



The high -value part of the nutmeg harvest – mace, used in pharmaceutical and cosmetic manufacture

HALGOLLA PLANTATION HOME
 - **THE** UNIQUE SRI LANKAN EXPERIENCE -
 FEBRUARY 2018

Those of you who've read our newsletters over the months and years would probably have begun to tire of our constant references to the vagaries of the weather – seeming feast when the rain comes down in buckets and then famine when we are subjected to droughts, each one seemingly without precedent. However, that is one of the realities for those of us dependent on the land for survival. Right now when we seemed to be on the cusp of a very intense drought which reduced the flow of our spring to less than a trickle, we've had a very welcome shower! The primary reason for our springs drying out appears to be the operation of five granite quarries below us and now an enormous one at the top of the mountain range immediately to our north. In



An old, but delightful, picture of a male Pompadour Green Pigeon on our balcony wall

any event, we are optimistic that our efforts at water conservation over the last dozen years will keep us above the "famine" level in the days ahead.

The years of providing a "home away from home" to our guests have begun to bear fruit with some of them returning and others new to us coming to HPH on the recommendation of family and friends who've already been here. Many of the birds, apart from the Sunbirds whose nest we displayed on our indoor clothes line in last month's Newsletter, have begun

their mating rituals and we often hear the plaintive, though melodious, mating call of the lovely Pompadour Green Pigeon and the cackling of a Grey Hornbill in our garden, the latter also indicating that it is gorging itself on our Flacourtia (*Uguressa*) fruit!



Entry to HPH after nightfall

"Kiki" the surviving half of our duo of "Heinz 57s" has begun to conduct herself with a degree of responsibility befitting one who is the only source of our canine security, even being polite about the manner in which she asks for and accepts her daily ration of Cream Crackers! There has been no change in the make-up of our band of helpers at HPH and our annual task of training (and re-training) those who are tasked with pollinating vanilla flowers was completed as January drew to a close.



"Kikki" when she first arrived at HPH a couple of years ago

Allied to this is encouragement to those receiving training to grow vanilla in their own home gardens as a source of supplementary income.

We will soon have, on our website, details of a new initiative developed out of what we already do with guests residing at HPH. This is a "Walkabout and Planter's Lunch with Emil van der Poorten" for those who are already committed to staying elsewhere but wish to experience an encapsulated part of the "HPH Experience."

If you or your friends have an interest in this endeavour, let us know. It is meant to cater to those who, for whatever reason, are not able to stay with us for a few days and is **NOT** a replacement for enjoying the ambience of HPH.

As this is being typed, at a time when the sun should have risen, we have an unusually dense overcast and a very much needed steady shower of rain which seems to presage a "once in two lifetimes"

For February, 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

event - a lunar eclipse, a blue moon etc. tomorrow, the last day of January 2018. If we get some pictures of the event they'll appear in the March newsletter. Our priority "project" right now is the painting of several parts of the interior of HPH, an expensive though essential, part of our maintenance schedule and one which we hope to get through before the shortest month of the year ends.



The Entada vine that grows freely at HPH and produces the largest pod in the world

Right now, several of those working at or for HPH are going through a pretty rough spell with sickness in their families, their elderly parents

displaying the ravages of time and, in one instance, the two operators of tuk-tuk three-wheelers sustaining injuries while having their vehicles destroyed by a runaway container truck! Fortunately,



Biso pollinating a new-crop Vanilla flower

their injuries were not life-threatening, though certainly disruptive in the matter of earning their livelihoods. The good news, though, is that the mutual support chain among the families appears alive and well at difficult times such as these.

With every good wish
Arlene & Emil



Pride of Burma (*Amherstia nobilis*) beside our car-port

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