



First Vanilla blossom!

Halgolla Plantation Home

Accommodation of a different kind

- February 2013 -

Vanilla in bloom

To those who've had access to previous HPH newsletters and our website, reference to vanilla, the second most valuable spice in the world, will not come as a surprise. However, what we have to report is the emergence of the first blossoms on this vine orchid. Vanilla flowers in the countries to which they owe their origin are hand-pollinated because there is only **one** pollinating agent. In Sri Lanka, which lacks even this assistance from nature, the flowers **must** be hand-pollinated if the "beans" are to set. Wish us luck with our first attempts which we hope will result in beans close to, if not of the quality of those that won an award, at the Paris Exposition of 1900, for the first van der Poorten to settle in Sri Lanka!

The weather at HPH has been nothing but delightful since what passes for the North East Monsoon began. Even someone who spent better than a quarter century enduring winters in northern Canada was reduced to putting another layer of clothing over his tee shirt at night! As I keep saying, though, I will never complain about wet and cool weather after the awful drought that we endured not so long ago.



Tailor bird roosting near passage to kitchen

The bird life, inclusive of migrant avians at this time of year, continues to delight us and we had a different experience when a Tailor Bird chose to roost each night, with its head tucked under its wing, on a passion fruit vine trailing just outside the open passage leading to the back of the house. This was behavior most unusual for this most shy of birds and Swiss visitors who were staying with us at the time were enchanted by this little bird's choice of refuge, presumably from the night predators it was in fear of!

Something we should have but haven't done previously is to thank all those readers of these scribbles for the kind things they've had to say about it and HPH in general. That kind of comment is truly a bonus for all of us engaged in this enterprise and really is the icing on the cake - the good company and interesting conversations that come with people from many parts of the world.



Typical HPH lunch

Warm wishes,
Emil & Arlene

PS. HPH is now on Facebook!

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

Mobile: 94-77-347-0702 or 94-72-284-9770 or by email at emil@halgollaplantationhome.com

For the month of February we will continue to provide each visiting group with a complimentary “Surprise Basket” of HPH “goodies”!

Sri Lanka has been rated as a top tourist destination for 2011, 2012 and 2013.

Sri Lanka

“Best in travel 2013”

from The Lonely Planet

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/sri-lanka>

Condé Nast Traveller

www.cntraveller.com/news/2011/december/destinations-to-watch-in-2012/sri-lanka

The New York Times

www.nytimes.com/2010/01/10/travel/10places.html

National Geographic

<http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/best-trips-2012/sri-lanka-photos/>

And is Sri Lanka the “best all-round wildlife destination in the world”? Gehan de Silva Wijeyeratne says ‘Yes’! See his article at:

<http://www.sundaytimes.lk/130113/plus/a-winner-in-the-wilds-28039.html>



TripAdvisor Mobile and Tablet Apps

Did you know that HPH is on Trip Advisor?

www.tripadvisor.com/Hotel_Review-g304138-d2057765-Reviews-Halgolla_Plantation_Home-Kandy_District_Central_Province.html

Upcoming events in the country

February

Feb. 2: World Wetlands Day. Sri Lanka has 5 Ramsar Sites covering 32,372 hectares: Anavilundawa, Bundala, Kumana, Maduganga and Vankalai.

On this day, a 6th site, the **Wilpattu Ramsar Wetland Cluster** will be declared. Covering 165,800 hectares and containing 205 bodies of water, this unique area is a treasure and a “must visit”. A unique feature is the “villu” - a natural shallow seasonal sand-rimmed water basin that fills with rain water and provides habitat for many animals and plants.



Sitana ponticeriana – the Fan-throated lizard found at Wilpattu

Feb. 4: National Day celebrations.

March

Mar. 3–5: Cricket: Bangladesh tour of Sri Lanka starts in Matara

Mar. 23 at 8:30PM- Earth Hour will be observed in Sri Lanka by many companies and individuals.

April

April – “The season” in Nuwara Eliya – to escape the heat and humidity of Colombo, people flock to Nuwara Eliya in April where a number of events take place including horse races, motocross rallies, flower exhibitions, concerts and golf tournaments.

April 13–14: Sinhala and Tamil New Year

The biggest celebration of the year that usually extends well beyond the two-day period. Traditionally a harvest festival, it is also a time to observe traditional and religious rituals in thanks and to bring good luck for the new year.

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