



Flowers & plants from in and around HPH

## HALGOLLA PLANTATION HOME – ONE OF A KIND!

- APRIL 2017 -

This HPH Newsletter begun on April Fools' Day, has turned into a joke at the author's expense, thanks to a variety of issues associated with its preparation and distribution much, much later than is usually the case. The month began with a collective sigh of relief because, as March drew to a close, "the rains came!" In any event it is going to take a great deal more precipitation to bring us back to anything resembling what used to be normal conditions for this time of the year in the past. However we are grateful for small mercies even though the sultry days are even more uncomfortable than those during the height of the drought!

Our battles with the vermin that destroy our water supply lines – primarily monkeys and wild pigs – continue unabated and we particularly relish a haunch of wild boar that our rural neighbours bring to our doorstep from time to time. As do our visitors, it seems!

Our efforts to protect our PVC water supply lines with split giant bamboos appears to be successful and I shall try to include three pics of what we've done in an ecologically-friendly manner to achieve that status. I believe this "technology" has not been used before.

Our pollination of vanilla flowers, fewer in number than in the past year (drought, again?) appears to have recently been less successful than last year and this is being attributed to the scorching heat of the day which seems to promote pollen desiccation and a resultant shedding of this substance which is absolutely essential for the beans to come into existence. It will be interesting to see whether the recent precipitation might help us, though the flowering season seems all but over for this year. Oh well.....

The "soap opera" that unfolded during our (forced) re-organization of our measly staff complement seems to

have come to an end and the process of reorganization is progressing at an adequate pace, if not an ideal one! Pathma and Rajamani who were with us some years ago are back with us and it is good to have reliable faces around one after our recent "staff experiences" which, to put it mildly, verged on the macabre!

Our seemingly never-ending quest for secure and well-constructed potable water storage has made noticeable progress and this copy of the newsletter will contain three small pics. of how we've made protective shields of Giant Bamboo for our PVC supply pipes: not only an ecological solution but one that WORKS. Sittamma has proven to be a "find" in the matter of being an intelligent handywoman despite her inability to read or write any of Sri Lanka's major languages! With our active encouragement, her recently-arrived, old and feeble father has embarked on a process of converting the "outer skin" of giant bamboo into various woven household articles and we are looking forward to seeing the fruits of his labours. Never a dull moment at HPH! I am penning this shortly after (we hope!) our stream of New Year visitors has abated for this year and the unbelievable hubbub that this festival constitutes comes to an end. Goodness knows we need the R & R!

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**For April, as in month's past, we'll continue our very popular "Sampler pack" of HPH-grown and -roasted coffee and a "Surprise Basket" of HPH "goodies" that appears to delight visitors as they take their leave of us and HPH!**

- 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

Our work in vanilla flower pollination, harvesting and processing what seems like one of our biggest nutmeg crops on record has placed additional stress on our very meagre field labour resources though the return of one exceptional tree-climber to our fold has not hurt our endeavours in that regard.

At the risk of closing on a negative note, our Visitors' Comments have continued to be beyond excellent. However, they have diminished due to a very serious fall off in our bookings. Part of this is due to tourist accommodation being available in the Kandy area at unrealistically low prices ("\$10 for bed & breakfast" anyone?) and the fact that the gross over-construction in the hotel area due, primarily we are told, to a huge amount of uneconomic hotel space coming on stream due to the "black money" that flooded this sector not so long ago.

However, when all is said and done, our challenge is to survive, providing the level of service that we have steadily improved over the years.

We cannot afford the kind of advertising budgets that larger operations operate. However, we have built a small but steady list of new guests because of the recommendations such as you, dear reader.

**Let's be honest, we need your endorsement and outreach to survive because that kind of "word of mouth" is what has helped us survive and if YOU get the word out to friends and acquaintances we'll be around to cater to an ever wider circle of friends in the future. Let me confirm: your help and support will enable us to produce an April 2018 Newsletter!**

The quickest method to register with us and the most trouble-free is to go to our website, [www.halgollaplantationhome.com](http://www.halgollaplantationhome.com)., complete the Guest Reservation Form and e-mail it to us at [emil@halgollaplantationhome.com](mailto:emil@halgollaplantationhome.com)

We are also on [Facebook](#) and bookings can be made on [freetobook](#), , [Airbnb](#), agoda and [Booking.com](#) or, preferably, by contacting us directly at our email address. For regular updates of what is happening at Halgolla Plantation Home, please like us on [Facebook](#).



Senevi & Biso splitting length of giant bamboo



Split lengths of Giant Bamboo with some nodes removed



PVC pipe being encased in giant bamboo

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