld, en geld vir omgewingsbewaring is gewoonlik baie laag op enige regering se lys van prioriteite.

Ek is seker meeste van julle het al van hierdie “garbage patch” gehoor of gelees, maar indien nie, hier is 'n skakel:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Pacific_garbage_patch

Grillerig man, grillerig!

Nou vra julle maar wat het dit met jou, Jan Alleman te doene; by daardie tyd is jy lankal onder die grond en jy kan tog nie so 'n boot borg nie! Wel daar is nogals 'n webwerf waar gewone ouens ook kan bydra tot hierdie poging, maar wat ek eintlik probeer sê, is dat mens moet verder dink as net aan jouself en die hede. Wat los ons vir ons kinders en hul nageslag?

Plastieksakke en papiertjies wat rondlê word deur die wind rondgewaai en land meestal in riviere en dus uiteindelik in die oseaan. Deur hergebruik skakel ons alreeds 'n groot klomp onnodige gemors uit. Daar is bevind dat plastiek in kleiner deeltjies opbreek en dis wat dan seelewe se kiewe, bekke en lugweë verstop en die dood daarvan veroorsaak.

Ons gewone ouens kan regtig ons kinders en werkers op 'n interessante manier leer wat se invloed so morsery op almal se toekoms het (moet nou net nie prekerig wees nie, ons weet wat dan gebeur!). Ek sê mos altyd, moenie net voetspore laat nie – beur sommer die pad vorentoe oop deur 'n voorbeeld te stel!

Iets heeltemal anders: Het julle mense ook al gewonder hoe maak 'n slang nou eintlik sy siggeluid? Wel ek het, ek is gek daarna om oor nuwe dinge na te lees en so te leer. Slange haal asem deur 'n orgaan in hul kele. Hierdie orgaantjie is net agter die tong geleë en word die stemspleet genoem. Normale asemhaling veroorsaak dat die spleet oop- en toemaak in die tragea (windpyp) in. Die reptiel se stemspleet (anders as die van soogdiere) bly pal toe, wat dus 'n vertikale spleet vorm totdat die slang 'n asemteug neem. Slange kan lug uitforseer deur hierdie spleet en dit veroorsaak dat 'n klein kraakbeentjie binne-in die spleet vibreer. En DIS hoe slange hul kenmerkende siggeluid maak! Interessant genoeg kan hierdie orgaantjie by die kant van die slang se bek verleng word terwyl dit groot prooi insluk. Die slang kan dus terselfdertyd moeiteloos asemhaal.



Nie 'n slang in die gras nie, maar eerder 'n slang op 'n mat! 'n Rooilpslangetjie (Crotaphopeltis hotamboeia) (Selfoonfoto: Garfield Krige)

Feit:

Eskom is die enigste besigheid in die land wat jou smeek om *nie* hul produk te gebruik nie!

Nou-ja vriende, dis al vir nou en tot volgende maand, bly vrolik!

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

