



*Aechmea gamosephala*, one of Arlene's potted beauties!

**HALGOLLA PLANTATION HOME**  
**- THE *UNIQUE* SRI LANKAN EXPERIENCE -**  
**JANUARY 2019**



Indigenous orchid growing on one of our *Delonix* trees

A landmark event insofar as the wildlife around HPH is concerned has been the confirmed sighting of a pair of (wild) Peafowl on the road leading to the house and by the boulder below our kitchen! This is not the first time that the largest of Sri

Lanka's domestic "poultry" have been sighted near HPH, sporadic sightings being reported over the last two years, but this sighting was accompanied by their unmistakably raucous cry which I heard as they sought to regain contact



The most prehistoric plant at HPH, *Cycas nathorstii*

with each other. When I was a young man (no jokes, please!) one had to journey about 150 miles to see one of these magnificent birds in the wild. Now, following increasingly scarce wild and

domestic grain supplies, I suspect, they are in the Kandyan foothills! I still

For January, as in past months, we'll continue our "Surprise Basket" of HPH "goodies," which appears to delight our guests as they take their leave of us!

**Some Recognition of HPH**

- Certificate of Excellence from Trip Advisor
- Rated as [Best Home Stay](#) in Sri Lanka
- Recommended by [Bradt Travel Guide for Sri Lanka](#)

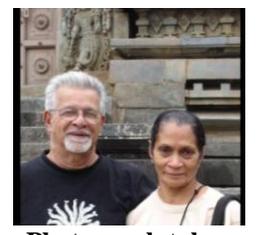


The Guest House at Dr. George van der Poorten's Butterfly Garden

have not been able to get a picture of *Pavo cristatus* myself, thanks to not being as fleet of foot as I once was (no more bad jokes, please!), but I **will**, sooner or later, and then our monthly newsletter will be adorned by a photograph taken by yours truly and not

one from another publication! HPH continues to be an oasis of tranquillity despite the political tragicomedy that has played out in the national legislature of Sri Lanka, a land that was once the acme of democratic practice in South Asia! Never a dull moment, but this has certainly proved that there ARE advantages to our isolation from urban Sri Lanka!

A challenge that we have not abandoned is that of persuading our “squatter neighbours” to engage in some agricultural pursuit that will enhance their (meagre) livelihoods while saving such efforts from the worst deprecations of some of their thieving neighbours. A quick solution has still not come to mind but we will persist in the hope that growing vanilla as a house-plant might provide the beginnings of a



Photograph taken, NOT very recently, in Karnataka, India!



Waiting for Santa!

“Michael” van der Poorten and his wife Nancy have produced a companion volume to their landmark book on the butterflies of Sri Lanka. Their field guide is an excellent companion to the larger “bible” on Sri Lanka butterflies which

solution to this challenge, because the beans can be protected from thieves to some extent at least. Because two of the residents of those settlements already have significant expertise in vanilla flower pollination, a task that has to be done by hand, we would welcome any ideas that readers might be able to provide to assist in this effort.

(Cousin) Dr. George

George and Nancy published a while back. The link to the review in the Sri Lanka Daily Mirror is

<http://www.dailymirror.lk/article/Latest-Field-Guide-to-the-Butterflies-of-Sri-Lanka-159705.html>.



Ceylon Peacock

Our Holiday bash for HPH employees and their children proved yet another success and a really good time was had by all, the children in particular, as the photos that appear here will attest.



Holiday cheer for all!

**With all good wishes for the Holiday Season  
Arlene & Emil**



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