

Stories

of

Jah Lemon

part three

Citrus for Haramaya

**Celebrating the contribution to agricultural education
and citrus cultivation by Ras Tafari**

**Natty Mark Samuels
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<https://reggaediscography.blogspot.com/2019/01/african-garden-magazine-2019.html>

Dedication

to

Beth McDougall

Family and Communities Officer, Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford

for giving me the opportunity to deliver my first workshop in the museum



African Reverie

Nadine Williams

Citrus for Haramaya

"It gives Us great pleasure to be present here to inaugurate the College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts, an occasion which marks a great and far-reaching advance in Our programme for the promotion of agricultural education. This institution will serve as a source of inspiration in carrying out the agricultural programme which We have laid down for the future...It is not enough for the children of Ethiopia to be recipients of education. They should never forget that the responsibility for passing on this knowledge to others and of handing it over to the next generation rests on them."

Jah Lemon re-reads part of the speech Ras Tafari made in 1958, at the inauguration of the aforementioned educational institute. The legacy of the great educator continues, when we know that the same college, now known as Haramaya University, has been, alongside the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research, leading research into the disease called *citrus gummosis*; looking at aspects such as bark discolouration and gum exudation. In another research article from the same university, on the subject matter of traditional medicine, we are informed of a long time remedy for stomach ache, consisting of honey, garlic, lemon and bread. Jah Lemon has to confess that it was through the latter research, that he first came across another member of the citrus family, a herb called *Ruta chalepensis*, that the Ethiopians use for abdominal pain: the root is chewed and the juice is drunk.

Another article from Haramaya University, published in the Journal of Biology, Agriculture and Health Care, looking at the conditions and diseases that infect and damage citrus, mentions chilling injury, rind oil spot, red blotch, blue mould, green mould, black rot and brown rot amongst others. In Dire Dawa, Upper Awash Valley and Melkassa, the citrus growing regions of Ethiopia, the farmers are benefitting from the research undertaken by Haramaya University, to counteract the intrusion of the unwanted and to enhance the farming potential.

Briefly going south of Ethiopia, we go into Kenya, to once again salute the brave and brilliant environmentalist, Wangari Maathai, who amongst her many accomplishments, was the receiving of the Nobel Peace Prize: the first African woman to do so. One of the major reasons why we salute her, is her massive, trans-continental campaign, began in the 1970s, to plant trees. What is less known, is that in the 1950s, Ras Tafari inaugurated Arbor Day, encouraging Ethiopians to plant trees. Jah Lemon wonders to himself, how many citrus trees were grown; of lemons, lime and orange. Going back to his notebook, he reads again the excerpt he took from a speech Ras Tafari gave, on the third anniversary of Arbor Day...

"It is Our wish and Our desire that each and every citizen of Our country follow the example We set on this Arbor Day in planting this tree, and himself plant as many trees as he can, for his won benefit as well as for the benefit of future generations." An initiative of Ras Tafari, it is now organised by the Ministry of Agriculture.

It's for his educational vision, that he honours Ras Tafari. His pioneering, national, educational endeavours, have helped to inspire his local initiatives. Inspired him to found the Zambezi School, a cultural education project, as well as Jah Lemon Products, to help fund Zambesi School - and offer a little healing. Jah Lemon Products has in turn inspired his mentee, Cindy Citrus, to set up her own herbal range, called Pomelo Products!

Ras Tafari would be happy to know that the institution which he founded, has produced students such as the two, who in 2015, were winners of the EPA-NA (Ethiopian Physics Society-North America) Award. Happy that it has employed such iridescent figures as Professor Tekalign Mamo, winner of the 2016 IFA Norman Borlaug Award. A renowned specialist in soil science, his vision and implementation, has brought increased grain production and advances in poverty alleviation to his homeland.

"I am honoured to receive this award, and am proud Ethiopia's leadership in addressing soil health issues is being recognized internationally," comments Professor Mamo. *"Much remains to be done to continue Ethiopia's transformation and lift even more people out of poverty, but an accolade such as this serves as encouragement for my fellow citizens and African colleagues to continue this important journey."*

And talking of luminaries, Jah Lemon would like to think that the orange juice served to Queen Elizabeth on her Addis Ababa visit, was home grown: from one of the three aforementioned citrus growing areas. It was during that 1965 visit, that the British monarch and her consort Prince Philip, bowed before Ras Tafari.

Going back to Haramaya, the university's Dire Dawa farm announced last year that 3,800 citrus seedlings had been given away that year, for local cultivation: a perfect example of community engagement. From all his speeches, Jah Lemon thinks that if Ras Tafari had a mantra, it would be something like 'education, for service to the nation.' All his speeches on education are around this same theme, so he would be elated now, to hear of the interaction between a tertiary level institution and the local communities nearby.

Alongside the Maythebri Shire Agricultural Research Center in Tigray, the Haramaya University is looking at the use of orange oil extracts, in the on-going battles against the Maize weevil. Neem oil is also being used in the experiment – and the chosen one of citrus is orange: peel of the orange, seed of the neem. The weevil attacks the sorghum, one of the great grains of Africa: of major importance to the Ethiopian national diet and to its economy.

Jah Lemon thinks that one day, if possible, he'd like to take a tour around the Plant Protection Laboratory at Haramaya: to ask questions and then to stand and marvel. A guided tour around the citrus experiments and after the scientific wonders, a culinary one: a salad or salata of tomatoes, chilles and onions, blessed with olive oil and lemon juice. Or a Dinich Salad of potatoes, bell peppers, red onions, jalapeno peppers and garlic, completed by zest and juice of lemon.

Another Haramaya initiative, concerns the citrus orchard on the Errer Gotta State Farm. In 2011, the university began investigations, for the "characterization and classification of soil and irrigation water." The on-going relationship that Haramaya has with the citrus growers, reminds Jah Lemon of the long time interaction between the University of California and the American citrus farmers.

Jah Lemon is glad to see that the legacy of Ras Tafari bears fruit. He thinks again of his return from exile; coming back to find out that the youth that he had educated during his years of governorship, prince regency and after the coronation, had either died during the war, as resistance fighters, or had been targeted as part of the intelligentsia. All that talent and potential, time and money, taken away by the Fascist hand. So a beautiful vision, of Ethiopians teaching Ethiopians, was deferred. I sense that Ras Tafari was trying to produce a template, that then could be used for the countries of emerging Independence. But due to the five year intrusion into the vision, there was instead, the enforced reliance on foreign teachers. Jah Lemon thinks Ras Tafari must have cried himself to sleep now and again, when he first returned: weeping with his beloved wife, for the loss of all that was taken. His vision, bright with the colours of the flag; stomped on, by the boots of darkness. Jah Lemon thinks he must have cried; then with the Empress beside him, began to resurrect the vision, because education cannot stop. The Oxford, Cambridge and Howard Universities – amongst others - all gave him degrees, for his contribution to education.

The institute that he founded, has a specialism in Research, which must be a source of pride to the academics who teach there and the students who study there. The first students graduated in 1957, with BSc degrees in General Agriculture. Now there is a choice of degrees, from schools and departments such as School of Plant Sciences; School of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness and the Department of Rural Development and Agricultural Extension.

Reading about this trailblazing institution, Jah Lemon gets the impression that the farmers, including those who grow citrus, are in safe hands. That there will be soil improvement; battle will be engaged with the invader, that research is endless, experimentation continual; that there will always be consultation and the sharing of knowledge.

A treasured excerpt from a 1959 Genna (Christmas) speech, Ras Tafari said "As a good tree is known by its fruits, so the future of Ethiopia depends on you, the fruits of Our educational system, to set an example to the coming generation through your work and the life you will lead.

And the people know a "good tree." For the cleansing of meat, the treatment of skin disorders and the everyday culinary pleasure, the Ethiopians are blessed by the lime tree, whose fruits are said to be the most popular of the citrus family.

A person doesn't die, if their vision lives on in the minds of others. Jah Lemon continues to follow the teachings of Ras Tafari on education, through a book of speeches he bought from a bookseller, in a street in Addis Ababa. He looks forward to going back one day; to one of the cultivation areas, to stand and raise a glass of cold lemon and say, " Citrus for Haramaya "

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