

## View from the Top

The recent RSA climatic news included massive rain (a Godsend), and equally massive rain as a destructive force of nature. The deep gratitude that we feel is moderated by the losses suffered by many of our countrymen, and even some deaths. However, South Africa was spared much of the destruction that hit Mozambique and Madagascar, and we should be happy. It has been associated with many reflections from both "amateurs" and "experts" on the reasons for the apparent frequency of unusual weather patterns, and as to whether this relates to climate change or not. Sadly, and for reasons that are not always clear, the debate is marred by a political stance that often dominates above common sense. Nature's Heart has investigated and come to a simple conclusion: (a) there is no doubt that planet earth is heating up and the trend is continuing in an upward direction, (b) the result is enforced change in many areas of life, and some will be profoundly negative to us, (c) this may be due to carbon emission (not proven, but a likely case), (d) no matter which way you choose to stand on the issue, there is no reason to continue to pollute the earth ad infinitum, whether that be by carbon emission, plastic pollution, or non-sustainable living practices. [george@naturesheart.co.za](mailto:george@naturesheart.co.za).

## Birding Plant of the Month

**Jacket Plum (*Pappea capenses*)**  
This stunner has featured before, but is repeated because it really is that good. Firstly, it is always great to have an evergreen plant in your garden. Secondly, it is different to have one that can equally be enjoyed by humans, along with the many insects, birds and other animals – why not try to produce a breakfast jelly from this fruit? The obvious thought is that the fruit attracts a great variety of creatures, (absolutely true), yet the leaves are also favoured by all the browsers. It is attractive, comparatively small, and easy to grow through most of South Africa. A very easy tree to choose for your garden!



**Jacket Plum**

## Nature's Heart

### Specials of the Month

*We are hopeful to slowly re-introduce specials as the present delivery stresses are overcome. This month until 30<sup>th</sup> April and while stocks last, we offer slabs at R20-00 each, and the multipack – 12 will reduce to R215-00.*

### Bon Mots

*"Perfect tranquillity within consists in the good ordering of the mind, the realm of your own." (Marcus Aurelius)*

### Environmental Chirps

Throughout most of the developed world there is a modicum of hope, as vaccines appear, and people start to consider a world returning to the life that we were used to experiencing before the pandemic. In Africa, the "usual" reasons will ensure that this happens more slowly, and we in South Africa are still bracing for a "third wave" in May.

Now thoughts start to drift towards the question – what is "normal"? We also ask is this not simply a "new normal" (ie. NOT normal), and will our way of life be irreversibly changed? How will it impact on our businesses, on our leisure time, on the education of our children, even at a deep spiritual level, and on our psyche? And finally, how will all this impact upon the way we see our natural environment, and our commitment to contribute towards a sustainable world?

It may not be possible to see the future, but we are able to make some assessment, and coupled with intuition come to some understanding, that may inform our actions.

- 1) Money will be tight! It will be many years before the world truly recovers financially, and the RSA is likely to be under greater pressure than the majority of others. Unless it makes financial sense actions of an environmental nature will be slow in forthcoming. We see low uptake on electric vehicles, environmental threats due to mining, continued ecological disaster due to service delivery issues (water is the biggest problem), extension of coal power plant lifecycles (with load-shedding continuing).

- 2) Conversely, the great hope is that the "money-spinning" tourism industry will come back, and force some consideration for nature reserve funding, and general clean-ups. Also, locals may no longer afford international travel.
- 3) Urbanisation will increase. The sad reality is that inner city squalor will increase. One may expect that many people will have discovered the joy of working remotely, and will consider moving (at least partially) to the countryside. Is it conceivable that this will result in rejuvenation of some selected small towns?
- 4) Local travel: Here I believe that we may see a positive outcome, where people have become tired of being cooped up in apartments and need the restorative effect of the wild open spaces.
- 5) As a concluding statement. It may be possible that many start to see the illusionary effects of money as a bringer of happiness, and commence a "new leaf" living a more fulfilling family oriented lifestyle

*In summary – nature is the best teacher when it comes to environmentalism. We may yet see a "new generation", with a growing "new" and better attitude, and with a somewhat better "new normal".*

## Bird of the Month

**Re Headed Finch (*Amadina erythrocephala*)**

These cuties chose themselves as bird-of-the-month. The photograph shows a group arriving and warily inspecting a new feeder under test. The new feeder is the "Birdie Seed Box" now available from Elaine's Birding. It took a full hour of flying up and down, before the stomach overruled all those uncertainties! Even though there are many millions of these birds (and they are clearly not a threatened species), we as bird lovers are always truly privileged to have them visit. Sadly, many are trapped into a life of caged captivity. How much better are they wild in your garden!

