



Senevi with (baby) Elephant's Foot Yam (*Amorphophallus campanulatus*)

HALGOLLA PLANTATION HOME
 - *THE UNIQUE SRI LANKAN EXPERIENCE* -
 NOVEMBER 2017

We have a "Halgolla Historic Event" in this month's edition in that we have Senevi on the cover of a **second consecutive newsletter!** If we want a rationale for this it could well be that this man who is very nearly at the Biblical three-score-and-ten mark has been resident on Halgolla since shortly after his birth, leaving after Emil's departure for Canada in 1973 and returning after his (Emil's) return from that country. Before 1973, he very successfully managed Sri Lanka's first A-Frame structure on the East Coast which its owner (the writer!) had set up as a pioneering sun, sea, sand and wilderness outpost when such operations were few and far between in Sri Lanka. Sad to say that, despite a host of guests having fond memories of the place at Panichchankerni, it wasn't a commercial success! Senevi is now an integral cog in the complex agricultural/homestay operation that is HPH. The yam he is holding was headed for the cook-pot and is, in fact, a very small example of this largest of yams which had to be prematurely harvested to save it from the attention of the wild pigs!

For December, as in months' past, we'll continue our "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
- recommended by [Bradt Travel Guide for Sri Lanka](#) 5th edition, 2014

We also, couldn't resist the temptation of placing (yet another) picture of the view down the valley from our verandah, one of which so many of our guests have such fond memories. This one's different in that the Western aspect is cloaked in mist and there is a waning moon in the sky! To impr

ove on the quality of our spice and coffee crop production, Selvarajah aka "Short" has built a wood-heated dryer which is about to be operational as this is written. It uses traditional "bamboo wattle and daub" construction technology. Not particularly



A different look to an old piece of scenery!



glamorous-looking but decidedly practical!
Our ongoing war in the matter of simian depredations continues – calling it a “battle” would not adequately convey what we confront! A mass demonstration in a neighbouring jurisdiction has hit the headlines and we can but

**Making a silk purse out of a sow's ear!
A firewood shed converted to a spice dryer**

hope that the thousands of rural folk around us mobilise similarly and put pressure on all levels of government before

all is truly lost.

The steady, soaking rains continue though we are glad to report that we have not (so far!) had the devastating floods and gale-force winds that other parts of Sri Lanka are experiencing.

The reason that this newsletter didn't go out a few days earlier is because of an extremely sad occurrence at HPH – the passing of the beloved “Natta,” our dog of indeterminate parentage but of a character that would do a **good human** proud. The word “distraught” is often abused, but it is the only one that comes to mind in describing all of us here at HPH at this time. When the pall of sadness has lifted, we'll fill you in on the tragic circumstances of her passing.

We are trying to get the word out about HPH to a wider international audience and, at our age and given our limited technical skills insofar as communications media such as Facebook,” find it “tough sledding” as that term from the country of my adoption had it! That said, we have come to realise that what Halgolla Plantation Home has to offer, as those of you who've been here will confirm, is truly unique. The challenge is how to get the message out while faced with significant financial constraints: commercial advertising is a non-starter! One of the things we've discovered is that there is a slow but steady trickle of potential guests contacting us because those who've “come to HPH as guests and left as lifelong friends” have recommended us and what HPH provides.

This newsletter is our primary means of getting the word out and many of you already have helped by disseminating it among your circle of friends. We are most appreciative of your assistance and hope you'll keep up the good work!



Our beloved Natta'' in happier times (by the Soaking Pool)

A recent addition to our endeavours, though one that harks back in time to the days before Emil left for Canada (1973), is the attempt to establish a commercial plant nursery at Halgolla. We're beginning with cloves and should have a few hundred plants in poly sleeves available for sale in a few months. We intend on concentrating on two of our spice crops for a beginning - nutmeg and cloves - and will look to cinnamon and some of our more exotic fruit and lumber trees such as the Mangosteen (*Garcinia mangostana*), Nelli (*Phyllanthus acidus*), Giant Okari nut (*Terminalia okari*), Citron (*Citrus medica*), Kaffir lime (*Citrus hystrix*) and Champak (*Michelia champaca*), among others. With the exception of Senevi (again!) this is going to be a new field of endeavour for those who help at HPH!

With the compliments of the holiday season to you and yours

Arlene & Emil



Thepu (*Costus speciosus*) grows wild at HPH

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