

Celtis africana

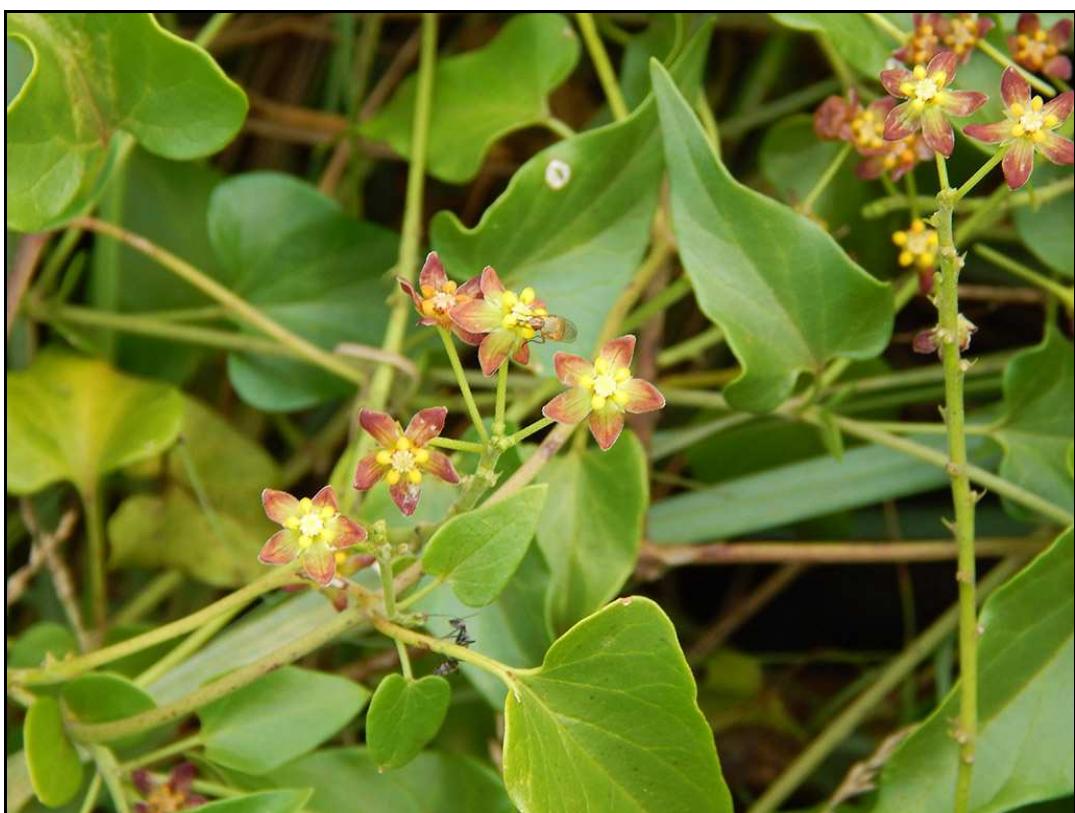
Sterkfontein Country Estates May/Mei 2016

Good day Celtis friends!

Early mornings and late afternoons have become rather nippy, but the clear blue skies - so typical of the Highveld at this time of the year, and warm sunny days certainly makes up for it! Slowly but surely some plants are going into dormancy, whilst others are getting ready to show off - the changing of seasons are always interesting.

I keep on being amazed at the number of edible and/or medicinal plants that occur naturally around here. No wonder Mrs Ples and her buddies made this area their home all those millennia ago! Wildlife roaming in abundance for meat supply, plus an abundance of plants for medicinal as well as edible use, who wouldn't want to live here?

This month's plant of the month - of which I featured a photo of in last month's Celtis, is the African Heart vine (*Pentarrhinum insipidum*). This rather inconspicuous plant has many interesting traits. The whole of this plant is consumed throughout Africa. The leaves are rich in calcium, iron, riboflavin as well as Vitamin C, whilst the young fruit have high concentrations of magnesium and copper.



African Heart vine (*Pentarrhinum insipidum*) (Photo: Elmarie Krige)

The “insipidum” part of its scientific name is from the Greek word for tasteless. I did try chewing a leave, and yip, it is rather tasteless! However, in certain countries in Africa it is chopped up or pounded and then used with other tubers and leaves for a healthy salad. When the fruit is young, it has a nutty, peppery taste and can be preserved like gherkins. When the young fruit and leaves are boiled, it taste a lot like asparagus – I have to confess I haven’t tried that one yet!

In Tanzania a decoction of the leaves are used to wash boils and afterwards hot leaves are placed on the boil; and in Malawi the roots are used medicinally. It is a good fodder for cattle and it has the potential of becoming a crop plant - experimentation is being done on this. Now is this an interesting plant or what?

Jenny Johnson (SCE 126) came back to me about the thrips used to fight the dreaded pom-pom weed. Apparently the experiment did not work – whether it is our cold climate or maybe predators that ate them, there is just no sign of them - so, folks I am afraid till a proper solution is found, we will all have to do our best to control these pesky plants on our own properties.

The eagles are busy breeding and the nest is quite well-hidden from the road, so hopefully it will once again result in a lovely chick being hatched in a couple of months. Let’s hold thumbs because when it is supposed to hatch, it will still be winter and food quite scarce.

Interesting sightings:



Eyed Pansy or Ox-eyed Pansy (*Junonia orithya madagascariensis*) (Photo: Garfield Krige)

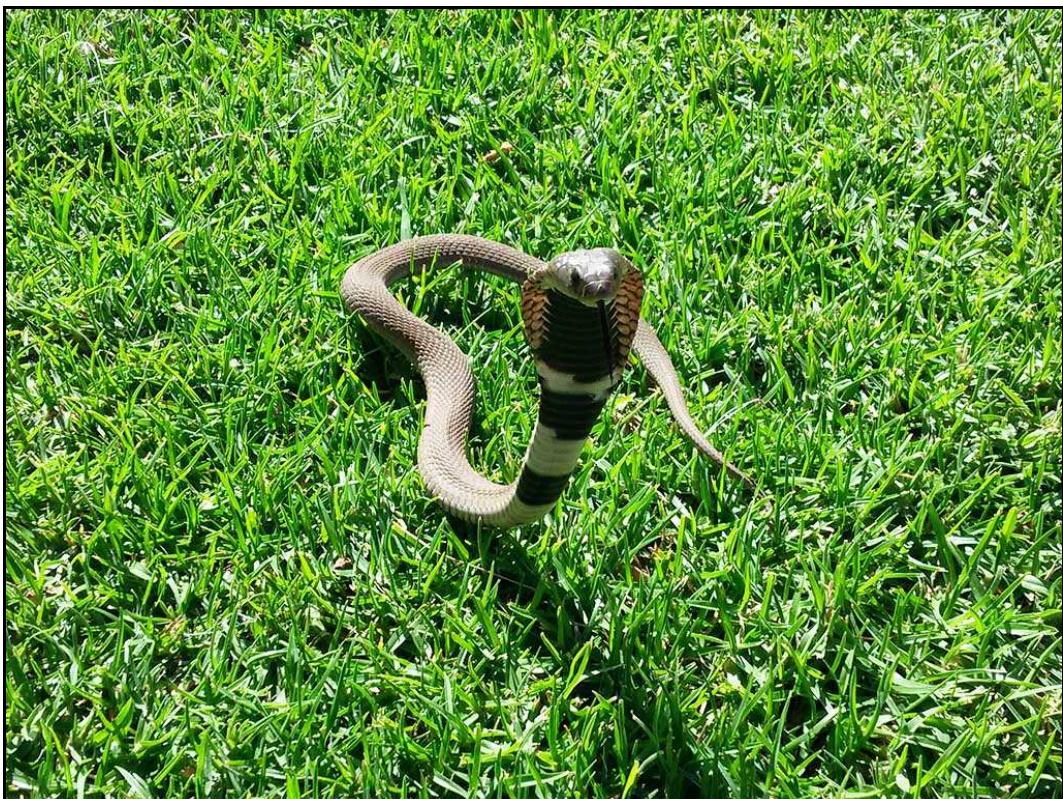
We often noticed this beautiful butterfly during our lunchtime breaks and Garfield managed to get a few nice photos if it. According to our butterfly guide, it is widespread, but uncommon.



Some lovely mushrooms that was in abundance after the last rain we had (Photo: Garfield Krige)



"Did you bring us some snacks?" Yellow Mongoose (Photo: Elmarie Krige)



This little Rinkhals (maybe at about 40 cm, NOT quite so little!) caused a bit of a stir at our house the other day. Our maid came running around the house, hammering on the window and screaming, "Snake!" It turned out that as she was on her way from the washing line, Mr Rinkhals preceded her into the kitchen. Garfield managed to catch it, and of course, first wanted to photograph it on the lawn before releasing it into the veld some distance from the house.

Just for fun:

Little Johnny

A new teacher was trying to make use of her psychology courses. She started her class by saying, "Everyone who thinks they're stupid, stand up!" After a few seconds, Little Johnny stood up. The teacher said, "So you think you're stupid, Little Johnny?" "No, ma'am, but I hate to see you standing there all by yourself!"

To ponder:

"The human brain has hundred billion neurons, each neuron connected to ten thousand other neurons. Sitting on your shoulders is the most complicated object in the known universe." Michio Kaku (Japanese-American futurist, popularizer of science, and theoretical physicist, as well as a best-selling author)

That's it from me for this month! Stay warm and be safe!

Goeie dag Celtis vriende!

Vroegmôre en laatmiddae het deesdae bietjie 'n byt in die lug, maar die lieflike helderblou lug – so tipies van die Hoëveld hierdie tyd van die jaar, en die warm sonnige dae, maak verseker op daarvoor! In die veld is meeste plante besig om in 'n rusperiode te gaan, terwyl ander begin regmaak om hul kleure te wys.

Ek is steeds verstom oor die hoeveelheid plante wat oor medisinale en/of eetbare eienskappe beskik. Dis geen wonder ou Miesies Ples en haar pêlle het al daardie millennia gelede besluit hul bly net hier nie! As mens dink oor die volop wild vir vleis en daarby die oorvloed van plante om te eet of om vir kwinte en kwale te gebruik, dan is dit te verstane.

Een van die interessante plante wat hier voorkom en dus die plant van die maand is, is die Donkieperske (*Pentarrhinum insipidum*). Ander Afrikaanse name vir die plant is hondepisbossie (moenie vir **my** vra hoekom nie – ek sal net so graag wou weet!) of ook opklim. Die “opklim” kan ek nogals verstaan want die plant rank (klim op!) en kan nogals 'n ander plant heeltemal toerank.



Donkieperske (*Pentarrhinum insipidum*) (Foto: Elmarie Krige)

Die Donkieperske beskik oor heelwat goeie eienskappe. Die blare van die plant is ryk aan kalsium, yster, riboflavien asook Vitamien C. Die jong vrugte beskik oor hoë konsentrasies van magnesium en koper.

Alle gedeeltes van die plant word in Afrika geëet. Die “insipidum” gedeelte van die wetenskaplike naam van die plant kom uit die Grieks, en verwys na die smaakloosheid daarvan. Natuurlik moes ek nou 'n blaar kou en proe en ja, dit proe

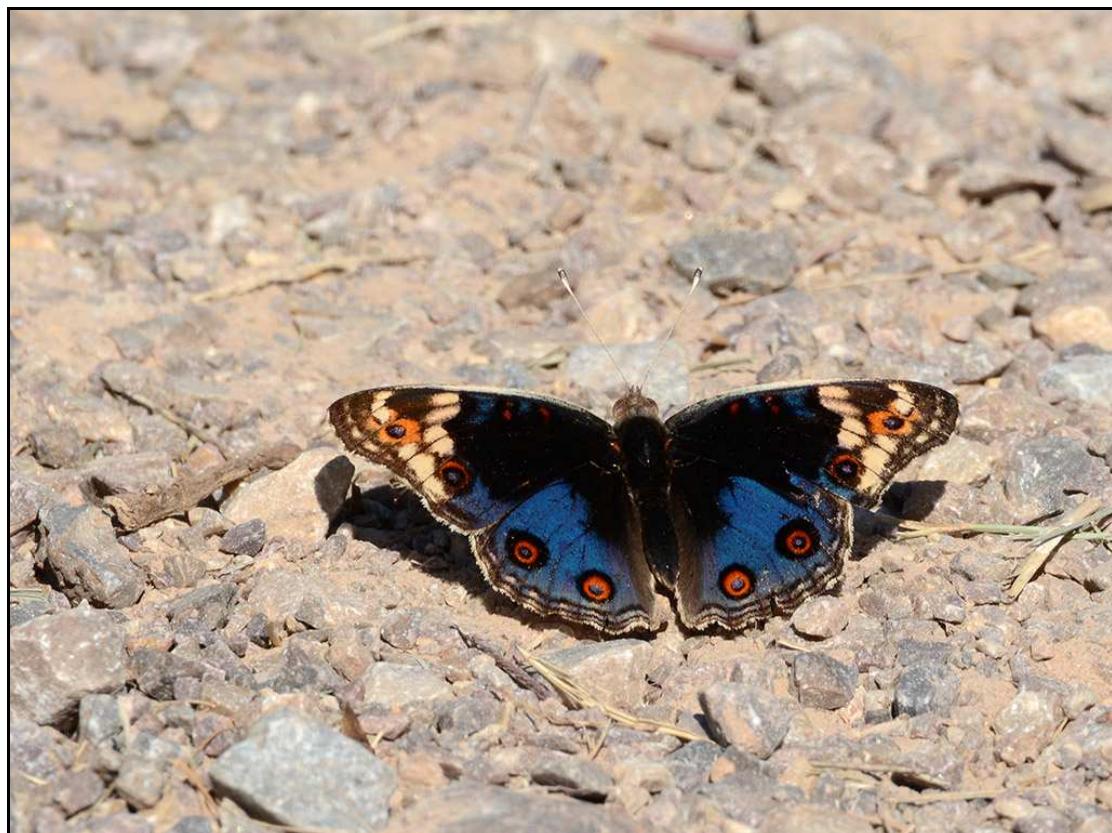
maar na niks! Maar in sekere lande in Afrika word die stingels en blare fyn gestamp en gekap en saam met ander plante gebruik as 'n gesonde slaai. As die vrug jonk is het dit glo 'n neuterige, peperagtige smaak en word soos agurkies ingemaak. As die jong vrugte en blare gekook word, het dit glo die tekstuur en smaak van asperges – ek moet erken ek was nou nog nie honger genoeg om dit so probeer nie!

In Tanzanië word 'n konkoksie van die blare gemaak en gebruik om bloedvinte of swere mee te was en agterna word warm blare op die seer self geplaas. In Malawi word die wortels medisinaal gebruik. Die plant is ook goeie voer vir vee en die potensiaal om dit as landbouplant te verbou word nagevors. Nou wie sou sou kon dink die beskeie plantjie kan so nuttig wees!

Na verlede maand se Celtis het Jenny Johnson (SCE 126) my gekontak oor die goggatjies wat veronderstel is om die pom-pom plant te help uitroei. Ongelukkig was dit nie 'n suksesvolle poging nie – of dit nou ons klimaat is of predatore wat hulle opgevreet het, hulle het ongelukkig nie oorleef nie. So ons sal maar elkeen ons bes moet doen om hierdie aaklike onkruid uit te roei op ons eiendomme.

Die arende is woes aan die broei en hopelik sal hul slaag om nog 'n pragkuiken groot te maak. Ons moet maar duim vashou want wanneer die kuiken moet uitbroei sal dit nog winter wees en kos maar skaars!

Interessante dinge raakgesien op ons Estate:



Padwagertjie (*Junonia orithya madagascariensis*) (Foto: Garfield Krige)

Ons sien gereeld hierdie pragtige skoenlappertjie wanneer ons oor middagete gaan rondstap. Nie net is hy mooi nie, maar die Afrikaanse naam is so mooi en beskrywend want hy sit gereeld in ons gruispad, of op die middelmannetjie van ons gruispad soos in die foto in die Engelse gedeelte. Alhoewel hierdie skoenlapper wydverspreid voorkom, is hulle redelik skaars en word hulle nie gereeld gesien nie.



Hierdie foto van 'n laksman se "biltongfabriek" is maar grillerig, maar dis die natuur (arme muis!)
(Selfoonfoto: Elmarie Krige)



Hier buite in die oopte sien mens regtig die mooi van wolke raak! Hierdie interessante foto van 'n wolk is laat een middag laat deur Garfield geneem.



Hierdie klein rinkhalsie (40 cm is ook nou seker nie SO klein nie!) het nou die dag vir groot konsternasie gesorg. Ons bedienende het om die huis gestorm gekom, aan die venster gehamer en "Sla-a-a-a-ng!" geskree. Blykbaar toe sy die wasgoed inbring, seil meneer slang voor haar die kombuis binne. Garfield het daarin geslaag om hom te vang, maar wou natuurlik eers 'n foto of twee van die slang op die grasperk neem voordat hy hom in die veld loslaat het.



Mnr Reier kom gereeld kuier op ons plot op soek na 'n lekker happie. (Foto" Garfield Krige)

Net vir die grap:

Twee boere loop deur 'n veld. Een van die boere hurk by 'n bol beesmis, druk sy vingers daarin en smeer dit oor sy lippe. "Ga, ou, hoekom doen jy dit?", vra die tweede boer. "Ek het gebarste lippe" antwoord hy terug. "So help dit daarvoor?" vra die eerste een weer. "Nee, maar dit keer dat ek my lippe te veel lek!"

En wat van so ietsie van onse Langenhoven om oor na te dink? Hy kon soms glo maar 'n ou korrelkop wees, maar hy was reguit en sy sêgoed bly van waarde, selfs vandag nog!

Gee my 'n man
wat sê wat waar is
as die duiwel daar is;
wat doen wat reg is
as die regter weg is;
wat trou by sy gewete bly
as hy straf in plaas van beloning kry. – C.J. Langenhoven

Nou-ja, na al die slimmighede is dit tyd vir my om te groet tot volgende maand! Bly warm en bly veilig!

Sources/Bronne: Plantzafrica

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

