

nature net

The Nature Kenya Newsletter www.naturekenya.org Dec 03/Jan 04

NATURALIST CORNER Beauty and the Beast

Ann Birnie



If you are able to, now is the time to drive down the lower road to Lake Naivasha. On both sides of the road are patches of forest, now covered with pink-flowered trees called Cape chestnut *Calodendrum capense*, my chosen 'beauty'. The *Candelabra euphorbia*, *Euphorbia candelabrum*, the 'beast', is quite distinctive amongst other trees, grey-green, spiky and top heavy.

Our beauty is the only one in its genus *Calodendrum* in Kenya and it grows widely in dry upland and riverine forests 1,600-2,300 m. The tough yellow-brown wood is used for housing, tools, stools etc, but is not commercial. This tree is often chosen as an avenue tree, for its beauty and shade. Although deciduous, its fallen leaves will enrich the soil and the pink flowers are visited by bees. Fruit are rounded capsules with soft prickles, which harden, then break open to set free shiny black seeds. Good seed will germinate easily, but saplings grow rather slowly even in the best forest soil.

The 'beast', like all euphorbias, has a white sap or latex. One drop in the eye is said to be more painful than spitting cobra venom!

The sticky white latex has been used to catch little birds,

kill fish and add to arrow poison. The 'beast' is

found all over Kenya in dry country, from rocky slopes to bush, forest and grassland from 1,800 m down to the seashore. The spiny upright branches are green, having taken

over the job of leaves. A favourite food of rhino, the flowers are said to make the rhino drunk or mad! Only baboons and goats will eat the youngest shoots as the latex is very bitter.



TALKS & VIDEOS

Can timber plantations save our indigenous forest?

by Charles Bengough

Mon 8 December '03,
5:30 p.m. Louis Leakey Hall,
National Museums, Nairobi

The talk will give an up to date picture on the state of Kenya's forestry with particular reference to the importance of timber plantations, the importance of the timber industry and how a viable forest plantation sector can help to save Kenya's indigenous forests.



Charles Bengough is a Canadian forester who came to Kenya in 1967 and spent five years as a forestry officer with the Kenya Forest Department before going into the private sector in Kenya. He also works as a freelance international forestry consultant.

Succulenta Annual Supper

Fri 5 December '03,
6:30 p.m. at no. 80 Bogani
East Road, Langata

Sue Allan will be showing photos of some plants seen on her recent trip across the Sahara and another safari to the Huri Hills, Kulal and Mount Nyiru.

Please call 891190 and liaise regarding food and drinks.

FIELD TRIP

Eburru Escarpment Saturday 20 December 03

Guided birdwalk at the Great Rift Valley Lodge, situated on the Eburru Escarpment, overlooking Lake Naivasha. Possible excursion to the Eburru Forest.

Bring picnic lunch, water and hat and meet at the National Museum, Nairobi car park at 7:00 a.m. (The Lodge offers sandwiches at 350/- if you are interested please indicate when booking.)

Book at the Nature Kenya front office with 300/- per person. Transport is by car pool and confirmation is reliant on available vehicles.

Christmas Carols

Sat 13 December 03
from 3:00 - 6:00 p.m.

An end-of-year carol Christmas celebration at the Arboretum. Invited choirs will lead the public in singing popular Christmas carols, and also present their own.

The African Waterbird Census

on the southern Rift Valley lakes and other wetlands is scheduled for weekends and Wednesdays in January. Experienced volunteers and participants who can provide transport are especially welcome. For more information please contact Alfred Owino, Head of the Dept. of Ornithology, National Museums of Kenya, phone 3742161 ext 243

REGULAR ACTIVITIES

BIRD RINGING

Meet at the Museums' Nairabi Botanic Garden, at 7:00 a.m. every Thursday.

SUNDAY BIRDWATCH

Members meet at the National Museum, Nairobi car park at 9:00 a.m. the third Sunday of every month, i.e. **21 Dec & 18 Jan**. The members decide where to go. Bring lunch

TREE WALK

Guided Tree Walks in the Arboretum on the second Saturday and last Monday, i.e. **13 Dec, (but none on last Dec Monday) & 10 & 26 Jan from 9:30 a.m.** Meet at the Arboretum gate. Those who are not members of FONA or Nature Kenya pay Ksh 100/- fee on arrival at the gate.

WEDNESDAY MORNING BIRDWALKS

Bird watching walks at sites in and around Nairobi. Meet at the National Museum car park every Wednesday at 8:45 a.m. Return about 12:30 p.m. Those who are not members can get temporary membership at Ksh 100 per birdwalk, payable on arrival at the car park.

ARABUKO-SOKOKE (COAST)

The Saturday birdwatch with the Arabuko Sokoke Forest Guides Association is on the first Saturday of each month i.e. **6 Dec & 3 Jan, at 6:30 a.m.** from the Visitor Centre, Gede. Cost 100/- per person. KWS fees may now apply (100/- Citizens, 500/- Residents)

FFJ Bird Walk (Coast)

Friends of Fort Jesus birdwalks are held the third Saturday of each month, i.e. **20 Dec & 17 Jan** Please call Marlene Reid on (041) 491 648 to confirm

Ngong Road Forest Walks (Nairobi)

The Ngong Road Forest Sanctuary Trust Nature walks are held on the first and third Saturdays of the month i.e. **6 & 20 Dec & 3 & 17 Jan, at 9:00 a.m.** Meet at the stairs leading to the Restaurant at the Racecourse.

Lake Victoria Sunset Birders (Kisumu)

The Lake Victoria Sunset Birders are a Nature Kenya Site Support Group and organise bird walks at sites in and around Kisumu every Friday of the month. For further details call 035 42952 or email wck@vicweb.net

DECLARATION

Nature Kenya does not accept any responsibility whatsoever in respect of negligence of any of its staff, volunteers or members organising the outings/trips or for any loss, injury, death or damage to property.

TANA RIVER SAFARIS

Calling All Naturalists !

A Unique 7 Day Safari via Tsavo to the Coast & Back! Via Galla Camp, Taita Ranch (part of a 160,000 acre conservancy in the Tsavo ecosystem), Tsavo East, to 2 nights at the luxury Tana Delta Camp. Thence up the Tana to Mchelelo Camp (2 nights) in the fabulous jungle of the Tana River Primate Reserve, where sightings of 2 species of endangered primate guaranteed!

Return Nairobi via Tsavo East & Umani Springs Camp in the Kibwezi Forest.

K.Shs.61,000 per person 4 pax.
74,000 per person 3 pax.
100,000 per person 2 pax.
179,500 per person 1 pax.

For further details, see contacts below.

KWS fees for Tsavo East not included (2 days). Bring own smart cards.

Porini Resources Services for Conservation,
Community & Wildlife Management

PO Box 22759, Nairobi, Kenya

Tel: 254-2-891702

Fax: 254-2-891307

E-mail: info@poriniresources.com

Web: www.poriniresources.com <http://www.poriniresources.com>

CLASSIFIEDS

Christmas Offer Courtesy Tours & Travel

8 Days Mt Kenya Climb 22,000/-

8 Days Loita Hills & Maasai Mara
21,000/-

6 Days Maasai Mara, L. Nakuru,
L. Naivasha

Daily departures to Mt Kenya, Maasai Mara, Samburu, Loita Hills, Kilimanjaro, Nakuru and L. Turkana
Call 020 341452 or 0733 907657
Email: Courtesytours@yahoo.com

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DECEMBER 03 DIARY

Sat 6	ASF Birdwalks & NRF walk
Man 8	Timber plantations talk
Sat 13	Tree Walk & Carols
Sat 20	Eburru Escarpment & NRF walk
Sun 21	Sunday Birdwalk
	Birdwalks every Wednesday Morning
	Bird ringing every Thursday Morning
	Kisumu birdwalks every Friday

FLAMINGO CAMP, offers free camping for Nature Kenya Members!

Through out the month of December, Nature Kenya members can camp without charge on the shores of Lake Elementaita.

You can take walks or take advantage of optional extras (boating, camel riding, cycling) at reasonable prices. The camp is also situated within a walking distance of the Kariandusi Prehistoric site.

Members wishing to make use of the offer MUST carry their camping gears. Toilets and hot water showers available and security is provided.

Flamingo camp is situated near Gilgil on the Nairobi-Nakuru Highway. Proof of membership needed. Call 0722-832001

JANUARY 04 DIARY

Sat 3	ASF Birdwalks & NRF walk
Sat 10	Tree Walk
Sat 17	NRF walk
Sun 18	Sunday Birdwalk
Mon 26	Tree Walk
	Birdwalks every Wednesday Morning
	Bird ringing every Thursday Morning
	Kisumu birdwalks every Friday

Editor, Catherine Ngarachu



TROPICAL BIOLOGY ASSOCIATION

Field courses in tropical ecology Kenya, Uganda and Madagascar 2004

Do you want to gain experience and learn new research skills? The Tropical Biology Association is running month long courses in practical, field-based training in tropical ecology, conservation and project design. If you hold a first degree in a biological science (or are due to finish by June 2004) and have a keen interest in tropical ecology and conservation - then please do apply.

What do the courses involve?

The unique feature of the TBA courses is that they bring together biologists from African and European countries in equal numbers. This provides you with a rich learning environment and an ideal opportunity for exchanging ideas and making useful contacts.

Course teachers are selected from institutions worldwide, and cover up-to-date concepts and techniques in a variety of topics in tropical ecology and conservation biology. Field exercises form a large part of the curriculum; you will also have the chance to undertake your own research project during the course.

When and where?

- **TBA 04/1 - Savanna ecosystems, Kenya:** 23 June to 22 July 2004
- **TBA 04/2 - Forest and savanna ecosystems, Uganda:** 28 July to 27 August 2004
- **TBA 04/3 - Forest and savanna ecosystems, Uganda:** 2nd September to 30 September 2004
- **TBA 04/4 - Tropical forest ecosystems, Madagascar:** 1st November to 30 November 2004

Who is eligible?

You **must** be a national of an African country and **hold** a first degree in a biological science by the time the course begins. Preference will be given to those involved in biological field research and/or those studying for a higher degree and who are at an **early stage** in their careers.

Scholarships

Scholarships are available for African and Malagasy nationals which include transport to and from the field-site, accommodation, subsistence and course fees.

Application Procedure

Applications (including letters of reference) must be in English and **must include:**

- **a completed application form** (available from the TBA offices upon request or TBA website)
- **a covering letter** explaining in detail why you want to go on the course
- **a curriculum vitae** detailing your education (degree, year of course and marks attained); any achievements, interests, work and/or extra activities (especially any biological ones).
- **two confidential references** from lecturers at your University or employers from your current institution. All applicants must arrange to have references sent to the TBA as soon as possible.

Send your application to:

Project Officer, Tropical Biology Association, c/o Nature Kenya **Email:** courses-africa@tropical-biology.org; For full details, see the TBA website: <http://www.tropical-biology.org>

Closing date for applications: 20 February 2004. *Late applications will not be considered.* Successful applicants will be notified by the end of March. Unsuccessful applicants with emails will also be notified.

Nature Kenya

Membership form

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 Age Bracket (tick) under 21() 21-35() 36-50() over 50()
 Country of Origin _____
 Would you like us to share your contacts Yes/ NO



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<i>Journal of E.A. Natural History</i>	1000	_____
<i>Scopus (Ornithological Journal)</i>	500	_____
<i>World Birdwatch</i>		_____
(the BirdLife International magazine)	1500	_____
Succulenta East Africa	400	_____
Friends of Nairobi Arboretum		_____
Single - 400/-, Student - 250/-, School or Club - 800/-		_____
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