



Halgolla Plantation Home

Accommodation of a different kind - September 2011

Comfortable, cool weather is with us once again following the return of the rains after the drought. A new set of tasty fruits are coming into season—ambarella (*Spondias dulcis*), Lovi (*Flacourtia inermis*), guava, star fruit or carambola (*Averrhoa carambola*), oranges (both sweet and marmalade varieties), pomegranate, grapefruit, olive and passion fruit. The selection of fruit, both in their fresh form and as home-made drinks, jams, jellies and preserves, provides many culinary opportunities. We are also planting out a fresh batch of hybrid papaya and tree tomato plants as well as vegetables, the latter under the tender care of Mallika who takes such pride in growing things! One thing is for certain, our visitors are not going to be short of healthy and flavourful dietary options.

Pinnawela Elephant Orphanage, which is about an hour's drive from HPH, continues to be uniquely entertaining and educational for those interested in pachyderms in their various shapes and sizes. You can view them doing everything from bathing in the Maha Oya to the calves being bottle-fed by their keepers and visitors. "The Gathering"—a spectacular sight of up to 300 elephants at a time—continues until the end of the month at Minneriya National Park, a 2-hour drive away.

We are inching towards what we hope are successful strategies for protecting our fruit and King Coconut crops



from the, sometimes exotic, predators that devastate them. These include the giant flying squirrels (*Petaurista philippensis*) who, "cute" as they are, compete with us for our crops to the point where we've had little to harvest for ourselves for months on end!

We are also compiling a list of all the trees and plants in the garden and every time we see the proverbial 'light at the end of the tunnel' we discover yet another omission! In any event, it will soon be available to visitors as a



'work in progress' together with other reading material on the flora and fauna of Sri Lanka much of which is to be found around the HPH. Speaking of which, the Devil Bird (Forest Eagle-Owl, *Bubo nipalensis*) has begun its plaintive call as of last evening after an absence of some weeks. It's worth a trip to HPH just to hear its eerie call.

Upcoming events in the country include the celebration of the Hindu Festival of Lights (Deepavali) on October 26th. The Sri Lankan Airlines Golf Classic takes place in October at the world-renowned Victoria Golf Course in Kandy. Whale and dolphin watching season starts in November and runs through to March. And for cricket fans, several matches play throughout the year.

Halgolla Plantation Home is the ideal base from which to launch your travels to these events and to the Cultural Triangle and other places of interest, including the tea estates of the High Country. HPH is also the perfect place to relax and enjoy nature, read, write and, maybe, just "vegetate!"

With warm wishes, Emil & Arlene

For information or to book your accommodation, contact us at:

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