

## **Project Update: November 2019**

Guided by the research objectives and intended project outputs, the research team managed to do field visits focused on stakeholder engagement to enable the socio-ecological and economic analysis of the values associated with the plant. We wanted to understand the following values associated with the plant:

- Aesthetic values.
- Patrimonial values.
- Rarity values.
- Peculiarity values.

Other social, economic and environmental issues were also analysed, which of course included consulting the communities, but more on what and how is their relationship to this plant (their dependency on them, their attitude towards it, their role in its illegal gathering for ornamental reasons) in order to understand what's been their role in its decline and what might be their role in their conservation. The researcher managed to visit a number of private plant propagation areas to try and understand their source markets (networks of illegal trade) for the *Encephalartos* cycad plants they are selling.

### **The fieldwork component has helped to:**

- Draft a communication strategy document.
- Come up with communication messages and strategy that will be employed to support the conservation of the plant.
- Help mapping networks of illegal trade.

### **The next components of the project are:**

- Scaling up conservation horticulture activities.
- Opening web page to feed and communicate the messages informed by the research.
- Engaging police officers and national parks and wildlife management employees who are legally mandated to enforce by-laws on conservation of the chimanimani cycad.
- Conduct a feasibility study on how the conservation horticulture component can be spread firstly to other government owned botanical gardens and the concept can be spread to private cycad propagators.

Below is a snapshot of the photos taken during fieldwork. The information gathered during our analysis of the socio-ecological and economic values associated with *Encephalartos* cycads has been used to inform drafting of communication messages and a communication strategy document.







