

Volume 6 issue 4

October 2019



91
participants



Kenya Horticultural Society North Coast District

The Shamba Times

We celebrate our 2019 NCD Gardeners' Courses.

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Chairman's Notes

I am delighted that the front page of this edition of The Shamba Times features our gardeners, and celebrates the success of the 2019 NCD Gardeners' Courses, which were devised and delivered by Jonathan Baya and Katana Baya, both of whom serve on the KHS North Coast District committee. We had a total of 91 gardeners who attended this year's courses, which were delivered at a higher level of knowledge than previous basics courses.

And on the subject of gardening knowledge and know how, are you, like me, sometimes a little flummoxed by the botanical terms which are in common use? For instance, what about the terms: *indigenous, native, naturalised, alien, exotic* used to describe the origins of trees and shrubs? Or, what distinguishes one from the other of the following: *seed, fruit, pod, drupe, nut and kernel?* Or, perhaps like me, you would like to be able use a proper, botanical term for, say, a fruit that bursts open to liberate its seeds when mature. Help is at hand! Starting with this issue, we are working towards the compilation of a *Shamba Times* Glossary of Terms, which will be built up issue by issue. So, if there are terms you would like added and/or clarified, send them to me at: sharpcrispin@hotmail.com for inclusion in subsequent issues of the *Shamba Times*.

I am very pleased too that we have persuaded Marion, Lady Langham, to contribute a really useful piece for this edition, intriguingly entitled *Hassle Free Plants for the Garden*. Be sure to read it, and to try out some of the suggestions Marion makes for planting that will enhance your garden, but which will break neither your back nor your budget.

There's lots more too - Wendy Taylor writes about cashew nut growing in our district, we record the last three months of NCD events, and we share what's coming up for the rest of the year.

And remember, we always like to hear from you!

Crispin Sharp.

Vanessa Aniere



After many years of devoted service to the KHS NCD committee as our Hon Secretary, Vanessa Aniere has stepped down from the post to 'rest her eyes' and to concentrate on other things.

We are immensely grateful to Vanessa for the commitment, energy and enthusiasm that she has given to KHS and to our district for so long and unstintingly. She has generously supported our last three Chairmen and kept meticulous records of our committee meetings. We thank her for her outstanding service and wish her all the best for the future.



KENYA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY
Gardening Kenya

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. Of course we welcome new members, so why not see if you can introduce a new member to us? this quarter?

Officers of The North Coast District

Chairman	Mr Crispin Sharp sharpcrispin@hotmail.com
Vice Chairman	This post remains open
Hon Sec	Mrs Wendy Taylor wendy.elizabethkenya@gmail.com
Hon Treasurer	Mr Rupert Partridge rdbpartridge@gmail.com
NCD Shop	Mrs Elfried Hoogeweegen hoogeweegen@africaonline.co.ke

Our 2019 Gardeners' Courses



Establishing and Maintaining Lawns, Rock Gardening, Pot Plants, Pruning, Making and Using Compost, Pests and Diseases in the Garden.



These courses are aimed at equipping NCD gardeners with knowledge and skills, and build interest amongst gardeners so that everyone enjoys working as a gardener.

The first course was held in Watamu at Watamu Turtle Trust on 10 July and 25 gardeners attended, then in Malindi at Drift Wood club on 11 July; 11 gardeners attended. The third course was delivered in Kilifi on 15 July and 26 gardeners attended. The last course was held in Vipingo on 16 July at Tewa Technical Training Center and 29 gardeners attended.

Gardeners who attended and said they enjoyed the courses and they learnt plenty of information which will help them with their garden work. They wanted these courses to continue in future, and to be more practical in nature.

I would like to congratulate those who organised the courses the gardeners who attended and all those who paid for their gardeners to attend and I urge those who missed this year's courses to attend the next series of courses which will be held next year and will cover specific plants like 'Planting and Care for Orchids and Bromeliads' and much more.

Kozi za Bustani za 2019 - by Katana Baya

Mwezi wa Saba tulikua na msururu wa mafundisho ya wana bustani. Mafunzo yaligusia,

- 1 Kupanda na jinsi ya kutunza nyasi**
- 2 Rock Garden**
- 3 Kupanda maua kwenye vyungu**
- 4 Kupunguza miti**
- 5 Kutengeneza Samadi na jinsi ya kuitumia**
- 6 Wadudu na magonjwa ya mimea**



Lengo la mafunzo haya ni kuwapa maarifa na ujuzi na kuwapa motisha wana bustani ili wafrahie na ku- penda kazi ya shamba. Mafunzo ya kwanza yalifanyika tareke 10 Watamu Turtle Trust na wana bustani 25 walihudhuria. Mafunzo ya pili yalifanyika Malindi Drift Wood Club tareke 11 na wana bustani 11 walihudhuria. Mafunzo ya tatu yalifanyika tareke 15 Kilifi nyumbani kwa Martin na Alfried na wana bustani 26 walihudhuria. Mafunzo ya mwisho yalifanyika tareke 16 Vipingo katika Chuo cha mafunzo cha TEWA na wana bustani 29 walihudhuria.

Nawapongeza wote walio husika kupanga, na wote walio hudhuria na wote walio lipia wana bustani wao ili kuhudhuria. Wale nilio zungumza nao kuhusu mafunzo haya walisema walifrahia na kujifunza mambo kadha wa kadha yatakayo wawezesha kufanya na kufrahia kazi ya bustani na waliomba mafunzo haya yaendelezwe na kuwe na vitu vya kufanya ili kila mmoja ajihisi kwamba anashiriki moja kwa moja.

Hassle free plants ...

50
YEARS

“Flowers welcome, Weeds by appointment”

By Marion Langham

The list is long when one is looking for hassle-free plants for the garden; it all depends on what the gardener wants the plants to do, so, I have selected some of my favourites.

WEEDS/Annuals.

I call these ‘friendly weeds’, because they reseed easily but need to be kept in check. If left them to their own devices the garden would full to capacity of these whilst other plants may suffer.



Impatiens balsamina excels itself in the garden, if allowed it will grow in clumps and from afar resembles dwarf ‘sweet peas’ in flower. It needs no special growing attention. Seeds can be scattered in the garden or sown in pots but, during the dry season, it may struggle a little, so it is wise to save some seeds to scattered after the rains. Whitefly and spider-mite can be a nuisance.

Gomphrena globose is worth encouraging. With purple pom-poms, it flowers freely and self-seeds all year round. It grows very close to the sea and is not seriously affected by the saline conditions.



Catharanthus roseus is an invasive weed worth having; it flowers freely and fills the garden with white or magenta flowers. It survives without any care or attention. Be selective, allowing it to grow where it is wanted rather than where it wants to grow.

Rivinia humilis is a delicate looking plant with small white flowers and masses of red berries. It is both a real beauty and a pest. It is drought and saline tolerant, making it a great low maintenance ground cover. We brought one plant into the garden, now it is nearly out of control.



Capiscum nunnuum or Kenya’s bird’s eye chilli. This is not quite what one would expect for the flower garden. However, the red chillies are very eye-catching, bringing birds and butterflies to the garden.

Euphorbia cyathophora grows very well in the garden and is fast becomes a friendly weed. It grows best in full sun and is drought resistant, surviving the worst of the dry seasons.



BULBS



Siphonochilus aethiopicus is part of the ginger family; it can be found growing wild around Kilifi. In the garden it is at its best after the rains, and will flourish in both sun and shade. The lush leaves are attractive, and the delicate pink flowers are worth waiting for. When the dry season takes over these die back, to return in the next rains. It has been over collected in the wild, as it has many medical uses,

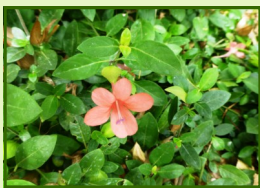
and is on the Red Date book for South Africa.

Habranthus robustus.

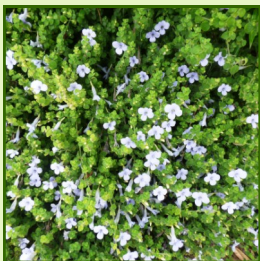
This bulbous plant flowers after the rains, or if it has been watered. It can become quite invasive.



PERENNIALS



Barleria repens is a perennial that grows where few other plants would survive. It clammers high and can be used to cover unsightly walls.



Barleria obtuse is a perennial, it is a great ground cover flowering most of the year round.

Ruellia tweediana puts on a great show most mornings. The flowers only last until mid-day, followed the next day with another display. It is drought resistant, although it loves the water. It is quite a spreader, so be warned.



AND NOT RECOMMENDED ...

Argemone Mexicana is very decorative, with fascinating leaves, which are prickly and pretty yellow poppy flowers. Don't be tempted, *Argemone Mexicana* re-seeds easily and the tiny plants that spring up as a result are prickly so removing them is notoriously difficult.



Where have all the Mkorosho gone,

50
YEARS

There is no disputing that the cashew nut grows on a tree but what a rather curious form this takes. The kidney-shaped seed or nut is enclosed in a double shell, which is attached to the base of orange-yellow-red 'cashew apple'. In botanical terms, the former is a drupe, the true fruit of the cashew tree, which develops first, while the latter is an accessory fruit, sometimes called a false fruit, which grows on the cashew seed/nut. The painted glass panel in my Swahili bed well depicts this as shown, suggesting also that cashew trees have been growing at the Coast for a long time. This is indeed the case. Originating from the northern part of South America, the cashew, *Anacardium occidentale*, was introduced by the Portuguese to Mozambique in the 16th Century. There it flourished forming extensive forests. Eventually, it became dispersed into East Africa along the coastal plains of Kenya and Tanzania.



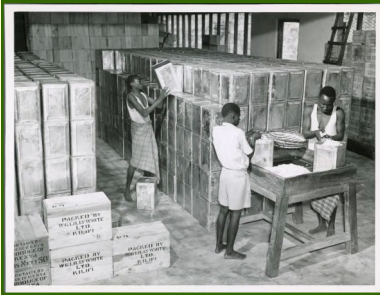
As it became naturalised, the cashew or *mkorosho* in Kiswahili developed into one of the coastal region's oldest and valuable cash crops. The crop is perfectly suited to tropical lowland areas with a pronounced dry season; the trees can be very drought resistant provided their roots can penetrate deeply into the soil and draw water from the sub-soil; they normally bear fruit when they are between 2½-3 years old and, when they have reached maturity after 9-10 years, fruiting continues year after year, with an economic life span of 30-40 years if well cared for. It is also easy to look after. The whole fruit fall from the trees when mature and the nut in its shell is easily separated from the accessory, cashew apple, ready for traditional artisanal processing or for delivery to the factory for industrial processing. Some occasional pruning of branches may be necessary and the odd cuttings can be conveniently used for fire wood.



The presence of a cashewnut processing factory in Kilifi spurred interest in the crop as was the case with the father of Sue Horsfall, a KHS NCD member, she recalls. Having purchased in the 1960s a large acreage of land on the southern side of the Kilifi Creek, her father who was a farmer had pondered on what to do with it apart from building a holiday residence. The discovery of an old well on the site was advantageous to the creation of the first cashew tree orchard on the plot with a second one then being established alongside the road. The trees of the latter are still in existence today though no longer fruiting. Once the trees matured and were fruiting, her father largely left the crop in the hands of his staff including the collection of the nuts and their delivery to the nut factory on the outskirts of Kilifi Town.

... long time passing?

50
YEARS

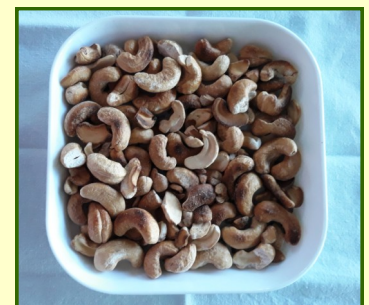


The Kilifi Cashew Nuts Factory, established in the early 1970s as the sole processor at the Kenyan coast, was set up initially as a government parastatal in a joint venture between the Kenya Government and an Italian company that supplied the processing machinery. The latter incorporated a new system of cracking open the nut shells without damaging the nuts: the individual shells were perforated and compressed air inserted to crack the shell.

The factory operated successfully over several years: at its height, it apparently had 3,000 workers and processed more than 30,000 tonnes of cashew annually. With the departure of the foreign management, the running of the factory started to deteriorate. Privatisation was sought though this ultimately failed. Some blame the collapse of the company on taking this course of action. With the closure of the factory in 1998, local farmers were thus deprived of a structured market for their produce and there was a significant negative impact on the local economy. Orchards were abandoned or the land put to an alternative use: the extensive coverage of land by the cashew nut crop of yesteryear is now no longer.

Efforts to revive the industry in the recent past have always faced challenges including the lack of commitment by government authorities, farmers' unwillingness to plant hybrid orchard, aging trees and lack of a market. However, a new EU-funded initiative, a cashew nuts and sesame value addition project, was launched last year which will support smallholders within Kilifi, Lamu and Kwale to plant one million nut seedlings per year over three years with a new processing factory currently being constructed at Kakanjuni, west of Kilifi County.

An opportune time for you, too, to plant a few seedlings in your garden? With one of the improved varieties available at KALRO (Kenya Agriculture & Livestock Research Organisation) Mtwapa Research Centre, you should be able to harvest your own fruit within the short period noted above and then, after processing using the traditional artisanal method, to enjoy the fruits of your labour. The latter basically involves putting an open pan of nuts over an open fire to rid them of an allergen phenolic resin - anacardic acid; stirring continuously to avoid scorching until they start burning; throwing them onto sand to extinguish the fire; then removing the outer hard shell and the inner casing; and, finally, sun-drying for a short time to complete the process.



Lastly, you could always eat your nutritious nuts, either raw or roasted, accompanied by a small glass of cashew apple liquor...!

Main Sources:

Wikipedia/Cashew 7/1/2019; Infonet Biovision/Cashew 7/9/2019; Sue Horsfall; Pauline & Aurelio Balletto.

TOWARDS A SHAMBA TIMES GLOSSARY OF BOTANICAL TERMS : Part 1

Explanatory Note

This first part of our glossary in-the-making covers five commonly-used terms: indigenous, alien, naturalised, invasive and exotic, which all relate to one of the units of classification of plants - '*species*'.

The terms presented here are drawn from '*The Kew Plant Glossary - an illustrated dictionary of plant terms*' by Henk Beentje, Kew Publishing, 2010 (written to accompany the *Flora of Tropical East Africa*) with a few minor amendments and additions being made including the 'area' meaning, in this context, Tropical East Africa - Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. The terms are descriptive and not necessarily definitive. A few examples of trees, shrubs and/or herbaceous plants found in our coastal gardens that accord with the different terms have been provided, with some then illustrated in the accompanying photographs. This did not always prove to be a straightforward exercise as it is apparent that a plant may be categorised under more than one type of plant species as was the case, for instance, with *Azadirachta indica* (*Neem*). The tree was found to be classified as exotic, as naturalised and as invasive, an indication of the complicated subject matter which has been touched upon!

Particular reference has also been made to the Kenya Horticultural Society's *Gardening in Eastern Africa*, 2017 book, together with N. Dharani's, *Field guide to Common Trees and Shrubs of East Africa*, 2011.

Indigenous: a plant species occurring naturally in the area.

Delonix elata, *Hibiscus schizopetalus*, *Kigelia africana* (*Sausage Tree*), *Majidea zanguebarica*, ***Mimusops obtusifolia***, *Oncoba spinosa*, ***Scadoxus multiflorus***



Alien: a plant species not native but introduced to the area and (becoming) established in the wild

Naturalised:

a non-native, introduced plant species that has become established and reproduces freely

Terminalia catappa (Indian Almond), *Pithecellobium dulce* (Madras Thorn),



Invasive:

a non-native plant species intruding into, and spreading in, areas to which it is foreign, a subset of **naturalised**

Azadirachta indica (Neem), *Lantana camara*, *Barleria repens*



Exotic:

a non-native plant species introduced into an area by humans, often for its economic or ornamental value

Delonix regia (Flamboyant), *Ceiba pentandra* (Kapok Tree),
Moringa oleifera



And for good measure:

Native:

an undoubtedly indigenous species occurring naturally in a given area. Opposite to introduced

Introduced:

a non-native species brought in by man. Opposite to Native.

NCD Monthly Talks,

50 YEARS



A New Rock Garden in Watamu

On 30 July, 2019, after relaxing on the loggia of the house of our hosts, the Knowles, which is protected by windbreaks at this time of the year against the winds coming off the sea, and having enjoyed tea or coffee together with a delicious samosa or two courtesy of William, the housekeeper, some 35 plus of us got down to business. First, a tour of the main garden led by Evie Walsh: across the lush *pemba* grass (barefoot is best) through a gate to see an area which has been reclaimed from the sea through planting, for instance, *Scaevola*, a heat-tolerant, low in water requirements, mat-forming shrub and young coconut trees; then through other parts of the garden past a Flamboyant tree of some 50 and 60 years old, tall climbing philodendrons, healthy mother-in-laws tongues and verdant ferns growing on beds of wood chippings which reduces their water intake.



And then onto the *pièce de résistance* - the Rock Garden, with Evie, its creator, telling us how it came into being. Built where a house had originally been located, large coral boulders, acquired



from those excavated when the new water pipeline was laid alongside the Malindi-Kilifi Road, have been sited atop the mounded area and surrounded by coral chippings. Interspersed within the chippings are numerous kinds of plants giving splashes of colour from lantanas, *evolvulus* or dwarf morning glories, crowns of thorns, and dwarf bougainvilleas, and the occasional tree including an unusual frangipani (*Plumeria pudica?*).

Members surely came away inspired to build their own rock garden - though probably of a much more modest scale. Thanks to our hosts and their staff and, of course, to Evie Walsh for a most enjoyable event.





Events and Visits



Remarkable Gardens - an illustrated talk by Rory Stuart.

Perhaps all gardeners need to stop and think from time to time. We are so used to creating conventional gardens that will never look out of place, that will always fit in, and that will cause no possible offence, that perhaps we miss the opportunity to create a remarkable garden instead. A garden that will truly reflect who we are, and that will be designed and built out of our stubbornness, our insistence on doing it our own way, and despite all obstacles to the contrary.

On 3 September, around 25 NCD members gathered at Kinuni, the remarkable garden that May Buxton created, the story of which featured in the July Shamba Times. We were privileged to have UK garden historian, writer, enthusi-



ast and outstanding speaker, Rory Stuart, to talk to us about nine 'Remarkable Gardens' and remarkable they were. From Nek Chand's extraordinary Indian garden (left) built entirely of recycled ceramics, metals, light switches and rock to Derek Jarman's uncompromising garden (right), lovingly created in the shingle around his cottage at



Dungeness, even as he himself was dying. There was a modest but extraordinarily colourful and crowded garden built tumbling down a hillside in Positano, and two Canadian gardens, Grand Metis and Quatre Vents, created in harsh and unforgiving landscapes (only one hundred frost free days per year) but themselves now a part of those landscapes. There were follies from Italy, an Arab garden in Majorca, Alfabia, and a garden of monsters (actually natural rocks) built more than 400 years ago at Bomarzo in Italy.

Our thanks are due to Carissa and Peter Nightingale who hosted the event, but most of all to Rory Stuart for his wonderfully erudite, amusing and inspiring talk. May he return to Kenya soon.

A Visit to Robusta—a Garden and its Art.

On 25 September, some 20 members set off on a *tour de force*: to view Carola Rasmussen's remarkable collection of 300 stone sculptures carved by 40 different sculptors from Zimbabwe, collected when she resided in that country in the early 1990's. The Robusta garden, formerly a more landscaped garden created by Helen Cockburn, now provides the perfect setting for this other collection with sculptures being located in every conceivable nook and cranny. From solitary pieces such as those depicting a mother, father and child or those carved as a choir with little heads atop open-mouthed and singing, to groups - of small animals under the trees or positioned on steps as were the creep of tortoises, or standing on walls like the many owls. After seeing the splendid display of numerous faces in the House of Faces, transformed from the orchid house which housed Helen's renowned orchid collection, one becomes aware of how, through the simple and direct way of carving, the gamut of human expressions has been captured: some seeming almost spiritual with their elongated heads linking them, it is understood, to the spirit world, some with pouty lips, others with sad-looking eyes while others appear youthful sporting patterned hair created through using a special hammer with spikes.



Such beautiful, tactile pieces of sculpture carved from serpentine stone with those from the harder, darker stone keeping their colour while those from the softer stone being of different shades of colour, which change and weather over time. Carola guided us around with a quiet passion for her collection aided and abetted by Ann Robertson on the botanical side of things, with one particular shrub with a dainty little flower being ably identified by her as *Carpolobia goetzei*. On then to a film show in the gallery on a famous Zimbabwean sculptor, Nicholas Mukomberanwa, and, finally, a visit to the crafts shop with its tasteful display of small pieces of sculpture, wood carvings, and ceramics. A splendid morning with thanks extended to our host, Carola, and to Ann, and to others who made it possible.

Odds and Ends



Would you believe it? Modern day uses for sisal.

The discovery of new and innovative applications for sisal fibre has been one factor which has helped ensure a bright future for the crop (see *Shamba Times* issue 6, April 2019). Yet another use, though perhaps not by our KHS NCD members, was described in the *Saturday Nation*



Seeds of Gold, 25 May 2019: hair extensions or sisal braids. A female ICT student at Kakamega County Polytechnic has been perfecting the art of making this hair product. Sourcing her raw material from farmers in Webuye and Bungoma, whom she now pays, she cuts the leaves into various lengths before starting to process them on a threshing bench. After the sisal fibres are extracted, they are washed to remove all

the green matter and dried, and then soaked for a short period in an alkaline solution to soften them. The fibres are then dyed - not only black but maroon and purple, too! After the dyed sisal strands are sun-dried, they are generously oiled to make them smoother for plaiting and styling. They are then ready for packing - two whole sisal leaves are needed to make one packet of sisal braids or hair extensions, which sells to salonists at Ksh 50.

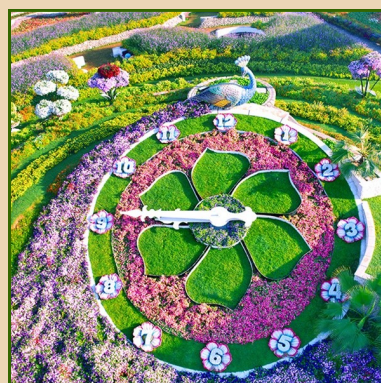
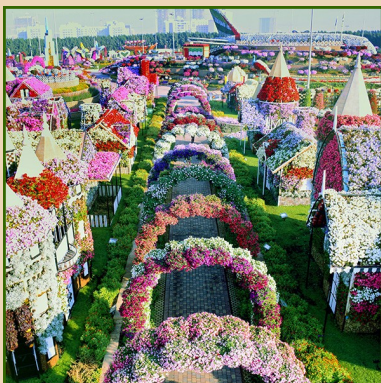


Flower Show, or Horror Show?

Publicity announcement from Dubai! 'Every year from mid-November to mid-May, a 72,000 sqm space full of scents and colours comes to life. This incredible experience is one of Cityland's signature creations – Dubai Miracle Garden. It was launched on Valentine's Day, 2013, and is set in the heart of Dubailand. Seeing the garden in full bloom with its 150 million flowers arranged in colourful arches and patterns, and the myriad shapes they form, is truly magnificent.'

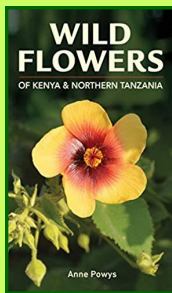


Is it? Well, we will let you our readers be the judge of that.



And finally, for your diary

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YEARS



Tuesday 22 October 2019 at 1600 at The KWS Education Centre Arabuko-Sokoke Forest Main Gate near Gede.

A talk by Anne Powys, and some elephant watching.

Anne Powys launches 'Wild Flowers' and following a talk by Anne, NCD members can join Sami Safari at the swamp, where we may see elephants coming to the watering hole.



Tuesday 26 November 2019, at 1000 for 1030 at the Kilifi Sisal Plantation.

Kilifi Sisal Plantation

You have read about the Kilifi Sisal Plantation in April's Shamba Times. Now we visit the plantation, to be followed by an informal lunch at The Food Movement Eco Restaurant on the plantation.



Tuesday 10 December 2019 at 1000 for 1030 at Lady Annie Norton-Griffith's home in Watamu.

Christmas Decorations from the Garden

Our annual NCD festive season event in which members and gardeners share their creative skills and compete for prizes.

25th December 2019—the annual NCD Christmas Day Cruise

This is a delightfully informal and relaxing way to spend Christmas Day, cruising up Mida Creek and back, to anchor for an excellent lunch of fish, lobster, prawns and traditional Christmas turkey on board the newly refurbished Turtle Bay Beach Club hotel dhow. The price of 3,500/- per person includes all drinks. KWS marine park fees are the only extra and are, at present, Kenyan citizens 130/-, Residents 300/- and Visitors USD17. We meet at Turtle Bay Beach Club hotel at 10.30 and are transported by minibus to Mida Creek. The minibuses return us to the hotel at about



15.30. This KHS NCD event is open to all members and their guests but since it is very popular, booking is on a first come first served basis. Payment is not required until mid-December. If you would like to spend Christmas Day in this congenial way, please email me, John Golds jmgolds@icloud.com giving your name and immigration status (Kenyan, Resident, Visitor) and the same details for any guests you wish to bring. I will reply by email to confirm your reservation. Welcome aboard.

