



Jumbo fruit and flowers

Halgolla Plantation Home

Accommodation of a different kind

– May 2014 –

April brought in its latter days, “showers of blessings” and a desperately-needed break in the shorter-than-2012-but-more-intense drought that we had been enduring. And not a moment too soon! If this kind of weather is not climate change, we certainly don’t know what can be judged as such!

We’ve had several interesting groups of visitors including one group from Canada who were associated with the same political party that Emil supported and worked for in that country over many years. One member of the family was the son of a man who had been Premier of that province; the person who recommended they spend time with us was a journalist who had covered community development initiatives conducted by Emil in Edmonton, Alberta. If nothing else, it went to show that being a “do-gooder,” no matter in what part of the world, could have compensations, literally, half a world away!

On the “home front”, we’ve done more work on our walking trails and are completing a cosy bedroom for Senevi, inclusive of putting in a ceiling and two windows in a room that lacked both. More “gussying-up” of the Soaking Pool was made possible by the drought we recently experienced and our nursery of pepper and bougainvillea cuttings has been augmented by more vanilla vines being put down, both to replace the casualties resulting from the drought as well as to expand the extent of our vanilla planting. We have a strange mango crop, from little “button” mangoes up to fruit ready for harvest and the Durian trees from which a quite decent crop was only recently harvested, now have a pretty impressive array of flowers, suggesting yet more evidence of climate change. We have also “bagged” a number of Kaffir lime cuttings (*Citrus hystrix*) that look like they may soon be ready to join the trees we already have in the field. The leaves of this plant are much requested for cooking fish and seafood and its fruits are used medicinally.

Arlene keeps adding to her selection of jams, jellies, chutneys and preserves made from our garden produce. The most recent has been a truly delectable and interesting drink

made of the old “Jumbo” (*Syzygium samarangense*). This, I believe, is an HPH “first!”



Kaffir lime (*Citrus hystrix*) fruit and leaves

If the rain continues, we will soon be harvesting our first cinnamon, which, though not coming from a particularly fine plantation, will afford us the opportunity of learning how to harvest this crop with which **none** of us are familiar. Talk about teaching old dogs, new tricks!

In response to feedback from our visitors, we are developing a guide to some interesting alternatives to the established tourist destinations and routes. We recently visited an absolute gem of a Buddhist temple at Padeniya, which is an hour and a quarter’s drive from HPH. You can read about it on the next page. In the next newsletter, we will provide information about the largest Buddha statue in the world, being carved out of living granite, about an hours’ drive from HPH. And we will be suggesting 6-day sojourns at HPH, with two days spent in and around our Homestay and the other four days devoted to leisurely visits to points of interest within easy reach of us: an effort to establish a simple and interesting routine without the pressure of “I really have to see **that** place before I return home!”

You may have noticed in our last newsletter a photo by Sharni Jayawardena, one of Sri Lanka’s renowned

photographers who recently completed a very successful documentary photo exhibit on the worship of Pattini-Kannaki, a goddess common to both the Sinhalese and Tamils. She visited us at HPH and took many photos for us to use. Look for more of them in upcoming newsletters.

Warm wishes!
Arlene & Emil

For the month of May

**a pack of Special HPH-grown and -roasted coffee
with each booking**

**In addition
each visiting group will receive
what has become a trademark
of HPH hospitality, the complimentary
“Surprise Basket” of HPH “goodies.”**

Daytrips from HPH

The following is the third of a continuing series on suggested day trips from HPH to lesser-known places of interest.

Padeniya Temple

A little known temple within an hour’s drive of HPH is the Padeniya Temple. Though its history is not clear, it is a fascinating mixture of buildings and styles. One of the most impressive sights is the bo-tree—a massive tree of unknown age. Stones and bricks with cavities for oil lamps have been placed around its base, presumably to support the tree—“a rich confusion of roots, stones, fragments of masonry”. The tree is the object of ancient tree worship—banners and fresh flowers adorn it.



The Bo-tree at Padeniya

There are several interesting ancient buildings on the site and even the newer buildings have unique tiled roofs. The highlight is the Pilimage or Image House with medieval, Chinese, Indian and Kandyan elements. Outside are 28 carved pillars; inside many more with an elaborate door to

the inner shrine. It has not yet been declared as an archeological site but is expected to be.



Pilimage-Image House

Padeniya Temple is a comfortable half-day excursion from HPH and if we have an indication of interest in advance of a guest’s arrival we could make the necessary arrangements for them to experience these unique buildings of cultural, religious and architectural interest.

Halgolla Plantation Home

- rated as [Best Home Stay](#) in Sri Lanka 2013
- recommended in the [Bradt Travel Guide for Sri Lanka](#) 5th edition, 2014

HPH is highly recommended on Trip Advisor.
See what our previous [guests](#) have had to say!



TripAdvisor Mobile and Tablet Apps

Sri Lanka – rated as a top tourist destination for 2011, 2012 & 2013.

[The Lonely Planet](#)
[Condé Nast Traveller](#)
[The New York Times](#)
[National Geographic](#)