

# Ethiopia's Wild Flowers & Archaeology

Naturetrek Tour Report

9 – 25 October 2015



*Kniphofia foliosa*



*Lobelia rhyncopetalum*



*Kniphofia isoetifolia*

Report & images compiled by John Shipton



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Tour Participants: John Shipton (Leader) & Getachew Eshete (Guide) with eight Naturetrek clients

## Day 1

Friday 9th October

Group members from UK met at Heathrow for an evening departure for Addis which left on time. David and Jay arrived in Addis from Australia and transferred to Ghion Hotel in the afternoon.

## Day 2

Saturday 10th October

### Addis Ababa

We arrived at dawn at Addis, and negotiated the visa application process and immigration control. Emerging from the airport in fine weather, we were met by Getachew and transferred to the faded splendour of the Ghion Hotel, where we met David and Jay while we checked in. We then repaired to our rooms for a rest or wandered the gardens to admire sunbirds amongst the exotic, often Australian, tree species, with Black Kites overhead, before meeting again at midday. We then all went for lunch at the Lucy Restaurant next to the National Museum. Half of us indulged in Ethiopian food: our first Injera and Shiro, Tibs and Doro Wot, according to taste.

Next we had our tour of the National Museum. The palaeontology section downstairs with the famous Lucy, *Australopithecus afarensis*, had been professionally rearranged and gives a good glimpse into *Homo* species evolution and the vital importance of Ethiopian finds. We then had a short tour of the city, first stopping off at the well known Tomoca's Coffee shop, to sample the brew which is one of Ethiopia's many delights. From there we drove through the Mercato, the huge and turbulent Addis market. Still recovering from our flights, and with an early start on the morrow, we retired to the hotel for an early supper in the hotel, accompanied by a local band and a victorious Niger football team.

## Day 3

Sunday 11th October

### Addis to Simien Mountains.

We left at dawn for our flight to Gondar which went smoothly. It was somewhat hazy so we didn't get the best views of the Blue Nile, but caught glimpses of Lake Tana as we came into Gondar. We were met by our new bus at Gondar airport, which was adorned with usual municipal plantings of *Spathodea campanulata* the African Tulip tree and the Australian *Grevillea robusta*. We drove into the city where we indulged in a much-needed coffee, our first sampling of Ethiopian ceremonial. Heading north, we soon reached the fabulous viewpoints over edge of the great escarpment, where we found our first *Kniphofia foliosa* and one *Plectrocephalus varians*, helpfully picked by one of the usual horde of village children who emerged every time we stopped.

Our journey up to Debarq featured several stops, both botanical and ornithological, including a floral bank of the endemic *Bidens microptera* with a purple carpet of *Trifolium acaule*, mingled with the blue Commenilid, *Cyanotis barbata*. We then stopped to examine fields of Tef, *Eragrostis tef*, the staple vital to subsistence on the Ethiopian highlands. Exotic *Eucalyptus* is depressingly everywhere in the Ethiopian Highlands but groves of *Acacia abyssinica* were a wonderful counterbalance. After lunch at Debarq, which included more Injera, Shiro and Tibs for some of us, we registered with the Simien park office and collected our local guide, Alex, and our armed two scouts who are required to accompany all visitors in Simien. Heading up onto the great escarpment, we made a diversion to walk above the gorge of the Lama River where we admired Steppe Eagles and Lammergeier, as well

as the majestic *Schefflera abyssinica* above the cascade of the river. We then arrived at Simien Lodge in the early evening which, at 3260m, is the highest lodge in Africa.

## Day 4

Monday 12th October

Simien Mountains; Michibi; Chinkwanet.

Emerging from the Simien Lodge after breakfast, we strolled out to the spectacular view over the great basalt escarpment. Today we walked along its edge amongst the giant heather trees in flower, festooned with *Usnea* species. We spent the first hours strolling and examining the ground flora, highlights perhaps being the gentian *Swertia abyssinica* and *Pletocephalus varians*. There were some stunning Lichen species, with some of the foliose species having opening apothecia (fruiting bodies). After a couple of hours, while Getachew was explaining the area, Derek discovered an *Albuca abyssinica*, that green-flowered Lilloid wonder. Just then we had our first meeting with a huge troupe of Gelada Baboons and spent some time wandering amongst them.

The weather was cloudy but remained clement for the rest of the morning as we carried on with our walk around the escarpment. At one point we had views of Klipspringers, and there were plenty of ornithological treats. Plant highlights amongst the *Erica* trees included *Scabiosa columbaria* and the rather Edelweiss-like, but in fact Umbelliferous, *Alepidea peduncularis*. At around two, we met up with our bus and had a packed lunch picnic, accompanied by Thick-billed Ravens and, right on the escarpment, found our first *Hebenstretia angolensis* and a very inaccessible but glorious *Gladiolus abyssinicus*. Some of the group returned to the lodge with the bus and, although the weather looked threatening, the rest of us continued our walk along the escarpment. However by three, the rain set in heavily, and we all came back to the lodge for a well earned rest. In the evening the group watched a presentation on the Simien Gelada Baboons at the Simien Lodge bar.

## Day 5

Tuesday 13th October

Simien Mountains; Chenek.

Thankfully all the heavy rain had passed by morning, which was clear and bright. We sent off early for the 40km drive along the escarpment. We needed to get to Chenek early to have our best chance of catching sight of Walia Ibex. Saving all the botanical treats for the return journey, we arrived at Chenek camp with its fabulous vistas on the edge of the Simien escarpment. Walking slowly around the edge of the basalt cliffs, it wasn't long before we caught sight of a male Walia Ibex with its huge horns way down below us. We were further in awe of a range of raptors including the great Lammergeiers, Steppe Eagles and Augur Buzzards. We carried on our walk above the gorge to a viewpoint opposite the camp to take in some of the thrilling Afro-alpine flora. *Helichrysum citrispinum* often dominates and, hanging from the cliffs, *Aeonium leucoblepharum*. We then walked to a secluded cliff top for another spectacular picnic lunch accompanied, as usual, by Thick-billed Ravens, who entertained us, reckoning on a few crumbs, while raptors whirled about, above and below.

Thankfully the weather stayed good, and we had the whole afternoon to take in plants and birds on the drive back. First we had several stops to admire the great sweeping stands of the Giant Lobelia, *Lobelia rhyncopetalum*. Further along we stopped for several vast stands of *Kniphofia foliosa*, all wonderfully in flower, forming corridors of colour up the mountainside, and being fed on by flocks of Slender-billed Starlings and various sunbirds. Having crossed the cultivated areas which were being ploughed laboriously with horse and implements that

won't have changed for a thousand years, we found similar stands of the beautiful *Kniphofia isoetifolia*, in all its range of yellows and reds. Further down, the road was adorned with *Aloe macrocarpa* in full flower, accompanied by more *Gladiolus abyssinicus*. Later on we stopped for a great stand of *Leonotis ocymifolia* and another for the giant Hypericum, *H. revolutum*. There were several bird stops and a wonderful pause for another troupe of Gelada Baboons before arriving back for a well-earned dinner at the lodge.

## Day 6

Wednesday 14th October

### Simien Mountains; Sankaber to Jinba Waterfall

Again we were blessed by the weather gods who delivered rain overnight but a clear morning and a dry day. Today we drove back along the escarpment, stopping at a wonderful viewpoint near the village of Michibi and on to Sankaber camp where we started our walk along the ridge.

Through the scout camp there we passed a fine stand of the Afro-montane endemic tree *Hagenia abyssinica* and the enormous herbaceous *Senecio myriocephalus*. We were becoming familiar with many of the plants but were greeted with more extensive stands in full flower of *Gladiolus abyssinicus*, *Aloe macrocarpa* as well as lovely pockets of *Kniphofia isoetifolia*, and had time to admire the glumes and awns of the lovely *Andropogon* and *Exothecca* grasses. Later we passed *Asparagus africanus* smothering shrubs, and on the way down to our picnic lunch we found *Delphinium dasycaulon* in flower. Along with lots of bird stops with larks, sunbirds and plenty of raptors, we had a good sighting of Menelik Bushbuck, followed by a prime shot of a female Klipspringer on a horizon.

We then had a sunny picnic on a meadow known as Kaba, accompanied by our Ravens with baboons playing in the feathery *Andropogon* grass. Leaving some of our party by the bus, we walked across a stream, and through fascinating mixed woodland, to the terrific viewpoint of the Jinba waterfall which plunges 500 metres off the escarpment, draining the Gich plateau opposite. The viewpoint was adorned with *Aloe macrocarpa* in full flower and the Lilloid *Albuca abyssinica*, beautifully placed. The platform is accessed by an astonishing dyke which cuts through the layers of basalt, and can be traced wonderfully on the cliff face next to the waterfall. Returning to the bus, we drove back to the lodge with stops again for the *Leonotis*, more sightings of Menelik Bushbuck and several birds.

## Day 7

Thursday 15th October

### Simien Lodge and Gondar

In the morning we left the lodge and drove back down to Debarq, on the way spotting several birds. We also took in local activity: barley being harvested, hillsides being ploughed for next season and noting how water is accessed by hand pumps and carried. After stopping at the Falasha village, now devoid of the original Jewish population, we arrived at the luxurious and warmth of the well-appointed Goha hotel above Gondar, with views south almost to Lake Tana.

After lunch accompanied by Mocking Cliff Chats, who live in the restaurant, we went into town for our various archaeological tours. First was Gondar Palace itself. The group were taken by a local guide, a young man who proved popular, and I then persuaded Getachew to take us to Debre Berhan Selassie Church with its fabulous frescoes. The quiet grounds that surround the church area delight, and abound with raptor activity in the great

*Ficus* trees above. Next we went to the Fasiladas Baths. Again, the grounds abound with bird life amongst the *Ficus vasta* and *F. sycomorus*, and the gatekeeper showed us a Greyish Eagle Owl residing in the ruins.

## Day 8

Friday 16th October

### Gondar to Lalibela

We had a morning flight to Lalibela, and an early start from the Goha Hotel for the drive to the airport. The flight was on time and the skies reasonably clear and not too hazy, so we had good views looking over the fascinating mountainous country of the Northern Ethiopian Highlands. Leaving Lake Tana, we could trace the various rivers cutting gorges through the basalt flows, culminating in the Tekeze River which flows north around Simien and eventually into Sudan and the Nile. After collecting the baggage, we boarded our new bus and drove the 30km across this new, drier landscape, patterned with Sorghum and Tef fields and tiny villages made up of the round thatched dwellings typical of Northern Ethiopia. Just by the airport, we stopped for *Aloe berbana* in flower and spotted a Pin-tailed Whydah, amongst other birds. We reached the simple Jerusalem Hotel, whose chief merit is the great views west across the Highland landscape.

After lunch at the hotel, we went into Lalibela for a tour of the northern cluster of the wondrous rock-hewn churches. Getachew dispensed with a local guide, but we were accompanied by a local man who looked after shoes while we were inside the churches. First we toured the largest church, Bet Medhane Alem, then the smaller, but somehow more intriguing, Bet Maryam, followed by journeys through deep cut passages into Bet Debre Sina and Bet Golgotha, where the inner sanctum is guarded by priests and can only be entered by males. Exiting via the dramatic Tomb of Adam, we emerged into the sunlight and passed the preserved traditional houses, noting the range of exotic trees such the Australian wattle *Acacia podalyriifolia* and the Pepper Tree, the American *Schinus molle*. Bird life abounded, with several sunbirds being seen. In the evening, before supper, we could watch from our balconies the sunset across the wild landscape of Welo, this northern province of Ethiopia.

## Day 9

Saturday 17th October

### Lalibela

This morning we visited the western cluster of rock-hewn churches. On the way the road was blocked so we walked across the "River Jordan". Today was market day so we found ourselves with a throng of people heading to market with goods and livestock. Our first tour was of Bet St George which in many ways is the most dramatic of all and remains without a protective structure. From above the church, we could see the market place full of people and watch various avian inhabitants, sunbirds, flycatchers and bulbuls. Bet Gabriel was in the process of renovation work, so we walked through tunnels to visit the last of the monolithic churches, Bet Emmanuel, with its 16th century friezes, before finishing the tour with the half-cut-out church Bet Abba Labanos.

After lunch at the Hotel, I persuaded Getachew to take us out of town to visit Na'akuto La'ab, a cave church 7km out of town. We drove passed the mass of people returning from the market and heading for their villages in the hinterland, all on foot. The short walk down to the cave yielded an array of plants and birds. The most spectacular birds were the gorgeous Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu and the Variable Sunbird, and around the cave

entrance White-billed Starlings were massed and building their nests. In the valley below, we had fine examples of the giant *Euphorbia abyssinica*, whilst above our heads we had an African mistletoe, in the Loranthaceae, *Tapinanthus* sp. Inside the cave, the group had a Getachew talk and were entertained by the priest who showed off the accoutrements of the Ethiopian Orthodox church and very old Ge'ez texts which he read for us. After a rest at the hotel, we went out to a restaurant a short walk away for a sumptuous meal.

## Day 10

Sunday 18th October

### Lalibela to Wondo Genet

We had a mid morning flight to Addis so we weren't subjected to too early a start on our drive back to the airport. The plane was on time again and we had a clear flight with not too hazy views over the Ethiopian highlands. We were met by our newest bus and the very good natured driver, Afarra, who served us for the coming week. We made good time driving through the city and, after an hour or so, were speeding along Ethiopia's brand new and only motorway which led us to the junction town of Mojo. Here we had lunch at the Daema restaurant, which turned out one of the best meals of the trip with both its Ethiopian and Farenji dishes.

We then set out for the journey south along the Rift Valley. First we stopped to view the great Tef fields with the crop ripe and just about to be harvested. Then near the bridge over the Awash River, we stopped to watch birds over the swampy ground which was covered in Water Hyacinth near the river. There was a huge range here, from Hamerkops to Plovers and Herons to Stilts and Kingfishers. Further on, we stopped by the side of Lake Koka, a popular spot for the Marabou Storks which massed the lake side along with Sacred Ibis; here also was a vast Kapok Tree, the exotic *Ceiba pentandra*. Thereafter we didn't have time to stop at Lake Ziway, as time was pressing. It was sunset as we entered and drove through Shashamene and downhill into the forest country around Wondo Genet, home of the Sidama people, and arrived at the wildly eccentric palace of Haile Selassie's sister, now the just as eccentric Wabe Shebelle Hotel. We didn't really have time in the evening to appreciate the surroundings, although we could ourselves of the Hot Spring Baths, a few hundred metres away.

## Day 11

Monday 19th October

### Wondo Genet to Goba

We decided to go without a morning stroll around the "palace" as we wanted to spend more time at Dinsho Park HQ later in the day to take in plants, animal and birds there. But some of the group had time to watch the Grivet Monkeys and appreciate the forest surroundings. After breakfast we headed back through Shashemane, picking up fruit on the way for our picnic lunch. Rising out of the Rift Valley, we travelled through Oromo country, climbing steadily up to the Bale Mountains. Before Dodola we stopped to view an impressive stand of the enormous *Echinops*, the endemic *E. ellenbeckii* and then, just after Adaba, we spotted Abyssinian Ground Hornbill amongst fine stands of the indigenous Gymnosperm *Afrocarpus (Podocarpus) falcatus*. The forests were dominated by *Juniperus procera*, with herbaceous cover including *Bidens macroptera* and *Kniphofia foliosa*. At 3000m, we started recognising plants familiar from the Simiens. At the pass, at 3500m, the giant *Hypericum revolutum* started to appear. Over the pass, the Gaysay Grasslands began and, at their start, we stopped to watch a range of geese, duck, and grebe species. On the grassland we were soon introduced an array of large mammals: Warthogs, Olive Baboons and Mountain Nyalas.

We arrived in good time for lunch at the Dinsho Park, HQ of the Bale Mountains National Park. After lunch a local villager took us to see Abyssinian Owls and Wood Owls in residence. Thereafter, accompanied by yet another local guide, we walked through the upland forest around the park HQ. Here the glorious *Hagenia abyssinica* really dominates, much in spectacular flower, along with the giant *Hypericum revolutum*. On the forest floor we managed to pin down several herbaceous species such as the tiny *Lobelia schimperi* and the fine, endemic, red flowered *Acanthus senni*, another garden-worthy plant yet to be widely introduced to our gardens. During our walk we had excellent sightings of Colobus Monkeys, Bushbuck, Bohor Reedbucks and Mountain Nyalas. After a very welcome traditional coffee, we carried on in the late afternoon around to the east side of Bale to our hotel just outside Goba, a good base for exploring the mountains.

## Day 12

Tuesday 20th October

### Bale Mountains

It rained heavily in Goba during the night but, wonderfully, it cleared by dawn and after breakfast at the hotel, we drove through Goba and up onto the Sanetti Plateau. Today's mission was to cross the plateau and descend into the Harena Forest to the south. From Goba, at 2300m, the road climbs over 1000m and, after passing through the *Eucalyptus* and *Picea* plantations, we passed through various levels of native vegetation. First, fairly dense *Juniperus procera* forest gives way to *Hagenia abyssinica*/*Hypericum revolutum* forest up to 3000m, with *Kniphofia foliosa* growing in cleared areas. At 3200m we stopped by a particularly stunning female *Hagenia* in flower with a blue carpet of *Lobelia schimperi* at its base. There were bee-eaters and sunbirds to spot. The *Hagenia* gave way to *Erica arborea* at 3500m, large at first but then more stunted. This in turn gave way to heathland dominated by the endemic *Alchemilla haumannii*. Emerging onto the Sanetti plateau itself, the country is a wide expanse of white and dominated by *Helichrysum* species, especially *H. citrispinum*. Dotted throughout is the Giant Lobelia as seen in the Simien, *L. rhyncopetalum*. We soon spotted Mountain Nyala, various raptors, geese and Wattled Ibis. We drove across this fabulous and unique Afro-alpine environment, passed the nunatak-like Mount Konteh, and the highest peak in Bale Mountains, Tullu Deemu. Reaching the opposite side of the plateau, we stopped at a viewpoint at 3500m to look down the steep basaltic escarpment that looks out over the Harena Forest to the south. Here we could admire the gentian *Swertia lugardiae*, *Hebenstretia angolensis* and several beautiful *Helichrysum* species, perhaps first prize to the rose coloured *H. formosissimum*.

We then descended 1000m, passing through the busy Moslem village of Rira, and entered the beginnings of the Harena Forest. We stopped for lunch by a clump of massive nettles *Girardinia bullosa*, but more poetically on a carpet of *Cyanotis* and *Lobelia schimperi* under spreading *Hagenia*. We then had a delightful afternoon walk first through park like open *Hagenia* woodland and then into forest where we found another giant Lobelia *L. giberroa*. At the waterfall, I found the *Begonia* seen last year, still there and in flower. In the late afternoon, we drove back over the Sanetti Plateau and were privileged to meet a group of seven of the precious Ethiopian Wolves trotting through the *Helichrysum*. Back in Goba, I stopped in town to buy some local honey, before another interesting meal. I made the stern matron who served us smile, and finally organised a group of card players for a game of Queenie.

## Day 13

Wednesday 21st October

### Bale Mountains

Again it rained heavily overnight, and again we were lucky in being left with a dry day for our second sortie onto the Sanetti Plateau. This time we had more time for birds and mammal spotting. By Mt Konteh, we walked to the Sanetti camp to spot the Giant Mole Rats who have a big population near the camp. Today was overcast and the strong wind chilling at this altitude of 4000m. We could examine the range of *Helichrysum* species that cover the vastness of the plateau. Amongst them were carpets of *Swertia lugardiae*, and here and there the erect gentian *S. kilimandscharica*. After having our fill of Mole Rats, we explored the lake side beyond to watch the Blue-winged Geese and migrant Ruddy Shelducks who come specially from the north of our planet to Bale. Rocky outcrops near the lake are covered in a plethora of fabulous Lichen species. In amongst the rock there were a range of attractive composites we couldn't name, as well as bright red spikes of the Navelwort *Umbilicus botryoides*. By the lake itself, the Giant Lobelias give a sense of walking on a different planet, this further enhanced by coming across a fabulous giant thistle we thought might be *Carduus macracanthus*.

We were grateful to get out of the chilling wind back on the bus where we had our picnic lunch and, while we were eating, a group of Ethiopian Wolves strolled past. In the afternoon, we walked over to what is known as Crane Lake. The Cranes were absent but we had seen them fly over earlier. There was another giant *Carduus* to examine there. On the way back we stopped to study the *Alchemilla humannii* by the radio mast that perches at 3500m before the road descends to Goba. I was very impressed by the garden made around the tower by the custodians, using garden-worthy plants extant all around them such as Giant Lobelia and all the best *Helichrysums*. In the evening at the hotel we made an attempt, over a beer, to collate our botanical finds so far.

## Day 14

Thursday 22nd October

### Goba to Lake Langano

It rained yet again overnight and yet again was clear in the morning, so the local deities must have been pleased with us. We drove back across the Gaysay grasslands and, this morning, crowds of Olive Baboons blocked the road. The now familiar Rouget's Rails and Warthogs joined the throng. We stopped again at the pond at the beginning to check that what we thought was a bog *Persicaria* wasn't an orchid species after all. The drive back over the 3500m pass towards the Rift Valley was spectacular again. We made stops on the way to photograph the roadside *Euphorbia candelabrum* and later a plantation of Ensete, the false banana staple of Southern Ethiopia.

Back in the Rift Valley, we stopped in Shashamene, at the Rift Valley Tourist Hotel. The entrance is adorned with the orange-flowered American climber *Pyrostegia venusta*, and in the Garden Restaurant we were entertained by Paradise Flycatchers and Grivet Monkeys in the usual collection of exotic trees. The river outside was dirtier than last year and yielded fewer birds which were restricted to Hadada Ibis. Driving north up the Rift Valley, we stopped for the roadside *Cassia didymobotrya* and later fine *Aloe calidophila*. We had decided to do our Flamingo viewing today rather than on our last day, due to the change of flight schedules. So we headed to the shores of Lake Abiata and, picking up the local guide, walked across the open dried-out lake side, where the flamingos were massed. After this we called in at the park HQ for a stroll amongst the Ostriches, various *Acacia* species and Hornbills. As the daylight faded, we turned off the main road for the 20km dust road drive to the wonderful Bishangari Lodge on Lake Langano. It was distressing to pass a village where crowds of people were unloading American food aid as harvests in this part of the country had been affected by drought.



## Day 15

Friday 23rd October

Bishangari Lodge, Lake Langano.

We all got up at dawn for pre-breakfast bird watching. Hornbills, cuckoos, shrikes, bee-eaters and orioles abounded. The more passionate bird-spotters soon left those keen on plants behind, but the environs of the forest around Lake Langano are a find. We were without a good field guide tome, but had a go at tracking down the fabulous and enormous *Ficus* species and began to get to grips with the various *Acacia*, *Maytenus* and other tree species, along with some of the climbers. There were not many herbaceous plants in flower; the little semi-parasitic *Cynium tuberosum* and *Kalanchoe lanceolata* filled the gap a little. Reunited with the birders, we retired for an excellent breakfast and then had the rest of the day left to our own devices, relaxing by the lake, or wandering over the remarkable Pumiceous Ignimbrite, a graphic signal of the geological evolution going on under our feet. Various activities including horse riding and hippo tracking are on offer, and Derek and I hired bikes for a wild pedal through villages, along forest tracks, and around the lake. After tea we all joined for an afternoon wander. Teals, plovers, ibis, Avocets and herons populated the lake shore and again the birders, i.e. Mike and Terry, went off with our local bird guide while the rest of us strolled back through the forest.

## Day 16

Saturday 24th October

Lake Langano to Addis

This morning we left for the long drive back up the Rift Valley to Addis. Before reaching the main road, we stopped for a fabulous *Cordia africana* in flower and an *Acacia seyal* with its yellow button flowers. Reaching the main road, we headed north, passing Alutu, one of the chain of Rift Valley volcanoes to the east. We pulled into Ziway, down to the lakeside where we were greeted by the flocks of Marabou Storks and Pelicans that throng the jetty there and around the great *Ficus* trees. Birds including Jacaranda and Malachite Kingfishers abound, especially amongst the Banyan-like *Aeschynomene elaphroxylon* which sports a large yellow pea flower, fed on and pollinated by enormous bees. We had lunch at the luxurious lakeside Haile Resort Hotel beside a swimming pool and accompanied by a young Mountain Reedbuck who grazed the lawn.

We then drove back to Addis, stopping to see the Tef harvest in progress, vast fields all cut by hand and carted by livestock. Having arrived at Addis, we checked into the familiar Ghion Hotel for a rest. We left at eight for a meal at the Ethiopian Quadrants Hotel, saying goodbye to David and Jay who were flying back to Australia the next day. After dinner, where we met Tony the intrepid owner of Quadrants, we drove to the airport for our flight home, saying farewell to Getachew and Afarra before going through airport security.

## Day 17

Sunday 25th October

London

The flight, which was very full, left on time and we arrived at Heathrow at dawn.

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## Species Lists

Oct 11<sup>th</sup>

### Airport:

<i>Callistemon citrinus</i>	Myrtaceae	Bottle brush	Arboreal
Exotic			
<i>Spathodea campanulata</i>	Bignoniaceae	African Tulip	Arboreal
Indigenous			
<i>Cassia didymobotrya</i>	Leguminosae		
Indigenous			

### Drive to Debar:

<i>Ficus sycamorus</i>	Moraceae	Arboreal	Indigenous
<i>Cordia africana</i>	Boraginaceae	Arboreal	
Indigenous			
<i>Eucalyptus</i> species in abundance	Myrtaceae	Arboreal	Exotic
<b><i>Acacia abyssinica</i></b>	<b>Leguminosae</b>	<b>Arboreal</b>	<b>Indigenous</b>
<b><i>Cyanotis barbata</i></b>	<b>Commelinaceae</b>	<b>Herbaceous</b>	<b>Indigenous</b>
<b><i>Trifolium acaule</i></b>	<b>Leguminosae</b>	<b>Herbaceous</b>	<b>Indigenous</b>
<i>Eragrostis tef</i>	Poaceae	TEF (fields of) Ethiopian staple crop	
Indigenous			
<i>Hagenia abyssinica</i>	Rosaceae	Arboreal	Indigenous
<i>Bidens macroptera</i>	Asteraceae/Compositae	Herbaceous	Endemic
<i>Kniphofia foliosa</i>	Xanthorrhoeaceae	Herbaceous	Endemic
<i>Echinops longisetus</i>	Asteraceae/Compositae	Herbaceous	Endemic
<i>Andropogon</i> species	Poaceae (Grass)		Indigenous
<b><i>Crassocephalum mannii</i> (syn <i>Solanecio mannii</i>) (House boundaries)</b>			<b>Indigenous</b>
<b><i>Salvia schimperii</i></b>	<b>Lamiaceae</b>	<b>Herbaceous</b>	
<b>Indigenous</b>			

### Drive up to Simien Lodge from Debar:

<i>Rumex nervosus</i>	Polygonaceae	Herbaceous	
Indigenous			
<b><i>Schefflera abyssinica</i></b>		<b>Arboreal (Lama River)</b>	<b>Indigenous</b>
<b><i>Silene sp</i></b>	<b>Caryophyllaceae</b>	<b>Herbaceous</b>	
<i>Bidens pachyloma</i>	Asteraceae/Compositae	Herbaceous	
Endemic			
<i>Trifolium simense</i>	Leguminosae	Herbaceous	Indigenous
<i>Erica arborea</i>	Ericaceae	Arboreal	
Indigenous			
<i>Solanum marginatum</i>	Solanaceae	Herbaceous	
Indigenous			
<i>Scabiosa columbaria</i>	Dipsacaceae	Herbaceous	
Indigenous			
<i>Verbascum stelurum</i>	Scrophulareaceae	Herbaceous	Endemic

*Juniperus procera* Cupressaceae Arboreal  
Indigenous

Oct 12<sup>th</sup>

**Walk from lodge to Chinkwanet (lunch stop):**

*Erica arborea* in flower dominates

<b><i>Crinum abyssinicum</i></b>	<b>Amaryllidaceae (at lodge not in flower)</b>		<b>Indigenous</b>
<b><i>Solanum giganteum</i></b>	<b>Solanaceae</b>		
Indigenous			
<b><i>Moraea schimperi</i></b>	<b>Iridaceae</b>		
Indigenous			
<b><i>Carduus schimperi</i></b>	<b>Asteraceae/Compositae</b>	<b>Herbaceous</b>	
Indigenous			
<b><i>Alchemilla pedata</i></b>	<b>Rosaceae</b>	<b>Herbaceous</b>	
Indigenous			
<b><i>Cyanotis barbata</i></b>	<b>Commelinaceae</b>		
Indigenous			
<b><i>Cynoglossum coeruleum</i></b>	<b>Boraginaceae</b>		<b>Endemic</b>
<b><i>Kalanchoe densiflora</i></b>	<b>Crassulaceae</b>		
Indigenous			
<b><i>Commelina africana</i></b>	<b>Commelinaceae</b>		
Indigenous			
<b><i>Rumex nepalensis</i></b>	<b>Polygonaceae</b>		
Indigenous			
<b><i>Thymus serrulatus</i></b>	<b>Lamiaceae</b>		<b>Endemic</b>
<b><i>Albuca abyssinica</i></b>	<b>Asparagaceae</b>		
Indigenous			
<b><i>Anthemis tigrensis</i></b>	<b>Asteraceae/Compositae</b>		<b>Indigenous</b>
<b><i>Hypericum peplidifolium</i></b>	<b>Hypericaceae</b>	<b>Herbaceous</b>	<b>Indigenous</b>
<b><i>Bartsia trixago</i></b>	<b>Orobanchaceae</b>		
Exotic			
<b><i>Solanum nigrum</i></b>	<b>Solanaceae</b>		<b>Exotic</b>
<b><i>Usnea filipendula</i></b>	<b>Lichen on <i>Erica arborea</i></b>		
<b><i>Usnea florida</i></b>	<b>Lichen on <i>E. arborea</i></b>		
<b><i>Arisaema schimperianum</i></b>	<b>Araceae (one plant)</b>	<b>Herbaceous</b>	
Indigenous			
<b><i>Cotula abyssinica</i></b>	<b>Asteraceae/Compositae</b>	<b>Herbaceous</b>	<b>Indigenous</b>
<b><i>Salvia schimperi</i></b>	<b>Lamiaceae</b>	<b>Herbaceous</b>	
Indigenous			
<b><i>Rosa abyssinica</i></b>	<b>Rosaceae</b>	<b>Shrub</b>	<b>Indigenous</b>
<b><i>Satureja abyssinica</i></b>	<b>Lamiaceae</b>	<b>Herbaceous</b>	<b>Indigenous</b>
<b><i>Jasminum abyssinicum</i></b>	<b>Oleaceae</b>	<b>Climber</b>	
Indigenous			

<i>Hypericum revolutum</i> Indigenous	Hypericaceae	Arboreal	
<i>Impatiens tinctoria</i>	Balsaminaceae	Herbaceous	Indigenous
<i>Swertia abyssinica</i> Indigenous	Gentianaceae	Herbaceous	
<i>Plectrocephalus varians</i>	Asteraceae/Compositae	Herbaceous	Endemic
<i>Conium maculatum</i> Indigenous	Apiaceae	Herbaceous	
After lunch (2015)			
<b><i>Gladiolus abyssinicus</i></b> Indigenous	<b>Iridaceae</b>		
<b><i>Ostegia fruticosa</i></b>	<b>Lamiaceae</b>		<b>Indigenous</b>
<b><i>Alepidea peduncularis</i></b> Indigenous	<b>Apiaceae</b>		
<b><i>Astragalus atropilosus</i></b> Indigenous	<b>Leguminosae</b>		
<i>Arabis alpina</i> Indigenous	Brassicaceae	Herbaceous	
<i>Hebenstretia angolensis</i> Indigenous	Scrophulariaceae	Herbaceous	
<b>Walk back amongst the <i>Hypericum revolutum</i> (2014)</b>			
<i>Artemisia afra</i>	Asteraceae/Compositae	Herbaceous	Indigenous
<i>Impatiens hochstetteri</i> Indigenous	Balsaminaceae	Herbaceous	
<i>Malva verticillata</i> Indigenous	Malvaceae	Herbaceous	
Oct 13 <sup>th</sup>			
<b>Drive to Chenek:</b>			
<i>Kniphofia foliosa</i> in flower - abundant			
<b>Chenek:</b>			
<i>Lobelia rhyncopetalum</i>	Campanulaceae	Shrub!	Endemic
<i>Hebenstretia angolensis</i> Indigenous	Scrophulariaceae		
<i>Dipsacus pinnatifidus</i> Indigenous	Dipsacaceae (now Caprifoliaceae)	Herbaceous	
<i>Scabiosa columbaria</i>	Dipsaceae (ditto)		Indigenous
<i>Helichrysum citrispinum</i>	Asteraceae/Compositae	Shrub	Indigenous
<i>Helichrysum splendidum</i>	Asteraceae/Compositae	Subshrub	Indigenous
<i>Senecio nanus</i>	Asteraceae/Compositae	Herbaceous	Endemic
<i>Aeonium leucoblepharum</i>	Crassulaceae	Subshrub	Indigenous

<i>Arabis alpina</i>	Brassicaceae		
Indigenous			
<i>Cyanotis polyrrhiza</i>	Commelinaceae	Herbaceous	Endemic

**Drive up towards Bwahit (2014)**Spectacular stands of *Lobelia rhyncoptalum**Helichrysum splendidum**Swertia abyssinica***Drive back to Simien Lodge:**Fine stands of *Kniphofia foliosa* Xanthorrhoeaceae! Subfamily Asphdeloideae Endemic***Primula verticillata ssp simensis* Primulaceae Endemic*****Gladiolus abyssinicus* Iridaceae Indigenous*****Kniphofia isoetifolia* Xanthorreaceae Endemic***Aloe macrocarpa* Xanthorrhoeaceae subfam Asphodeloideae

Indigenous

***Epilobium stereophyllum* Onagraceae Indigenous*****Carduus schimperi* Asteraceae/Compositae**

Indigenous

***Malva verticillata* Malvaceae Indigenous*****Verbascum arbusculum* Scrophulariaceae**

Indigenous

***Clematis simensis* Ranunculaceae**

Indigenous

***Ferrula communis* Umbeliferae**

Indigenous

***Allium subhirsutum ssp spathaceum* Amaryllidaceae sub fam Allioidae Indigenous*****Sparmannia ricinocarpa* Malvaceae Shrub Indigenous***Leonotis ocymifolia* Lamiaceae Herbaceous IndigenousOct 14<sup>th</sup>**Walk from Sankaber to Jinba waterfall:***Kniphofia isoetifolia* Xanthorrhoeaceae Herbaceous Endemic*Plectranthus garckeanus* Lamiaceae Herbaceous Indigenous*Achyranthes aspera* Amaranthaceae Herbaceous Indigenous*Plectocephalus varians* Asteraceae/Compositae

Indigenous

*Senecio myriocephalus* Asteraceae/Compositae Herbaceous

Indigenous

*Carduus schimperi* Asteraceae/Compositae Herbaceous IndigenousFine stands of *Kniphofia isoetifolia**Clematis simensis* Ranunculaceae Climber

Indigenous

***Andropogon amethystinus* Poaceae Indigenous**

<i>Exothea abyssinica</i>	Poaceae		Indigenous
<i>Romulea fisheri</i>	Iridaceae		
Indigenous			
<i>Hypericum quartinianum</i>	Hypericaceae		
Indigenous			
<i>Echinops macrochaetus</i>	Asteraceae/Compositae		Indigenous

**Walk through *Olea* forest:**

<i>Olea capensis</i>	Oleaceae	Arboreal	Indigenous
<i>Asparagus africanus</i>	Asparagaceae		
Indigenous			
<i>Delphinium dasycaulon</i>	Ranunculaceae		
Indigenous			
<i>Knipholia isoetifolia</i> + yellow lowering form			
<i>Gladiolus abyssinicus</i>			

**Jinba Waterfall:**

<i>Aloe macrocarpa</i>	Xanthorrhoeaceae		Indigenous
<i>Albuca abyssinica</i>	Asparagaceae		Indigenous
<i>Guizotia villosa</i>	Asteraceae/Compositae		
Indigenous			

Oct 15th

**Simen Lodge to Gondar****Hedging plants used in villages:**

<i>Justicia schimperiana</i>	Acanthaceae	Herbaceous	
Indigenous			
<i>Euphorbia abyssinica</i>	Euphorbiaceae	"Shrub"	Endemic

**Goha Hotel:**

<i>Caesalpinia</i> sp		shrub	Exotic
<i>Grevillea robsuta</i>		tree	Exotic
<i>Nerium oleander</i>		shrub	Exotic
<i>Bauhinia variegata</i> (Camels Foot)		Tree	Exotic
<i>Spathodia campanulata</i> (African Tulip)		Tree	Exotic

**Trees around Gondar:**

<i>Cordia africana</i> (often in spectacular flower)			
Indigenous			
<i>Jacaranda mimosifolia</i> (also in good flower)			Exotic
<i>Schinus molle</i> (Pepper Tree)			Exotic
<i>Yucca gloriosa</i>			Exotic
<i>Olea europaea</i> var <i>africana</i>			Indigenous
<i>Juniperus procera</i>			Indigenous

Oct 16<sup>th</sup>

**Lalibela airport to town:**

*Aloe berhana*

Indigenous

Sorghum and safflower cultivation

*Euphorbia schimperiana*

**In town:**

*Ficus vasta*

Arboreal

Indigenous

Oct 17<sup>th</sup>

**Lalibela**

**Na'akuto La'ab:**

*Euphorbia abyssinica*

*Barlenia* spp

Purple flower Rambler

Exotic

*Tapinanthus* sp

An African Loranthaceae or "Mistletoe"

**Birds in Lalibela:**

Greater Blue-eared Starling

Indigo Bird

White-billed Starling

Speckled Mousebird

African Fire Finch

Variable Sunbird

Oct 18<sup>th</sup>

**Rift Valley to Wondo Genet**

**Birds on the Awash River bridge:**

Sacred Ibis

African Fish Eagle

African Jacana

Cattle Egret

Great Egret

Crowned Plover

Hamerkop

Fulvous Whistling Duck

**Birds by Lake Awash:**

Marabou Stork

Yellow Wagtail

Grey-rumped Swallow

Little Stilt

Egyptian Goose

Brown-rumped Swallow

**Shashamene:**

Silver-cheeked Hornbill

Oct 19th

**Plants on road to Gobe:**

*Echinops gigante* (Village hedging plant)

*Ensete ventricosa* "False Banana"(Ethiopian staple in villages)

**Trees at lunch stop:**

*Podocarpus falcatus*

*Juniperus procera*

*Ficus sycamorus*

**Plants at Dinsho offices:**

*Hagenia abyssinica*

*Maytenus arbutifolia*

*Satureja paradoxa*

*Lobelia schimperii*

*Helichrysum citrispinum*

***Viola abyssinica***

***Centrostachys (Achyranthes) abyssinica***

***Oldenlandia monanthos***

***Haplocarpha rueppelii***

***Acanthus sennii***

**Birds:**

Mountain White-eye

Brown-rumped Seed-eater

Abyssinian Catbird

Chestnut-naped Francolin

Rouget's Rail

**Gaysay Valley Birds:**

Yellow-billed Duck

Red-knobbed Coot

Blue-winged Goose

Wattled Ibis

Oct 20th

**Bale Mountains:**

*Harenia abyssinica* up to 3000m

*Hypericum revolutum* up to 3000m

*Leonotis* sp up to 3000m



**Above 3500m:**

<i>Alchemilla haumannii</i>	Endemic
<i>Lobelia rhyncoptalum</i>	
<i>Helichrysum citrispinum</i>	
<i>Senecio</i> sp (several)	
<i>Swertia lugardiae</i>	Herbaceous
<i>Lobelia schimperi</i> (ground cover)	
<i>Umbilicus botryoides</i> (amongst rocks)	
<i>Alchemilla</i> sp	

**Escarpment summit 3500m:**

*Erica arborea*  
*Helichrysum brownei*  
*Hebenstretia angolensis*  
*Helichrysum formosissimum*  
*Trifolium schimperi*  
*Sedum mayoni*  
*Veronica glandulosa*  
*Swertia lugardiae*  
***Swertia kilimandscharica***  
***Haplocarpha schimperi***

**Birds:**

Augur Buzzard  
 Lammergeier  
 Wattled Crane  
 White-collared Pigeon  
 Steppe Eagle  
 Blue-winged Goose  
 Spot-breasted Lapwing  
 Chestnut-naped Francolin  
 Olive Thrush

**Haremma forest:**

*Lobelia giberroa*  
*Impatiens hochstetteri*  
*Commelina benghalensis*  
*Commelina africana*  
*Begonia "wallensteinia"*  
***Jasminum abyssinicum***  
***Parochetus communis***  
***Rubus steudneri***  
***Hypoestes triflora***  
***Girardinia bullosa***

Oct 21<sup>st</sup>

**Sanetti Plateau:**

*Lobelia rhyncopetalum*

*Swertia lugardiae*

*Swertia kilimandscharica*

*Helychrysum citrispinum*

*Helichrysum brownei*

*Helichrysum splendidum*

*Cineraria abyssinica (C. sebalzii)*

*Carduus macracanthus*

*Alchemilla haumannii*

Ethiopian Wolves

Thekla Lark

Spot-breasted Plover

Black-headed Siskin

Oct 22<sup>nd</sup>

**Goba to L. Langano**

**Gaysay Grasslands:**

Olive baboons

Warthogs

Plants seen on road:

*Euphorbia candelabrum*

*Ensete ventricosum* False banana Musaceae Staple food in S. Ethiopia

*Cassia didymobotrya*

*Aloe calidophila*

**Rift Valley Tourist Hotel birds and plants:**

Blue-breasted Bee-eater

Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu

Mountain Wagtail

Baglafecht Weaver

Little Stint

*Pyrostegia venusta* American orange fl exotic adorning hotel entrance

**Lake Abiata birds:**

Greater Flamingo

Lesser Flamingo

Sacred Ibis

Pied Kingfisher

Tawny Eagle

Common Crane

Grey-winged Goose

**Park HQ:**

Ostrich (Somali & Common)

Lesser Sparrowhawk

Red-billed Hornbill

Hemprich's Hornbill

**Trees:**

*Acacia abyssinica*

*Acacia seyal*

*Acacia tortilis*

**Dirt road to Bishangari birds:**

Ostrich

Egyptian Goose

Greater Blue-eared Glossy Starling

Black Scimitarbill

Carmine Bee-eater

Speckled Mousebird

Lilac-breasted Roller

White-headed Buffalo Weaver

Black-billed Barbet

Hoopoe

Black-winged Lovebird

Abyssinian Ground Hornbill

Namaqua Dove

23<sup>rd</sup> Oct

**Bishangari Lodge, Lake Langano**

**Trees, shrubs, climbers, parasites:**

<i>Celtis africana</i>	Ulmaceae	Tree	
<i>Cordia africana</i>	Boraginaceae	Tree	
<i>Ficus vasta</i>	Moraceae	Tree	
<i>Ficus sycamorus</i>		Tree	
<i>Ficus sur</i>		Tree	
<i>Ficus thonnigii</i>	Strangler fig		
<i>Ekebergia capensis</i>	Meliaceae	Tree	
<i>Podocarpus falcatus</i>	Podocarpaceae	Tree	Gymnosperm
<i>Maytenus senegalensis</i>	Celastraceae	Shrub/bush	
<i>Vernonia amygdallina</i>	Asteraceae/Compositae	Shrub/bush	
<i>Croton macrostachys</i>	Euphorbiaceae	Tree	
<i>Pterolobium stellatum</i>	Leguminosae	Climber	

***Tapinanthus sp***                      **Loranthaceae**                      **Red flowered mistletoe**

**Hebaceous:*****Kalanchoe lanceolata*****Crassulaceae***Cycnium tubulosum*

Orobanchaceae

Semi parasite on grasses

***Argemone mexicana*****Papaveraceae****American exotic****Bishangari morning birds:****African Fish Eagle****Silvery -cheeked Hornbill**

Yellow-fronted Parrot

Grey-backed Shrike

Northern Black Flycatcher

Spur-winged Plover

White -necked Cormorant

Pied Kingfisher

Wood Sandpiper

White-browed Sparrow-Weaver

Red-eyed Dove

Speckled Mousebird

Yellow Wagtail

Blue-spotted Wood Dove

Greater Honeyguide

Black-winged Lovebird

Nubian Woodpecker

Ethiopian Bulbul

Common Redstart

Village Indigobird

Grey -headed Kingfisher

Scarlet -chested Sunbird

African Pygmy Kingfisher

Paradise Flycatcher

Abyssinian Ground Hornbill (amongst Warthogs)

Double-toothed Barbet

Red-billed Hornbill

Blue-breasted Bee-eater

Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu

Black-billed Hoopoe

African Fish Eagle

Black Cuckooshrike

Bare-faced Go-away-bird

Sulphur -breasted Bushshrike

Silvery-cheeked Hornbill

Woodland Kingfisher

Klaas Cuckoo  
Banded Barbet  
Squacco Heron  
Grey-headed Heron  
Wood Sandpiper  
Flamingo  
Knob-billed Duck  
Wood Sandpiper  
Great Egret  
Malachite Kingfisher  
Hottentot Teal

New birds on Afternoon walk:

**Black-winged Lovebird**

**Red Cormorant**

**Jacana**

**African Skimmer**

**Yellow-billed Stork**

**Pied Avocet**

Crested Francolin

Scaly Francolin

Hadada Ibis

Yellow-billed Stork

Little Egret

Great White Pelican

Grey-backed Fiscal

Woolly-necked Stork (in grass playing with Baboons)

**Oct 24<sup>th</sup> Return Rift Valley**

**Lake Ziway Birds:**

Marabou Stork

Great White Pelican

**Woodland Kingfisher**

**Malacite Kingfisher**

Hamerkop

Sacred Ibis

Black Heron

African Darter

Cormorant

Pied Kingfisher

White Winged Tern

Grey-headed Gull

Egyptian Goose

Cattle Egret

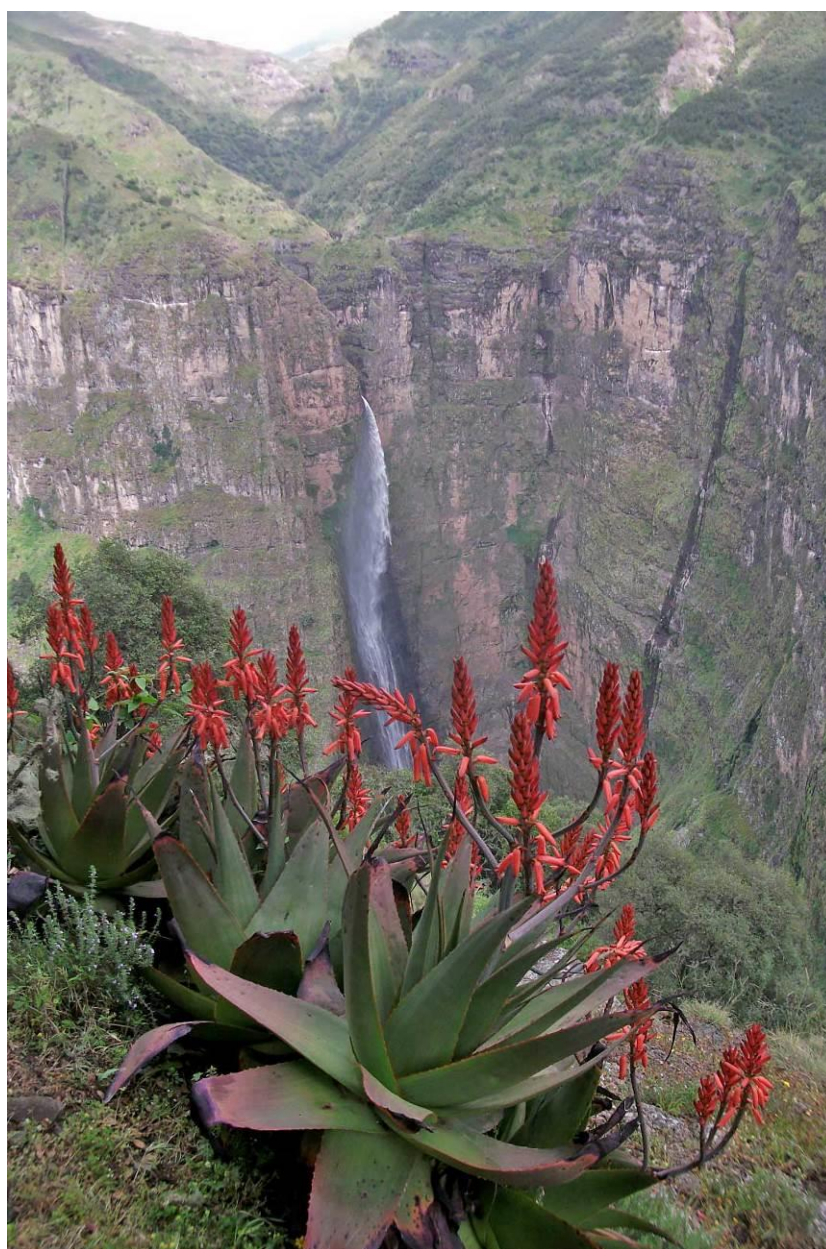
Plants:

***Aeschynomene elaphroxylum*** Leguminosae Yellow flowered banyan type lakeside tree

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*Aloe macrocarpa*