

# SAWLOG PRODUCTION GRANT SCHEME



NEWS OF UGANDA'S COMMERCIAL TREE PLANTING FUND FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR

NO. 14 MARCH - APRIL 2007



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## SEED UPDATE

The latest news on the commercial seed front is not much changed from the last Newsletter: the improved *E. grandis* seed from South Africa is expected at the NTSC by April, 2007; the National Tree Seed Centre (NTSC) also expects Brazilian PCH seed by April (150 kgs) and May (200 kgs). We still await word from FPQ in Australia regarding their 2007 PCH collection. The NTSC and the SPGS have tendered for 200 kgs and 100 kgs respectively. We expect to hear by April/May 2007 how successful their collections have been.

**Stephen Kaukha** (NTSC Manager) requested some space in our Newsletter to inform customers about the Seed Centre. Since he is such a nice chap, we were happy to do so!

The objective of setting up the NTSC was to provide, promote and conserve genetically suitable tree seed and other reproductive materials of good physiological quality, to meet present and future needs of tree planting activities in Uganda. Since the launch of NFA in April 2004, the Centre has endeavoured to reverse the negative public opinion it had under the then Forest Department. These concerns largely centred around the poor quality of tree seed, inadequate supply of some species'

seed and lack of genetic and handling information on the seed supplied to customers.

### How is NTSC addressing these concerns?

The Centre is committed to ensure that the tree farmers receive adequate supplies of quality seed and planting materials to meet their planting requirements. The supply of seed has improved over time, with an annual stock rising from less than 1,000 Kg in 2004 to the current 8,000 Kg. For species which are not locally available seed imports have been organized, especially for Pine and Eucalypts.

Local seed collection has been diversified to include the indigenous timber species, agro-forestry species, fruit trees and ornamentals. The demand for these is increasing annually, but the Centre is so far well placed to collect and sufficient quantities to meet this demand. The main problem lies in the poor culture of the customers to make early bookings for the seed to allow sufficient time for the Centre to organize seed collection.

Quality control is one of the main concerns of the Centre. The seed is collected from seed sources which have been identified, selected, and marked by the Centre. For timber species, seed must be collected

under close supervision for quality assurance. For agro-forestry species, private seed sources have been identified and seed suppliers trained in seed collection and handling techniques. All seed is subjected to rigorous tests for purity, seed count, moisture content, viability, germination and seed hygiene (phytosanitary conditions).

To consolidate seed quality control, the Centre has applied to register under the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Scheme for the Control of Forest Reproductive Materials Moving in International Trade. Some of the seed sources which qualify under this Scheme include *Eucalyptus grandis* (Fort Portal), *Terminalia superba* (Nandagi), *Maesopsis eminii* (Mabira), etc. More seed is being cleaned to meet the OECD standards.

There is increasing openness and information sharing on tree seed and planting materials between the Tree Seed Centre and its wide stakeholders. The Centre is very receptive to comments and constructive criticism on the procurement and supply of its products. Doubtless, there has been a lot of support from the Sawlog Production Grant Scheme that has enabled the Centre excel in its service delivery in the last three years.

## A UGANDAN ABROAD

*Jean Vianney Besesa sent us this interesting article about his placement in a large South African company.*

Three months later with Global Forest Products (GFP), my hosts, I have something to write home about. Around the town of Sabie in Mpumalanga, there exists one of the largest plantation forests in the world, with GFP managing 65,000 hectares of plantation. Plantation forestry in Sabie began when the far-sighted Joseph Brook Shires planted the first commercial trees in 1876 after miners had chopped down the indigenous forests. Today the "Green Gold" flourishes.

Sometimes we hear things on radio or just read about them in the media, but what caught my attention on arrival was a drive of more than two hours or so within a plantation. I had never seen a forest this big! As if to get to terms with the experience, I was booked into an apartment (Pine Lodge) in the middle of the plantation. Waking up every morning to the cool and fresh scent from the pines just breaks down the day's challenges into opportunities to love the pines more.

I spent my first days at the main nursery (Klipkraal) in Sabie. Here, most of my experience was observation since almost 80% of the activities are automated, including tray filling and seed sowing. After around four days in a heated germination room (kept at about the same temperature as Kampala – 260C!), the trays are put out on tables and watered by overhead sprinklers. The nursery specialises in *Pinus taeda*, *P. elliottii*, *P. patula*, *Eucalyptus grandis* and *E. nitens* (for colder regions). They also deal with cuttings including crosses of *P. patula* x *tecunumanii* (PT) and *P. elliottii* x *P. caribaea* (EC). Despite the system being automated, I was able to learn a number of ideas that could be useful Ugandan style.

Walking through the plantations just makes one fall in love with the forestry standards: trees are all of the same height, volume and the pruning height is uniform. After a spraying session, one may think that weeds are a myth, beneath the trees is virtually clean with low fuel load. Finding the people at work was just

*Cont'd on pg 13*

# SPGS UPDATE



By the SPGS team

Something positive is definitely happening in northern Uganda these days, stimulating an SPGS team to jump in a Land Rover and set the drivers' GPS on a northerly course. As a follow up to the exploratory visit (read promotion) to by the SPGS late in 2006, we carried out our first field inspections of our northerly clients in early February 2007. All the eleven contracted clients (7 in Gulu district, 2 Lira district and 2 in Paidha district) were visited.

In Gulu we met with the main local dignitaries, including the RDC, District Environmental Officer, District Forest Officer, the NFA, local interested people and also representatives from two womens' community groups. We discussed how the SPGS could help such communities, including those returning from the Internally Displaced People camps. We shall certainly follow this up in the very near future.

Overall we found that the North has great potential for tree growing and there appears to be significant areas of suitable land available for commercial tree growing – both in Forest Reserves and private land. There was a huge level of enthusiasm for tree planting but (like we have experienced elsewhere over the last few years), the technical support was severely lacking. This has resulted in some poor silviculture – especially the use of poor seed and the use of some species that are not the best suited for the area or even for financial return. For example, teak has a long growing cycle (maybe 30 years), whilst other species (especially eucalypts but even pines) would provide a return earlier on as long as sound silviculture and management programs are followed. There is also a real need for good nurseries providing improved planting material. Read more in Bric's article on page 11.

Within the same quarter, we held the second Bridging Phase clients' meeting. As usual we didn't just sit in a room but held a full day's safari (before sitting in a room together!), which Paul has documented on page 4. The meeting following the safari in

Jinja's Hotel Triangle was very well attended - maybe because we had promised to award the prizes for 2006's best planters (see pages 6 and 7). After Allan's administrative update, the formal presentations were on Eucalypts and the environment (Paul), the need for better weed control (Bric) and important environmental issues (Zainabu – see page 5). As is the norm now in these important quarterly meetings, the 'meat' of the meeting was a very busy question and answer session, which

covered many of the clients' concerns.



*SPGS Plantation Officer, Alex Atuyamba, showing workers of a new SPGS client, Eng. John Byabagambi, how to weed correctly (in Rukiri, Ibanda District).*

Also at the meeting, the SPGS gave the Uganda Timber Growers' Association (UTGA) an opportunity to present their case to potential members. Dr. Peter Ngategize, an interim committee member, acknowledged the tremendous interest in private tree growing over the past few years but emphasised the importance of working together for technical, administrative and lobbying reasons.

UTGA's AGM took place on 2nd March (see page 14). The signs are very encouraging that UTGA will not become just another Association after your dollar (or even your shillings!) but it could really make a difference for private growers here in Uganda. We at the SPGS urge all our clients (past and present) to sign up and to work together to ensure UTGA becomes a powerful trade body.

**Overall we found that the North has great potential for tree growing and there appears to be significant areas of suitable land available for commercial tree growing – both in Forest Reserves and private land. There was a huge level of enthusiasm for tree planting.**

During the meeting we asked who would be interested in going on a partly subsidised trip to see large scale commercial forest industries in South Africa and Swaziland. We were nearly knocked over in the rush and thus have decided this year to take two groups that will travel separately under the leadership of Paul and Bric. The intrepid travelers will be heading for their 10-day tours on 12th March 2007: the next SPGS Newsletter will be full of their discoveries down South. Don't miss it.

## CLIENTS' SAFARI

By Paul Jacovelli

In terms of tree planting in Uganda, there seems to be a lot of truth in the old adage 'seeing is believing'. If any of you doubt the remarkable tree planting revival that is occurring within the private sector in Uganda, my advice to you is come along on one of the SPGS clients' meetings and you will be cured very quickly. The thirst for knowledge is extremely encouraging as more and more people get involved in the business of commercial forestry. Anyway, back to the business in hand – notably a report from our latest safari, where the objective was for the new planters to learn from the 'old hands' (referring to those who have been with the SPGS since 2003 rather than their age!).

Even the miserable wet weather and dire roads around Jinja and Mayuge could not dampen the enthusiasm of the 75 tree planters on the last day of January 2007. The age distribution of those present ranged from 8 months to 80 years – see the photos on page 8 if you don't believe me! This first SPGS clients' safari of 2007 took many of the 'new' private sector growers to Mukono, Jinja and Mayuge districts, where we looked at plantations established since 2003 under the SPGS.

The three sites visited were - Ferdult Engineering Co., Wakitaka Farms Ltd. and Busoga Forest Co. Ltd., who between them successfully established over 700 hectares under the first phase of the SPGS from 2003 to 2006. All three growers have signed new contracts under the second phase of the Scheme too. Starting with Ferdult, the initial discussion was about growing *Eucalyptus grandis* for poles and timber. The plantation we saw is on private land and had been planted in 2003 at a spacing of 2x2m or 2,500 stems per hectare (sph). A thinning was in progress, aimed to reduce the stocking to around 1,000 sph. With the plantation not far away from Kampala, Ferdult have a good local market for building poles from this thinning operation.

The advice from the SPGS was that they needed to thin more heavily if they wanted

to produce large trees – for transmission poles or sawlogs. The crop should be down to around 750sph at this age and ready to bring down to around 500sph by year 5-6. The message was clear: whatever the initial spacing, follow the SPGS's recommended thinning regime if you want to produce big trees. Far too many eucalypt growers in Uganda are reluctant to thin their plantations, resulting in lots of smaller trees.

The last stop at Ferdult was a 14-month old PCH crop, established from Brazil seed. Discussion was based on the late planting and high weeding costs. It had been planted in Dec. 2005 at the end of the rains and (unsurprisingly) suffered high mortality. Thus heavy beating up had to be carried out. Their other problem was high weeding costs, which could be

admired the effect of the pre-plant spraying operation that had killed most of the tough grass species.

Then it was off to Mayuge District, where Busoga Forest Co.'s Manager, Jossy Byamah, was happy to show us his efforts over the last 3 years. We looked at the 3 and 2 year-old PCH crops – both from the Australian seed orchard seed – but with contrasting performance. The younger crop (which incidentally was the SPGS Plantation of 2005) was looking superb with almost full stocking and growing vigorously: it was not far off catching up the older crop already. The difference with the older crop was largely due to weed control. Pre-plant spraying with Glyphosate was not carried out in the 2003 crop, which then suffered severely from heavy grass competition.



Jossy Byamah, Manager of Busoga Forest Co., preaching to an attentive audience at the 1st SPGS Clients' meeting of 2007 (in Jinja and Mayuge Districts).

attributed to their not using Glyphosate before planting. Despite these problems, however, it was generally agreed that the plantation was looking pretty good - even through the mist!

The convoy then headed across the mighty Nile, and on to Wakitaka Farms, where Harriet Migeroko is planting on Ngereka Forest Reserve. Harriet explained the problems she had experienced with a previous Supervisor, who encouraged local people to grow their crops amongst the Musizi seedlings – the so-called 'taungya' system. The result was (unsurprisingly) almost complete failure of their early tree plantings. At the next stop of 1 year-old PCH, however, it was clear to all present that things had improved greatly: no more taungya and planting a species better suited to the site. The voracious army ants kept everyone on their toes as people

As participants thoughts were turning towards sundowners against the backdrop of the Nile, there was just time to call into Nileply's factory in Jinja town. Nileply is the major buyer of logs in Uganda, transporting eucalypts and pines from as far as the West Nile region to Jinja – a round trip of over 700 kms. Their factory has particleboard, chipboard and veneer operations, with an output of 200m<sup>3</sup> of product on a good day. What impressed people most was the extremely high recovery they achieve (>90% since the chip plant can take very small material and off-cuts) and the fact that they employ over 700 people. Because of the supply situation here, however, Nileply are operating at only 60% of their capacity.

Although it may be year or two before most of the tree growers present will have products to sell to Nileply, it was clearly very important for them to get the link between the growing side and the market place. Hopefully the SPGS planters will also start thinking more seriously now about matters such as yield, quality, log specifications and distance to markets – all key issues that impact on the profitability of every commercial forestry company.

*Our thanks to the people (especially the private growers) who assisted in making this day such a success. The next clients' safari will be around mid-May – make sure you read the Newsletters for details. We have already placed an order for some sun this time.*

# TREE PLANTATIONS: What cost to the environment?

By *Zainabu Kakungulu, SPGS Plantation Officer*

Over the last 30 years, Uganda's natural forests have been massively exploited with very little effort put in to replanting. The diminishing forest resource has caused a crisis to the country's forest industry - hence the urgent need for plantations. The rapid expansion of these plantations is however associated with possible environmental consequences, including biodiversity loss, soil water and nutrient consumption, site degradation (e.g. soil erosion and compaction), sedimentation (caused by increased run-off) and water pollution (from chemical operations). All these impacts can, however, be greatly reduced if appropriate measures are taken:

## 1. Identify important/ sensitive areas

First and foremost, intact natural forests must not be cleared for tree plantations. Sites of special scientific (and cultural) importance (e.g. threatened or valuable species) should be protected. Particular management strategies and planting restrictions must be adopted.

## 2. Conserve corridors of natural vegetation.

Natural vegetation along streams, lakes, rivers and valley bottoms should be left uncleared (and even encouraged to regenerate). These have useful hydrological roles as well as enhancing biodiversity within the broader plantation estate.

## 3. Use of native species.

Where two species grow equally well but one is exotic, for ecological benefit it is generally preferable to plant the native one. Note, however, that very few indigenous trees are suitable for fast growing timber plantations - Musizi (*Maesopsis eminii*) being the best known exception.

## 4. Use of several species and varying age classes.

Commercial forestry usually involves planting one species over a reasonably sized area (usually called a compartment or block); this is for reasons of productivity and management. To increase the biodiversity associated with such plantations, there are simple measures that can be taken at the planning stage - such as having different age classes over a region. In areas where there are alternative species that could be planted without sacrificing yield, this will also add to the biodiversity in the region.

## 5. Careful site species matching.

Like all plants, forest stands use water and nutrients during growth. The concern with excessive water and nutrient consumption by eucalypts is largely due to poor site species matching and management techniques. Eucalypts should be fertilised to replace the nutrients and they should not be planted in area where water is scarce. No trees should be planted within 20 metres of water courses or wetlands.

## 6. Careful site management.

On steep slopes, planting sites should be prepared manually along the contours to minimise erosion. Weed control should not be 100% and it should be done along the contours. Firebreaks should also not run up and down steep slopes.



*An example of good plantation management hereby the NFA in Nyakunya Forest Reserve, just outside Masindi town. Post plant spraying with Glyphosate has killed the aggressive grasses whilst the soils on the steep slope are still protected from erosion.*

## 7. Careful use of herbicide/pesticides.

Herbicides and pesticides can be harmful to both humans and the environment if not properly used. The following measures should be taken:

- Restrict access to areas for storing, mixing, and preparing herbicides to authorised and well trained employees.
- Spraying should only be carried out by trained personnel.
- Choose appropriate application equipment.
- Ensure safety of the spraying team by providing personal protective equipment (particularly overalls and rubber boots for the sprayers and gloves for the person mixing).
- Carefully rinse and destroy empty chemical containers.

## 8. Road planning.

Poor planning of roads results into high construction costs and environmental damage. Roads should be carefully planned and the following considerations made:

- They must be well shaped (balanced cut and fill and cambered) and as smooth as possible.
- Should have clear drains and culverts to avoid blockages.
- Avoid routing new roads near designated sensitive areas.
- Crossings must be constructed at right angles to the water courses to avoid sedimentation.

This work is based on my project for the SPGS: it will be expanded into an SPGS Plantation Guideline shortly. The SPGS TAs are also working on a new Forest Roads Guideline too.

## Pruning and Thinning Grant

**P**onder this fact: tree growers who want to benefit from high quality timber and large stem diameters need to prune and thin. Now that planting is well underway in our new phase and we have just about put the old phase to bed we thought it would be a good time to talk about the pruning and thinning part of the new SPGS phase.

In order to encourage private growers to manage their plantations well for sawlog production, the SPGS has available a thinning and pruning grant. It is available only to those clients from the first phase, who planted from 2003-2006. The stands must be of the right age and quality to justify both thinning and pruning. Remember there is always the possibility that you will be able to sell some of those thinned out trees.

If you are interested then do the following steps;

- Let Allan know, include all the details of the trees (age, species, seed source, estimated size of area, location).
- Let us know if you need extra training or whether you have already sent people to do our *Plantation Maintenance course* (which covers both thinning and pruning).
- Let Allan know when you are planning the activities

We will then select areas that we feel deserve the pruning and thinning grant. After the work is done we will inspect and GPS the area and then of course if everything meets the standards, pay. The payment will be UGX100,000 per ha for pruning and first thinning (combined).

Please consult our guidelines (Nos. 26 & 27) which cover thinning and pruning respectively: below is a summary of the basic standards:

The standards for pruning are:

- Pruned close to the stem using a proper pruning saw.
- No tearing or scaring.
- 1st prune to a height of between 1.8m – 2m.
- Obviously the trees must be at a height and stage where they are ready for this pruning.

The standards for the 1st thinning are:

- A selective thinning, where the trees to be removed are pre-marked.
- Thinned down to 750sph, regardless of initial stocking.
- Timing of thinning is critical: trees that have past the correct stage will not be considered.

## NOT QUITE THE OSCARS BUT..... THE SPGS 2006 AWARDS

**T**he winners (and near winners) of the SPGS annual awards were announced at the clients' meeting in Jinja on 1st February 2006. Before Allan presented the prizes, Paul explained the judge's criteria and showed numerous photographs of each winner so that everybody could clearly see how they arrived at their judgment.

In contrast to the 2005 awards that were given solely for the best plantation established in that year, we decided to broaden the perspective somewhat and consider each planter's wider business approach. This meant looking critically not just at the quality of the plantations established during the year but also at matters such as community involvement, staff development (training), labour issues and environmental measures taken. The fact that it was not an easy task is testament to the improvements made by many of the planters. But as they say 'someone has to win!' And the winners were:

**No. 1** **GLOBAL WOODS LTD.** Planting in Kikonda Forest Reserve, close to Hoima town received the top prize of Best SPGS Planter of 2006. GW had planted 500 ha over the past three years under the SPGS but during 2006 showed a much more commercial approach to the business. Clearly the company is investing in people as well as trees: they have an active training programme, regularly send their staff on the SPGS training courses and then implement what they have learnt. They are undertaking some basic silvicultural research, have improved their nursery and are actively supporting

the local communities to also plant trees.

**No. 2** Close behind Global Woods came **KAMUSIIME ASSOCIATION**, planting on privately owned land in Bushenyi. Kamusiime have maintained the high standards they adopted right at the beginning of the SPGS. In 2006 they completed planting their 100 ha contract and the plantations are looking very good. This Association of 22 small landowners is a role model for others: not only do they pool their labour but they employ many local people (particularly women) and have generated great interest in tree planting in the region. They have developed their nursery and have even started contract planting for others. Well done to Brenda Mwebaze and the rest of the team at Kamusiime for their efforts.

The award that seemed to have the most popular support – Most Improved Planter of 2006 – went to **ROBERT NABANYUMBA**, who has been planting in Kasagala Forest Reserve. Suffice to say the judges were not too impressed during 2004-05 but something must have happened in 2006 as all of a sudden, Robert's standards improved remarkably. Peer pressure from his friend Edward Mupada's excellent planting next door may have had something to do with it: whatever it was, keep it up Robert!

There were honourable mentions too for **Arthur Busingye** (Bushenyi) and **Busoga Forest Company** (Mayuge) in the best of 2006 category and **ET Dominion** (Masindi) in the most improved category.



# THE BEST OF 2006



*An excellent 2004 PCH stand at Kikonda Forest Reserve near Hoima, established by Sustainable Use of Biomass Ltd (Global Woods). It was 1.5 years old at the time this photo was taken in early 2006.*



*The Kamusiime Association Committee outside their office in Rutoto, Bushenyi District.*



*The surprised Kikonda team receiving the SPGS's top prize of 2006 – Best Planter. (left to right) Shedrack Kajura, Johannes Mokwena and Kay Windhorst here receive a beautiful wooden briefcase made in one of Horizont 3000's workshops in Uganda.*



*What can we say? Robert Nabanyumya entertains the crowd at the 2006 SPGS award ceremony.*



*Kamusiime Association have established 100 ha under the first phase of the SPGS and have consistently demonstrated good practices.*



*Robert's much improved (p.04) PCH plantation at Kasagala Forest Reserve, Nakasongola.*

# Photo Gallery - SPGS CLIENTS' SAFARI.



*Even the rain cannot dampen the enthusiasm of our planters! This was at the 1st stop of the day – Fersult's 1-yr old PCH crop (seed ex-Brazil), near Lugazi.*



*Dr. Peter Ngategize's mother, Sabina Kikafunda, grilling Jossy Byamah about why he hasn't pruned his pine trees yet (answer: they are too young!).*



*SPGS Clients doing an unrehearsed 'biting ant' dance at Wakataka Farm Ltd's 2006 PCH planting in Ngereka Forest Reserve, north of Jinja.*



*Participants at Busoga Forest Company's 2005 PCH planting.*



*Bric impressing everyone with the latest SPGS tool n Wakitaka's 3-yr old Musizi crop. It is an extendable, aluminum high pruning saw, capable of pruning up to 10 m.*



*Not quite everybody was interested in learning about improved nursery practices at the meeting.*



# PHOTOS FROM RECENT SAFARIS



*Participants posing at the end of the latest SPGS Training Course on Plantation Maintenance (1st March 2007).*



*One of the trainees – Fred Iga Kizeyo (from IK Associates) demonstrating his prowess at pruning during the Plantation Maintenance course.*



*Trainees discussing the problems caused by delayed weeding in the NFA's Katugo Forest Reserve. Stocking and growth will be sacrificed due to insufficient funds available at the right time – a common problem with private planters too.*



*The Plantation Maintenance course covers laying out a Permanent Sample Plot and the basics of measuring tree diameters and heights.*



*SCOUL's 2005 PCH planting at Lugazi is now looking good: SCOUL have planted some 440 ha over the last 3 years under the SPGS, all on land within their estate that was unsuitable for sugar cane – like this hilltop.*



*Ferdsult's most recent planting near Lugazi being beaten up in January 2007. Planting so late in the season is very risky.*



# SPGS SUPPORT TO N. UGANDA



*There is great potential for commercial tree planting in northern Uganda: this young PCH crop was in Amuru District.*



*Stella Opic with her well maintained PCH crop in Opok Forest Reserve near Gulu.*



*Whilst some good growth can be exhibited by Teak in these northern regions, the lack of improved planting material being used results in some very variable crops.*



*E. grandis planted by the Norwegian Afforestation Group in Lira. More intense weeding is necessary, however, to prevent the crop from becoming stressed.*



*This poorly drained site was part of Jimmy Obaa's planting in Lira: clearly not suitable for commercial forestry.*



*At the end of the day.....the SPGS staff held a meeting with local leaders, community representatives and interested local business people in Gulu. The great interest in tree planting is extremely encouraging.*

## THE SPGS HEADS NORTH

By Bric Milligan

**As a follow up to Allan's exploratory visit to the North late last year, an SPGS team (comprising Allan, Thaddeus, Zainabu and myself) headed back there in early February 2007. It turned out to be an extremely interesting week. In addition to meeting the local administration and representatives of two womens' groups, we visited seven tree planters in the Lira and Gulu areas and a further two in the Pachwach area of West Nile. Two other SPGS clients who had not started planted were not visited due to a time constraint.**

Starting at Karuma, we visited Patrick Ojok Okullo where we saw his *Pinus oocarpa* and teak (*Tectona grandis*) plantings. One problem we had not encountered before was seeing many trees trampled by buffalo, coming from the nearby Karuma Wildlife Reserve: any suggestions for Patrick? Next up was the Norwegian Afforestation Group managed by Fred Okello-Okori. They proved to be well organized, having measured the areas and planned the planting before starting. This planning was seen in the quality of planting as well as the accuracy of the areas recorded compared to our GPS. They had planted *P. caribaea* var. *hondorensis* (PCH) from Brazil as well as *Eucalyptus grandis*. They also have a good nursery from which they hope to be able to supply quality seedlings to the communities around them.

The last stop in Lira and for the day was Jimmy Obaa. He has established an area with *P. oocarpa* and has kept in incredibly clear of weeds and boundary planted the area with teak. Jimmy had also built proper toilets for the labour, which makes for a far more pleasant walk for us through the trees. The next day we headed off early for Gulu. Just before Gulu town we saw some very good plantings of PCH from Brazil and teak. Next door to these young trees was a stand of eucalypts which although had not been thinned or possibly even weeded when young, were looking quite good (which shows that if the termites can be tamed then Eucalypts could do quite well there too). Then we were off to Opok Central Forest Reserve, where we visited the plantings of Stella Apio. Stella had only planted a small area but now that she is more confident she plans to plant a far bigger area this next season. Her PCH was doing very well.

Right next door to her was teak planted by JC Forest Company. These also looked good and were more uniform than many other teak plantings we had seen. Lastly in this Reserve we visited *Lacan Pe Nino*. Although the *P. oocarpa* looked fine a good example of herbicide burning of the lower leaves could be seen. This indicates that the spraying team was not experienced and could even have sprayed in windy conditions. We also stopped at the plantings of a local women's group. We had organized a meeting that evening with local authorities and as well as some of the local community groups,

as we could see that they could do with some technical advice. The meeting went well with everyone expressing the desire for the SPGS to become more active in the area. The community groups were very grateful for the guidelines we gave out and are waiting eagerly for a technical visit which we shall try and do in the near future.

The following morning we headed for the West Nile, first stopping at a site in Amuru district, which had areas of musizi, eucalypts, teak and pine. The next site enabled us to see the difference that closer supervision makes: the site nearer Gulu had higher stocking and better weeding. Finally we made it to Paidha where we visited two new SPGS clients – Maber Group Farm Ltd and Othuba Pathua. The first plantation was disappointing; the second had not planted much but was so very eager and positive after attending our recent clients' day in Jinja that we expect good plantings from him. He has cleared the site and is about to start land preparation.

We stayed in Nebbi that night and saw that Bobbi Wine was performing so a couple of the team decided to see the man in action. So it was a long drive back to Kampala the next day after a very busy but worthwhile week of visits. Without doubt the SPGS will increase its presence in the North over this phase of the project, in order to satisfy at least some of the demand there for both financial and technical support for tree growing.

# Stop Press!

By Nalwadda Celia (SPGS Plantation Officer)

**A** big **Thank You** to all our clients that so honestly filled in the Public Relations (PR) questionnaire at the SPGS clients' meeting on 1st February 2007. Your comments will be great help to us in two main ways: firstly as we strive to improve our support to you, and secondly to assist us as we look to secure further funds to continue the scheme beyond 2008 to enable more private planters to get involved in the business of tree planting. We are happy to report that our current communications approach generally received your whole-hearted support though you had some excellent suggestions for improvements too. Let us run through your main points with our responses in italics):

### **SPGS Plantation Guidelines:**

The SPGS Guidelines got a royal nod from all of you: the winning trick being quality information, presented in a simple, clear and straight forward approach. There were many calls for Guidelines on stand valuation, estimation of future yields, calculating standing volume etc., and markets). *We will include these in our planned list and we pledge to have the complete set of Guidelines finished by mid-2007 (see Page 14).*

**SPGS Newsletter:** The Newsletter tied with the Guidelines in terms of impressing the clients; its great points being timely updates and coverage of many issues of interest to the readers. Your suggestions for improvements were mainly about including articles from clients, current international research findings related to plantation forestry and increasing their circulation to involve relevant institutions of learning. *Client's articles are always very welcome: please send in any interesting features to our office – preferably with a clear colour photograph too. We are very happy to send the Newsletters to whichever institutions you feel appropriate - please send us the contact details of interested people or organisations. Don't forget too that you can request for extra copies to spread the word – just pick some from our office or ask Josephine nicely to send you some more.*

**Delivery and Circulation modes:** Most of the clients are receiving their Newsletters and Guidelines on time, although there are a few whose postal addresses were incorrect. We also noted that some of your field managers and supervisors are not receiving copies regularly either. *Our apologies to those*

*with mistakes in their addresses: we are currently cross-checking and updating our mailing list so, hopefully that problem will be sorted soon. We do believe though that it is also your job to pass on relevant material (newsletters and selected Guidelines) to your field staff, as they contain a lot of information – including lots of photos - that is beneficial to them as well. Ensure you receive sufficient copies and don't just keep them on your desks!*

### **The SPGS Website:** [www.sawlog.ug](http://www.sawlog.ug)

It was interesting that only 30% of respondents had visited our website.

*We are not discouraged since we know the web site is really targeting a different audience who might want to know about the project. As you can see from the visitors list, many overseas people are accessing it. As more of you hook up to the worldwide web, however, the website does have a lot of useful information on it (including all the published Newsletters and Guidelines to date). If you have a chance, please check it out sometime and we are always eager to hear your comments to help us improve it. We are currently in the process of upgrading it as well as moving the site to our new satellite internet provider.*

Some other excellent suggestions you had are more forward looking and will be addressed by the SPGS in due course – for example:

- Increase awareness of the SPGS in Government circles.
- Attract organisations like

NSSF and pension funds to invest in commercial forestry.

- Promotion of tree plantations as an investment.
- Holding radio talk shows and even lecturing at key educational institutions.
- Investigating and promoting the major impact of plantations on rural livelihoods and especially on poverty alleviation.
- Publicising the sometimes 'thorny' issues of the use of herbicides and the planting of eucalypts.

One respondent strongly urged the SPGS to have more of a presence in the north. At least we know that we have one happy customer as they read the features in this Newsletter.



*Who says plantations are not attractive? Celia posing in front of the 3-yr old PCH demonstration planting at Kasagala Forest Reserve, in Nakasongola District. The spectacular red flowering tree is Erythrina abyssinica, which is widely used as a live fence in Uganda.*

# Invasive Plants No V – *Prosopis juliflora*

By Bric Milligan



**Taxonomic name:** *Prosopis juliflora* (common names: Mesquite, Mathenge (Kenya)).

**Origin:** *P.juliflora* is a shrub that originates from the Americas. It was brought to Senegal in 1822, South Africa in 1880 and Kenya in 1973.

**Description:** A perennial deciduous, thorny plant that can grow up to ten metres in height, it can also develop a thick trunk of over a metre in diameter. *P. juliflora* is a fast growing nitrogen-fixing

species, tolerant to arid conditions and saline soils. It has a thick, brownish-black bark and produces greenish-yellow, sweet scented flowers.

**Uses:** Bee keeping, the pods can be ground into flour to be used in baking or making nutritious drinks. Charcoal made from *P. juliflora* is very good and the wood can be used as furniture timber and in construction. The pods can also be used for forage. The tree is used to rehabilitate eroded and degraded sites: in Kenya, for example, it was introduced to curb the encroaching desert. The tannins, bark and gum from the tree can also be used in glues, dyes and some other medicinal and pharmaceutical ways.

**Threats:** Despite the potential benefits of the species, once established it has proved to be very difficult and costly to eradicate. It colonises areas and destroys all local vegetation forming dense thickets. Although its pods can be used as forage it is being reported that the pods which have a high sugar content rots the teeth of livestock especially goats leading them to run the risk of starvation. The thorns are very poisonous to both livestock of people

causing a loss of livestock and increased veterinary costs.

In Kenya *P. juliflora* has really sparked off a major debate, with some claiming that its spread is causing a national disaster in some localities. Since its introduction to Kenya in the early 1970's (to control soil erosion), it has colonised extensive grazing areas and river banks and is threatening the survival of some pastoral communities.

**Control:** As it is very difficult and costly to eradicate it is proposed that proper management and commercial production of charcoal take place in order to control rather than eradicate this shrub. While there are many who see *P. juliflora* as a pest and is has been declared a noxious weed in Sudan, South Africa and Kenya, there are others who see the potential benefits of this shrub, as long as it is properly managed.

This concludes the current series on Invasive Plants. In case you missed them – previous SPGS newsletters carried features on *Lantana camara*; Bugweed (*Solanum mauritianum*), Paper mulberry (*Broussonetia papyrifera*) and Black Wattle (*Acacia mearnsii*).

## A UGANDAN ABROAD

From pg 2

another amazing experience. Armed with a knapsack on their back with the handle in their right hand, taking calculated steps, with the cone in the left hand protecting the young trees being sprayed shows that these people are experts and they enjoy what they do. Refresher training is done occasionally to keep up with the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) standards.

A bird's view on the road network creates the magnificent scenery beneath. The well-maintained roads meander through the plantation making it possible to reach every corner of the vast 65,000 hectares of forestland that blend naturally with the indigenous vegetation. Besides accessibility, the roads are used as compartment boundaries, which I find quite interesting when mapping out compartments and in case of fire fighting.

The general experience when compared to Ugandan standards is quite challenging, but every morning when I wake up to a new challenge, it is an opportunity for me to learn as much as I can to be of substantial help in sustainable forest development

when I return. FSC is an international system of standards established in 1993 to promote responsible management of the world's forests and it guides forest management in South Africa. FSC independently accredits companies and private farmers whose forests are managed and maintained according to its world-class forest management principles. The South African Bureau of Standards (SABS), and the Seedling Growers' Association (SGASA) also set principles and guidelines on which tree-nurseries are managed and maintained.

Besides many other forest related workshops, I also attended the company's General Meeting: believe it when they say that forests are the new 'Green Gold!' I extend my appreciation to both Besepo (U) Ltd, the SPGS office for their support and of course my hosts, GFP. I am giving it my best too!

Regards to all SPGS clients, Jean Vianney Besesa, [jeanviyan@yahoo.com](mailto:jeanviyan@yahoo.com)  
+27 (0) 827 433 578

## How do I do that?

As many of you will be aware, for the past two years the SPGS has been producing a series of very useful Plantation Guidelines to help tree growers in Uganda – both large and small. The aim of these is to encourage growers to establish not just any old plantations but **FAST GROWING, HIGH YIELDING** ones. As you can imagine, this has meant rather a lot of work and we always knew that it would take a few years to complete. Rather than wait until the complete set was completed, however, it was our policy from the start to print each chapter or section as a separate leaflet once they were completed.

This policy also enables us to update and revise individual Guidelines as necessary. The latest batch has also taken into consideration feedback from you – especially with regard to more photos of good and bad practices. To date (Feb. 2007) we have completed 18 of the Guidelines (around 35 are planned) – but as some of you complained at the recent Clients' Meeting in Jinja, a number of them have 'sold out'. The most recently printed Guidelines are listed below and full colour copies are still available from the SPGS office:

2. The SPGS – Frequently Asked Questions (v.3).
7. Tree Nurseries: the key Issues.
- 9/10. Growing Eucalypts for Timber, Poles & Fuelwood (v.2).
12. Establishment & Management of Commercial Pine Plantations (v.2).
14. Land Preparation.
16. Safe Use of Glyphosate Herbicide (v.3).
17. Post-Plant Use of Glyphosate.
18. Forest Fire Protection (v.2).
23. Basic Tree Measurements & Permanent Sample Plots.
25. Planting and Beating Up.
26. Thinning Plantations to Maximise Sawlog Production.
27. Pruning for High Quality Timber.

All the older Guidelines are available on our web-site (as downloadable pdf files) or Josephine can make you a photocopy for free (alas only in black and white). For those of you who are asking for a complete set – please don't despair. By mid-2007, once we have completed all the planned ones, we will reprint them all together in a book form, which will undoubtedly be a rather useful **SILVICULTURAL MANUAL FOR UGANDA** (and beyond?). As ever, we will keep you informed.

## MORE TREES PLEASE!

The SPGS support to communities interested in tree planting continues to expand as word spreads. Both the maintenance of the planted seedlings and the yearning for expansion are the two major interesting issues that ever confront the SPGS Plantation Officers (POs) while visiting communities.

Some 150,000 tree seedlings have already been ordered by the SPGS from various nurseries to meet the requirement of 9 community groups in 8 districts for the coming planting season alone. In 2007, two groups have been dropped for poor performance (one planting burnt in Mbale the other group – in Apac – showed a lack of interest in moving things along). As you probably know by now, the SPGS does not hang around and quickly switches its support to other willing parties! New to our clients are two community groups allocated land by the NFA adjacent to Mabira Forest Reserve and also a group in Ibanda, close to some of our more commercial planters under the SPGS.



*Eager recipients of seedlings supplied by the SPGS to communities in Masaka. Over 250,000 trees were supplied in 2005/06 to communities in 9 Districts.*

After we successfully accomplished the usually challenging task of delivering seedlings to our communities at the beginning of Sep/Oct 06 rainy season, we POs had to make a quick visits back to the communities purposely to ensure planting standards are followed up and assess the need for possible expansion during the forthcoming (March/April 2007) planting season. The results of these field visits were very interesting.

All the communities that received seedlings in the districts of Rakai, Masaka, Mbarara Bushenyi and Luwero completed seedling planting well on time. Their small plantations (or woodlots as some call them) were being looked after well, most of them managing to keep the weeds to a non-competitive level. All this interestingly occurs despite the competition for labour amongst the community for those engaged in food production. With regular technical support from SPGS, the communities are increasingly adopting cheaper and cost effective methods of woodlot maintenance. People seem to increasingly appreciate the role of tree planting as means to generate some household income – albeit in the future.

As mentioned earlier, the communities' interest in expanding their woodlots keeps increasing each time they receive a consignment of seedlings. All the communities noted above – including those in Nakasongola – have already submitted their seedling requests for this season, and provided they adhere to the SPGS's standards, we will continue to work with them. Meanwhile those new community applicants on a long queue (a non-political one please!) may finally soon realize their dreams come true. Watch this space to see who will be our new kids on the block in 2007.



# UTGA

## INCREASED PROFITS FOR UTGA MEMBERS



Members of the Uganda Timber Growers Association (UTGA) have vowed to strengthen their association as a means enhancing the profitability of commercial timber growing in Uganda. During their second Annual General Meeting held at the Fairway Hotel in Kampala on March 2nd, 2007, various speakers re-echoed the mandate of UTGA of improving the status of the members and promoting their ability to establish profitable commercial timber plantations.

It was pointed out that the association will deliberately encourage continuous learning processes and the sharing of experiences between the timber growers and other stakeholders. UTGA will also contribute to the creation of a conducive environment for the development of commercial forestry in Uganda and create public awareness about the industry.

The Chairperson, Mr. Jossy Byamah observed that UTGA would lobby government and donors for organized and increased access to financing for timber growing in Uganda. As part of their activities the association will among others facilitate the procurement of quality and affordable seed materials, bulk purchases of herbicides, equipment and implements to enable UTGA members to establish commercial timber plantations that are globally competitive.

Mr. Byamah further highlighted that through UTGA the members will be in position to contract experts to handle diseases and pests attacking the timber plantations; engage contractors for plantation establishment and share information on the marketing of the timber produce.

As a priority the association will organize trainings and field tours so as to equip the members with new knowledge and share information on best practices so as to enable the members to eventually qualify for the universal certification by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).

UTGA will hold an extra-ordinary meeting on March 30th, 2007 (Fairway Hotel, Kampala – start 09.00) to hold elections for the new officer bearers. It was emphasized that only paid up members will be eligible to participate and stand for the elections.

Full membership fee is US\$400,000/= plus Ug.Shs. 200,000/= annual subscription. You may pay your membership and subscription fee to the Association Account with STANBIC BANK, Crested Towers A/C No. 0140063590201.

Sheila Kawamara-Mishambi  
UTGA Interim Committee Member  
2nd March 2007



**W**e almost forgot to tell readers about a little event that almost went unnoticed but when the annals of the SPGS history are written, it may merit a footnote. Immediately after the Clients safari on 1st February, the SPGS hosted its inaugural golf competition at the very scenic Jinja course, which by complete coincidence was right next to the hotel booked for the meeting. Interest was ...well, maybe a bit on the low side but we eventually came up with 3 golfers connected to the SPGS and so a trophy (the smallest you have ever seen) was bought and the rest (as they say) is history.

What the field lacked in numbers, they made up for with their enthusiasm. Bric, Paul and CD Langoya hotly contested the event.



With just two holes to go, Paul and CD were tied for the lead. CD drove his tee shot into the Nile (well, almost) so Paul feeling very smug decided to emulate Tiger Woods

with his 150+ yard approach to the green. His ball buried itself in a green-side bunker, which virtually required a mining license to retrieve. To cut a long story short, CD won by one shot. Paul and Bric were very gracious in defeat but were last heard muttering (somewhere around the 19th hole) about why they had not restricted entry in the competition to SPGS staff. Maybe next time we will find more golfers who also like planting trees and we promise to have a bigger trophy then too!

## IN THE NEXT ISSUE

**YOU CAN LOOK FORWARD TO...**

-  **Lessons for Uganda's tree growers:** Issue 15 will feature highlights from the 2007 SPGS study tours to RSA and Swaziland.
-  **Important pests & diseases affecting our plantations:** a new feature starting with termites.
-  **Technical advise:** details of a number of keystudies currently being commissioned by the SPGS to assist commercial planters - inc. tree improvement and the chalcid wasp.

## TRAINING UPDATE

*Important events & what tree planters should be focussing on during March & April.*

- Book for the **Plantation Planning & Establishment** course May 2007 (see below).
- Pre-plant spray** Glyphosate where necessary, immediately prior to planting.
- Plant into the early rains** if possible to give your trees the best possible start.
- Ensure your older crops are well weeded as the rains arrive.

## TRAINING UPDATE

The 4-day **Plantation Maintenance** course in late Feb. 2007 was fully subscribed again, with 24 participants turning up. Some of you don't listen though! We strongly recommend you send your Supervisors/ Managers on the **Planning & Establishment** course first as this covers the fundamentals including species choice, the use of improved seed, seedling quality and land preparation. The next Planning & Establishment course is scheduled for 28th - 31st May 2007. Places are restricted to 25 so book with Josephine soon: the venue will be decided nearer the time. By the way, the winner of our coveted book prize for the last course went to **Alfred Macapili** from Norwegian Afforestation Group, planting in Lira. Well done to him.

**Were you an SPGS Client in Phase 1 and are your trees ready for first pruning and thinning?**

If the answer is yes to both these questions turn to page 6 quickly!

## ANYONE PLANTING NEAR FORT PORTAL?

*We hear that Tooro Botanical Gardens just out-side Fort Portal, have seedlings for sale for the forthcoming season. They come from SPGS approved seed sources - PCH (ex-Brazil) and E. grandis (Fort Portal seed stand). Contact George Tuhairwe on 0782 364 160 or 0752 802 399.*

### SPGS OFFICE CONTACTS:

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