

October 3th 2025, 30°



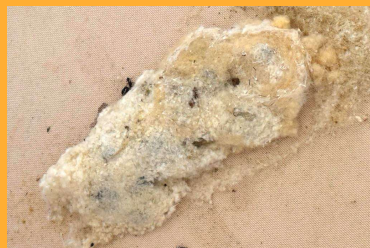
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GUESS WHAT

Any bright reader will know what this is. I found it on the outside couch under a cushion. I wouldn't have guessed myself, if I hadn't seen a tiny creature crawl out. A baby gecko, barely 2 cm long. Geckos are lovely. Adults reach 20 cm. They live outdoors, but indoors as well. Every cottage is bound to have one. They talk. They're harmless and useful. Real mosquito hunters. The few mosquitos they fail to catch we simply swat.



Me in action

19 october: Concert
International Choir of
Aljezur, Escola Nova
Bordeira

8/9 november: Christmas
Arts Fair, Arrifana

13 december: Christmas
concert International
Choir of Aljezur, Igreja
Nova Aljezur



DUD YEAR

It's been a bit of a dud year. Bookings are lagging behind. Our ADSL server died. Somehow, we didn't qualify for a subsidy. We can no longer use green diesel since legislation has changed. The buyer of our eucalyptus wood still owes us a large sum of money from. Wynand's car failed the MOT. It got through in the end, but now the suspension has given up the ghost. So has Bas's van. Its engine gave out. Pumps, dishwasher, tumble dryer – everything is breaking down. The starter of the diesel generator had a burn-out. The float in the loo in one of the cottages got stuck. We noticed too late, and by then the water tank was empty. The automatic water control doesn't work.

Most things have been fixed by now, but since then the printer has stopped working. Every day, something happens that we could really do without. It simply doesn't end. Good for our resilience, we suppose.

On top of all that, nature is letting us down too. It started at the beginning of the year when I could hardly find any mushrooms. At first, it probably was too dry, and then it became too wet.

The olives are doing poorly, and so is the medronho. We harvested just five apricots and seven cherries.



The wine grapes are yielding much less than before. Estimate: 15 bottles of white and 100 bottles of red. Then again, it will last us year.

END OF MOUSE

At least, the egg plants and bell peppers are thriving. And so are the tomatoes. They're delicious. Firm and meaty. Beautifully red and round.

The mouse we discovered in the laundry-slash-storage room liked them, too. Or it may well have been a rat. I can't tell one rodent from another. But it certainly had hard, sharp teeth. We already suspected there was a mouse, but we hoped it would just bugger off again.

The damage: 2 mattresses, 2 coo boxes, the dog food container, 5 cartons of milk, 3 packets of cream, 3 packets of tomato paste, 2 cartons of apple juice, gnawed potatoes, and all but completely devoured tomatoes. Enough was enough.

Mouse traps didn't work. Eucalyptus oil. That was supposed to be the solution – the majority of mice simply hate it. But this mouse had clearly grown up around eucalyptus trees, so he (or rather she, as it turned out) found the scent familiar. She dragged the oil-soaked eucalyptus leaves everywhere. Poison? Only if nothing else worked. It's a bit risky with the dogs around.

So we tried a live trap. A small cage with a door. And a tomato.



That did the trick. We released the mouse a kilometre away. The three pups we found we moved outdoor. As prey for other animals. Not very kind, perhaps, but I simply didn't know what else to do.

COFFEE

Recently, we introduced a manual coffee grinder to every cottage. And a bag of coffee beans. The beans we were able to buy through our neighbour, Lennart Clerkx, who is the CEO of This Side Up.

This Side Up is not just any coffee bean importer. They act as the farmer's agent – the good middle man, connecting coffee farmers and roasters from 14 countries around the world. Rather than low-paid forced labour, coffee farming becomes a trade to be proud of, with room for innovative and creative ideas, fair prices, and with respect for nature, soil, and ecosystems – values that match ours perfectly.



Our coffee bean project is a success. Some guests even take beans home with them. Soon they'll be available online. I'll let you know when. Enjoy!

SULPHUR POLYPORE

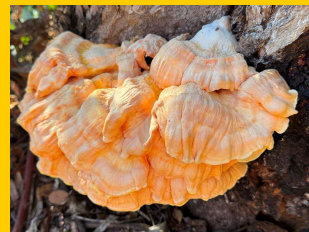
Yesterday's dinner included sulphur polypore. Found two days ago on a eucalyptus stump. 30 cm long, 10 cm high, 20 cm deep, weighing 750 grams. It has the structure and taste of chicken.

That's probably why it's also known as *chicken of the wood* in English.

At the suggestion of my mushroom expert, I brined it for 24 hours first. It stays juicier that way. Then, I made a risotto with it. It was tasty, but not my favourite mushroom. It doesn't have enough of a mushroom flavour for me.

It make take a while before the others show up. When they do, I'll pick them, too.

Hopefully.



Nel