



A sight to gladden our hearts - mist down the Weuda valley after rain

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



Nam-nam (*Cynometra cauliflora*) fruit

The misshapen fruit on the plate on this page are from the plant that Arlene first put down at HPH some years ago and is probably the only one of thirty-odd varieties of fruit that doesn't owe its existence to

a van der Poorten! In this age of "Googling" we'll leave it to any interested reader to further research this tree, its fruit and origins. On the right of this page is a plant the common name of which – "Kaffir lime" – is probably one of the most politically incorrect in use! It is the ingredient that gives Thai cuisine its distinctive flavour but the two shrubs at HPH owe their origin to a far different application. Under its common Sinhala name, "Leema," the fruit were an essential ingredient in the traditional concoction used to treat the cut surface of the Toddy Palm (*Caryota urens*) flower to encourage the free flow of sap which ended up as sweet (or sour) toddy and the delectable Toddy Palm syrup ("kithul-pani) and jaggery which are a sine qua non as an accompaniment to buffalo curd.

Those working with us at HPH have had their ups and downs in the matter of health and other issues and

we are, at the moment, minus Sanjeeva and Senevi who are battling health problems.

"Short" and Rajamani have more than risen to the occasion with occasional help from their eldest, Daniel, when he is not busy at



Kaffir lime (*Citrus hystrix*)

the gym in his efforts to convert flesh into muscle! As I might have mentioned before, Rajamani's culinary skills have grown by leaps and bounds under Arlene's expert tutelage.

We have had a breathing space long enough to do some catching up with maintenance tasks in our vanilla patch and look forward to the vines producing more blossoms than last year when, thanks to the devastating drought, our blossom count was about a third of the year before. Also, our electric fence seems to be working in the matter of preventing the wild pigs from

rooting out the vines in their efforts to get at the grubs in the leaf mould around the *Gliricidia* poles on which the vanilla vines are trained.

The picture that appears adjacent to this text is probably



"Kurukunda" nests

For September, 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!

- Certificate of Excellence from Trip Advisor
- Rated as [Best Home Stay](#) in Sri Lanka

one of the dullest we've ever printed. However, the conical indentations in the soft sand adjacent to our entry veranda are created by tiny insects, the capture of which before they burrowed ever deeper into the soft sand, used to be a great childhood sport in the days before the mobile phone consumed the attention of children to the exclusion of everything else!



Adonanthera pavonina
("Madithiya") seeds

We have changed our means of distributing the monthly HPH Newsletter and hope there are no major glitches. The reason for our seeking a new method of distribution was that the one we've used for many years arbitrarily changed its user format and created problems that were

beyond solution by the computer/email skills of yours truly!

We have taken the liberty of placing in this HPH Newsletter what could probably be described as "archival pictorial material." One picture provides evidence of activity at HPH by what is reckoned to be the most endangered mammal in the world, the Scaly Anteater or Pangolin. This very mild and totally inoffensive creature is being hunted into near extinction in the South Asian region to satisfy the seemingly insatiable appetite of the Chinese for the meat and scales which are reputed to have all kinds of

magical qualities. What price superstition and mumbo jumbo? Incidentally, the animal's name is derived from the Malay word, *pengguling*, meaning, "one who rolls up," descriptive of this totally inoffensive animal's sole means of defence.

On a lighter note is the picture of *Cycas* shoots that Arlene makes into a substitute for asparagus tips, ensuring that they are indistinguishable from the delicacy they are replacing!



Pangolin diggings at Meditation Flat



Cycas nathorstii leaf shoots

AS ALWAYS, WE'D BE MORE THAN PLEASED TO RECEIVE YOUR FEEDBACK ON WHAT YOU'D LIKE TO SEE IN OUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

With all good wishes,
Arlene & Emil



HPH's "official mascot," the Pangolin



Website: <https://www.halgollaplantationhome.com>

Email: emil@halgollaplantationhome.com;

Mob. +94 76 975 2176, +94 77 347 0702