



National Trust of Zimbabwe

ESTABLISHED 1960

NEWSLETTER 2 OF 2022

The National Trust of Zimbabwe is very happy to report that it has been given a grant to enable one person from NTZ to attend the INTO (International National Trusts Organisation) Conference this year, being held in Scotland.

We are very appreciative of the amazing support that we, as the NTZ, get from INTO. They have shown an enormous interest in our small but quite significant operations here in Zimbabwe, on the ground, so to speak.

We look forward once again to positive feed-back from our delegate attending this Conference which will enable us to forge forward with fresh new ideas and contacts from within the INTO membership and renewed contacts and friendships for the NTZ.

In October we will be very happy to have a visit from our INTO AFRICA

counterpart, John De Coninck, together with Emily Drani, who are very actively involved in Uganda and who have also shown an active interest in our own National Trust here in Zimbabwe and with whom we have been working closely to develop closer collaboration with our common interests of cultural, historical and environmental preservation.

World's View - Nyanga

It is with a great sense of pride and with immense gratitude to the NTZ team at Worlds View, that we can announce a VIP visit which took place on Saturday 3rd September - when the NTZ team and local officials welcomed the visiting President of Botswana, His Excellency President Masisi and his wife, the First Lady.



His Excellency The President of Botswana, President Masisi and First Lady, enjoying the views at World's View, Nyanga



Left to right:- Godfrey Koti - Zimbabwe Tourism Authority, Gill Honeyman of the National Trust Nyanga, H.E. President Masisi, First Lady, Oppah Muchinguri - Min of Defence and War Veterans Affairs.



The First Lady of Botswana receives a gift of a stone sculpture, from one of the World's View sculptors, Livingstone



Being introduced to the President on his arrival by Godfrey Koti. Ruth Tongogara, Winnie Muchanuka CEO of ZTA, and Gill Honeyman with the bouquet of local proteas about to be presented to the First Lady.

H.E Masisi said World's View was the highlight of his Nyanga visit. The NTZ is very proud indeed!!!! Gill Honeyman certainly does a sterling job up there for the NTZ!!! Well done Gill and to all your team in the hills and mountains!!!! We are all so proud of you!
Please see <https://youtu.be/B6nSsPvMHcc>

La Rochelle

Recently we had interest from one of the Zimbabwean students, studying Environmental Humanities Cape Town University, to help us with identifying and labelling some of our unidentified orchids at La Rochelle and offering growing advice at the orchid collection held at there.

Brad Croukamp has done a fabulous job in identifying and helping to get the labelling done, a copy of his report is available should any orchid enthusiast wish for a copy to be forwarded, and the Trust would like to extend a warm and most heartfelt thank you to Brad for undertaking this task for us!

Brad, I might add, has a very fine collection of orchids of his own here in Zimbabwe and remains one of the Orchid Society's top enthusiastic young growers!

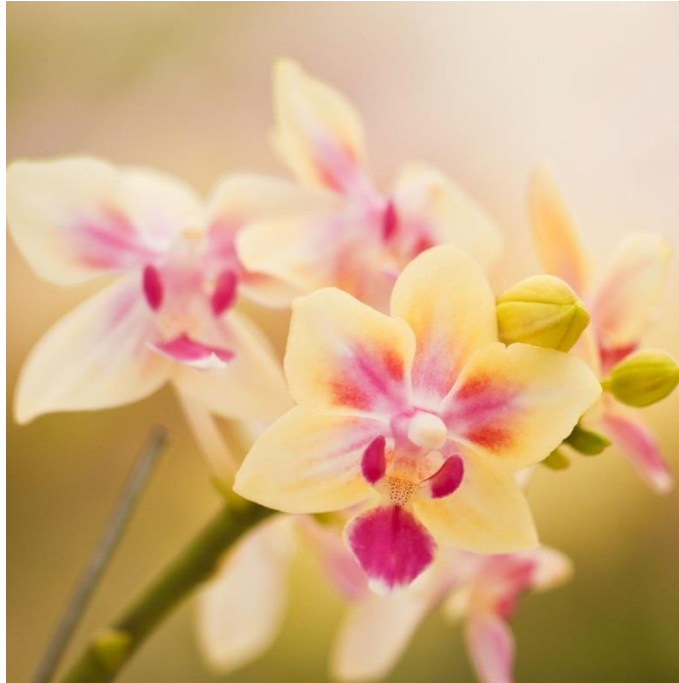
“Many of the plants in the collection have their origins in east Asia with many coming from the base regions of the Himalayas,(India to China) this is because their natural climate is similar to what is reproduced in La Rochelle with moderate but not extreme seasonal variation, moderate humidity, and access to water throughout the year so these are the plants that have the greatest success.”

We are really grateful to Brad for his interest and the time taken to provide an extensive write-up on each of the species that can be found at the La Rochelle collection.

We welcome visitors to see the collection started by Sir Stephen Courthauld and look forward to your comments!

Please visit the Facebook page:-

<https://www.facebook.com/larochellecentre>



One of the many stunning specimens to be found at La Rochelle

Mubukawene

Thanks to generous sponsorship from the Thomas Meikle Trust, work is on-going on the site to eradicate the invasive Lantana weed from the area and a caretaker will be on site to look after the property. We are grateful to the Thomas Meikle Trust for their on-going support of the National Trust efforts in this regard.

Spider Club of Bulawayo visit to Mabukawene:-

Spider Hunt at Mabukawene Nature Reserve on 12th February 2022

The Spider Club of Zimbabwe meet up for an outing into Mabukawene Nature Reserve on 12th February at 8am before the temperatures started to rise. It was a clear summers day and a small group of enthusiastic kids with their parents came along. One mother was totally terrified of the bush and anything with more than two legs but it was encouraging to see her overcome her fears so her child could join in. As with most spider and bug hunting walks you really don't need to go far to find anything and after a two hour hunt we have only gone 50m. We broke for a tea break and were entertained by Martin Sanderson (Founder of Adventure into

Learning) with his story that Mabukuwene as named by Mr Thomas Meikle because this was where he kept his Library (Mabookas)!! After which we went for a walk to the “library” and lookout point and continued the bug hunt.

Many thanks go to the staff of the Entomology and Arachnology department at the Natural history Museum for helping out and the National Trust for granting permission to use their Nature Reserve for this outing.

Spiders, insects, reptiles and other things that were photographed during the morning can be viewed at <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/mabukuwene-nature-reserve> where there is project for these and any other records for the Nature reserve can be viewed on INaturalist.

Annotated Checklist Mabukuwene 12th February 2022

Spiders

Neoscona (Hairy filed spiders) make orb-webs at night which are removed early in the morning. These spiders are commonly found during summer in grassland and low vegetation. A number of species have been recovered from Zimbabwe.

Steatoda capensis (False button spiders) make three dimensional webs usually close to the substrate and are frequently found under stones.

Cheiracanthium species (Sac spiders) are notorious for their cytotoxic venom and small wounds that they can make. There are a number of species in Zimbabwe, those collected were all juveniles so cannot be identified. The females make a silk retreat amongst vegetation and then she encloses herself with the eggs and guards them. Unfortunately none were photographed and all specimens collected were juveniles.

Numerous Jumping spiders, Salticidae, were recorded, including *Hyllus* and *Heliophanus* species. These spiders are always fun to watch as they are diurnal with well developed vision, and have various threat displays which they will use when trying to photograph them!

Other plant dwelling diurnal active hunters are the *Oxyopes* (Lynx spiders) who will leap into the air to catch their prey. At night they usually rest hanging from

dragline silk attached to the underside of a leaf.

Various crab spiders were recorded including *Tmarus*, *Synema*, *Thomisus scrupeus*, *Misumenops rubrodecoratus*, *Diaea puncta*, *Stiphropus bisigillatus* and *Heriaeus*. These are sit-and-wait ambush hunters, mainly active during the day and their gait is side-ways or crab-like hence their name. They have strong bodies and robust front legs enabling them to attack prey much bigger than themselves. They are usually cryptically coloured so they are concealed while they wait for their prey.

Ground dwelling spiders recorded include *Zelotes brennanorum*, wolf spiders including the fast moving *Pardosa*, and the wall spider *Selenops*. *Palpimanus* species are slow moving spiders found during the day in small sac-like retreats under stones. When walking the strong front legs are held up in the air which are full of receptors. They are spider hunters actively seeking their prey hiding in their retreats.

In the three hours in the Nature Reserve we managed to see a good number of spiders and insects and have a discussion about the importance of spiders in the environment and also a discussion about the various spiders seen and it proved an excellent opportunity for questions and education as there was also a learner guide present who was knowledgeable on reptiles. As the morning progressed the temperatures began to rise, and many invertebrates start finding cooler diurnal resting places and sighting become harder.



Spider Club enthusiasts inspecting and identifying their subjects!



Out on a hunt for spiders!!

Murahwa's Hill

The following is an extract from the notes following the latest visit to the site. The National Trust thanks the local Mutare Committee and Dr. Charlie Waghorn and Clare Griffiths of MY TREES for the very valuable input as well. It is with such valuable interested parties that we can move forward to secure this site as a very interesting part of our history, culture and for the very varied fauna and flora to be

found on the site.

"Murahwa's Hill is a large granite hill 153 acres in extent and a place of cultural importance, a naturalistic paradise and is of archeological value. It has a unique combination of a cultural heritage and indigenous flora and fauna given its location vis a vis the prevailing moisture bearing winds. The hill is named after a Manyika Chief who was the last local occupant of the site. Murahwa's Hill is an important place and is respected for the wealth of history it holds.

The property has been undeveloped since it was acquired. The signage was lost/damaged/destroyed prior to 2005 the NTZ has had no presence at the site for a long time. In October 2021, NTZ formally appointed Eng Jackson Njunga as the Chairperson to spearhead activities at the site whilst Nina Bauer remains as the Membership/Treasurer.

A generous donation by the Roy Tuner Trust allowed the frontage of the Hill to be planted and for the NTZ to commence its presence at the site. The front part was cleared and lawn and plants planted, mainly aloes that were kindly donated by Gill Honeyman of the Worlds View site. More work is still to be done in terms of completing the whole front part. It was also decided to build a boundary wall from stonework in order for the Trust to have a presence at the site and to curb free movement of people wandering in and out of the area.

On Saturday 26th March 2022 Dr. Charles Waghorn, Executive Council member, organized a fact-finding site visit He was accompanied by Eng. Jackson Njunga, Sharon Waterworth (Vice Chair NTZ), and Clare Griffiths (Founder of "My Trees Trust") who is involved in many reforestation projects around the country. In 2005 the late Helen Hsylop, one of the Executive Council members who was passionate about the site, worked with Mr Rob Burrett, an archaeologist/Geographer/Botanist, in order to assess the potential of the site. The recommendation was that the property would be best utilised as an Educational and Interpretative/Museum Centre. The purpose of the visit was to ground truth, undertake a preliminary flora investigation, identify the best location for the planned education centre and ensure that the site is safely open to the public.

Clare Griffiths, Ecologist and tree specialist was delighted to report that the rainforest on the Hill is spectacular with lots of mature Albizia trees: a genus of more than 160 species of mostly fast-growing subtropical and tropical trees and shrubs. To put this into context rainforests are very rare in Zimbabwe and cover less than 0.25 percent of the country and are home to an enormous percentage of biodiversity. They are typically created by orographic rainfall, such as the case at Murawha's Hill. She estimated that the larger forest trees are at least 150 years old. Clare also identified a range of vines, fungi, mosses and ferns. The diverse flora in turn supports a varied diversity of insects, amphibians, birds and mammals.

"I would like to express my appreciation for the support rendered by the Chair, Vice Chair and all members of NTZ Council during the few months the Committee has been in existence. I appreciate the funds which have been made available from World's View and donors such as the Roy Turner Trust other donors sourced by the Chairperson. I do understand that funds are scarce at the moment but the availed funds will be used efficiently and I will do my best to maintain the momentum. I will also use my own resources and those sourced locally as much as possible. I am in the process of lobbying for local support, financially and/or materially and intend to invite the Provincial Secretary and the Minister to site in order to solicit their support.

I am working towards the financial viability of the site and the priorities are to complete the wall, employ a new caretaker, remove the settlers, open the site to the public and regularly remove any alien vegetation. Alongside these activities we will work towards securing funding to build the education centre. A long term strategy, sustainable management and development plan will be developed by the NTZ for Murawha's Hill. I am excited to be opening the Hill for visitors again and will work hard to see that Murawha's Hill to be a preferred place for people who would like to appreciate the natural beauty of this unique and very special place".

Jackson. A. Njunga, Chairperson

A very big thank you from the National Trust of Zimbabwe to the Roy Turner Trust for the on-going and generous donations which have greatly helped in improving the site and enabling us to prepare to receive visitors.



A map showing the location of Murawa's Hill



A fine view of Murawa's Hill from Christmas Pass

HERITAGE IS PRECIOUS - TREASURE IT!

[MailPoet](#)