



Four Flies Flash

January/February 2010

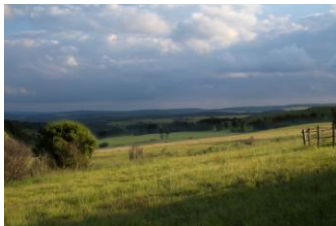
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**Tequila is
produced from
agave plants
whose seed
production drops
to 1/3000th of
normal without
bat pollinators.**



**The new trial
plantings in our
herb garden**

Bat fiction

Bats may very well be one of the most mystified species in the world. We all just *know* that they are flying rodents that will get tangled in your hair at night, or even worse: these aggressive vampires will attack human beings and suck out their blood! But, once you learn more about these shy and gentle creatures, you can only admire and respect them.

Bat fossils date back to 50 million years ago. Interestingly enough, they are almost identical to the ones found today. Bats are the only true flying mammals. They have hair, give birth to live young pups, and feed them on milk produced in mammal glands. Females give birth to one pup every 1-2 years. Only 40% of pups survive, which make the bat very vulnerable to extinction.

There are two groups of bats. Insectivorous bats are smaller with one wing claw and a tail. They rely on an echolocation system that enables them to detect obstacles as small as a human hair in total darkness. This system is similar to our common sonar. The wings are specially adapted to enable the bat to fly at speeds which allow them to catch insects.

Fruit bats are larger with two claws on the wing and a poorly developed or absent tail. They have dog-like faces and are limited to warmer regions. They find fruit, pollen and nectar by their excellent sight and smell during the day. Fruit bats sleep in tree hollows and under leaves at night.

Bats are extremely beneficial to humans and eco systems:

- They are the major predators of night flying insects like mosquitoes, and many crop pests. A colony of 150 bats can protect a farmer from up to 33 million rootworms a year!
- Many bats spread seeds for plants and trees. Seeds dropped by bats account for up to 95% of forest re-growth on cleared land.
- In many African and Asian countries, as well as certain Pacific Islands, bats are a normal part of people's diets.
- Bats also have scientific and medical value. Bat studies contributed to birth control, artificial insemination techniques, vaccine production and drug testing.

South Africa has 56 recorded species of bats. Many are critically endangered. So, when you see a bat, remember to appreciate and value this exceptional and unique little animal.

From: www.batsgauteng.org.za

Editorial

2010 has finally arrived! It has been on everybody's lips ever since South Africa won the bid to host the Soccer World Cup. A lot of people are making predictions on what we can anticipate to get out of this experience. Flights will be extremely expensive, traffic will be hectic and there will be extreme

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*Time is not a line,
but a series of
now-points.*

-Taisen Deshimaru

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congestions in areas where matches are played. According to the more cynical, schooling will be disrupted and there will be a lot more crime.

South Africans are also anxiously awaiting the riches that are expected to come with the thousands of visitors. Food, accommodation, transport and beverage providers are already raising their prices to get the most out of this once-in-a-lifetime incident. South Africa is waiting for the fat purses of the world, and I wonder what idea our guests would have when they return home.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a guest is a person who is invited to visit someone's home or attend an official function. Hospitality is the friendly and generous reception and entertainment of guests and visitors. To my mind that implies that guests are very special people to be tended to with exceptional care. Would it then be fair to say that we should be friendly and helpful and considerate and reasonable with our World Cup visitors?

What do we have to offer our guests? Will they feel enriched by the treatment of an exceptional rainbow people, or will they feel exploited and used by a people who prefer to take rather than to give. Only time will tell.

Four Flies News

1. We now have a small herb garden at your unit. You are most welcome to use the fresh herbs for your cooking.
2. **Four Flies Nature Farm** now also offers retreats for spiritual refreshment. We will only accommodate four people/four pairs at a time. Dates are available on www.4flies.co.za now.
3. We built a classical labyrinth in a silent spot between the blue gum trees. Labyrinths are really sacred places and you are invited to enjoy the experience of walking it.
4. Visit us at www.4flies.co.za to check availability online. You can also conveniently book online.
5. Register for one of our art classes before you arrive at **Four Flies Nature Farm**. Attend your class between 10:00 and 13:00 on Saturday mornings. All materials are provided and you do not need any skills. R100 per person.

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