



The view out of Emil's office window – Ambatale/Gommunawa hill

Halgolla Plantation Home

Accommodation of a different kind

– January 2016 –

Like the man said, “2015, warts and all, is done and dusted” and we have a leap year ahead of us with all kinds of entertainment from the Summer Olympics to the Soccer World cup awaiting fans of international sport! For us at HPH and our friends who’ve already been here and those soon to belong among that number, we intend to maintain HPH as the island of peace and tranquility in what is sometimes a turbulent island.

December saw our traditional staff Christmas party (for the organization of which goodness knows where Arlene finds the energy) prove to be yet another roaring success. The faces continue to change, but the level of enjoyment seems



One of the little stars of the HPH X'mas party!

to rise, if anything! A Canadian friend who spent one Christmas with us fondly recounted, as he phrased it, “the shining faces” of the young people and the fact that we seemed to have been fortunate in establishing a bond of friendship with those associated with HPH, not just a “worker-management” relationship. Simply put, that’s the way it should be and the way we will strive to keep it. The bonus for visitors, of course, is that they are

beneficiaries of that warmth of friendship. Sorry for seeming to blow our own horn, but we believe we can take justifiable pride in what ALL of us at HPH have achieved over the relative short period we have been open to “those who arrive as guests and leave as friends.” As in years past, we have in this newsletter a couple of pictures from our December gathering.



A good time was had by all!

Both of us, as well as Mallika and Senevi have had our share of health problems and Gamini has had the challenge of helping his eldest teenager secure appropriate training to meet the employment challenges ahead, but by hanging together, all of us at HPH have not only survived an exciting year but look forward to 2016 and the prospect of making new friends from all over the world!

Talk to you again next month!
Arlene & Emil

P.S. I’m sorry to have to end this Newsletter with a piece of rather unhappy news. Arlene had to be admitted to hospital because of a worsening of the heart condition she’s endured for many years. The news on the first day of the year is that

her condition has improved to the point that she's making calls from the mobile phone she's sneaked into the institution! She's not yet "out of the woods", though we're confident of a recovery that is as swift and complete as possible in the circumstances.

**For January 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 by [Bradt Travel Guide for Sri Lanka](#) 5th edition, 2014

Plants of interest at HPH – Ceylon Gooseberry (*Dovyalis hebecarpa*) (Sinhala – ketembilla)

The newest addition to the flora of HPH is still in a bag, waiting to be planted out! Ceylon Gooseberry is a mid-country plant, endemic to Sri Lanka, though it is not commonly found. The ripe fruit makes a delicious jelly, which visitors to HPH should be able to sample in a year or so, once our plants flower and set fruit. The berries are also used in preserves and curries.

It is widely planted in Florida where it was introduced by Dr. David Fairchild. From there, it has been grown in a variety of tropical and semi-tropical countries. Despite its popularity as a crop world-wide, it has sadly ended up as one of the neglected fruits in its native Sri Lanka. We at HPH are seeking to right this wrong, in our own little way, by putting down and nurturing two plants in our garden, gifts of my cousin Dr. George and Nancy van der Poorten. They were able to secure some seeds from a plant in the Kandy hills. The seeds sprouted well and the plants are now about 1 foot tall, ready to be planted in the ground. We'll give readers of this Newsletter updates on the progress of the plants from time to time. And of course, you'll be first to hear of the culinary fruits, in both senses, of these labours!



Dovyalis hebecarpa from Trimen's *Handbook to the Flora of Ceylon*. Plate 7.

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.

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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](#). And most recently [the \(London\) Times](#) has rated Sri Lanka the No. 1 tourist destination in the world.