

Celtis africana

Sterkfontein Country Estates April 2016

Good day Celtis friends!

The veld on our property certainly looks lush, healthy and green after the late summer rains and it is a joy to see the tall grasses sway in the wind!

Last month I featured a photo of the little *Huernia hystrix* var. *hystrix* (Porcupine Huernia). This plant is becoming increasingly rare in the wild due to over-harvesting. It is low-growing and not easy to spot. Interestingly, some research on this plant has shown that the roots and stem have very strong anti-oxidant qualities and that it also seems to possess anti-inflammatory properties. It is nice to know that this is another medicinal plant occurring on our Estate!



***Huernia hystrix* var. *hystrix* (Porcupine Huernia/Ystervark huernia) (Photo: Garfield Krige)**

In Ethiopia this plant is used as a famine-food, and in our country locals harvest it for medicinal uses. Although it is becoming very rare in the wild, it is grown as an ornamental by some nurseries and hopefully this will prevent it from becoming completely extinct. It is always nicer to see a plant growing in its natural habitat though.

Garfield has taken some lovely photos of a *Bonatea antennifera* orchid, which has just started flowering on our property! Always exciting for me, as they are becoming so rare due to urban sprawl, so do have a look if you have it on your property as

well! They usually grow in the shade of certain indigenous trees but somehow this one is out in the open veld. Go visit the web page and read a bit more about this plant under Flora - "Our Orchids". I specifically went late in the afternoon to observe if it really does smell sweet with coconut overtones like the guide books say, and believe me it does! During the day it smells like nothing!



Bonatea antennifera (Afr. Kappieblom/moederkappie) (Photo: Garfield Krige)



A Hawk Moth, pollinator of the *Bonatea antennifera* (Photo: Garfield Krige)

Something else that is flowering all over the place is the dreaded pop-pom weed! This is **not** a pretty wild flower as some people still seem to think, but it is a Category 1b invasive plant, and I copy from our website:

“Category 1b: Invasive species requiring compulsory control as part of an invasive species control programme. **Remove and destroy.** These plants are deemed to have such a high invasive potential that infestations can qualify to be placed under a government sponsored invasive species management programme. No permits will be issued.”

If you are unsure what it looks like – there is a photo in the Afrikaans section.

It is not easy to get rid of this invasive plant as it has an underground rootstock system. It has no natural enemies in our country and because of that, it destroys our indigenous plants’ habitat by taking completely over. In doing so, it also destroys natural grazing, so we should all do our best to eradicate this pesky plant. Maybe we can ask Jenny Johnson from SCE 126 how things are going with the little thrips that was imported to try and help the country get rid of this pesky plant! I know Jenny and Rob have actively tried to start a colony of these bugs on their property – they went all the way to Pretoria to collect some, so we could get them to work on our Estate - an email update would be nice, please, Jenny!

The eagles have been busy for some time now to construct a new nest. We noticed that Henrietta seems to be sitting on the nest all the time the past day or two and today we saw Kgosi bring her something – not sure if it was a bite to eat or just another piece of nesting material. I was hoping they’d take their time before breeding; otherwise the chick will hatch in winter when food is scarce. But it is just exciting every time for me to see them building another nest on our Estate!

A Spotted Eagle Owl (see Celtis May 2015) is definitely still around in our area. Whether it is the same one I can’t say but one is definitely around as I often find a little “business card” left on our lawn or somewhere near the house whenever I go for my early morning walk!



"Business card" from a Spotted Eagle Owl (Photo: Elmarie Krige)

Have a look at other interesting recent sightings on our property.



"Ho-Hum... Please put me down!" Flap neck chameleon (Photo: Garfield Krige)

We are very lucky enough to have at least three species of gladiolus growing on our Estate. See photos below:



From left to right: *Gladiolus crassifolius*, *G. elliotii* and *G. premeabilis* (Photos: Garfield Krige)



Polygala uncinata (Wild Violet/ Wilde viooltjie) (Photo Elmarie Krige)



Pentarrhinum insipidum (African heart vine/Donkieperske) (Photo: Elmarie Krige)

Just for fun:

**What is a dog's favourite food?
Anything that is on your plate!**

So true:

“We still do not know one thousandth of one percent of what nature has revealed to us.” - Albert Einstein

I hope you enjoyed this month's Celtis and maybe you've discovered something new or interesting! Until next month, greet every day with a smile!

Goeie dag Celtis vriende!

Die veld op ons plot lyk darem so mooi en groen na al die laat somerreëns en dis altyd lekker om, as mens kans kry, tussen die hoë grashalms te loop en kyk of ons nie iets nuuts sien nie.

Verlede maand het ek 'n foto geplaas van die klein *Huernia hystrix* var. *hystrix* plantjie (Ystervark *Huernia*). Hierdie plantjie word al skaarser in die veld as gevolg van oeroes of dan oorbenutting. Die laaggroeiende plantjie is nogals moeilik om raak te sien in die veld. Wat my egter baie interesseer is dat studies en navorsing op die

plantjie gewys het dat die wortels en stam hoë antioksidant waardes toon en ook dat dit oor anti-inflammatoriese eienskappe beskik. Nog 'n medisinale plantjie wat op ons Estate voorkom!

In Ethiopië word die plant geëet in tye van hongersnood en plaaslik word dit goes vir medisinale gebruike. Alhoewel dit hier skaars raak in die veld, kweek sommige kwekerye dit as ornamentele plantjies en hopelik sal dit die uitsterf daarvan verhoed. Dis maar vir my altyd mooier om plante in hul natuurlike habitat te sien.

Garfield het pragtige foto's van die *Bonatea antennifera* orgidee wat pas begin blom het op ons plot geneem! Ek is altyd opgewonde as ons nog orgideë op ons eiendom kry, want hulle is besig om baie skaars te raak aangesien hul habitat deur menslike ontwikkeling oorgeneem word. Soek bietjie op jul eiendom of julle dalk enetjie raakloop! Gewoonlik loop mens hul in skadukolle onder sekere inheemse bome raak, maar op een of ander manier het die enetjie sommer in die oopte in die veld sy verskyning gemaak.

Gaan lees gerus bietjie op die webwerf onder Flora – "Our Orchids" as julle meer wil leer van die mooi plantjie. Ek het juis laatmiddag uitgegaan en self geruik – dit ruik presies nes my orgideegids beskryf - soet met botone van klapper. En in die dag ruik dit na niks! Presies net soos die gids sê! In die Engelse gedeelte is daar 'n foto van die mot wat hierdie orgidee bestuif.



Nabyskoot van die *Bonatea antennifera* orgidee se blom (Kappieblom/moederkappie) (Foto: Garfield Krige). Mens kan duidelik sien hoekom dit "kappieblom" genoem word!

Kyk bietjie wat sy pragtige blommetjies is nog te siene.



Dicoma anomala subsp. circioides (Maagbitterwortel) (Foto: Elmarie Krige)



Cleome maculata (Foto: Elmarie Krige)



Pavonia burchellii (Foto: Elmarie Krige)

Ons is bevoorreg om minstens drie gladiolus spesies op ons Estate te hê.



Van links na regs: *Gladiolus crassifolius* (Foto: Elmarie Krige), *G. elliotii* (Foto Garfield Krige) en...



... *Gladiolus premeabilis* (Foto: Garfield Krige)

lets ander wat ook orals te siene is, is die aaklige pom-pom onkruid. En ja, glo dit of nie, maar daar is mense wat steeds onder die indruk verkeer dat dit 'n mooi ou veldblommetjie is! Hierdie is 'n Kategorie 1b onkruid en moet uitgeroei word. Dis 'n moeilike taak want dit het 'n hardnekkige ondergrondse wortelstelsel maar mens moet maar net bly uithaal of uitkap. Die onkruid is 'n groot probleem oral in Suid Afrika want dit het geen natuurlik vyand om die aanwas te beheer nie. Dus word inheemse plantegroei heeltemal verdring en weiveld word ook vernietig.



Pom-Pom Onkruid (Foto: Elmarie Krige)

Besies wat die plant vreet en onder beheer hou is ingevoer en ek weet Jenny en Rob van SCE126 het spesiaal Pretoria toe gery om van die besies te gaan haal en 'n kolonie te probeer vestig op ons Estate. Miskien kan sy vir ons almal e-pos en laat weet hoe dinge aangaan en of dit werk. Hoe lyk dit asseblief Jenny?

Ons arende was al geruime tyd besig met nesbou. Ek het gehoop hulle gaan bietjie later broei en nou lyk dit van gister af asof Henrietta pal op die nes is. Vandag het Kgosi iets aangedra – of dit kos was of dalk net nog bietjie nesbou materiaal kon ons nie sien nie. Ons sal maar moet wag en sien of daar pal op die nes gesit word.

'n Gevlekte ooruil is steeds in ons omgewing (sien [Celtis van Mei 2015](#)) en of dit nou dieselfde een is wat so lekker op ons grasperk gekuier het, weet ek nie. Maar so gereeld soos klokslag kry ek 'n “besigheidskaartjie” na 'n nagtelike kuiertjie op ons grasperk of êrens naby die huis.

Hierdie outjie het ek nou eendag in die veld raakgehoop – besig om lekker in die son te bak. Hy mag dalk groot lyk op die nabyskoot, maar hy (of sy!) was sommer nog 'n ou kleintjie!



Gestreepte skink/striped skink (Foto: Elmarie Krige)

[Net vir die grap:](#)

Koos kom by John en sê: “Jinne maar dis 'n praghond wat jy het! Hy lyk baie kwaai – is hy 'n goeie waghond?”

John: “Moenie praat nie! As ons verdagte lawaai in die nag hoor hoef ons hom net wakker te maak en dan blaf hy woes!”

Die man en sy vrou het goed baklei en sy bel haar ma: “ Ek trek more terug huis toe want Jan het vreeslik met my baklei”. Haar ma antwoord: “Nee hy moet sy les leer, ek trek more by julle in!”

Nou-ja vriende, weereens hoop ek julle het die Celtis geniet en tot volgende maand: groet elke dag met ‘n groot glimlag!

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

