

View From The Top

"I love Jennifer Eccles, I know that she loves me". Don't you just hate it when those silly songs get into your head? After the latest mining shenanigans it is getting worse. Now I have in my head "I stole one billion dollars, because my "friends" said I could".

Well at least this month you could have your garden birds singing a new song with our fabulous new "Grub in a Tub" feeder and associated grub cartridges. And we give you a super introductory special...

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Birding Plant of the Month

Lavender Tree (*Heteropyxis natalensis*)

A smallish Highveld garden cannot do much better than a lavender tree. Firstly, the tree is stunning with an excellent shape. Secondly it is very low maintenance, and although slow growing, can even be planted in a large pot, will provide lavender aroma from crushed leaves before maturity, and has small off-white flowers. The maximum size will be about 5 - 7m. The biggest benefit is with insects – expect bees, butterflies and others, and these followed by all your insect feeding birds. If you are planning a "rock" garden, or a bushveld style garden, this one is for you.



Lavender Tree

Nature's Heart

Specials of the Month

1): "Bird-Grub-in-a-Tub". A very "friendly" way to feed your birds! We offer 25 cartridges of 260g each, containing the highest grade suet. We also throw in a free Bird-Grub-in-a-Tub Feeder.

R500,00

2): Suet Bits 3kg

R180,00

Bon Mots

When the owl sings, the night is silent.

(Charles de Leusse)

Environmental Chirps

The chances of falling pregnant after having your tubes cut is apparently about one in ten thousand per event (!) reducing as time progresses after sterilisation. Who knows how these things work, but miracles happen, and they always result in "miracle babies". We have just such a "miracle baby" in the family born to a cousin. Except that he is no longer a baby, has just qualified as a Game Ranger, and was recently posted to Mana Pools. (Go Luke!) African wildlife needs a few miracles. Which got me thinking – the very biggest miracle that I have observed is how fast the natural environment recovers after areas are declared as reserves. That includes both vegetation and animals, but obviously not necessarily those threatened by extinction. Yet there are always humans behind these "miracles". There are those with the necessary political clout or financial muscle to make things happen. They are clearly critical to conservation, but are very often on the receiving end of plenty of positive press and popular praise. Then there are the ones like Luke, who make things happen at ground level, who will probably never be wealthy in currency terms, but will experience the

deep satisfaction of doing something positive for the planet, and in some cases will have the pleasure of actually living closely to our natural heritage. They never seem to receive the credit that is due. These include the parks officials, the scientific researchers and associated staff, the veterinary staff, the botanists, the entomologists, the mammologists, and all the other unsung heroes. We must not forget our special heroes – the ornithologists. Nature's Heart salutes you, and we are very grateful for our many Lukes. You are the keepers of the miracle.

Bird of the Month

African Jacana (*Actophilornis africanus*)

How do you get excited at a waterhole when only water birds are around? The answer is "African Jacana", and at the moment there are plenty around to observe! They say "behind every successful man there is a woman" (and a surprised mother-in-law). But what constitutes success. For our boy that means raising 4 hungry chicks all alone. In parallel his missus Idea of success is to copulate (and hopefully procreate) with every available male in the pond. That is what happens when she is much bigger than you. One has to admit that based on Jacana numbers they are both very successful at their independent strategies. And for you, (the waterhole voyeur), watching Jezebel in action is pretty exciting...

