

**MATOBO CONSERVATION SOCIETY**  
**CHECKLIST FOR THE FLORA (ALOES, GRASSES & ORCHIDS) OF THE**  
**MATOBO HILLS**



**APPRECIATION**

This material was prepared by the MATOBO CONSERVATION SOCIETY  
from chapter 7 of the book  
**“THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE MATOBO HILLS” ISBN 978-0-7974-9815-0**  
with the approval of the  
NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM OF ZIMBABWE

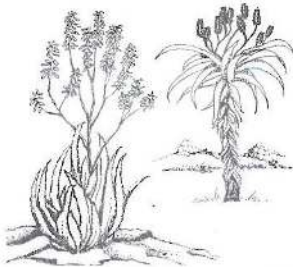
The Matobo Conservation Society, a registered Welfare organisation, is committed to the conservation, appreciation and sustainable use of the natural and cultural resources within the Matobo Hills region. For more information (a) on this checklist and (b) the book “THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE MATOBO HILLS” , write to: The Matobo Conservation Society, PO Box FM 648, Famona, Bulawayo or email [matoboconservationsociety@gmail.com](mailto:matoboconservationsociety@gmail.com)

**INTRODUCTION**

Information on:

Aloes provided by           RG Stephens  
Grasses provided by       DM Gammon  
Orchids provided by       RG Stephens, S Sibanda, L Norman, B&E Good

Sketches were done by Mary Friend



The Matobo Hills covers an area of about 3,100 square kilometres, and even within such a relatively small area there is wide botanic variety. This ranges from the extreme desert conditions found on the exposed "dwalas" or whale back hills, through grassland and lush woodland in the broad valleys. The vleis, or seasonal wetlands, usually have a sparse number of trees and shrubs, but are filled with grasses. The hills range in

altitude from 1,564m above sea level, in the north east, to 1,115m in the south west. Rainfall follows a similar pattern, with the eastern hills recording an average in excess of 800mm, and the southwest as little as 400mm. Due to the runoff from the rocks, the effective rainfall in the valleys is considerably higher. The combination of altitude and rainfall has a profound impact on the



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distribution of plants in general. Temperatures range from a mean summer maximum of 26.3C to a mean winter maximum of 17C. Frost can occur in winter, but never snow. The granite gives rise to a pale coloured sand, not particularly rich, but well drained. In valleys, compost has enriched the soil, whilst vleis generally contain good soil. All told, this makes the area a place of intense interest for the professional and amateur botanist alike. There are 24 orchids found in the hills, with the high north eastern area possessing the greatest variety. Only one of these, *Ansellia africana*, is arboreal. The Aloe Family is represented by 6 species. Hybrids also occur naturally.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Your Notes
<b>MONOCOTYLEDONS</b>	<b>ALOES</b>	
<b>Asphodelaceae</b>		
<i>Aloe aculeata</i>	Red Hot Poker Aloe	
<i>A. chabaudii</i>	Dwala Aloe	
<i>A. cryptopoda</i>	Kirk's Aloe	
<i>A. excelsa</i>	Excelsa	
<i>A. greatheadii</i>	Greathead's Aloe	
<i>A. zebrina</i>	Zebraleaf Aloe	
	<b>GRASSES</b>	
<i>Acroceras macrum</i>	Nile grass	
<i>Alloteropsis semialata</i>	Black seed grass	
<i>Andropogon eucomus</i>	Silver thread	
<i>A. gayanus</i>	Blue grass	
<i>Aristida barbicollis</i>	Common three-awn	
<i>A. congesta</i>	Catstail three awn	
<i>A. junciformis</i>	Ngongoni three-awn	
<i>Bothriichloa glabra</i>	Purple tassel grass	
<i>B. insculpta</i>	Pin-hole grass	
<i>Brachiaria brizantha</i>	Common signal	
<i>B. humidicola</i>	Creeping signal	
<i>B. nigropedata</i>	Blackfoot	
<i>B. serrata</i>	Red top signal	
<i>Cenchrus ciliaris</i>	Foxtail	
<i>Chloridion cameronii</i>	Gilston	
<i>Chloris gayana</i>	Rhodes grass	
<i>C. pycnothrix</i>	Spider web grass	
<i>C. virgata</i>	Old lands grass	
<i>Craspedorhachis africana</i>	Whisk grass	
<i>Cymbopogon excavatus</i>	Broad- leaf turpentine grass	

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<i>C. plurinodis</i>	Narrow-leaf turpentine grass	
<i>Cynodon dactylon</i>	Couch grass	
<i>Dactyloctenium aegyptium</i>	Little crow's foot	
<i>Danthoniopsis pruinosa</i>	Rock crack	
<i>Digitaria eriantha</i>	Finger grass	
<i>Diheteropogon amplexans</i>	Broad leaf blue grass	
<i>Eleusine indica</i>	Rapoko grass	
<i>Elionurus argenteus</i>	Lemon or Wire grass	
<i>Eragrostis chapelieri</i>	Spiky love grass	
<i>E. gummiflua</i>	Sticky-stem love grass	
<i>E. rigidior</i>	Curly-leaf love grass	
<i>E. superba</i>	Heart-seed love grass	
<i>E. viscosa</i>	Sticky love grass	
<i>Hemarthria altissima</i>	Red vlei grass	
<i>Heteropogon contortus</i>	Spear grass	
<i>Hyparrhenia filipendula</i>	Fine thatching grass	
<i>Hyperthelia dissoluta</i>	Yellow thatching grass	
<i>Imperata cylindrical</i>	Silver spike grass	
<i>Loudetia flavida</i>	Pointed russet grass	
<i>L. simplex</i>	Russet grass	
<i>Microchloa kunthii</i>	Pincushion or sickle grass	
<i>Oplismenus hirtellus</i>	Basket grass	
<i>Panicum maximum</i>	Buffalo or Guinea grass	
<i>Paspalum dilatatum</i>	Dallis grass	
<i>P. urvillei</i>	Vasey grass	
<i>Perotis patens</i>	Bottle-brush grass	
<i>Phragmites australis</i>	Common reed	
<i>Poa annua</i>	Annual winter	
<i>Pogonarthria squarrosa</i>	Herring bone or cross grass	
<i>Rhynchelytrum repens</i>	Red top grass	
<i>Schizachyrium sanguineum</i>	Red autumn grass	
<i>Setaria pallide-fusca</i>	Annual Timothy grass	
<i>S. sphacelata</i>	Timothy grass	
<i>Sorghastrum friesii</i>	Fries'	
<i>Sporobolus fimbriatis</i>	Catstail	
<i>S. ioclados</i>	Sodic soil	
<i>Themeda triandra</i>	Red grass	

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<i>Trachypogon spicatus</i>	Grey beard grass	
<i>Tragus berteronianus</i>	Carrot seed grass	
<i>Trichoneura grandiglumis</i>	Tumble weed or rolling grass	
<i>Tristachya leucothrix</i>	Trident	
<i>Urelytrum squarrosom</i>	Centipede or Quinine grass	
<i>Urochloa mosambicensis</i>	Common Urochloa Gonya grass	
<b>Orchidaceae</b>	<b>ORCHIDS</b>	
<i>Ansellia africana</i>	Leopard Orchid	
<i>Bonatea speciosa</i>	Green Wood Orchid	
<i>Brachycorythis buchananii</i>		
<i>B. congoensis</i>		
<i>B. pleistophylla</i>		
<i>Cyrtorchis arcuata</i>	Large cream tree orchid	
<i>Disa woodii</i>		
<i>Eulophia angolensis</i>		
<i>E. coeloglossa</i>		
<i>E. cucullata</i>	Foxglove Orchid	
<i>E. hereroensis</i>		
<i>E. livingstoniana</i>		
<i>E. nordindhii</i>		
<i>E. petersii</i>	Aloeleaf Orchid	
<i>E. streptopetala</i>		
<i>Habenaria disparilis</i>		
<i>H. filicornis</i>		
<i>H. galpinii</i>		
<i>H. nyikana</i>		
<i>H. schimperiana</i>	Vlei Orchid	
<i>Orthochilus mechowii</i>	Banana Orchid	
<i>Platycoryne affinis</i>		
<i>P. buchananiana</i>		
<i>Satyrium buchananii</i>		
<i>S. macrophyllum</i>		
<i>S. trinerved</i>		