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Kenya Horticultural Society North Coast District

The Shamba Times



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North Coast District News



Chairman's Notes

Welcome to a brand new edition of The Shamba Times. The beautiful orchid on the front cover of this month's newsletter was photographed in Robusta garden in Malindi at our September 2019 meeting.

Now, it's a new year, 2020, perhaps the year of perfect vision? And on that note, might it be a good year to re-visualise our own gardens? How many of us garden simply to maintain the status-quo, to keep things in order, rather than to renew, to restyle, to restore, or to reinvigorate our gardens and to take them to the next level?

Which brings us to inspiration. When we are inspired, we can see better what is possible, what might be, how our vision can be broadened, unlimited, set free.



And so it was at our North Coast District visit to the Knowles' garden at their impressive beach side home in Watamu. Evie Walsh had created a very large new rock garden where previously an old building had stood. The new garden was simple, spectacular, and beautiful. Easy to maintain and built from the one material to which we have endless access, coral.

Since that meeting in Watamu, smaller rock gardens have popped up all over our district, inspired by what we saw that morning. Seeing the new rock garden enhanced our vision of what could be achieved in our own gardens. I set about creating my own small rockery outside the front gates of my place, and now I get pleasure from seeing it every time I drive in or out of my front gate.



And I hope it gives my neighbours and passers-by pleasure too.

So why not make 2020 the year you look at your garden through fresh eyes? Why not visualize a renewed and reinvigorated garden? Join us at our meetings, garden visits and events in 2020, and I promise you too may be inspired.

Wishing you all a very **Happy New Year.**

Crispin Sharp.

Our new Hon. Secretary

We welcome Wendy Taylor as the NCD's new Secretary following her retirement from the post by Vanessa Aniere. Wendy lives in Kilifi where she and her husband Paul have built a new house and garden – a work still in progress.



Wendy has been gardening since she was a child, though her scope as a gardener has often been limited by living in rented homes outside the UK. She looks forward to now participating more fully in the role of the KHS, and also to honing her gardening skills and knowledge.



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

NCD 2019 Rainfall



How we see rainfall, what it means to us, and whether we view it as a blessing or a curse depends of course on what impact the rain has on our lives. For shamba-holders who depend on the rain to irrigate their crop of maize, too little rain is a disaster and yet too much rainfall may easily cause flooding. In an instant, precious seed and seedlings can be washed away. For those who live in areas without proper drainage, or who run lodges, beach hotels, or small and medium sized tourist-



related businesses, too much rain is a major challenge. We have seen lodges in Tsavo East washed down the river and into the ocean. Heavy rainfall in areas of dense low-cost housing can cause misery for the inhabitants of homes that lack proper roofs and flooring. This piece below, from The Guardian newspaper of 9 November 2019, explains why rainfall has been quite so heavy in eastern Africa in 2019.



Twenty years ago in 1999 a **new weather pattern** was described for the first time. Now it has shifted up a gear and is causing devastation across east Africa.



The **Indian Ocean dipole**, sometimes called the Indian El Niño, is an irregular oscillation in which the surface temperature of the sea is alternatively greater in the ocean's west and its east. The positive phase, when it is warmer in the west, sees more rain in the west and greater chance of drought in the east. These are reversed in a negative phase.



According to Australia's Bureau of Meteorology, the current positive dipole is the strongest since measurements began in 2001, although there may have been a similar pattern in 1997. The latest dipole may have contributed to record-breaking monsoon rainfall in India.



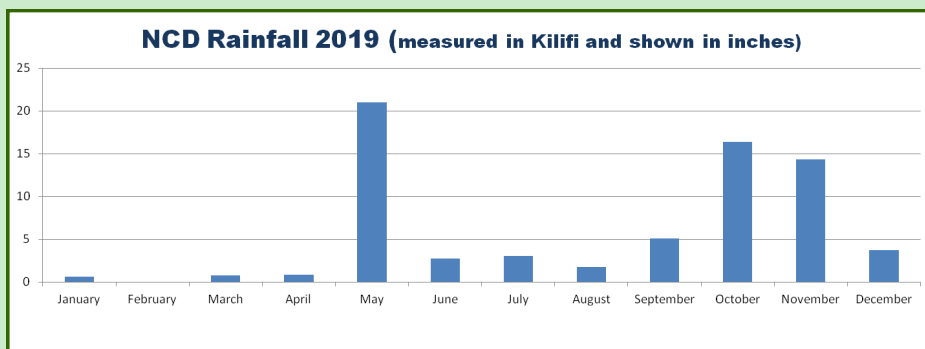
The warm ocean around east **Africa** is bringing torrential rain. Flooding has displaced hundreds of thousands of people in Somalia and submerged towns in South Sudan, while flash floods have caused landslides in Kenya, Ethiopia and Tanzania.

The dipole is also suspected of having produced hot weather and drought in south-eastern Australia, a region previously thought to be influenced mainly by the Pacific El Niño.

The current dipole is expected to peak later in November, with extreme weather continuing until it passes.

For gardeners, the rain is usually very welcome, even in large quantities. It is not precious young crops that we are nurturing, but usually well established plants, shrubs, palms, trees and grass, all of which welcome the rain. Many homes and gardens here on the coast have large underground water storage tanks and plentiful rainfall is essential to maintaining adequate supplies of stored water to see us through the dry periods. In terms of rainfall, 2019 has been very

kind to our members as the chart above shows. Total rainfall for our district in 2019 as measured in Kilifi in NCD member Bob Hammond's garden was a remarkably high **69.53** inches.



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Calling all gardeners. Attention please!

Growing vegetables and herbs here at the coast.

In the next three issues of *The Shamba Times* of 2020, we shall be running a series on 'Growing Vegetables and Herbs at the Coast'.

For this, we want to use the experiences you have had in this respect. So, why don't you sit down and write something up about a particular vegetable or salad leaf or herb that you have grown - tell us all about the process from the best planting season, seeds used, soil preparation, watering, to any pests and diseases that you had to deal with and how during the growing period.



Get help from your employer if necessary and then submit your piece to us (for editing, formatting, etc.) at sharpcrispin@hotmail.com plus a photo of the produce, if possible. We greatly look forward to your participation!

Kupanda mboga na mimea hapa pwani.

Katika makala tatu zifuatazo za *The Shamba Times* ya 2020, tutakuwa tukifanya safu ya juu ya 'Mboga Zinzokua na Mimea kwenye Pwani'.

Kwa hili, tunataka kutumia uzoefu ambao umekuwa nao katika hali hii. Kwa hivyo, kwa nini usiketi chini na uandike kitu juu ya jani fulani la mboga au saladi au mimea ambayo umepanda - tuambie sisi wote kuhusu mchakato kutoka msimu bora wa upandaji, mbegu zilizotumiwa, utayarishaji wa ardhi, kumwagilia, kwa wadudu wowote. na magonjwa ambayo ulipaswa kushughulikia na jinsi ya kipindi cha ukuaji.

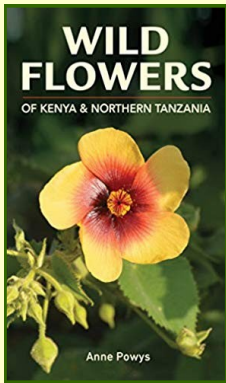
Pata usaidizi kutoka kwa mwajiri wako ikiwa ni lazima na wasilisha kipande chako kwetu (kwa kuhariri, fomati, nk) kwa sharpcrispin@hotmail.com pamoja na picha ya mazao, ikiwezekana. Tunatazamia sana ushiriki wako!

Translation into Swahili by Google translation software



'Wild Flowers of Kenya and Northern Tanzania'

by Anne Powys. Reviewed by Ann Robertson



In this very useful new book, Anne Powys is in her own words following in the footsteps of her parents 'both completely at home in nature, whose knowledge of plants had a profound impact on my life'. Anne herself is an accomplished naturalist and ethno-botanist and has co-authored several publications, including 'Pinguone, Kenya, Succulents and their Environment' by Rudolf Schwartz and Anne Powys, about the plants and farm in Laikipia, and 'Miti ni Mali' by Anne Powys and Leslie Duckworth, a handbook of useful East African medicinal plants. She has a deep interest in nature and the wise use of indigenous plants and their uses. Anne has trained many young tour guides and with this new field guide, she 'hopes to inspire people to get outside and see what is around them'.

She will certainly achieve her objective with this compact and reasonably-priced pictorial field guide to over 380 wild flowers in our area of Eastern Africa. This volume is a great addition to the other field guides now available from Struik Nature (particularly those on insects and butterflies and localities for bird watching) and fills a long felt need, since the 'Collins Guide to the Wild Flowers of East Africa' by Michael Blundell has been out of print for many years.

The great advantage of this compact booklet is that you can carry it in the field and flip through the photographs to find that colourful flower or, hopefully, its near relation. Anne has had to limit the number of species illustrated, but she has managed to depict plants from a wide variety of habitats. She has also, with her excellent photographs, and those contributed by her colleagues, managed to illustrate not only the large spectacular flowers, but also some of those delicate and shy flowers the casual observer might miss.

Anne, with the help of her editors, has made searching for the names of flowers a lot easier for the non-specialist by arranging the photographs, with the accompanying names and short descriptions, by colour.

Please do read the Introduction and the following pages at least once or twice before you delve into the pictures. This will help non-specialists to understand some of the mysteries of plant names and the terms used in the text to describe the parts of the plant. I have one slight criticism, apart from the very few errors, as I would like to have seen the Glossary on page 208 teamed up with the illustrated glossary on page 9, but this may have been due to editorial constraints rather than the author's choice.

As a long time plant collector and field botanist, I am delighted that Anne has authored this field guide and I echo her wish that it will encourage more interest in, and knowledge of, our wonderfully diverse plant heritage. Please do buy a copy for yourself and one for your gardener.

'Wild Flowers of Kenya and Northern Tanzania' is available in our district, price KES1,500 from KHS NCD, Friends of Arabuko Sokoke Forest, and the Malindi Museum Society.

First published in 2019 by Struik Nature. ISBN 978-1-77584-245-3

The dry season is approaching, so here are

How we can plant smart and enjoy the dry season - by Marion Langham

Sunlight is essential for plant photosynthesis though the amount required differs from plant to plant. If a plant is growing tall and spindly or is leaning towards the light, it is searching for more sunlight.

Some plants only flower well when grown in full sun though that is not to say that they can't grow well and even flower in the shade, but the blooms will not be as abundant when grown in shady conditions. Many climbing plants like their roots in deep shade but clamber high to reach the full sun they need to flower.

There are times that I find it unbelievable that any growing organism can enjoy the blazing full sun that falls upon us during the hottest parts of the year.

Adenium obesum.



Several shades of red and white Desert Rose can be found growing in the wild and this is where they should remain. This attractive plant flowers best in full sun and can be grown easily from seed. During the dry season, they enjoy and will benefit from a little water, which can



be slightly saline. They grow well in pots but require care to ensure enough drainage. Re-pot regularly as they have large root systems and need the space to develop.

Beaumontia multiflora



This plant is a rampant climber and can reach to the top of any baobab. It is easy to grow, does not require special treatment, and is drought tolerant.



Bixa orella.



The seed pods of the plant bring it to life. It is easy to grow, drought tolerant, and will brighten up any dark corner.

some plants that will enjoy the sunshine.

Hibiscus sabdariffa



This is a colourful plant that is drought tolerant and easy to grow. The fruit can be used to make a juice which is high in vitamin C. It can be troubled with mealy bug, so keep a close eye on it.

Impatiens balsamina

This popular and well known plant is easy to grow and thrives in full sun. It is fairly drought tolerant but needs to be watered from time to time. The flowers come in many shades and the plants reseed easily giving a continuous display of colour. Seeds may be planted in pots or open ground.



Ipomea



Better known as Morning Glory, this plant is a great joy in the garden. In the early morning, just after sunrise, little can compare with a wall covered with these blue flowers. They do require a little water from time to time and are subject to mealy bug attack but this is a plant worth having in the garden. There is a white variety, which



flowers in the evening, ending the day with its beautiful scented flowers.

Ixoras



This plant grows well in the garden and the reds and orange enjoy full sun. They are drought tolerant and are not fussy about the soil condition. They can be grown in dappled shade but flower less. Ixoras can be allowed to grow very tall, or pruned into shape, or even grown as a hedge.



Pentas

An indigenous plant which gives a colourful display in the garden. It is slightly drought tolerant and flowers best in full sun.



What's in a (botanical) name?

Take a look at this newspaper cutting (The Daily Telegraph 23/11/19) that was sent to us by Carissa Nightingale, and which neatly summarises an RHS ruling that our familiar kitchen garden rosemary is now to be known as sage, and that its botanical name will change forever.

Thyme for a change as RHS rules that rosemary is just a slightly different sage

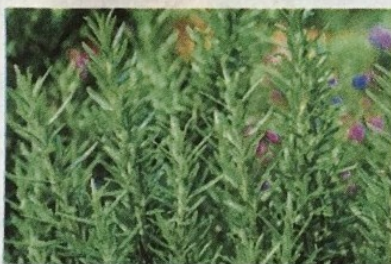
By Helena Horton

IT IS a ruling that might confuse kitchen gardeners, not to mention upsetting the lyrics of *Scarborough Fair*, but rosemary is in fact sage, according to the Royal Horticultural Society.

The RHS is to adopt a change in the scientific name for rosemary after research has shown that is in fact a salvia, or a sage.

The body is now telling gardeners to change their plant labels. In technical terms it will now be known as *Salvia rosmarinus*, rather than *Rosmarinus officinalis*, although its common name of rosemary remains unchanged.

The plant has been known as *Rosmarinus officinalis* since 1753 when the international system of naming plants



The stamens of rosemary are different from sage, but not enough to be distinct

began and salvia and rosemary were deemed to be two different genera.

Although they have always been thought to be similar, a difference in the stamens of the plants was held to be enough to view them as separate plant

types. However, this difference has now been found to be not significant enough to rule them as distinct.

The RHS will now be changing all its plant labels in its gardens and shops, though they have acknowledged some gardeners may think they are “meddling for meddling’s sake”.

A spokesman said: “When plant name changes happen there is sometimes some confusion or resistance by gardeners, simply owing to something having been known as something for so long.”

The change will appear in the next edition of the *RHS Plant Finder*, which precedes publication of the charity’s rosemary plant trial that recommends those plants that perform best in UK gardens.

So, how do plants get their names, and who has the right to change them? What do the names actually mean, and why are names sometimes changed? To answer some of the questions the RHS decision raises, we asked Professor Len Newton, who has a long background of teaching and research in Kenya, to give us a layman’s guide to the naming of plants.

A (desert) rose by any other name! By Professor Len Newton.

Adenium obesum (Forssk.) Roem. & Schult., *Syst. Veg.* 4: 411 (1819). What’s wrong with “Desert Rose”? Although we are used to referring to familiar animals and plants by “common names” (vernacular names), in a scientific publication all living things are referred to by names that are in Latin. Thus we are *Homo sapiens*.



Why Latin? A few hundred years ago (mainly 16th to 18th centuries) Latin was an international language of learned people, including scientists. Isaac Newton was British, but his major book, “*Principia Mathematica*” (1687), was written in Latin. One outstanding naturalist was Carl Linnaeus, who was Swedish, and it was he who established our present system for naming living organisms. In his 1753 book, “*Species Plantarum*”, he listed all the plants that he knew of, with a Latin binomial. He published a similar book with names of animals, including *Homo sapiens*.

And why do names sometimes change?

What form do the names take? The name of a species consists of two words, the binomial. The first is the name of the genus in which the species is classified. A genus is a group of closely related species. The second word, the specific epithet, applies just to that species. Before 1753, plant names were several words long, being brief descriptions in Latin, and different authors gave different names for a particular species. Some species are somewhat variable, and groups within such species are recognised as subspecies or varieties, indicated with an extra epithet.

Who gives these names? Anyone who is convinced that a particular plant is undescribed can give it a name and publish it. However, for a name to be accepted by botanists the author must follow a set of rules laid down in a book called “International Code of Nomenclature for Algae, Fungi, and Plants” (abbreviated to ICN), which is updated every six years. There are similar codes for naming animals and bacteria.

What do the names mean? Many names are descriptive, referring to a particular feature of the plant, such as (*Desmidorchis foetida*, for the foetid odour of the flowers. Some are geographical, such as (*Aloe mangleaensis*, meaning from Manglea Hill. Some are commemorative, honouring a person, such as (*Sansevieria ballyi* for Peter Bally. There are also some unusual origins, such as (*Kalanchoe mitejea*, published jointly by a French botanist and his female assistant, in which the epithet is an anagram of Je t'aime.



Why are names sometimes changed? The ICN states that there can be only one correct name for a plant, and that is the earliest one to be validly published. Sometimes it is found that a species has been named twice and the earlier name was overlooked. A plant described in 1977 as *Aloe dumetorum* was later found to have been described in 1905 as *Aloe ellenbeckii*, so the older name must now be used. Another change occurs if research has shown that a species belongs to a different genus. *Sansevieria elliptica* was originally described as *Acynta elliptica*. Names that are no longer used are called synonyms. All published names are listed on a website called International Plant Names Index (<http://www.ipni.org>), and which ones are in current use can be seen on The Plant List (<http://www.theplantlist.org>).



For more information, readers might like to see a little booklet that I wrote for Succulenta East Africa some years ago: “Taxonomy Without (too many) Tears.” (2003) — available from the Nature Kenya office, at NMK, Nairobi. For the meanings of names, see: Egli, U. & Newton, L.E. (2004) *Etymological Dictionary of Succulent Plant Names*. Springer, Berlin — there is a copy in the herbarium library at NMK, Nairobi.



Towards a Shamba Times glossary

Explanatory Note

In whatever tree and shrub reference book you may refer to, you will be struck by the array of terms used under the general heading: **Fruit**. Some will be familiar, others not. In the second part of our glossary in-the-making, we seek to elucidate the terms and explore various definitions associated with “fruit”. Amongst other things, we learn that many structures which are commonly referred to as “seeds” are actually dry “fruits”. First, to distinguish between these two...

Seed: an embryonic plant enclosed in a protective outer covering.

The formation of the seed is part of the reproductive process. It is a ripened ovule after fertilisation.

Fruit: a seed-bearing structure that develops from the ovary of a flowering plant after it has been pollinated.

The seeds develop and the extraneous parts of the flower drop off, leaving the immature fruit which gradually ripens.

Pericarp: the outer layer or wall of a fruit, some fruits having **dry** pericarps at maturity, others **fleshy**.

This dry/fleshy distinction forms one common type of fruit classification; another distinction relates to how they discharge their seeds...

Dehiscent: refers to a fruit that bursts open to liberate its seeds when mature

Dry Indehiscent: refers to a fruit that remains closed when ripe

Examples of Different Types of Fruit with Some Illustrations from the Coastal Area

Pod: a case or pouch holding a plant's seeds, of the dehiscent type. It is characterised by the case having seeds attached to one side, splitting along both sides when ripe and bursting open to liberate the seeds. Common to the Legume family, they range from the dark, blackish, flat woody pods of the *Azalia quanzensis* or Pod mahogany, and long, short and flattened seed pods - such as those of the Flamboyant tree (*Delonix regia*), the White Albizia and the Sickle Bush respectively to the curly, twisting ones of the Manila tamarind/Madras thorn, *Pithecellobium dulce*.



of botanical terms: Part 2



Follicle: a dry, one-chambered dehiscent fruit, usually containing two or more seeds, splitting along one side such as found on the various Sterculias such as *Sterculia foetida*.



Capsule: a dry, one to many-chambered dehiscent fruit containing seeds within a hard, woody shell such as that of *Ceiba pentandra*, the Kapok tree, and the more slender kind of the *Moringa oleifera*. A capsule can also be of a dry, indehiscent form such as the fruit of the *Adansonia digitata* - the Baobab tree.



Two- or three-winged, Four or five-winged fruit: small, dry indehiscent fruits containing a seed within a papery shell, quite common amongst the coastal indigenous tree species. The Terminalias are a good example of a group of trees bearing two-winged fruit including *Terminalia spinosa* while the large genus Combretum has four-winged fruit, as seen on *Combretum schumanii*.



Drupe: an indehiscent fruit in which an outer fleshy part surrounds a single shell with a seed or seeds inside, such as cashew nut, the fruit of the doum palm (*Hyphaene compressa*) and mango. A coconut, the fruit of the coconut palm, is technically not a nut but is a simple dry, fibrous drupe.



Berry: a fruit containing several seeds with a fleshy pericarp. *Lepisanthes senegalensis* with its clusters of grape-sized berries that turn red is an example of this type of fruit.

Main Sources:

N. Dharani, *Field guide to Common Trees and Shrubs of East Africa*, 2011

Norbert Rottcher, Kivukoni Indigenous Tree Nursery

Kenya Horticultural Society, *Gardening in Eastern Africa*, 2017



NCD Monthly Talks,

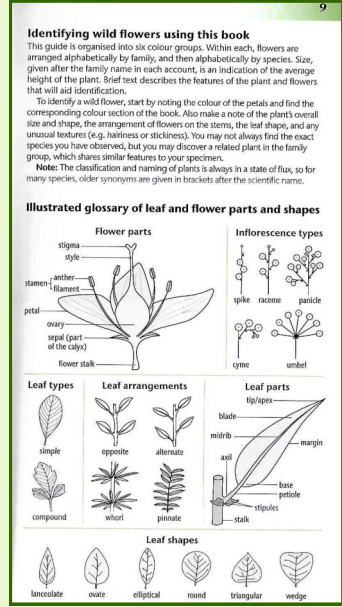
The **Anne Powys - 'Wild Flowers'** event of 22 October, 2019 was rather special in many respects. First and foremost, it was the occasion for Anne Powys to launch her new book, *Wild Flowers of Kenya and Northern Tanzania*, with Dino Martins, a regular speaker of ours ably introducing her; secondly, it was a co-hosted event - KHS NCD with the Friends of Arabuko-Sokoke Forest; thirdly, it was held within the environs of the forest at the KWS Education Centre, KFS Gede;

and, last but not least, it provided for some of the more intrepid NCD members the prospect of sighting the Arabuko-Sokoke forest elephants.

After Dino had set the context for her talk by reminding us that "plants came first", we then sat enthralled as Anne told her story about the genesis of her book: from the time as a child she ran "free" to explore the bush with the children of hunter-gatherers so learning the local names and uses for the indigenous plants around her; to successfully persuading safari companies to let her teach tour guides about the rich plant life in the national parks, knowledge to share with visitors in addition to that about the wildlife; to a realisation that wild flowers was not a subject that people were interested in so to rectify this and inspire interest, a pocket-guide was needed!



The wonderfully illustrated guide contains clear and succinct information about nearly 400 plants, selected to capture the diversity of wild flowers within Kenya and North Tanzania from amongst the known 10,000 flowering plants. In our area, the sand dunes provided a rich source of flowers as were the uncut waysides along the road. Indeed, Anne stressed the importance of the latter - in Laikipia where she lives such rough areas are kept cut destroying any chance of wildflowers to survive - in line with the concept of "ungardening" which KHS NCD will also be seeking to encourage with its members.



Then, onto wildlife... though unfortunately the elephants chose not to show themselves to the 20 or so NCD members who visited the picnic area overlooking the swamp. Nonetheless, it was a very pleasant and peaceful place for a sundowner and bitings plus a little birdlife and a lovely sky to enjoy. Thanks are extended to all those involved in organising this visit and the main event.

Events and Visits

A very instructive experience best describes our event of **26 November**, the visit to the **Kilifi Sisal Plantation** by 21 members. After enjoying our refreshments at Gina and Rene Faber's home, Fredrick Onyango, the Assistant Farm Manager at Kilifi Plantations, gave a talk on *Agave sisalana*, the variety of sisal, a natural fibre crop, which is grown here, and on the various stages of its production. We then re-grouped at the factory to see in practice some of that which we had just learnt with Frederick guiding us through the main production stages - from the harvesting of the leaves when they have reached maturity - between 2



and 3 years; the decortication process whereby the outer wall of the leaf is stripped away to reveal the fibres; the washing and drying of the resultant fibres, to the brushing, grading, baling and packing of the final product for export via the Kenya Sisal Board. A small quantity of the fibre is retained, however, for making rope. We watched a display of the first stage of this which entailed the fibre being transformed into single strings: the ladies doing this

made the process look simple but it undoubtedly involved some skill. The single strings are then combined and twisted to create the thick rope - 48 single strings in the sample that was shown. The rope is available for purchase as is some of the lower-grade fibre which can be used as stuffing for cushions and mattresses.

▪ Remember, you can enjoy further reading on this subject by referring to *The Shamba Times* April 2019 edition. ▪

A little added extra was a quick visit to the workshop of Fabiana Alcojor and Roberto Gerosa who have created a number of innovative uses of the baobab capsule including a lampshade, as well as producing baobab powder, one of the current "superfoods". ▪ Remember, you can enjoy further reading on the baobab by referring to *The Shamba Times* Spring/April and October 2018 editions. ▪

Christmas Decorations from the Garden

NCD's annual December meeting - Christmas Decorations from the Garden - was held on Tuesday 10th December at Mike and Annie Norton-Griffiths' lovely home in Watamu. Hosted as usual by Vanessa Aniere and Holly Pritchard, the event was attended by about 20 members and gardeners and included a very informative talk by Pauline Balletto as to how to create Christmas decorations from your garden (the big tip being collect and dry suitable foliage throughout the year - don't wait until December to do it), along with a competition amongst our gardeners to come up with their own decorations sourced and made from their gardens. And our gardeners did not disappoint, with a wide range of creations, imaginatively put together, and using all sorts of foliage and garden materials, as well as a fair dollop of spray paint.

Winner of this year's competition was the Christmas decoration pictured right, which was chosen by our three wise judges, Lis Gregory, Pam Duff and Maggie Bashforth, for its richness of colour and its extensive use of natural materials drawn straight from the garden.

Congratulations to our winner, and let's hope for many more exciting decorations and creative ideas next year. To our gardeners, remember the tip - start collecting material right now!





Odds and Ends



The 'deadly beauty' that may be in your garden!

Nerium oleander is a shrub or small tree in the dogbane family Apocynaceae, toxic in all its parts. It is the only species currently classified in the genus Nerium. It is most commonly known as nerium or oleander, from its superficial resemblance to the unrelated olive Olea. And it is to be found in many of our gardens here on the coast.



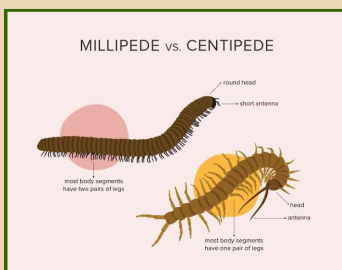
Nerium oleander has been called a “deadly beauty,” admired for its fragrant blossoms of red, yellow, coral, pink and white, but



feared for its less desirable qualities – namely, its toxicity. According to a popular legend in oleander plant history, Napoleon lost one hundred soldiers when they dined on meat roasted on the wood of the oleander plant. While this story has yet to be verified, there’s no doubt that oleander is not only beautiful, but highly toxic to animals and people. Ingesting any part of this plant can be deadly, especially for children. Even smoke from burning oleander can be fatal. The plant's use as a poison is well-known. Oleander is reportedly a favourite suicide agent in Sri Lanka, where oleander poisonings exceed 150 per 100,000 people each year. About 10 percent of those cases are fatal.

Centipedes or Millipedes - the poisonous carnivore in your garden!

We all have both centipedes and millipedes in our coastal gardens—probably more of the latter than the former. They may have similar sounding names but they are markedly different creatures, and one of them is to be handled with real care—a bite from a centipede can be very nasty.. So, how are they different from each other?



Centipedes are terrestrial arthropods belonging to Class Chilopoda. Centipedes are flexible, dorsoventrally flattened arthropods. Millipedes belong to Class Diplopoda and are more rigid arthropods distinguishable by their subcylindrical shape. Centipedes have one pair of legs per body segment, while millipedes have two pairs. While most centipedes are known for their speed, millipedes move slowly and burrow.

Centipedes and millipedes also vary in diet:

centipedes are carnivores and millipedes are primarily detritivores. Centipedes are carnivorous and kill their prey by injecting them with venom. Millipedes feed primarily on decaying organic matter and they may eat the roots and leaves of seedling plants. Millipedes are ecologically esteemed as agents of microbial decomposition and soil nutrient cycles.



So, in brief, millipedes are very welcome in our gardens. Centipedes, not so much!

And finally, for your diary



Tuesday 28 January 2020 at 1000 for 1030 at Simon Walsh's wonderful tropical nursery at Gede.

A guided walk around the Gede Nursery.

Members are invited to visit this spectacular nursery of tropical and coastal plants in Gede, which is now run by Simon Walsh, offering an amazing array of tropical plants, palms and trees, and in which members may enjoy a post-meeting picnic.



Apologies. Our February meeting will take place on Tuesday 25 February 2020, but we are still finalizing the details of where the meeting will be.

We will inform all members of the time, date and place by email and by a flash.



Tuesday 24 March 2020 at 1000 for 1030 at The Driftwood Club in Malindi

KHS North Coast District 2020 AGM

Our keynote speaker this year will be Dino Martins who will examine flora and fauna and our environmental dependence upon both. The meeting will be followed by lunch at Driftwood and the draw for the exciting 2020 raffle.

KHS North Coast District Subscriptions for 2020.

Oh yes, a new year and that means it's time to pay our annual subscription for membership of the KHS North Coast District. Subscriptions for 2019 are as follows:

Single membership = KES 1,000

Family membership = KES 1,500

Gardener membership = KES 500

Corporate membership = KES 2,000

The money we raise from your subscription goes to support the national Kenya Horticultural Society, as well as to allow us to run the North Coast District. We need resources to put on monthly events and visits, to bring in outside expert speakers, to produce The Shamba Times - your quarterly NCD newsletter, and to sponsor and support community gardening schemes, and the training of NCD gardeners.

Pay your 2020 subscription by Mpesa direct to the Hon. Treasurer at 0702 767 177.

