



Padma with Elephant foot yam plant



Yam with piece broken off
(white circle shows where stem was)

Halgolla Plantation Home

Accommodation of a different kind

– October 2014 –

September draws to a close with unprecedented thunder and lightning throughout the afternoon and relatively little precipitation following, though the soaking evening showers are something we hope will continue and grow in duration and not be yet another flash in the pan.

The first photographs in this month's newsletter show Padma holding plants which, when adult, produce the quite unique (grotesque?) yam in the picture beside it. The Elephant foot yam (called "gam kidaran" in Sinhalese) grows wild in some places on Halgolla and is much prized in the village for its alleged medicinal qualities. It did provide an interesting, though somewhat bland addition to a recent lunch menu. For those of scientific bent the botanical name of the plant is *Amorphophallus paeoniifolius*. It's a member of the Arum family and has a large unusual flower which we'll include a photo of when it next comes into bloom between December and March.

In future Newsletters, we will feature more of the vegetation, both edible and otherwise, that is a part of our landscape, much of which grows along the walking trails we've developed – the *Pus vel* and *Senevi paaras* and the Boulder Path, among others. All of these have little stories of interest or descriptions attached to them which we hope will interest readers of our monthly report on HPH.

We will, in this and future issues of the HPH Newsletter, also pursue the theme of "living off the land," prompted by several visitors from lands across the sea remarking on this fact that we've taken for granted seemingly forever!

Apart from the "edibles" that come off Halgolla's 45 acres, every bit of wood used in the construction and renovation of our home over the years has come off land owned by my parents and now by us. This has ranged from the *jak* (*Artocarpus heterophyllus*) and *hulan hik* (*Chukrasia tabularis*) used in door and window frames to the ceilings of *lunumidella* or Ceylon mahogany (*Melia azedarach*). Like most Sri Lankans living in older homes, we'd lost

sight of this until our foreign guests began to remark on it while on "mini conducted-tours" around the buildings and property. Interesting stories emerge once the discussions begin, such as the manner in which termite damage to the frame holding the stained glass panels produced in the van der Poorten workshop in Brussels has been repaired. More on that later.



HPH-grown ground cinnamon and cinnamon sticks

Our new special includes a package of HPH-grown ground cinnamon or cinnamon sticks. Most cinnamon is actually *Cinnamomum cassia*, a rougher darker cinnamon. Ceylon Cinnamon (*Cinnamomum verum*), grown at HPH, has a delicate delightful smell and flavour and a beautiful light orangish-brown color, perfect for desserts, savories and drinks.

Warm regards,
Arlene & Emil

A special "Post script" to those of you who have visited HPH and have not reviewed it on Trip Advisor:

PLEASE DO SO by going to:
<https://www.tripadvisor.com/reviewit> !

Your kind words are much appreciated.

For each booking in the month of October
a pack of HPH-grown cinnamon (ground or sticks)
and a pack of Special HPH-grown and -roasted coffee
and the “Surprise Basket” of HPH “goodies”
which has become a trademark of HPH hospitality

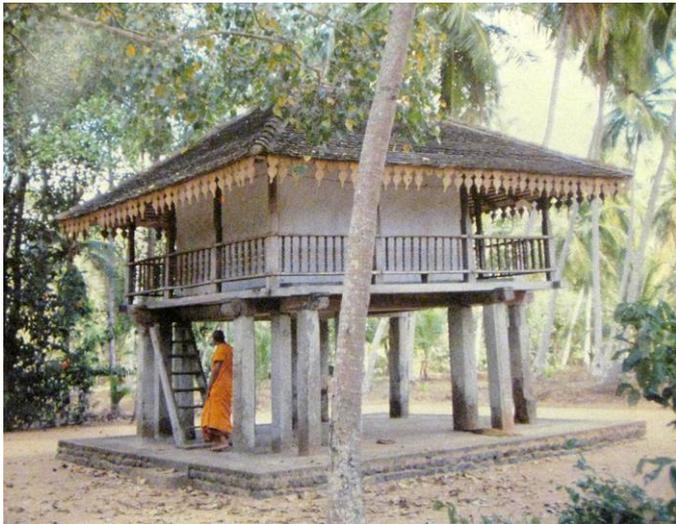
Daytrips from HPH

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

Dorabawila vihara

This unique vihara (temple) is situated near Hettipola about an hour’s drive from HPH.

The temple has been built on stilts—slender, rough-cut stone pilings. A narrow staircase leads to the building above—a square-shaped room with a cantilevered verandah all around it, lined with wooden railings and posts. The roof is heavily sloped and edged with wooden carvings that look like leaves with drip-tips. Brass birds are perched on the ridges of the roof. The temple also harbours ancient paintings and Buddha images and, according to Seneviratna & Polk, has “the special characteristics of the Kandy period.”



Dorabawila vihara

If a guest is interested, we could arrange for a daytrip to this temple and others nearby along with a picnic lunch.

Information from: Buddhist monastic architecture in Sri Lanka: the woodland shrines by A. Seneviratna & B. Polk. 1992.

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

We are also on [Facebook](#). Bookings can be made on [Trip Advisor](#), [Airbnb](#), [HomeStay](#), [Booking.com](#) 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](#)



Nellie's Suite



Ben's Bedroom



SelvaGamini Room

For information or to book your accommodation, check our website www.halgollaplantationhome.com or contact Emil van der Poorten: emil@halgollaplantationhome.com or by phone: 94-77-347-0702 or 94-72-284-9770