



Poinciana (*Delonix regia*) in full bloom



Flowers from Curtis's Botanical Magazine (1829)

# Halgolla Plantation Home

Accommodation of a different kind

– June 2014 –

May began with a near tragedy at HPH. I was on my customary “constitutional” with “Natta”, our much-loved Heinz 57 in tow. Just before I reached Meditation Flat, I saw what I thought was a largish, dark dog flash through the undergrowth. Natta, typically, dashed off in hot pursuit. I heard what I thought was the squealing of wild piglets immediately thereafter and figured that our dog had scared them. I proceeded downhill and Natta soon joined me. However, blood was literally pouring from three puncture wounds on her chest. Thanks to cellphone technology, help was summoned from HPH and she was carried home, an inert little mass.

Since it was May Day, everything was closed for the holiday and veterinary assistance was not available. We did the next best thing: phoned a vet friend of ours who suggested first aid until she could be taken to the Kandy Veterinary Hospital the next day. We did what we could for her and I feared she wouldn't make it through the night. She did and Mallika was able to get some milk down her throat using a teaspoon. She was dispatched the next morning to the Vet Hospital in Kandy where, thanks to being treated by one of the finest veterinary surgeons I have had the privilege of knowing, she is now almost fully recovered barely three weeks from her near-death experience. She's back to bugging me every time she figures it's time for her walk and harassing Arlene whenever she thinks it's tea time (and time for her cream crackers which are the only biscuits she will deign to accept!) A happy ending to what could have been a tragic story.

We suspect that her altercation was with a wild cat or an irate sow or a male Barking Deer (Muntjac). There are hoof prints in that area and the three punctures on her chest suggest she had cornered a Barking Deer who had acted in defense of its life.

With the break in the drought, the flowering trees in our yard, the Poincianas in particular, have produced an unprecedented abundance of blossoms. I hope the photograph that appears in this newsletter does justice to the aptly called “mai mal” [“May flowers”] in Sinhalese.

As with all natural phenomena, there seems to be a silver lining to the cloud of drought, as long as it is followed by rain before everything dies!



Padma with Puswel bean

Padma with an enormous flat, twisted pod of Puswel (*Entada zeylanica*), a vine that is common at HPH

Another consequence of the odd weather is the largest (and longest) mango crop in our experience and the fruit quality has been and continues to be excellent. Visit us soon before the crop is finished!

Warm regards,  
Arlene & Emil

**For each booking in the month of June**  
**a pack of Special HPH-grown and -roasted coffee**  
**and the complimentary**  
**“Surprise Basket” of HPH “goodies”**  
**which has become a trademark**  
**of HPH hospitality**

## Daytrips from HPH

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

## Monaragala Viharaya Sedent Buddha Statue

A short while back, Arlene and I decided that, while HPH is a great jumping off point for a variety of places of historical and archaeological interest, we should check out some of the less well-known sites within a half-day or day's trip of HPH. One of our discoveries has been the truly magnificent seated Buddha that is being carved out of the living rock and is well on its way to completion adjacent to a quiet village temple less than an hour's drive from HPH. As a feat in the art of rock carving there is probably nothing to equal it in any part of the world now or in the recent past. A brief outline such as will fit in this space does it no justice at all, and we strongly urge you to check out the following link for a fuller description

<http://www.samadhibuddhastatue.lk/story.html>.



The statue under construction



The stone mason at work

Suffice it to say that the statue is 67.5 feet in height, in the *Samadhi* pose and carved out of the granite mountainside which also provides the large pond at the statue's base!

Unlike much of the efforts at re-creating statues from Sri Lanka's illustrious past, this is not only stupendous in scale but in impeccable historical taste.



The pond below the statue

Monaragala Viharaya Sedent Buddha Statue is about one hour from HPH and affords a pleasant day trip. If we have an indication of interest in advance of a guest's arrival, we could make the necessary arrangements for them to explore this little-known site.

### 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!



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We are also on [Facebook](#).

Bookings can be made on [Trip Advisor](#), [Airbnb](#), [HomeStay](#) and [Agoda](#) as well as by contacting us directly.

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

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