



Chairman's Report

In spite of the fact that many of our regular North Coast members have disappeared to their homes in Europe, the last three months have been very hectic. Perhaps our most significant event was John Gold's 90th birthday, which we tried to celebrate in style and which we look forward to enjoying a repeat performance in ten years time. In addition we have had a busy schedule of meetings which, despite the unpredictable weather, have attracted quite respectable attendances.

I think, on the whole, the 'remainers' have enjoyed better weather than most of Europe. We have had an abundance of rain, and perfect bright cool sunny days, but that of course means that meetings can be difficult to arrange and numbers even more difficult to gauge. Our June event had to be hurriedly re-arranged when our speaker had to cancel. None the less the 'mixed bag' laid on at John Gold's house was well attended and great fun. Then we had an enjoyable day going around some gardens in Kilifi, including a tour of Norbert Rottcher's indigenous tree nursery. A few weeks later we all

met up at Evie Walsh's Tropical Nurseries to learn about grafting and air layering. It is my most favourite place to visit in Malindi. Coming off the terrible dusty roads and going through the gates, one finds oneself in an absolute oasis of lush green trees and flowering plants.

Our final event this quarter was a talk by Ingeborg Gonella. Due, I think, to the amazing weather and extra rain, my orchids are flowering better this year than they ever have for me. I felt quite proud of my success, which has been slow in coming. When I called on Ingeborg to arrange her talk my pride was dashed. Her orchids just take one's breath away.

A happy feature of our events is that we now quite frequently finish them off with a group picnic. Everyone contributes something, we arrange a simple bar, and we all sit down together to enjoy our mutual interest. This time we were joined by a small group from Mombasa District and very pleased we were to see them.

I need to finish with some serious drumming for your support. For

the last three year we have held a flower show of some sort at the Mnarani Club in Kilifi. Whilst we would count them all as successful events, participation by District members has been disappointing, relying on the support of a small core of committed loyalists. This year serious consideration was given to abandoning the show, but we have decided to have another try. We have changed the date to late November (25th and 26th) to accommodate the return of the swallows. We have also given up the idea of incorporating a flower show. Instead we are having a Garden Festival – two days of exhibitions, lectures, sales outlets, children's events, and fun to get you in the mood for Christmas. Dino Martins will be giving another of his fascinating talks and other speakers are being engaged. But the most important element of this event will be yourselves. We need your support so put it in your diary and bring your friends.

Marion

Four Score Years and Ten

It was a fantastic lunch party. Wednesday 6th September was our venerable former Chairman, John Gold's 90th birthday and 28 members and friends gathered at Mike and Annie Norton Griffiths' house to celebrate the occasion. The venue was ideal – a large, spacious house and grounds on the Watamu side of Mida Creek.

The brainchild of Marion, the event was largely organised and co-ordinated by Annie, with the able assistance of Damian, General Manager of Turtle Bay Beach Club. Right from the start, when the formal invitations were sent out, the arrangements were faultless. Guests were welcomed with a drink and offered an 'amuse-



A nonagenarian John Golds

bouche' and some delicious breaded crab claws. In due time, luncheon was announced and we moved out to the three tables set up under cover in the garden. An excellent Thai soup was followed by Turtle Bay's well practised feast of lobster, kebabs, and steak served with different salads and rice. A brief pause allowed for speeches and presentations before the arrival of wonderful Summer Pudding, served with a crisp chilled desert wine and coffee. Perfect.

Wine continued to flow after lunch and people lingered and chatted until the drooping sun indicated that it really was time to let our hosts have their house back.

cb

A new Aloe species in Kenya - Leonard E Newton & Susan Carter

ALOE MANGEAENSIS

A FIND BY ANN ROBERTSON

The piece below is an extract from an article published by kind permission of the British Cactus & Succulent Society. The full article may be seen in their journal, CactusWorld Volume 35(1). Visit their website

<http://www.bcsc.org.uk/cactusworld.php>

In the course of a Coastal Forest Survey in Kenya (Robertson & Luke, 1993), in March 1990 Ann Robertson and Quentin Luke found an *Aloe* species at the north end of Mangea Hill. This is an isolated sandstone hill, to 520m altitude, in the plains 50km inland from the coastal town of Malindi. There is forest on much of the hill, where the first author has seen the tree species *Aloe volkensii* subsp. *volkensii*. On lower slopes, where the currently discussed *Aloe* was found, there is more open vegetation with scattered rocks. Mrs. Robertson cultivated a collected specimen in her Malindi garden and prepared herbarium specimens when it flowered. A living plant was given to Newton, but it did not flower in his Nairobi garden (1,676m) before his final departure from the country. Later the present authors examined the specimens deposited by



Robertson and Luke at Kew and concluded that it is an undescribed species. This is described below. It is named for the locality where it was collected, to draw further attention to the need for conservation of the vegetation on Mangea Hill.

Leaf-succulent plant with usually unbranched stem to 50cm long, becoming decumbent and rooting where it touches the ground, with dead leaves persistent below the rosette, occasionally suckering; Leaves to 30, semi-densely rosulate, lanceolate, to 80cm long, to 7cm wide near base, apex acute, uniformly green, surface smooth; marginal teeth deltoid, pungent, 5mm long, 10–15mm apart, green, brown-tipped; exudate yellow; Inflorescence erect, to 1m long, with 4–6 branches, peduncle 40cm to first branch; racemes cylindrical, sub-dense, to 10cm long; bracts scarious, ovate, apex acute, 10–12mm long, 4–5mm wide near base, with 7 brown nerves, central ones reaching apex; pedicels 10mm long; flowers with perianth 26mm long, dusky pink in bud with grey tip, orange/pink, lobes pale yellow-tipped with pale green median stripe inside, cylindrical-trigonous, base rounded, 4mm diameter across ovary, narrowed to 3mm above, widened to 4mm at mouth, outer tepals free for 11mm; anthers exerted 4–8mm, stigma exerted 6mm; Capsule to 20mm long, 12mm diameter; Seeds, including wing, 8mm long, 3mm wide.



Molasses As Fertilizer - Susan Patterson, (Extracted from Gardening Know how magazine)

Looking for an easy, low cost way to feed your plants? Consider feeding plants with molasses. Molasses plant fertilizer is a great way to grow healthy plants and as an added benefit, using molasses in gardens can help fend off pests. Let's learn more about molasses as fertilizer.

Molasses is the by-product of beating sugarcane, grapes, or sugar beets, into sugar. The dark, rich, and somewhat sweet liquid is commonly used as a sweetener in baked goods, as a natural remedy for many ailments, and added to animal feed. Even though it is a by-product, molasses is full of vitamins and minerals. As a result, molasses as a fertilizer is possible too.

Using molasses in organic gardening practices is nothing new. Un-sulphered blackstrap molasses is commonly added to organic fertilizers to give plants the necessary carbohydrates and trace minerals that they need to be healthy. Molasses can be added to organic liquid fertilizers, compost tea, alfalfa meal tea and kelp, to name a few.

When molasses is added to organic fertilizers, it provides food for the healthy microbes in the soil. The greater amount of microbial activity in the soil, the healthier plants will be. Add molasses at a rate of 1 to 3 tablespoons to 1 gallon of fertilizer for best results. Molasses can also be added to water and sprayed on plant leaves or poured on the soil.

Using molasses in gardens has the additional benefit of fighting off pests. Because molasses increases the overall vitality of plants, pests are less likely to attack your garden. Use a molasses and water mixture every two weeks, in addition to your molasses fertilizer, for best results.

<https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/>

Southern California in the Spring - Belle Nanton

Southern California is a dream in the spring; this year in particular since the rains finally came causing desert blooms to flower exuberantly after years of drought. So we popped down from grey Vancouver to savor Pasadena's lush Huntington Botanical Gardens and Malibu's Italianate Getty Villa.



A pile of prickles at the Huntington

Nearly 100 years old, the Huntington consists of 12 principal gardens containing 15,000 plant varieties spread out over 120 acres of the 207-acre grounds. Since the sun was shining with a soft breeze blowing, we decided to focus on the Desert Garden's 60 landscaped beds which kept us enthralled for the best part of a morning. Stars included the Huntington's 200 species of aloes (one of the largest collections in the world), and other delights such as exuberant Golden Barrel Cactii (*Echinocactus grusonii*), spilling



Red rockets burst out from spiny fingers

out in all sizes on one sloped bed. Also blooming were Pachypodiums from Madagascar as well as gorgeous Erythrina Acanthocarpa with its burned orange and green flowers, from South Africa. Blooming Yucca included Yucca filifera at over 60 feet tall. Many folk were clustered around mega star rare

bromeliads from Chile marvelling at *Puya alpestris* whose blossom resemble wild blue aliens of metallic blue and green and *Puya Chilensis* whose flowers are chartreuse.

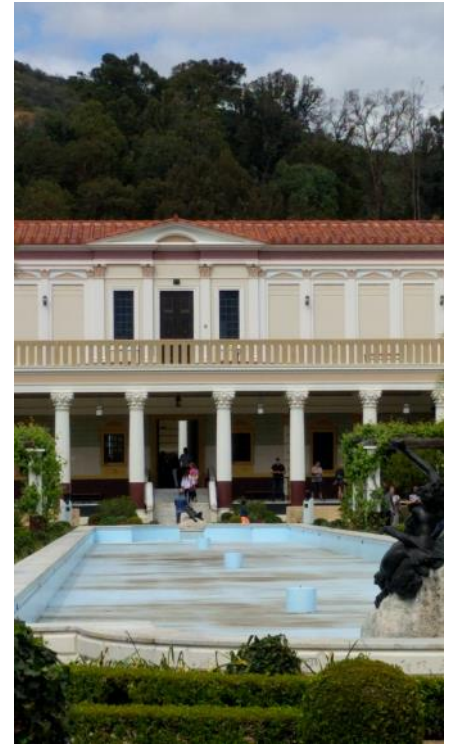
A couple of days' later we headed down to the Getty Villa for a 40-minute tour of its four Italianate gardens. Our illuminating guide

spoke to our wee group through headphones: handy not only for those of us who are hard of hearing, but also, for those of us who wander off piste during tours, as gardeners are wont to do.

J.P. Getty bought the 64 acres in 1945 and, appalled by the "penitentiary modern" architecture of the time as he called it, commissioned an Italianate villa completed in 1974. He died two years later, never having seen the villa but leaving a trust that allows free entry provided you book and pay the \$15 for parking.

The Romans admired the Greeks and their culture of perfection, so many ideas were imported into the four gardens. An inner parasol garden was just for friends and family, with four laurel trees planted to prevent catastrophe such as lightning strikes. Poison was the weapon of choice in ancient times, so white hellebore, reputed to be one of the many possible causes of the death of Alexander the Great at 32, was in evidence. Romans, so our guide also informed us, were into "chemical warfare" burning branches of oleander leaves to release toxic smoke.

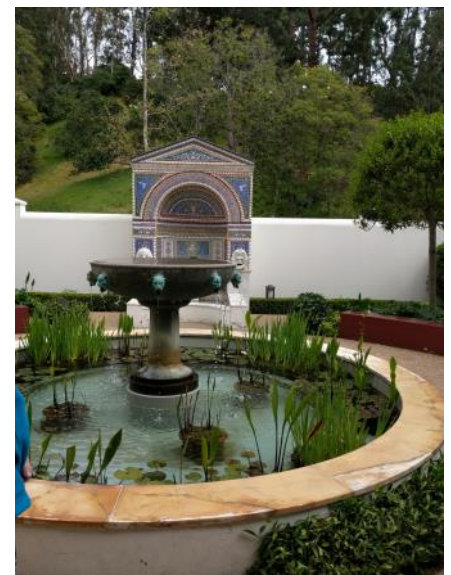
Harmony was the watchword of such Roman architects as Vitruvius, this extending into all outdoor spaces including the fruit and herb garden



Inspired by the Villa dei Papiri in Herculaneum

where we learned that putting rosemary under our pillow is beneficial, lambs ear was used for bandages and calendula added to chicken feed to achieve yellow yolks. Yarrow (from Homer's Iliad) staunches bleeding, while our guide urged us to exit via the gift store where we could buy papyrus paper-making kits, laying strips and pounding them together to make our very own bespoke memento from this special place.

Belle



The East Garden - a haven of peace and tranquility

Ingeborg and Orchids - Marion Langham

On 9th September 2017 North Coast District was once again lucky enough to be treated to a most interesting and informative talk about orchids by Ingeborg Gornella. I'm sure there were many KHS members abroad at the time who were sorry to have missed the occasion. In all we had about 28 members attend, including seven ladies from the Mombasa district. It was lucky that the talk had been arranged indoors as, half way through, the heavens opened and we had a much needed downpour.

The first and most important thing we were told to remember was that there were two types of orchid: those growing on living trees (epiphytic orchids) and those growing in the ground (terrestrial orchids). Then we were told how important it was to know the name of the plant, in order that we could check on the internet and find out for ourselves, firstly if the orchid liked growing in coastal conditions, and then whether it needed full sun, dappled shade or full shade. Whilst on naming orchids we were also advised to keep our orchids properly labelled with the date the orchid had been moved or transplanted – apart from the reference of the name, it helped keep a check on how the plant was doing when the date of any movement was recorded.

In the wild many orchids grow on trees, high up in the canopy, and we were told that we should try and copy this when



In full flow.

growing orchids for pleasure. Many different containers may be used like pots, baskets, wooden slabs, and coconut husks to name but a few. Driftwood can be used but the salt content usually stunts the growth of the orchid.

When growing in pots, it is important to make sure that the compost used is FREE draining as orchids die very easily from root rot. Bark, charcoal, pumice, coconut chunks, moss, nut shells, wine corks, or a mixture all work well.

Depending on what the orchid is planted on or in will dictate the amount of water required. When planted on a tree or a slab, the orchid can be watered every day. For orchids in pots, first check to see if the growing medium is still damp - if it is, don't water. Feed orchids daily or once a week on very much diluted nutrient. Naturally worm or elephant tea makes a good organic fertilizer – when using it, the water should look like VERY weak tea.

After the meeting we were able to tour Ingeborg's garden and admire her extensive collection. She also generously sold a number of plants and donated the proceeds to the KHS. We then travelled a short way down the road to Elfried and Marteen's house, 'Under the Neem Trees', where we had a very enjoyable picnic lunch. The orchids on display took ones breath away.



In rapt attention

NOT AN ORCHID BUT THE BLOSSOM OF A CANNONBALL TREE.
Couroupita guianensis IS A NATIVE OF CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA
 AND IS A RELATIVE OF THE BRAZIL NUT. THE FRUITS ARE
 SPHERICAL WITH A WOODY SHELL AND REACH DIAMETERS OF UP TO
 25 CENTIMETERS (10 INCHES), WHICH GIVE THE SPECIES THE
 COMMON NAME "CANNONBALL TREE".

THIS SPECIMEN WAS SPOTTED BY SUE HORSFALL IN THE GROUNDS
 OF THE HINDU CREMATORIUM IN MOMBASA. JEAN ELMS ALSO HAS
 A VERY FINE EXAMPLE IN HER GARDEN.



A Mixed Bag at John Golds - Chris Betts



Simple! Pauline gets to work on a pot

Thursday 29th June was a surprise. We had planned to put on our spats, wax our moustache, and trip off to Malindi to revive our little grey cells with the delights of tisane, but, had Monsieur Poirot been with us, he would have been disappointed. Milles tonnerres! Our guest speaker, David Gakuo, had been forced to cancel and the event was in disarray.

Actually there was no problem. We had been given a weeks notice and our doughty chairman blandly laid on an replacement event at the drop of a hat. John Golds was (willingly) pressed into offering his house as a venue for a mixed bag of lecturettes followed by a group picnic. A hurried email flash was sent out and some 25 people gathered at Bilgewater.

First off was Pauline Balletto who gave a short talk and demonstration on preparing a plant for a show. We were given several tips on how a few simple accessories could make all the difference to the presentation of a plant.. She was followed by Phillipa Corse who told us about bamboos. The variety was astonishing, ranging from a miniature suited to a flowerbed border up to a giant with a shoot the size of a watermelon. Next Marion told us about the plague of black sooty mould currently disfiguring all the Frangipani trees, up and down the coast. The

culprits of course were our old enemies the aphid family. Lastly Katana Baya gave a very slick demonstration on how to repot different plants. The meeting was rounded off with a light hearted quiz, trawled from the net. Readers can try their hands on page 11

Afterwards it was time for lunch. With everyone chipping in, a huge quantity and selection of food was presented on the table. The uncertain weather cleared enough for people to fill a plate and settle on one or other of John's many outside seating areas. Even Poirot would have been pleased. Ça suffit!



Katana rebomes a Dieffenbachia

BAMBOO FACTS

BAMBOO IS A MEMBER OF THE GRASS FAMILY *POACEAE*, ORIGINATING MAINLY FROM MALAYA, CHINA AND JAPAN

THERE ARE OVER 1500 IDENTIFIED SPECIES IN 111 DIFFERENT GENERA. WITH ONLY FIVE INDIGENOUS SPECIES, MAINLAND AFRICA HAS THE LOWEST DIVERSITY OF WOODY BAMBOO IN THE WORLD. HOWEVER A NUMBER OF OTHER SPECIES HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED AND NATURALISED OVER THE YEARS.

IT COMES IN MANY COLOURS RANGING FROM BLACK, THROUGH BLUE TO GREEN, YELLOW, AND RED.

FLOWERS OF BAMBOO ARE RARELY SEEN. SOME SPECIES OF BAMBOO ONLY DEVELOP FLOWERS AFTER 65 TO 120 YEARS. OTHERS ARE GREGARIOUS AND ALL POPULATIONS OF THAT SPECIES DEVELOP FLOWERS AT THE SAME TIME, NO MATTER WHERE THEY ARE LOCATED IN THE WORLD.

BAMBOO RELEASES 30% MORE OXYGEN INTO THE ATMOSPHERE AND ABSORBS MORE CARBON DIOXIDE THAN OTHER PLANTS.

THE BAMBOO SPECIES *Dendrocalamus sinicus* IS CONSIDERED THE LARGEST BAMBOO IN THE WORLD REACHING 40 M IN HEIGHT AND 30 CM IN DIAMETER. ON THE OTHER HAND, HERBACEOUS BAMBOO SPECIES ARE NOT WOODY AND CAN BE ONLY A FEW CM HIGH.

BAMBOO CULMS (SHOOTS) DO NOT INCREASE IN DIAMETER AS THEY GROW AND REACH THEIR FULL HEIGHT IN 1 YEAR

BAMBOO IS THE FASTEST GROWING PLANT IN THE WORLD. SOME SPECIES CAN GROW AS MUCH AS 3 FEET IN A DAY

BAMBOO IS NATURALLY SELF SUSTAINING. MAKING ITS OWN COMPOST FROM ITS OWN LEAF FALL AND GAINING ALL THE NUTRIENTS IT NEEDS TO GROW STRONG.

BAMBOO HAS A STRUCTURE THAT IS STRONGER THAN STEEL, MAKING IT A POPULAR MATERIAL IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY FOR SCAFFOLDING. IT IS ALSO USED FOR FLOORS, WALLS, FURNITURE, AND HAS EVEN BEEN USED FOR BICYCLE FRAMES AND SKATEBOARDS. IT MAKES WONDERFUL FISHING RODS, UMBRELLA HANDLES, AND WALKING STICKS. IT IS NATURALLY ANTISEPTIC AND GOOD FOR CHOPPING BOARDS AND KITCHEN UTENSILS.

BAMBOO IS COMMONLY EATEN AS A SOUP OR SALAD IN ASIAN CUISINE. HOWEVER THE SHOOTS CONTAIN A TOXIN WHICH HAS TO BE BOILED AWAY BEFORE THEY CAN BE EATEN. ON THE OTHER HAND PANDAS, GORILLAS, AND SOME OTHER ANIMALS EAT IT WITH IMPUNITY. BECAUSE OF THE TOXIN, BAMBOO IS RESISTANT TO PEST AND INSECT ATTACK.

BAMBOO FIBRES ARE THE STRONGEST NATURAL FIBRES IN THE WORLD, MAKING BAMBOO TEXTILES VERY DURABLE. THEY HAVE ROUNDED EDGES, WHICH MAKE THEM EXCEEDINGLY SOFT AND GENTLE WHEN USED AS BEDDING OR CLOTHING.. 100% NATURALLY MADE BAMBOO TEXTILES RETAIN THE ANTIBACTERIAL PROPERTIES OF BAMBOO

BAMBOO IS THE ONLY PLANT TO HAVE SURVIVED THE ATOMIC BLAST AT HIROSHIMA

MiziziPower revisited - Rolf Davey

Early in July, Rolf Davey revisited the Coast to see how the four MiziziPower Field Trials, set up earlier in the year, were getting along. The results were remarkably different, ranging from fantastic success in Watamu to dismal failure in Kilifi. (A full report on the performance of each of the four sites is available at <https://yellowgardening.com/cms/wp-content/uploads/Field-Trial-Report.pdf>). Plainly some further investigation was needed.

Rolf took soil samples from Kilifi and Malindi and submitted them for analysis to Messrs. Crop Nutrition Laboratory Services Ltd in Kabete, Nairobi. The results clearly showed that organic matter was lacking in the soils at both locations and that, as a result, micro-nutrients were not available for the plants to take up. The trials at Watamu were spectacular because of heavy and continuous inclusion of composted organic matter in their soils. The conclusion to be drawn from this is that products such as MziziPower are not sufficient on their own – they are complimentary to the existing soil, improving what is there – and if organic matter is absent, their effect is limited.

The simple and unmistakable lesson here is that all coastal soils should be heavily “treated” with composted organic matter if gardeners and farmers alike wish to achieve improved and lasting results. Not just hard work, sweat, and tears – but COMPOST, COMPOST and more COMPOST.

Another lesson learned here was the obvious one that it pays to be selective in the choice of seed used. At the Vipingo site, it was noticed that crops planted by a local farmer on a neighbouring plot had done much better than those used for the trial. It was then discovered that the seeds used for the trial were not varieties recommended for the coast. By chance The Saturday Nation ran an article on 9th September making the same point. Mathias Ringa reported from the Mombasa Show on the various varieties of crops that do well at the Coast. Besides three maize varieties (Drought Tego WE1101; CKH08069 (Shukran-16); Tosheka (MH401), he writes about cassava (Tajirika), passion fruit (KPF4), tomato (Fortune Maker; Prostar F1; Kemtom F1; Libra F1; Riogrande; Cal J VF; M82 and Joy F1), and watermelon (Sukari F1 and Kazuri F1) varieties specially developed for our climate. He also highlights the benefits of using new varieties of grafted cashew nut (A100, A81, A82 and A8), mango (Ngoe), and citrus (Washington and Valencia), all of which fruit in half the time taken by trees grown from seed. It is an interesting and informative article. Go to <http://www.nation.co.ke/business/seedsofgold/Crop-varieties-suited-for-the-Coast/2301238-4087784-xvpi61/index.html>



Fall Armyworm -

Whilst checking on the progress (nil) of the MiziziPower trial plot at Marion’s shamba, it was discovered that her forage maize crop was badly infested by Fall Armyworm. These terrible pests are the caterpillar of a small moth (*Spodoptera*), of which there are two species in Africa and which feed on all types of grasses, particularly maize.

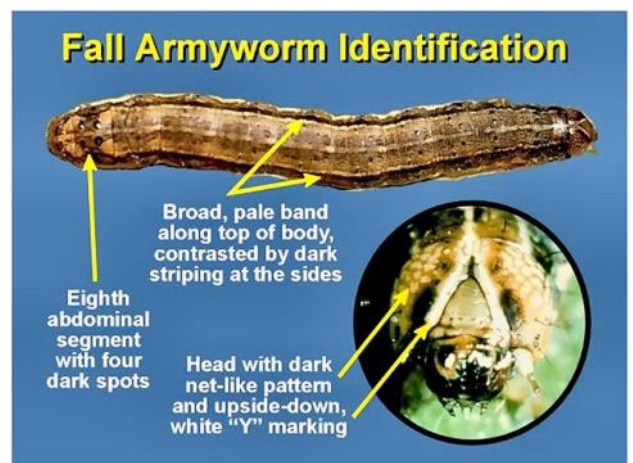


Tell tale debris

Infestations tend to occur at very high densities during the rainy season, especially after periods of prolonged drought.

First response treatment with the application of a granular insecticide called “TREMOR” being hand applied to each plant was largely ineffective.. So were Neem tea and Bulldock. The best so far has been Match 050 EC

Rolf Davey



How to recognise it



The caterpillar



The moth

Ya mgambo

Mwezi wa Julai mwanzoni, Rolf Davey alitembelea tena Pwani kuona jinsi mashamba manne ya Mizizi Power yalivyoendelea Tangu mwanzoni mwa mwaka. Matokeo yalionekana tofauti ya ufanisi tokea Watamu hadi kutofaulu kubaya kwa Kilifi. (Taarifa kamili ya matokeo ya kila shamba kati ya haya manne yanapatikana.

<https://yellowgardening.com/cms/wp-content/uploads/Field-Trial-Report.pdf> uchunguzi zaidi ulihitajika.

Rolf alichukua sampuli ya michanga toka Kilifi na akapelekea utafiti kwa Messrs Crop Nutrition Laboratory Services Ltd, Kabete, Nariobi. Majibu yalidhihirisha wazi kwamba kulikosekana viungo kwenye michanga ya maeneo yote na hivyo, kama matokeo, virutubishi vya micro havikupatikana kwa mimea kufanya vyema. Majaribio ya Watamu yalikuwa ya kutazamika kwa wingi wa viungo uliokuwa ndani ya mbolea taka iliyowekewa kila mara kwenye mchanga wao majibu kutokana na mazao kama

Mizizi Power haitoshi kwa hiyo yenyewe bali kwa mchanga uliopo, kufanikisha kilicho hapo – na kama viungo Hakuna, hali yake ina kiwango.

Somo rahisi na lisilo shaka hapa ni kwamba michanga yote ya Pwani ihudumiwe zaidi na mbolea taka “kwa wingi” kama wakulima na wanabustani wangependa kuona matokeo ya ubora wake sio tu kazi ngumu, jasho na machozi – ila MBOLEA TAKA, MBOLEA TAKA NA MBOLEA TAKA ZADI.

Somo lengine tulisoma hapa kawaida tu utafaidika utakapojua kuchagua mbegu iliyotumika. Sehemu ya Vipingo, iligunduliwa kwamba mbegu zilizopandwa na mkulima wa kienyeji hapo jirani ilifanya vyema zaidi kuliko zile tulizojaribu pia tukagundua kwamba mbegu tulizojaribu hazikuwa tofauti tofauti ambazo zingefaa pwani kwa bahati gazeti la jumamosi 9 September lilihariri jambo kama hilo mathias ringa alitarifu kutoka maonyesho ya Mombasa kuhusu mbegu aina tofauti ambazo hufanya vyema

pwani. Kando na mbegu tatu tofauti. (Drought Tego WE1101; CKH08069 (Shukran – 16); Tosheka (MH401), aliandika kuhusu mihogo tikiti maji (Tajirika), passion fruit (KPF4), Tomato (Fortune Maker; Prostar F1; Kemtom F1; Libra F1; Riogrande; Cal JVF; M82 and Joy F1) and watermelon (Sukari F1 and Kazuri F1) maalumu inayo fanya vizuri katika hewa yetu. Pia aliangazia faida ya kutumia mbegu mpya tofauti ya Korosho A81, A82 and A8), maembe, na citrus (Washington and Valencia), yote ambayo matunda katika nusu ya wakati ilichukuliwa kwa miti iliyopandwa mbegu.

<http://www.nation.co.ke/business/seedsofgold/Crop-varieties-suited-for-the-Coast/2301238-4087784-xvpi61/index.html>

Wako mtafsiri Stephen Saro.
0736 187917



Ask Maude

Q This is Checkie and do hope this is the right way to contact you? So grateful if you could help me identify and find a solution to these little white flecks appearing on leaves of young sapling *Cordia* still in my nursery and also young Bamba coffee trees. Do I need to treat them? Do you know how?

A On receipt of your email, I checked with my plants and found a very similar problem with my *Bougainvilleas*. I don't really know what the cause is but, from searching the internet, I suspect the problem is a species of the *Cervospora* fungus.

There are over 3000 species of this genus and most of them cause plant diseases and form leaf spots. It is a relatively well-studied genus of fungus, but there is still much to learn about the best-known of the species, one of which is particularly associated with coffee plants whilst another is responsible for Orchid leaf spot. Like most fungi, environmental conditions such as temperature and humidity have a big effect on how severe it's attack can be.

The most effective treatment seems to be a copper based fungicide spray, though prevention, by ensuring good air circulation and drainage to avoid a build-up of stagnant humidity, is best.

Of course, a common cause of leaf discolouration is nutrient deficiency. Try giving it a dose of Epsom salts. Mix 20 grams per 10 ltrs of water. Dissolve the salts in a little warm water first, then add to the balance of water and spray, covering the plant - or if you want, water the ground around where the plant grows.

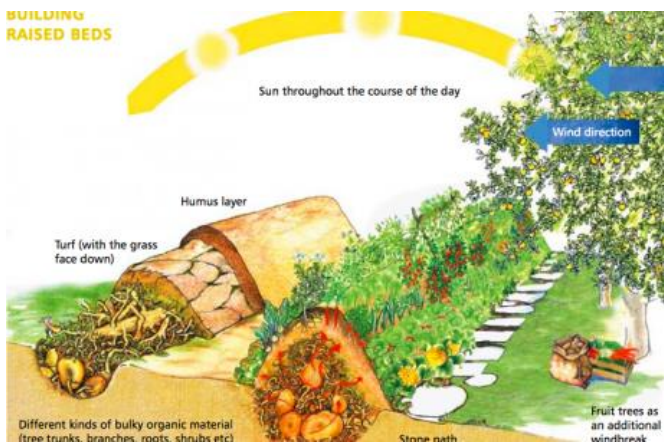


The Many Benefits of Hugelkultur - by Santie de Villiers

During July, a number of KHS members visited my garden in Kilifi. Our plot is on poor, sandy soil, which drains quickly when it rains and is therefore very “thirsty” and does not perform well in droughts. We love our gardening and wish to live in a lush, tropical paradise, but that is difficult to achieve with our soil and unreliable water supply.

One technique that we recently discovered and started to use in our garden is hugelkultur. The following is an excerpt from the Internet (<https://www.permaculture.co.uk/articles/many-benefits-hugelkultur>) about what hugelkultur is:

Hugelkultur are no-dig raised beds with a difference. They hold moisture, build fertility, maximise surface volume and are great spaces for growing fruit, vegetables and herbs.



Instead of putting branches, leaves and grass clippings in bags by the curb side for the bin men (or to be burned by your gardener) build a hugel bed. Simply mound logs, branches, leaves, grass clippings, straw, cardboard, petroleum-free newspaper, manure, compost or whatever other biomass you have available, top it with soil and plant your veggies.

The advantages of a hugel bed are many, including:

The gradual decay of wood provides a consistent source of long-term nutrients for the plants. A large bed might give out a constant supply of nutrients for 20 years (or even longer if you use only hardwoods).

The composting wood also generates heat which should extend the growing season (this is more relevant to Europe, of course).

Soil aeration increases as the larger branches and logs break down meaning the bed will need no tilling, long term.

The logs and branches act like a sponge. Rainwater is stored and then released during drier times. Actually, you may never need to water your hugel bed again after the first year (except during long term droughts).

Sequester carbon into the soil.

So, we adapted the hugelkultur principle in our garden from the description above. We do not make “hills”, but rather dig out the soil and build up the layers in the hugelkultur fashion. We start with a 50 cm trench or flat hole for a flower bed or vegetable garden. We then first line it with flattened out cardboard boxes or old makuti tiles, followed by layers of thickish branches, grass, twigs, coconut husks, compost and soil – as much organic materials as possible that can absorb moisture with the bigger/bulkier ones at the bottom.

Since we have a rather large garden (as most people at the Coast do), we started at the points where water collects around our plots such as:

Run-off from galana paths around our house: We dug 50 cm wide trenches next to the paths and filled this in the hugelkultur fashion and ensure that all water from the paths drain directly into these trenches, rather than onto the driveway.

Run-off from the roofs and gutters that do not feed into our storage tanks: We made a fairly large hugelkultur flowerbed (3 m x 6 m) where we extended the water drain pipe from the roof below ground to run across the flowerbed about 30 cm below the surface. This pipe has been perforated with holes so that the runoff from the roof will spread into the flower bed all along the pipe when it rains.

At our kitchen, we made a smallish herb/vegetable garden of 60 cm x 300 cm in the hugelkultur way and this is being watered by simple drip irrigation from a water tank nearby. Five minutes of watering each day keeps it moist enough to grow lovely lettuce, tomatoes and herbs.

We started with this about 6 months ago, so it is fairly new and we are probably just as curious as all of you to see if these parts of our garden will fare better than the conventional flower beds where we have been relying mostly on mulching and composting to improve the soil and water retention. So keep watching this space or come and visit us to see it for yourself.

Karibusana!



Two Hugelkultur trenches catching rainwater from the path and the roof, simultaneously improving the quality of our sandy soil

Here and There

A Kilifi Day Out



Our Kilifi Gardens Day on 27th July got off to a bad start. The police check on the bridge had decided to be very assiduous and the waiting time was about an hour. Our first host, Santie de Villiers, had gone to a great deal of trouble preparing coffee and delicious cakes but only a handful of people made it to hear her talk about her garden and her experiments with Hugelkultur.

Thankfully the traffic going South was not being affected so we were able to go on to Norbert Rottcher's tree nursery without difficulty. There we were briefed on his efforts to foster the regeneration of various indigenous hardwoods.

Finally we moved on to Heather's beautiful garden where our absent hostess had laid on fresh orange juice and comfort in which to relax after the rigours of the morning. Numbers had now grown and some 25 of us sat down to enjoy a really sumptuous picnic

Photography Course



To show what a cool, trendy, and 'with it' group they are, the keen photographers of North Coast District assembled at 'young' Golds' pad on the morning of the 16th June to hear Peter Derry tell them how to use the cameras on their fancy feature phones. The course was restricted to 12 places but, being 'y&t', they couldn't count and 14 turned up.

Actually, the course was both informative and enjoyable. Peter Derry has forgotten more about photography than most of us know. He has already kindly lectured the North Coast members on the basics of photography and how to get the best out of their regular cameras. This time he was trying to help people use their smart phones to better effect.

Understandably he started with composition. No point in taking a technically brilliant photo if you cut off the subject's head. He then moved on to discuss light, colour, and zoom before turning to the technical side of things – how to manipulate the photo afterwards. He pointed out that there were a large number of Apple and Android editing apps available to choose from but his preference was for something called Snapseed.

His final guidance concerned data management. Digital imaging makes it very easy to take a large number of pictures and one can very quickly lose control of things. His advice was - 1 Select the best and bin the rest; 2 Keep the original; 3 Back up.

The course ended with a practical of taking photos in John's garden and then trying out different techniques to adjust them.

Queen of the Night

This is a species of *Hylocereus*, a tree climbing cactus which we have growing up into the canopy of a Flamboyant in our garden. They get on very well together and the succulent has spread throughout the upper branches of the tree, flowering frequently and quite profusely. Flowering occurs at night and the bloom dies the following morning. Because of this, the common name for the plant is 'Queen of the Night' but that seems to be applied to the genus, rather than any individual species.

Hylocereus is best known for producing exotic fruits, known as Dragon Fruit. Nearly 20 species are known and all originate from the tropical regions of North and South America. However, in other parts of the world - especially tropical Asia - some introduced species are grown on farms for their fruits, whilst the fruit of all species is edible to some degree, that of *H. undatus* is the primary cultivated species.

We are not sure of which species of *Hylocereus* we have. Our plant could fit a number of the descriptions of different species offered in Google. None of our flowers have ever developed into fruit so one clue as to identity is missing but I think the most likely candidate is *H. undatus*.

cb



To Graft or not to Graft. That was my Question - Vanessa Anierre

I was happy to go along on the 24th August to Tropical Nurseries in Malindi to watch our Chairman, Marion and her team headed by John Munga demonstrate how this is done and to finally understand what the benefits are of grafting and air layering. This is an art created by the Chinese centuries ago and only done by highly skilled nursery men. With the invention of plastic, coco-peat and super glue this method of propagation as became much easier to achieve and, with practise, very satisfying.

The benefits are numerous but mainly it gives a strong root stock and by grafting on scions to the root stock one achieves a larger plant faster than from cuttings and certainly speedier than growing from seed.

About 40 of us enjoyed an informative outing in Malindi's spectacular show-piece garden hosted by Evi Walsh herself.



Grafting Basics - Marion Langham

TERMINOLOGY

Callus is the soft tissue that forms over the cut part of a plant that helps the healing process.

Cambium is a thin layer of living cells between the xylem (outer sapwood) and phloem (inner bark). The **Cambium** cells divide and make new cells. The cambium of two different but related plants will grow together if they are firmly fixed together.

Rootstock is the lower part with the strong rooting system onto which the Scion will be grafted

Scion is the part of the plant that will be grafted on to the rootstock

Union is the point where the rootstock and the scion meet

TOOLS

All tools must be clean and disinfected and kept razor sharp (where applicable)

- Secateurs
- Sharp knife with a fine blade –
- Rubber bands
- Plastic 'bandages'
- Sellotape
- Coco Peat damp

GRAFTING HIBISCUS AND OTHER PLANTS

Having selected the rootstock, which should be the same diameter as the scion, with a sharp blade cut into the stem of the rootstock about 1/2" to 3/4".

Make a point on the scion and gently but firmly insert this into the rootstock. It needs to be pushed into the rootstock until it is secure; making sure that the bark and cambium layers of both stems match perfectly

Bandage with plastic to prevent moisture gets into the scarred union and ensure the pieces are securely bound, but not so tightly that the scion dies. The rootstock through the cambium layer feeds the scion.. Once this is completed, try to

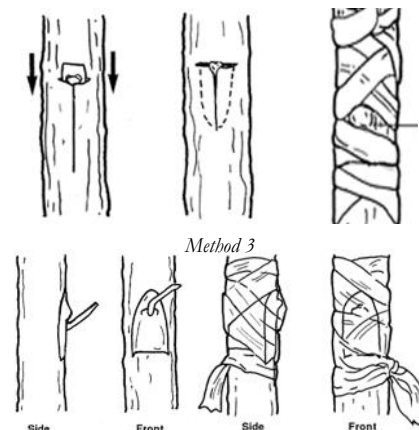


Preparing the scion

place a plastic bag over the grafted area to prevent evaporation

BUDDING

Is a graft where only a single bud from the scion is used. It requires the same care making sure tools are disinfected, and that the cambium of the scion bud and rootstock are compatible and match when placed.



Method 2

AIR-LAYERING

Air-layering was also practiced by the Chinese centuries ago. In the days before 'plastic' it was a highly skilled procedure only practiced by skilled nurserymen. In those early days the success was dependant on keeping the 'medium' usually sphagnum moss damp enough whilst the plant rooted.

Air-layering is not grafting. It is so easy and is a good way to reproduce plants/ It is:-

- Quicker than cuttings
- Achieves larger plants faster
- A good solution for plants which are difficult to get to take by the normal cutting process. Two prime examples are: *Ixora* and *Oleanda*

Method

Select where the layering should take place. Remove any growing stems and cut away the bark. This needs to be well done. When the bark has been removed, place a bag of damp coco peat around the stem and secure it firmly. Make sure that damp cannot get in or out of the bag.



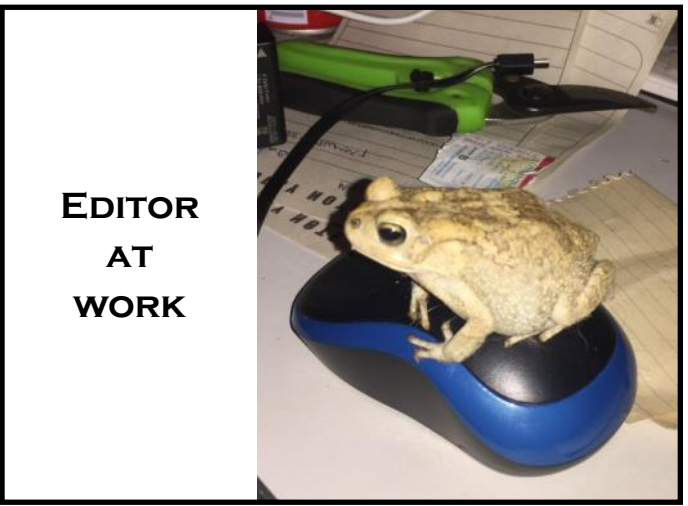
The stem securely wrapped

<https://yellowgardening.com/cms/wp-content/uploads/Grafting.pdf>

Quiz - Horticultural Trivia, as queried at the 'Mixed Bag' on 29th June

- Who is the patron saint of gardeners?
St Fiacre or St Phocas. St Phocas was a gardener and men who like to garden. He is said to be the patron saint of gardeners, agricultural workers, farm workers, farmers, and fieldhands.
- Frankincense is an aromatic substance used in incense and perfumes. Where does it come from?
It is a resin produced by *Boswellia sacra*, a shrub which mainly grows in Arabia and NE Africa. There are four main species of *Boswellia* that produce true frankincense. Resin from each of the four is available in various grades. *Boswellia sacra* trees are considered unusual for their ability to grow in environments so unforgiving that they sometimes grow out of solid rock.
- What is the derivation of the name of the Iris?
It comes from the Greek word *iris* meaning rainbow. As well as being the scientific name, *iris* is also very widely used as a common name for all *Iris* species, as well as some belonging to other closely related genera.
- In the Binomial Naming System what does the term '*vulgaris*' tell you about the plant?
That it is the common variety. Other terms you may have come across are *spinosus* - spiny; *grandiflora* - large flowered; *cordata* - heart shaped; or *edulis* - edible.
- Allotments were traditionally measured in rods, poles or perches. Which is biggest?
They are all the same - 5 1/2 yards. The rod is useful as a unit of length because whole number multiples of it can form one acre of square feet, bounded by sides of 43,560 square feet, bounded by sides of 660 feet by 66 feet long or 40 rods by 4 rods long. Thus, an acre is 160 square rods.
- Peaches, pears, apricots, quinces, strawberries, and apples are members of what plant family?
The rose, *Rosaceae*. The *Rosaceae* family includes herbs, shrubs, and trees. Most species are deciduous, but some are evergreen.^[1] They have a worldwide range, but are most diverse in the Northern Hemisphere. Flowering plants from the **Rose** family have a cup-like shape with five petals and oval-shaped leaves.
- The Avenue of the Baobabs is a group of famous trees in which African country?
Madagascar. The Avenue or Alley of the Baobabs is a prominent group of baobab trees of the species *Adansonia digitata*, lining a dirt road in the Menabe region of Western Madagascar. *Adansonia grandidieri*, is endemic to Madagascar and very different in appearance to our

- What is a Love Apple more commonly known as?
A Tomato. The tomato used to be called the love apple and this is nothing to do with its passionate colour or suggestive shape. This fruit confused French and Italian cooks, who called them 'pomme d'amour' or 'love apples', and 'pomodoro', or 'golden apples', respectively.
- Who said '*Gardens are not made by singing 'Oh, how beautiful,' and sitting in the shade?*'
Was it:- Claude Monet, Rudyard Kipling, Francis Bacon, or Cicero
Kipling. The others are quoted as saying 'My garden is my most beautiful masterpiece' - **Claude Monet** God Almighty first planted a garden. And indeed, it is the purest of human pleasures. - **Francis Bacon** If you have a garden and a library, you have everything you need. - **Marcus Tullius Cicero**
- What do Oranges, lemons, watermelons, and tomatoes have in common.
They are all berries. The scientific usage of the term "berry" differs from common usage. In scientific terminology the definition includes many fruits that are not commonly known as berries, such as grapes, tomatoes, cucumbers, eggplants and bananas. Fruits excluded by the botanical definition include strawberries, raspberries, and blackberries, which are aggregate fruits.
- The biggest seed in the world is produced by the Coco de mer palm *Lodoicea maldivica* Which plant has the smallest?
The orchid. Jesus said that the mustard seed was "smaller than all other seeds" but in fact certain orchids from the tropical rain forest produce the world's smallest seeds. These seeds are dispersed into the air like tiny dust particles, ultimately landing in the upper canopy of the rain forest. The largest seed in the world is the coco de mer, the seed of a palm tree which can reach about 12 inches long, and weigh up to 40 pounds.
- For cruciverbalists - One needs a new corset to make a sore toe cute (6 letters)
SWEETCORN



Kew Gardens

Rolf Davey referred me to an article published in the Telegraph, Lifestyle section, reporting on Kew Gardens Tropical Nursery. Housed in Kew's largest greenhouse, the nursery is home to over 10,000 species under 6,500 square metres of glass. Divided into four sections (orchids, arid, temperate, and moist) this is where the rarest plants in the world are nurtured and propagated and prepared for showing in the public areas. It has the world's oldest and most comprehensive orchid collection, one of which took nearly 40 years to flower. It also has specimens of the world's smallest water lily which no longer exists in the wild. For more about this fascinating sanctuary please go to <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/gardening/gardens-to-visit/inside-kews-tropical-nursery-secret-greenhouse-worlds-rarest/>. It's well worth the visit.

Kilifi Garden Festival

Mnarani Club

Sat/Sun 25th/26th Nov

A GREAT DAY OUT FOR EVERYONE

Attractions include

Guest Speakers - Dino Martins, Silas Njibwakale, Carissa Nightingale

Competitions - Wheelbarrow displays, Flower arrangement, Photography, Crazy hat decoration

Stalls - KHS Shop, Browns Cheese, Orchids, Special Plants, Kitengella Glass, Car & General, MiziziPower, Amiran, Jo Harris jams & smoked fish, David Green veg, Holistic medicines, Garden Furniture, Aquaria, Face Painting, Fundi Kipusa sustainable gardening, and many others

Dine and Dance at the Gala Dinner on Saturday Night

Letters

Hello Marian, Congratulations on being elected the new Chairman of the North Coast Branch!. I have just read the latest Shamba Times and hope I am not being too pedantic in pointing out some Naming of plants errors in your issue.

On page 9 "gallery" the seed pod is from the tree *Adenanthera pavonina* - not an Erythrina.

On page 12 "Creating Bug gardens" Maude says: The Manila or Adonida Palm is called *Veitchia Merrillii*

I feel this is important to point out as both of these are common at the coast.

That being said, the Shamba Times is very interesting and beautifully produced - well done.

Best wishes, and perhaps we will meet at the next Council meeting at the end of the month.

Ann McConnell, Chairman - Mt. Kenya District.

Ed's comment

Two or three people picked up our naming error here. To be fair, Wendy, the photographer, was not sure of the name when she sent the picture in. Her focus was on the interesting pattern

formed by the twisted pods but never the less, we are happy to stand corrected.

We were also picked up by someone else on the Christmas Palm. Lis Gregory, our local palm 'fundi' writes

Dear Marion,

Just as a matter of interest! -

I was enjoying Shamba Times (as always). Summer 2017 Vol.4 Issue 2.,

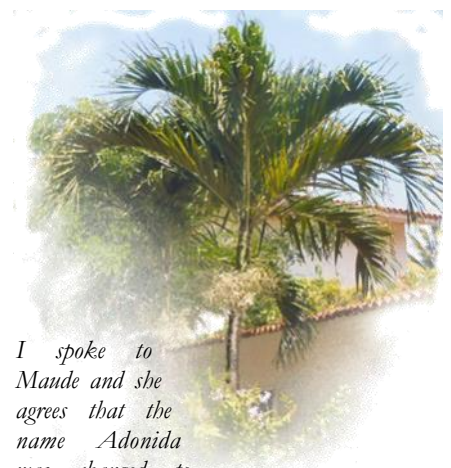
In this issue, the ultimate paragraph on page 11, column 2, mentions the Christmas or Manila Palm "*Adonidia Merrillii*" which is unfamiliar to me. I

used to grow palms and had a successful palm nursery in the 1970's, importing seed from the International Palm Society, amongst which was the Manila Palm, which I knew as *Veitchia Merrillii*. So I looked up "*Adonidia*" in Uhl & Dransfield's definitive *Genera Palmarum* and find it under *Veitchia Merrillii* (Baccari). I also looked it up in David Jones' *Palms of Australia* where it is described along with 5 other *Veitchias* in this genus. I wonder therefore, if *Veitchia* is not the more common name for this delightful small palm.

It was good to see you and Chris at John's 90th - and thank you both for organizing that super party!

Best wishes,

Lis



I spoke to Maude and she agrees that the name Adonida was changed to Veitchia. However it seems that taxonomists (Scott Zona) have now put it back into it's own genus Adonida, (much to the relief of those those with a romantic nature).

Internet forums are still buzzing with debate on the matter

Thank you for your interest.

cb

For your Diary

OCTOBER

BEE KEEPING - CANCELLATION

Due to uncertainty about the elections, this event has now been cancelled

NOVEMBER

SAT/SUN, 25TH/26TH NOVEMBER

GARDEN FESTIVAL AT THE MNARANI CLUB, KILIFI

See the main Ad opposite. Two days of fun, opportunity, and interest. An important event that deserves your support

DECEMBER

THURSDAY, 7TH DECEMBER

CHRISTMAS DECORATION MAKING

Annie Norton-Griffiths and friends will demonstrate the art of making decorations, at her house in Watamu, starting at 10.30AM. Coffee beforehand.

MONDAY, 25TH DECEMBER

CHRISTMAS DAY LUNCH ON THE TURTLE BAY DHOW

Our regular feast of mixed seafood starter, followed by BBQ lobster, & prawns, roast turkey and beef fillet with all the trimmings, and ending with Christmas pudding and coffee. House wines and local drinks are included but those who wish may bring their own more exotic drinks at no extra charge. Park fees are extra and have to be paid on the day. Otherwise the all inclusive price will be Ksh 3500 per head. The trip is always overbooked. Reserve your place now by calling John Golds on 0202335929 or by email to jmgolds@icloud.com

2018

JANUARY - DETAILS TO BE ADVISED

GARDENERS COURSES

The re-scheduled courses from October will now be run in January. The theme of the courses will be 'Getting Ready for the Rains'. Further details in due course.

The Shamba Times is published quarterly for the benefit of its Members by the North Coast District of The Kenya Horticultural Society. Articles for publication are welcome and should be addressed to the Editorial Office, as should any comments, suggestions, or corrections.

The Kenya Horticultural Society was established in 1923 for the purpose of stimulating and increasing interest and knowledge of gardens and plants in Kenya. The North Coast District extends from Vipingo in the South to Malindi in the North. Annual membership is Ksh 1000 per person (Ksh 1300 per couple). Corporate Membership is offered at Ksh 2000. Members gardeners are accepted for limited membership at a fee of Ksh 500 per annum.

M-Pesa payments can be made on 0702 767177

Editorial

I am always rather surprised at the way that the content of the Shamba Times, more or less, just falls into place. Of course we have our regular spots and a few reliable contributors but somehow, each issue, we get the additional material needed to make it different. Obviously I would like to see more of our members submitting articles since we are meant to be an outlet for your wisdom and comment but it is equally nice to be pointed in the direction of pieces published elsewhere which you feel will be of interest to other members. One problem though is that our format makes publishing a complete article difficult – we don't have the space. In those cases, we try to put in a synopsis of the article together with a link to the whole piece. However, I wonder how many people bother to follow the link. It is very easy – just *control + click* – and worth doing. There are several in this issue including one about Ann Robertson's skill at discovering new species.

In previous years at this time, we have been in the final throes of preparing for our extended flower show – 'Flowers for Everyone', 'Festival of Flowers', call it what you will. On every occasion the big problem for the organisers has been getting a large number of entrants. By dint of a bit of arm twisting, the number of entries has been reasonable but hardly representative of the membership. This year is to be different. We've put the date back to gather in the swallows and we have dispensed with the flower show. Instead we are having a 'Garden Festival' with stands and exhibitions of every kind together with a number of guest speakers, including Dino Martins. Give us your support!

What a tremendous contribution John Golds has made to the KHS, especially the North Coast District. The man is indefatigable, blasting out emails like a snow storm, and chivvying people to do things. It was therefore all the nicer to be present at his 90th birthday celebration and see how much he is appreciated by all his friends, here at the North Coast.

cb

KENYA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

FIND US ON THE WEB

WWW.KENYAHS.COM



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