

View from the Top

Fires are burning in the Amazon. The destruction is shocking, and the impact touches almost every aspect of our environmental awareness. There is no doubt that the primary cause is greed brought on by mining, and area cleaning intended for establishing illicit base communities. These in turn are the centre of illicit logging activities and illicit farming activities, (often farming being dependant upon logging to clear suitable agricultural areas). The Brazilian President (Bolsanaro) is being blamed and clearly shares some complicity. Yet the position is not simple. Actually, the massive fire clearing actions have been in progress for many years. Bolsanaro has inherited (and arguably worsened) an existing nightmare scenario. Yet to my mind the most appalling response has come from first world leadership, who have taken a hypocritical stance in attacking Bolsanaro. Bear in mind, the first world is the primary user of the logged timber, the mined minerals, the agricultural produce. The first world is equally culpable. That means you Emmanuel Macron. george@naturesheart.co.za.

Birding Plant of the Month

African Mangosteen (*Garcinia livingstonei*)

Sadly, you will need to live in one of our warmer climes to plant this tree. It will not tolerate frost. It occurs naturally from Durban, and north into the lowveld. Nevertheless, it will grow elsewhere provided the temperature is acceptable. The tree size could extend to 15m and will typically vary between 5 and 12m (but can be pruned down). It thus suits a slightly larger garden. The big attraction is the (human) edible fruit. The orange coloured berries are full of juice, and will be a major hit with monkeys and baboons (caution!); but they will also bring in those fruit feeding birds in droves! Yet before the fruit comes great nectar bearing flowers calling birds and insects alike. Another winner!



African Mangosteen

Nature's Heart

Specials of the Month

This month, an introductory special. We introduce "Luv Bugs" our answer to meal worms. Your birds will definitely be calling for you to try these! Available until 27th September or while stocks last.

1): A Free Beaded Mealworm Feeder, with every two 500g Bulk Boxes ordered!

R276-00

2): A Super Bundle! A classic metal Mealworm Feeder, with every three 100g Sealed Packs of Luv Bugs:

R200-00

Bon Mots

Daffodowdilly

She wore her yellow sun-bonnet,
She wore her greenest gown;
She turned to the south wind
And curtsied up and down.
She turned to the sunlight
And shook her yellow head,
And whispered to her neighbour:
"Winter is dead."
A A Milne

Environmental Chirps

The birds, the bees, the trees, and even the local radio station's overplaying of Vivaldi tell us one thing: Spring is here! That means nesting time, and a great deal of excitement and activity in your garden. For those who love to see this cycle being initiated again we encourage you to check out our nesting products, and contact us by email if you have an interest in nesting logs or owl boxes.

The question it begs is how our birds choose their mates; "How Do Fools Fall in Love?"

The amazing reality is that the process is probably at least as complex as that for human lovers, and varies in every bird species. Our hint this month; watch your garden birds and enjoy the differing courtship processes of each of the many species. As an example we

choose a few interesting pairings:

a) Cape Robin-chat. The first act is for a male to establish territory (about 1 hectare), and defend viciously. After pairing, the two birds could hold the same territory for years and repeatedly breed in a monogamous fashion.

b) Cape Glossy Starling. A very interesting mating display by the male including strutting around, throwing the head back and softly chirruping. This is an important selection period, because this is another of our monogamous birds. Breeding is typically in holes in trees.

c) Go Away Bird. The mating activity is all about noise! They seem to be in continuous motion with chasing and being chased. There seems to be less display than other birds, but the crest is raised up and down, leaving no doubt as to the activity and target of interest.

These are but three typical examples. Many more are out there in your garden – do yourself a favour this spring and enjoy the mating spectacle!

Bird of the Month

Cape Glossy Starling (*Lamprotornis nitens*)

A bird of startling beauty! One thing is certain – Cape Glossy Starlings love Elaine's Birdgrub! My vision of winter in July comes from a deciduous shrub we had in our garden – perhaps 2m high. The picture of at least 20 Cape Glossy Starlings sprinkled around the denuded branches, and glistening in the sunlight outmatches every White House Christmas Tree that ever was! Apparently these birds are not found in much of the Cape Province, but they are in abundance in the rest of the country. They are a must in your suburban garden! A common bird that is by no means dull! Remember the key calling card – "Birdgrub..."

