



Ceylon olive - *Elaeocarpus serratus* - in bloom, and ripe fruits

Halgolla Plantation Home

Accommodation of a different kind

– November 2014 –

The Ceylon olive (*veralu* in Sinhalese) is magnificent in bloom. And there is a certain element of nostalgia attached to this tree in that Senevi who was practically raised at Halgolla and has returned to us in his retirement years, reminded us that it was one of his little sisters who put the seedling in the ground at our request so many years ago!

Every *veralu* season, Arlene pits the ripe fruits and stuffs them and/or pickles them for continuing use as a part of our home-grown larder. The stuffed form is generally sweet rather than savoury and the pickled form goes in the opposite direction, with the addition of a few spices (also grown at HPH) to the vinegar in which they are bottled.

We have been laboring mightily to rehabilitate our cinnamon field, given that there were some significant mistakes made in establishing what was an exotic crop for us. We are “learning on the job” as it were and the second harvest and peeling has seen significant improvement in the end product even though we still have a ways to go in the matter of appearance and presentation. This has been, inevitably, very much a self-education process. That said, the quality of the quills, if not their appearance, leaves little to be desired and, as in the case of our vanilla which, like the cinnamon, is having its plant density increased, we look forward with anticipation to bigger and better things. This will permit us also to provide our workers, primarily women from the adjacent “colony,” better wages and working conditions. It does feel somewhat strange, though, to be embarking on what seems like a pioneering combined agricultural-and-hospitality enterprise in the twilight of our lives. Oh, well, “It’s never too late to learn,” as they say!

We’ve had what one could classify as an “urban problem” despite living in the “boonies.” Thanks to the ministrations of a “computer technician” we had pretty well our entire address book – personal and HPH’s – wiped clean. The result is that many of those who assured us that they enjoyed this monthly newsletter might not be receiving it now. If you, dear reader, know of any such person(s), would you please let us have their email addresses, so that we can put them back on our database?

We’ve had drenching showers as October draws to a close that are reminiscent of the monsoonal rains we used to enjoy in our dim distant youth. While that kind of precipitation is welcome and necessary, it has provided challenges in the matter of clearing earth slips and the side drains on our approach road, though we’ve succeeded in ensuring access to our hilltop home.



Rustic Jak-wood tables and floating flowers at HPH

Our “war” with the simians of our neighbourhood continues unabated though they, the simians, seem to have the upper hand at the moment as witnessed by the pile of King Coconuts that they have left for us!



What the macaques left for us!

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 November
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

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

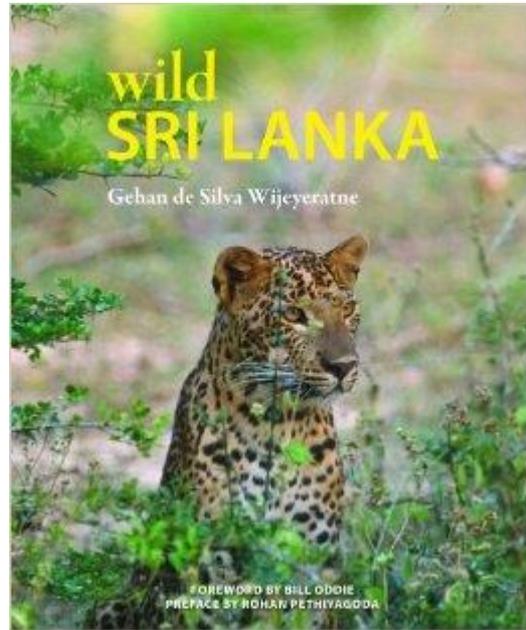
We are also on [Facebook](#). Bookings can be made on [Trip Advisor](#), [Airbnb](#), [HomeStay](#), [Booking.com](#) and [Agoda](#) as well as by contacting us directly.

Sri Lanka – rated as a top tourist destination for 2011, 2012 & 2013: [The Lonely Planet](#); [Condé Nast Traveller](#); [The New York Times](#); [National Geographic](#)



One of the many mushroom varieties found at HPH

Sri Lankan Wildlife



Well-known naturalist and author Gehan de Silva Wijeyeratne has recently been making the case that **Sri Lanka is the best all-round wildlife destination in the world**. A bold claim that he backs up with a wealth of data.

Here's just a small sampling of what Sri Lanka has to offer, the combination that no other country provides:

- several large terrestrial (especially 'Big Game') animals: elephants, leopards, wild buffalo
- outstanding for marine mammals (whales, dolphins etc)
- huge bio-diversity with a high proportion of endemic species (plants, birds, butterflies, dragonflies, snakes etc)
- all set within a compact area of varied landscapes with good tourism infrastructure and a high encounter rate to make it possible to see much of the target species within an affordable two week holiday.

To this, we add

- warm friendly people
- comfortable climate
- safe water
- delicious nutritious food
- music and dance with its own special character
- artists and artisans of exceptional skill
- archeological and architectural uniqueness

You can read more about Sri Lankan Wildlife by Gehan at the following URLs:

- <http://www.sundaytimes.lk/130113/plus/a-winner-in-the-wilds-28039.html>
- <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0Bz4XIKj1H3eVdm42Y1JiS3k4ZmM/edit>
- <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0Bz4XIKj1H3eVdm42Y1JiS3k4ZmM/edit>

If you have trouble accessing these links, let us know.

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