



Arlene on hammock suspended from *Kartha Kolomban* mango tree, with wild boar diggings beneath!

Halgolla Plantation Home

Accommodation of a different kind

– October 2015 –

The picture with which we open this month's newsletter is of Arlene in the hammock, slung from the *Kartha Kolomban* Mango tree which was first put in the ground more than sixty years ago by my father, Ben, at the bottom of the garden. I trust you will bear with me while I explain why it opens this month's newsletter!

One consideration is nostalgia: my father loved planting things and fruit trees were his particular passion, often vegetatively-propagated plants from the nursery of the Royal Botanical Gardens at Peradeniya, the primary source of all exotic plant material in those years.

Another consideration is acknowledgement of Arlene's innovative skill: slinging the hammock she is pictured in as well as another from another mango tree limb adjacent to it, and persuading me to build a tree swing the construction of which would gladden Rube Goldberg's heart!

What is very different though is the condition of the ground beneath Arlene's hammock. While it appears like a forked-over flower bed ready for planting, its condition is due entirely to wild boar looking for roots and/or grubs. And just so there's no mistaking their intent, they've returned to repeat the exercise a few times subsequently!

September has continued to be an excellent "planting month" with occasional light showers and we've tried to take advantage of the fact, to the extent that our meager supply of field workers has permitted, by putting in more pepper cuttings on more *gliricidia* sticks, the vast majority of which we expect will soon sprout.

Our latest venture, as we outlined in the last newsletter, is a set of one- and two-day trips from HPH. An abbreviated flyer is included with this newsletter but check our [website](#) for full details. And while we also recommend that guests spend at least one full day at HPH itself, taking in the trails, the ever-popular Soaking Pool, and just relaxing, we have

set up several trips that will also be of interest. Some are to the usual, quite rightly highly regarded venues, such as Sigiriya, Polonnaruwa and Kandy. Others are to places a little less known but equally interesting, some of which have been featured in previous newsletters. These include Panduwasnuwara, Arankelle and the Karagahagedera *ambalama*. In addition, a very special excursion is a day trip to the open-air butterfly garden of Sri Lanka's foremost expert on the butterflies of the country, my cousin George (Michael) van der Poorten. The morning session also includes a tour of his coconut plantation and lunch. In the afternoon, choose from one of several other sites nearby.



Michael van der Poorten's open-air butterfly garden

Those visitors who have experienced Mallika's cheery (and competent) services will be sorry to hear that, as I write this, she is under observation at the Kandy General Hospital after experiencing severe abdominal pain. We hope that she'll be back with us soon, bringing her broad grin and displaying her friendly demeanour for the benefit of all those fortunate enough to make her acquaintance.

With all good wishes
Arlene & Emil

For October we'll continue our very popular
"Sampler pack"
of HPH-grown and -roasted coffee
and
the "Surprise Basket" of HPH "goodies," both now
famous trademarks of HPH hospitality

Halgolla Plantation Home

- now ranked #8/241 B&Bs in Kandy on Trip Advisor
- Certificate of Excellence 2015 from Trip Advisor
 - rated as [Best Home Stay](#) in Sri Lanka 2013
- recommended in the [Bradt Travel Guide for Sri Lanka](#) 5th edition, 2014

Plants of interest at HPH – *Michelia champaca* (E. Champac, Sinhala – Sapu)

This is a fast-growing tree which produces a medium-quality lumber used primarily for roof frames in houses. Unfortunately, it is very susceptible to termite attack unless appropriately given some protective application prior to use. In India, a scent is distilled from its very fragrant flowers, something that hasn't happened in Sri Lanka for some reason. This tree was among the first victims of the wholesale exploitation of usable lumber trees that followed Land Reform in the early seventies and what few trees remain are clustered round parts of HPH. The Hill Mynah (Grackle) adores the fruit of this tree which grow in quite attractive bunches and now that the surviving trees on our land are beginning to produce fruit, the grackles have begun to return. Only those familiar with this bird of myth and legend will appreciate what a great addition it is to the birdsong of our garden!



Michelia champaca seed pods

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



TripAdvisor Mobile and Tablet Apps

You can now book directly with us from our website at:
www.halgollaplantationhome.com. Look for the booking widget:

Check In date:	Nights:	Search	
01 Jul 2015	1		

Use the widget above* to check for availability at HPH and to make your booking directly with us. Please note that there is a minimum stay of 2 nights for each booking.

If you don't see it, try refreshing your browser and make sure that your browser is set to "allow blocked content". Please note that there is a minimum stay of 2 nights for each booking.

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

Sri Lanka: rated as a top tourist destination by [The Lonely Planet](#); [Condé Nast Traveller](#); [The New York Times](#); and [National Geographic](#).



EULABES PTILOGENYS *ACRIDOTHERES MELANOSTERNUS*

The Sri Lanka Hill Mynah (*Gracula ptilogenys*) [on the left]. The Common Mynah (*Acridotheres tristis melanosternus*) [on the right]