ENDANGERED MEDICINAL HERBS OF ZIMBABWE

Issued 28th October, 2003

(Extracted from Philatelic Bureau Bulletin No 5 of 2003)[2]

Zimbabwe is wonderfully endowed with a rich variety of edible green herbs, almost all of which have additional medicinal value. They are fast disappearing under cultivated fields, urban building sites and new roads, at a time when herbal cures and their essential oils are becoming better known and valued. New drugs, medicines, ointments and cosmetics widely advertise the worth of what was traditionally once the only source of healing. May these plants be preserved for future research and understanding, in their great value and gentle unassuming beauty, to the glory of their creator and for the joy and the benefit of those to come.

$200: *Pentanisia schweinfurthii*.
Wild Verbena. Shona: Chikadaya



This is a low-growing herb of early spring, widespread in dry grass or on bare soil. The young leaves' shoots are edible, as spinach and the plant is widely used medicinally. The leaves have antiseptic value and are used to dress sores, erysipelas, wounds, rheumatic pains and swellings. An infusion of the plant is used as a sedative and as a refreshing bath for feverish patients or for mothers after child-birth. The crushed green berries are a ringworm cure. The root is used as an enema and in the treatment of piles, boils, itching and venereal diseases. Sutus use the plant as a Good Luck charm.

$500: *Tricliceras longipedunculatum*.
Pimpernel: Shona: Jongwe



Even before the rains this herb may be found flowering along dusty road sides and on sandveld. It is a widespread perennial, with brilliant vermillion tubular flowers, opening one at a time. The young leaves may be cooked with salt or potash as a relish. An infusion of the pounded root was a Matabele remedy for sore eyes. The infused root is also a Karanga ear ache remedy. The whole plant including the root, was used to relieve sudden pains attributed to witchcraft. The Shona name - 'littlie cock'- gives it a brave and cheering character as an early sign of the coming of Spring.

$1,000: *Tacca leontopetaloides*.
African Arrowroot. Shona: Bepe.



This is becoming a rare plant, found mainly in Northern or North-eastern woodlands. The fleshly white tuber, growing well below ground surface, must be washed several times to remove poisonous salts before being pounded in water to a fine starchy powder known as arrowroot. It is cooked as a thin, easily digestible porridge or gruel, used mainly as a nutrious food for invalids or babies.

$3,000*: Capsicum annum.*
Chili, Bird Pepper. Shona: Mhiripiri. Ndebele: Ibilibile.



Cultivated throughout Africa from ancient times, this herb is now a rarity in its wild state. The fruits vary in size and shape, hanging from short stalks, with shining green skins ripening to bright red. The numerous small white seeds are discarded and the pungent hot-tasting chillies are used as flavouring, fresh or dried, or ground to powder as paprika or cayenne pepper. Capsicum plants contain capsaicin, which is used to prevent flatulence and dyspepsia, neuralgia and certain forms of rheumatism and poor circulation. The name of the plant is taken from a Greek word meaning " to bite".

$4,200: *Tulbaghia alliaceae*
Wild garlic. Shona: Mhodya**.**



A herb of the Amaryllis family, this is often a garden weed, found in damp grass, smelling strongly of onions. The long narrow leaves may be cooked as a relish or chopped to flavour other dishes. The corm is scrapped clean and boiled or roasted as a vegetable. It is also used in small doses as an aperient and may be bruised and soaked in water to bathe a person suffering from fever, rheumatism or even paralysis. It is also said to be "a charm for serpents."

$5,400: *Cleome gynandra*
Sider flower. Shona: Nyevhe, Runi, Tsuna. Ndebele: Ulede.



An annual herb, common on disturbed ground and sometimes planted in village gardens, this is a popular green vegetable. It may reach nearly a metre in height, with sticky stems and delicate white or shell-pink flowers. The leaves are edible, picked early in the morning and cooked with peanuts or with buds of *Aloe greatheadii*. An infusion of the leaf is used as an eyewash or massaged into the skin to relieve pneumonia. It is also the source of yellow dye. It is correct to ask permission of the landowner before picking it.







Bulletin cover are: Blue Thunbergia, producing a lotion for skin diseases (left); Solanum nigrum whose crushed berries cure ringworm, ulcers, boils and dysentery (centre); Asparagus; a sedative used in childbirth (right).



Left: FDC - yellow Commelina, decocted to treat a wide variety of abdominal complaints and as a mild sedative.
Right: FDC postmark - a section of wild Cucumis, also medicinal



The Stamps















Miniature sheet at 50% size

Catalogue listings

SG	ZSC[1]	Value	Description
1117	545	$200	Wild Verbena
1118	546	$500	Rain Spider
1119	547	$1,000	African Arrowroot
1120	548	$3,000	Chili, Bird Pepper
1121	549	$4,200	Wild Garlic
1122	550	$5,400	Cleome
MS1123	MS7		Miniature sheet (se-tenant block of 6 values)

Technical details

Stamp size: Sheet stamps: 28 x 42 mm
Miniature sheet: 116 x 116 mm

Sheet Size: 50 stamps (5 rows of 10 stamps), two panes per printed sheet

Artist: Lady Margaret Tredgold

Paper: ZSC paper type J: paper described by Zimpost as "Chancellor Litho PVA Gummed Postage Stamp Paper". This paper is produced by Tullis Russell Coaters of Glenrothes, Fife, Scotland. Under UV there is no fluorescence either front or back, the stamp appears to be every dark.

Print colours: Cyan, magenta, yellow & black

Perforations: Stamps and miniature sheet: SG 14 x 14½, ZSC 14 x14¼
Left margin: Perforated through.
Other margins: Imperforate

Printer: NatPrint, Harare, Zimbabwe

Printer's Imprint: Sheets stamps only. Bottom Margin, below Row 5 Columns 5 & 6. Imprint printed in black

Cylinder numbers: Sheets stamps only. Bottom margin below R5/1. Colours from left – cyan, magenta, yellow, black

Colour register: Sheets stamps only. Type TL 4– round boxed – left margin opposite R5/1. Colours reading down – cyan, magenta, yellow, black

Sheet Value: Sheets stamps only. Bottom margin, below R5/10, printed in black.

Sheet Number: Sheets stamps only. Type SN 7 with printed 'ZIMPOST' prefix, right margin opposite R5/10, reading down

Print numbers:

$200	1,063,800	$500	2,276,500
$1,000	499,500	$3,000	347,300
$4,200	336,000	$5,400	334,000

Miniature sheets – 15,000

Issue date: 28th October, 2003

Miniature sheet

These miniature sheets have no perforations through the margins. In simple terms the sheetlets were produced using the comb perforators, in a laborious process of perforating with the head and teeth of the comb separately. For more details on this process see the section of the Encyclopaedia headed "the Local Printing of Rhodesian & Zimbabwean Stamps".

As a result of this perforating process, with the need to take sheets through perforators twice, some variations in the positioning of perforations can be found. This slight movement should be considered normal.

Postage Rates

At the time of release of these stamps the values of the stamps do not appear to reflect postage rates at the time, see below. The low denomination of $200 is below the local postage rate, including for printed matter. Four of the values however appear to reflect the postal rate increase on 1st January 2004.

It is possible that there was an anticipated increase in postal rates at immediately before, or on the date of release, but the increase was not authorised (like the Spider issue) until late December 2003. The $200 stamp would therefore be a makeup value for the local increase in postal rates from $300 to $500. The $1,000 value, however, was not a makeup rate.

Postal rates with effect from	20th August 2003	1st January 2004
Local	$300	$500
Africa	$1,500	$3,000
Europe	$2,100	$4,200
Rest of the world	$2,700	$5,400

Listed varieties

No listed varieties have been noted.

Unlisted Varieties

There are numerous small dots and specks in the printing of these stamps, particularly in the backgrounds.



$200: Double black printing
(Courtesy Narendhra Morar)



$200: Large gold spot below leaves of top flower
(Courtesy Narendhra Morar)



$500: Progressive doubling of black printing from right to left
(Courtesy Narendhra Morar)



$500: Purple area above artist's initials
(Courtesy Narendhra Morar)



Miniature sheet: $1000 value, with black dash in 1st '0'



$1,000: Doubling of black printing and shift of yellow plate to left.
(Courtesy Narendhra Morar)



$4,200: Doubling of black printing
(Courtesy Narendhra Morar)

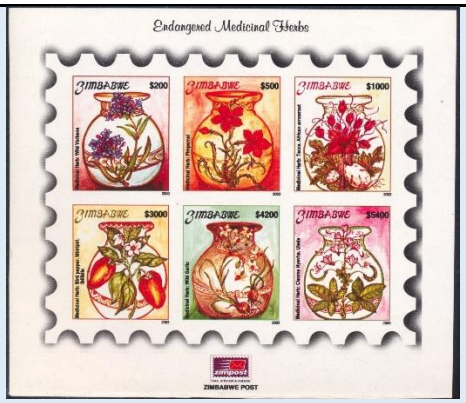




Miniature sheet: All printing on this sheetlet has double black printing
(Courtesy Narendhra Morar)



Miniature sheet: Offset of mainly magenta printing, but, also, the cyan and black



Miniature sheet: Imperforate sheet
(Source eBay January 2023)

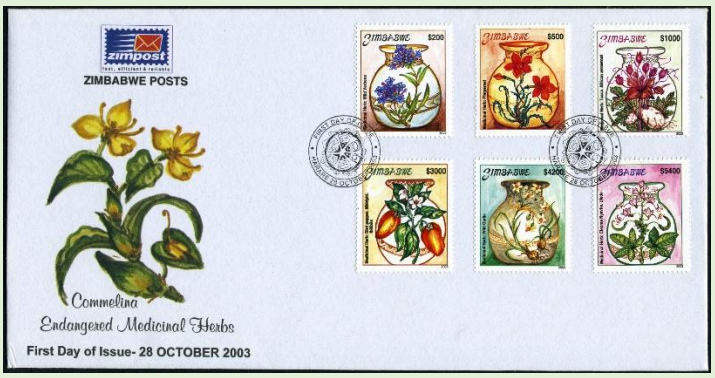
First Day Cover

The cover numbering comes from the catalogue produced by Geoff Brakspear.

A pictorial first day of issue canceller was produced for this issued and was used by the Philatelic Bureau. Other first day cover cancellers continued to be used at main post offices.



ZW105.1 (Zimpost)



Cover with set of stamps, placed on cover using Autophix machine and printed pictorial cancellation.
220 x 110 mm

ZW105.1 (MS) (Zimpost)



Miniature sheet with hand struck
First Day of Issue, Harare, cancellation for 30th July, 2003

Related Material

Rapidly changing duties from proof material

Examination of proof material from late September to release date of issue on 28 October 2003 makes an interesting story

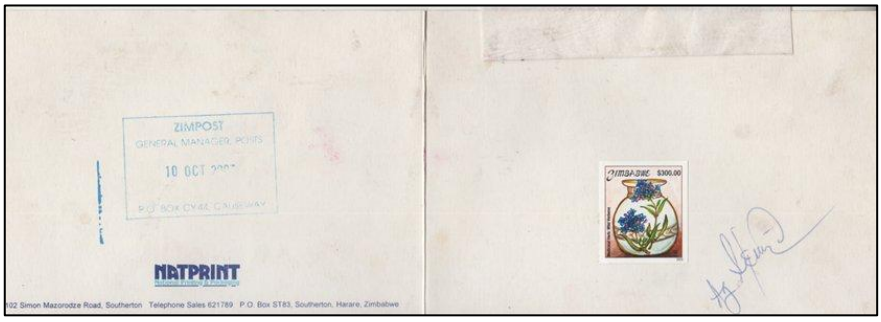
(All material courtesy of Pat Flanagan)



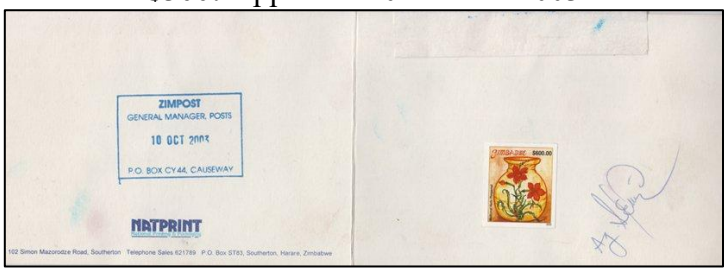
Printout of three lower values dated 26 September 2003 shows that the original duties were to change from (left to right) $150 to $300; $200 to $600; & $400 to $1500.



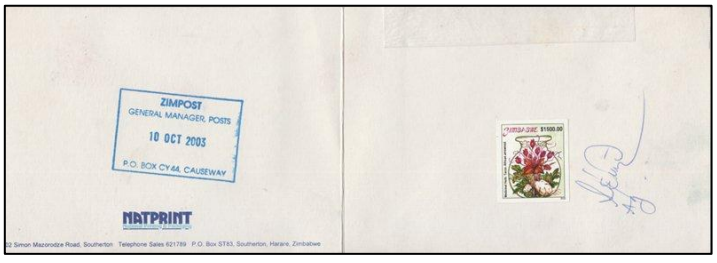
Assumed that this print out is an extension of the one above, with duties required to change from $900 tp $2,100; $1,250 to $2,100 & $1,600 to $2,700.



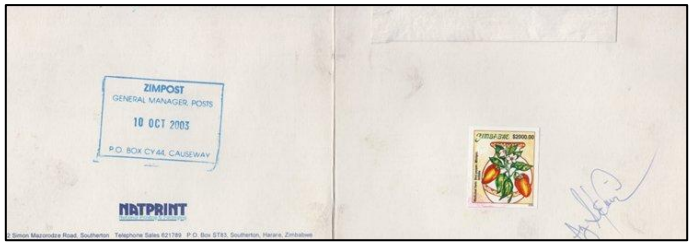
$300: Approved 10 October 2003



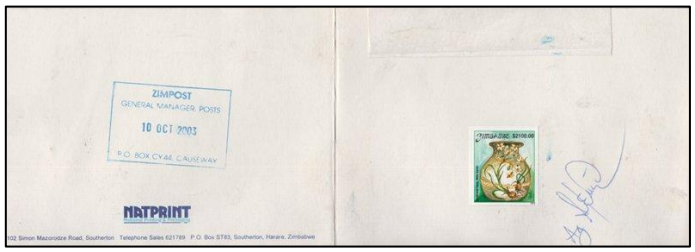
$600: Approved 10 October 2003



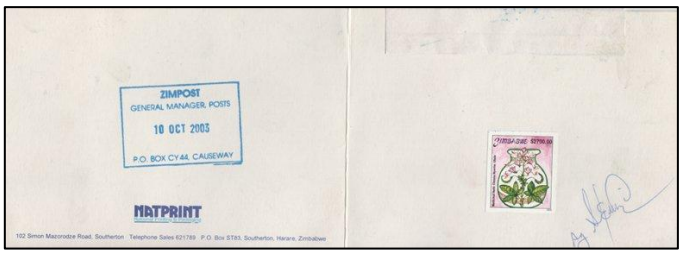
$1,500: Approved 10 October 2003



$2,000: Approved 10 October 2003



$2,100: Approved 10 October 2003



$300: Approved 10 October 2003



Proof of final **$1,000** duty, approved but not dated

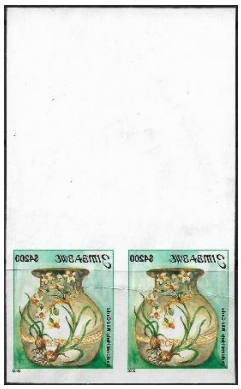


Proof of final **$4,200** duty, approval signed and dated 31 October, 2003.
This date is two days after the official release of this issue on 28 October,
which makes it clear that the release date was not met.
It is assumed at all duties were approved on that date.
It is not known when the stamps were finally released.

Final Proofs with correct duties as at issue release



$1,000
(Source eBay October 2021)



$4,200
(Source eBay October 2021)



$200
(Source eBay November 2024)



$500
(Source eBay November 2024)



$3,000
(Source eBay November 2025)



$5,400
(Source eBay November 2024)

Summary of changes over a period of one month

Printout 26/09/2003	Postal Zone	Required change	Approval 10/10/2003	Approval at 21/10/2003
$150	Zimbabwe	$300	$300	$200
$200		$600	$600	$500
$400	Africa	$1,500	$1,500	$1,000
$900		$2,000	$2,000	$3,000
$1,250	Europe	$2,100	$2,100	$4,200
$1,600	Rest/world	$2,700	$2,700	$5,400

It is possible that there was an anticipated increase in postal rates immediately before, or on the date of release, but the increase was not authorised (like the Spider issue) until late December 2003. The $200 stamp would therefore be a makeup value for the local increase in postal rates from $300 to $500. The $1,000 value, however, was not a makeup rate.

Postal rates with effect from	1st May 2003	20th August 2003	1st January 2004
Local	$100	$300	$500
Africa	$400	$1,500	$3,000
Europe	$550	$2,100	$4,200
Rest of the world	$700	$2,700	$5,400

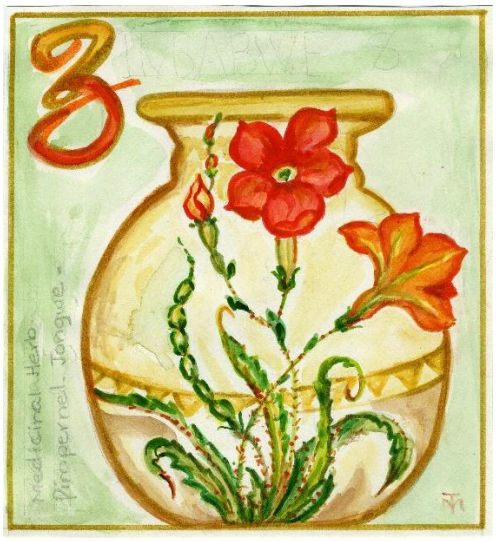
The duties approved on 10 October therefore correctly reflect the postal rates as at the date of release of 28 October. It would appear therefore the final duties were to reflect rates at the start of 2004.

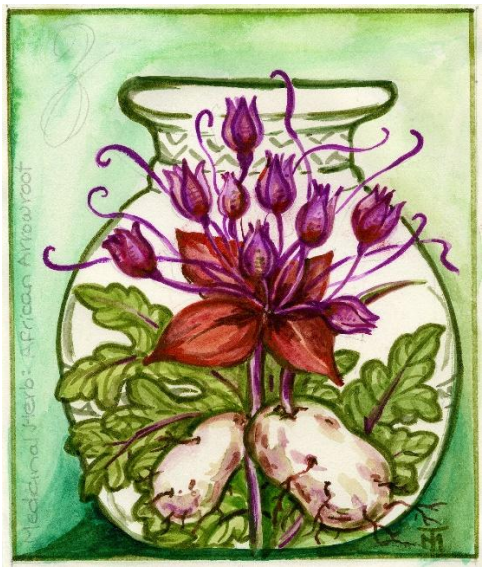
The question however remains as to where the duties came from for the September 2003 proof, as they are not reflected in any postal rates at the time.

Artwork by Lady Margaret Tredgold

Copies of preparatory artwork by Lady Margaret Tredgold.







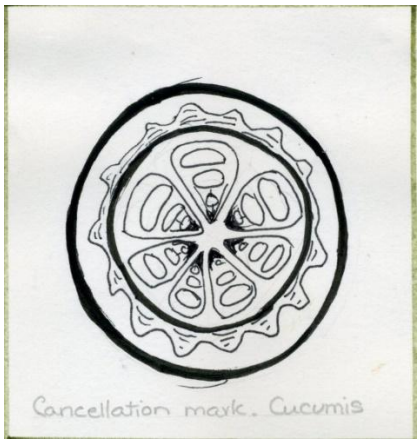








Preliminary artwork for first day cover



Preliminary artwork for postmark



Preliminary artwork for Bulletin

Bibliography:

1. "The Zimbabwean Concise Postage Stamp Catalogue", published by Harare Stamp Company, edited by Ken Allanson, Mike Amos and Geoff Brakspear. The catalogue continues to be updated and expanded by Geoff Brakspear
2. Zimbabwe Post, Philatelic Bureau Bulletin No 6 of 2003
3. "The Artwork of Margaret Tredgold and more", Rhodesian Study Circle Journal, July 2018, RSCJ 269, pages 178-184

Additions/Changes since December 2020	
12/2021	Proof material
3/2023	Additional proof material and its analysis
	Imperforate miniature sheet
12/2025	$200, $500, $3,000 & $5,400 proofs in blocks