

SAWLOG PRODUCTION GRANT SCHEME



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

NO. 10 JULY - AUGUST 2006

- **In Search of Quality Seed: An Australian Safari**
- **The 1st SPGS Commercial Forestry Seminar**
- **Plus.... a heart-warming story - The Man Who Planted Trees**



Cover photo:
The impressive PCH (*Pinus caribaea* var. *hondurensis*) clonal seed orchard at Brampton in Byfield State Forest, Queensland: the source of much of the seed for Uganda's plantations from 2003.



Some of the Busoga Forestry Co. team (l to r) – Sarah Masusuuma, Daphne Ayiekoh, Bbosa John Balabye & Jossy Byamah – in front of their 2-yr old PCH crop in Bukalaba CFR, Mayuge District.

No Worries, Mate!

Welcome to the SPGS newsletter: hard to believe it is issue number 10 already! The private sector planters in Uganda have certainly come a long way in a short time with over 3,600 ha established to date in less than 3 years. The SPGS team hope you enjoy the newsletter's new look and the many new features in this issue. It's objective is to inform (and dare we say even entertain?) the reader and hopefully encourage people to approach tree planting in a business-like and scientific way.

In case you are still wondering about the title of this article, it is what Australians say...an awful lot! This newsletter's main feature is on Paul and Allan's recent trip to Australia on behalf of the SPGS. "Why Australia?" we hear readers cry. Well, here are some pretty good reasons: Forest Plantations Queensland (FPQ) have been improving pines (especially *Pinus caribaea* var. *hondurensis* - PCH) for over 50 years and now have some 135,000 hectares of exotic pine plantations in Queensland. Australia is also the home of nearly all of the species in the *Eucalyptus* genus and finally, *Araucaria cunninghamii* not only is

native to Queensland but they also have some 45,000 hectares in plantations too.

We at the SPGS firmly believe that we should learn as much as we can from those organisations around the world that have been involved in successful sub-tropical and tropical commercial plantations. With regard to plantations, the Ugandan situation is pretty desperate and we cannot afford to wait until we do the research before we start commercial scale planting. By developing formal links with relevant organisations, however, we can gain at least a head-start and then hopefully get our own research programme underway too.

The recent visit to Australia has opened up exciting possibilities of such a collaboration - with FPQ - that is itself now reaping the benefits from massive investment in research (especially tree improvement). On behalf of private planters, the SPGS will continue to build on the contacts developed during this trip (as well as those from recent trips to South Africa with private planters too). We will - as always - keep you informed of developments.

SPGS UPDATE



The second last planting season of SPGS contract holders has been longer than normal and thus good, according to planters. As a result the SPGS management team has not had an easy World Cup season, as it meant the team has had to be out in the field for inspection. For England fans this was a good thing (though Paul is now claiming to be Italian!).

We are happy with the improving quality in the plantation establishment practices. At the time of going to press, the SPGS total accumulated planting had reached 3,661 hectares out of the targeted 5,000 ha by end of the programme (October 2006). Out of these 3,661 ha, 60% (2,208 ha) had received the 2nd SPGS instalment payment for plantation maintenance. Another 30% had received the 3rd (and final) instalment. The total sum that has been disbursed for planting now amounts to some UGX 1.6B (US\$ 860,000).

Remember recent studies indicate that about 50% of such money ends up in the

hands of the poor who do the clearing, dirty nursery work and planting activities. This is by no means a figure to be ignored amongst the efforts to alleviating the rural poverty the countryside.

In mid-June 2006, the SPGS contracted the Technical Services Division of NFA to undertake a mapping exercise of clients in Mubende and Mafuga. The maps to be produced will show planted compartments by hectares, age class, species, roads, natural features and other infrastructure. Eventually all our clients will have their plantings mapped.

We are also in the process finalising a contract with Technical Services Division of NFA to establish Permanent Sample Plots in our clients' plantations. Plots will be established in the different species and ages of crops: these will be important in enabling monitoring of tree growth and tree health. This would further serve to raise the awareness of SPGS clients.

On the 24th May 2006, the SPGS clients had another successful field meeting (see

separate report on next page). At all the sites visited, participants were able to see the benefits and challenges of weed control, but most important the role of good planning!!

In the wrap-up of the meeting on the following day, the issue of the Association took centre stage. We recommend the private planters to get this moving as soon as possible as a strong Association would greatly assist small and large planters alike - in matters such a bulk purchasing, training and license issues and would also give more credibility to other possible funding sources.

The next meeting should take place in the first week of September 2006, when we propose to take our clients as far as Fort Portal through Mubende and Kyenjojo. This should particularly interest many of you, as we shall be visiting James Finlay's tea estate with the best *Eucalyptus* plantations in the country and also the beautiful Oruha pine plantations.

CLIENTS MEETING

On 24th May 2006, some 40 people gathered in the drizzle at the homestead of Mrs Koroli near Wobulenzi town. It seems not even the rain can dampen the enthusiasm of the private tree planters now in Uganda. This was the third of our group safaris where SPGS planters (and increasingly, potential planters too) visit each others' plantations to share experiences - both good and bad. After a fruitful discussion about the SPGS Community Planting initiative (which you can read more about on the back page), the convoy headed north to Luwero, stopping at Nanga Farms and Dr. Rwendeire. Matters discussed included wrong species choice, poor weeding, late beating up (causing high variability) and fire protection (Dr. Rwendeire lost over 20ha in 2005).

The NFA's Central Forest Reserve, Katugo was the next stop, where the group saw some impressive, large scale pine establishment initiated by the FRMCP in 2002. The cost effectiveness of pre-plant spraying with glyphosate was clearly emphasized by Stephen Okurut, Katugo's Manager. The lunch stop was in the midst of one of the old pine blocks. Katugo has almost half of the country's 1,600 ha remaining mature plantations, where the consequences of poor management certainly provided food for thought.

Suitably re-fuelled, we then continued north to visit two SPGS clients who eventually 'saw the light' and after a shaky start now have very good plantations in Kasagala CFR - namely, Edward Mupada and Robert Nabanyumya.

Then it was back in the buses again as we headed towards Masindi town. The last SPGS client visited was ET Dominion. Again we saw some early mistakes (poor seed, wrong species, late beating up) now being corrected with his latest crop looking much better. The NFA's Masindi Manager, Robert Esimu and his enthusiastic team then proudly showed us their 2005 PCH planting at Siri-Siri and also the 2003-04 PCH at Nyakunyu CFR. The recent post-plant weed control at the latter site impressed everybody.

After an evening in Masindi (where Bric's prowess on the pool table indicated a mis-spent youth), a formal meeting was held. The main discussion was about the progress (and future) of the SPGS planters given the programme ends in Sept '06, problems with the improved seed supply and the formation of a private sector Planters Association.



A bird's-eye (well, maybe a termite's eye) view of some of the eager tree planters at the SPGS Clients' safari in late May 2006. This is at Katugo CFR and the crop is a well established 1-yr old PCH with one of the sawmillers' poor crops in the background.

Recognition for Uganda's Plantations

Uganda's first commercial forestry seminar (organised by the SPGS) took place in the Kampala's premier hotel, the Sheraton, on June 6th 2006. It was a landmark event, bringing together many people (not just foresters!) to hear not only about the importance of plantations and the sterling efforts of the private sector over the last 2-3 years, but also to discuss the key constraints to further plantation development here. Over 70 people attended the event and judging from the questions and the lively discussions held during the day, it certainly seems to have been successful.

The formal presentations were divided into two sessions: in the first, Paul Jacovelli (SPGS's Chief Technical Advisor) set the scene by stressing the urgent need for some 70,000 hectares of fast growing, high yielding plantations by 2025. Allan Amumpe (SPGS Administrator) and Bric Milligan (SPGS Plantations Advisor) then described how the

SPGS works. Finally Jossy Byamah (Busoga Forestry Co.) presented a private planter's perspective.

The second group of speakers brought a more international flavour to the proceedings. Cornelius Kazoora (Sustainable Development Centre) presented a most interesting paper entitled "Uganda's Plantations: an International Perspective". The talk was prepared by Alan Pottinger, Technical Director of the Commonwealth Forestry Association who unfortunately could not make the trip from the UK.

The Dr Timm Tennigkeit (Unique Forestry Consulting) held the audience's interest with a very topical talk on Carbon trading in forestry and also bio-energy. Finally Olav Bjella (ED NFA) talked about the NFA and its role in commercial plantations in Uganda.

There was a lively Questions and Answers session and after lunch, participants broke into groups to discuss the four key themes that emerged - namely;

- * Financing & Carbon.
- * Research (including seed and nursery matters).
- * Land and licensing issues.
- * Training and education.

NB: We will present the main conclusions and recommendations from these discussions in the next newsletter. All the formal presentations are available from SPGS office free of charge.

AUSTRALIAN SAFARI: An Overview



➤ Allan and Paul (sporting their brand new Aussie hats!) with Murray Keys (FPQ) at a huge – and highly mechanised – pine harvesting site. This was *P. elliotii* which will be replanted to hybrid pine (PEE x PCH).

the volume of unimproved seed sources. We can undoubtedly learn a lot from FPQ's tree improvement programme, which involves not only sub-tropical and tropical pines but also *Araucaria* and *Eucalyptus* species.

Given the excellent

Allan Amumpe and Paul Jacovelli spent some 10 days in late April/early May 2006 as guests of Forest Plantations Queensland (FPQ). Their report is summarised here.

Our trip was centred in Brisbane, the modern capital city of Queensland, situated about half way up the eastern coast of Australia. From there we travelled north to some of the main state plantation forests – namely, Beerburrum, Imbil, Fraser Coast and Rockhampton. Our hosts were FPQ, formerly the Dept. of Primary Industries, Forestry. FPQ is the principle forest grower in Queensland, with over 190,000 ha of plantations on a wide range of sites between Latitudes 17° and 27°S.

60% (134,000 ha) of FPQ's plantations are exotic pines, with the indigenous conifer, hoop pine (*Araucaria cunninghamii*) covering some 45,000 ha. Hardwoods (mostly indigenous *Eucalyptus* spp.) constitute the remainder of their plantation estate. In 2004/05, FPQ sold over 2,000,000 m³ of plantation grown timber to the local timber industry, which provides employment for 19,000 people (directly and in down-stream processing). Revenue from forest product sales was AU\$101 million (equivalent to US\$ 78 million).

The first thing that jumped out at us (no, not a kangaroo!) was a strong feeling that the forest industry is recognised as both a major revenue earner and an important employer in Australia. The people we met there also impressed us

also: FPQ have a very professional and dedicated team, both in Forestry House (their Head Office in Brisbane) and in the field. Everybody seemed to be focussed on the common goal of improving the yield and quality of their main product, namely, sawlogs. A major plantation resource of high quality has been established there: it is also clear that the trees currently being planted are vastly superior to the original plantings as their major investment in research and development starts bearing fruit.

The importance FPQ place on silvicultural research is not only improving sawlog yields and quality but also finding more cost-effective techniques for plantation establishment and management. With the country's high labour costs, this has inevitably led them to develop a high degree of mechanisation, especially with plant production, land preparation and harvesting. Of particular interest to us was the widespread use of clonal pine cuttings rather than seedlings and also the focus on hybrids specially selected for specific sites (further details are given in the following articles).

FPQ's very impressive tree-breeding programme has also significantly improved the trees' stem form, branching and wood quality too. Although this research has been a major investment, the benefits are now clear to see, especially with their new hybrid pine clones (mostly *Pinus elliotii* x *Pinus caribaea* - see article page 12). In one trial we visited, at 25 years of age these clones were yielding nearly three times

results of FPQ's PCH seed in Uganda since it was introduced in 2002, concerted efforts were made during the visit to acquire more seed from FPQ's breeding programme for Uganda's plantation development. Unfortunately, however, a combination of factors has greatly reduced the availability of this seed. FPQ are now, however, much more aware of the likely demand from Uganda and are looking at various ways of increasing availability (see article page 12).

It was a surprise to us that FPQ are not involved themselves in adding value through secondary processing: they sell their sawlog crops standing, by tender to the private sector (a mix of both long-term and one-off agreements). The lack of a pulping industry also means that there is a weak market for small diameter material and this influences many silvicultural decisions, especially spacing and thinning regimes, which differ significantly with ours in with Uganda. Their weed growth is also significantly less than ours in Uganda.

Some of Australia's natural forests have many high value timber species in them and these have been heavily exploited over the years. The issue of logging from natural forests, however, has been heavily criticised by the public at large and many environmental pressure groups. This led to an agreement in the mid-1990's to phase out harvesting in such forests and to focus state resources on plantations to produce sawlogs. Thus FPQ are now embarking on a major hardwood planting programme based mostly on CCV - *Corymbia citriodora* var. *variegata* and *Eucalyptus* species (see next page).

Tree Species in Queensland

Pines: After testing many species of exotic pines, *P. elliotii* var. *elliottii* (PEE) became the main species planted in the subtropical southeast and PCH in the more tropical areas of Queensland. They have small areas of *P. taeda*, *P. radiata*, *P. oocarpa* and *P. tecunumanii* but the last two species proved highly susceptible to wind damage. FPQ are also interested in *P. caribaea* var. *caribaea* as it is more wind-firm than PCH. Now the focus is on almost exclusively on the hybrid between PEE and PCH. This hybrid combines the positive attributes of both species (see text box on page 12). The quality and growth of this hybrid really impressed us (see photo this page).

Hoop pine: *Araucaria cunninghamii* (hoop pine) is an indigenous rainforest conifer species that produces high grade plywood and sawn timber. Until the 1980's there was a major plywood industry in Australia supplied from natural hoop pine forests. FPQ's hoop pine resource represents an unusual example of an indigenous rain forest tree being grown successfully in commercial plantations. Similar to our experience with the species, however, establishment costs are high with hoop pine due to its slow early growth. Combined with its long rotation (up to 50 years in Queensland), this means that it is not a highly profitable crop. But what magnificent stands of excellent quality hoop pine trees they have!



Allan next to a 7-yr old *Corymbia citriodora* (CCV) plot: the plot to the left is *E. tereticornis* at the same age!

The Giant Wood Wasp

One amazing insect that we are glad not have in Uganda is the aptly named Giant Wood Moth. The female adult moth is the world's biggest moth, which lays its eggs in the bark of *E. grandis* trees. The egg develops into a huge grub, known locally as the 'witchety grub', which was traditionally food for the indigenous aboriginal people. Further damage comes from a bird – the cockatoo – that drills (there's no other word for it!) into the tree to get at the grub. The stem is damaged so badly by the cockatoo that it is then prone to wind breakage. This pest is the reason why *E. grandis* cannot be grown in plantations in Queensland (see photo next page).



One of FPQ's impressive hybrid pine stands near Gympie in Queensland. This is 8-yr old PEE x PCH (see text).

Hardwoods: Traditionally Australia's natural eucalypt-dominated forests were an excellent source of large hardwood sawlogs and it is only relatively recently – in the face of both public pressure and a dwindling resource – that hardwood plantations are seriously being established to compensate for those remaining in natural forests. Government tax incentives have also driven this change. Australian plantations of *Eucalyptus* spp., however, are highly susceptible to attack from any number of indigenous pests and diseases and thus research into these pests is crucial if the plantations are to succeed.

The main species being planted is spotted gum (*Corymbia citriodora* var. *variegata* – known as CCV) on their drier sites. CCV produces a high quality wood and has good form: a hybrid between *Corymbia torrelliana* and CCV is also showing considerable promise in trials. Other species being planted include Gympie messmate (*Eucalyptus cloeziana*), with smaller areas planted with Dunn's white gum (*E. dunnii*) and western white gum (*E. argophloia*).

EUCALYPT TAXONOMY - ENOUGH TO TAX ANYONE!

A scientific paper published by two botanists (Hill and Johnson) in 1995, caused a stir in the world of eucalypt taxonomy. The bloodwood and ghost gum groups previously recognised as *Eucalyptus* species, were recognised as being in a distinct genus, namely, *Corymbia*. The species affected are (now) classed as *Corymbia citriodora*, *C. maculata*, *C. henryi*, *C. torrelliana*, *C. variegata*. Together this group of species are known as 'spotted gums' and they have a high quality, dense timber. It seems the revision was not without its critics, however, since the Australian National Herbarium do not recognise the change.

PHOTO GALLERY - AUSTRALIA



Allan posing next to a mightily impressive stack of hoop pine logs awaiting transport to the mill. This entire harvesting and transport operation involved just 3 people!



*The Giant Wood Moth's grub must surely taste good to the cockatoo but the damage to the *E. grandis* stem is pretty serious to say the least.*



*A 40-yr old hoop pine (*Aracuaria cunninghamii*) stand in Imbril State Forest, Queensland.*



Ian Last (FPQ) proudly showing us a well rooted pine hybrid cutting, ready for planting out. This was in their massive Towamba nursery.



*One of our FPQ hosts, Murray Keys, next to the giant stump of a Blackbutt (*E. pilularis*) – one of the valuable hardwoods in Australia's natural forests. The stand in the background is *P. elliottii*.*

JEAN GIONO

The Man Who Planted Trees



In order for the character of a human being to reveal truly exceptional qualities, we must have the good fortune to observe its action over a long period of years. If this action is devoid of all selfishness, if the idea that directs it is one of unqualified generosity, if it is absolutely certain that it has not sought recompense anywhere, and if moreover it has left visible marks on the world, then we are unquestionably dealing with an unforgettable character.

About forty years ago I went on a long hike, through hills absolutely unknown to tourists, in that very old region where the Alps penetrate into Provence. This region is bounded to the south-east and south by the middle course of the Durance, between Sisteron and Mirabeau; to the north by the upper course of the Drôme, from its source down to Die; to the west by the plains of Comtat Venaissin and the outskirts of Mont Ventoux. It includes all the northern part of the Département of Basses-Alpes, the south of Drôme and a little enclave of Vaucluse.

At the time I undertook my long walk through this deserted region, it consisted of barren and monotonous lands, at about 1200 to 1300 metres above sea level. Nothing grew there except wild lavender.

I was crossing this country at its widest part, and after walking for three days, I found myself in the most complete desolation. I was camped next to the skeleton of an abandoned village. I had used the last of my water the day before and I needed to find more. Even though they were in ruins, these houses all huddled together and looking like an old wasps' nest made me think that there must at one time have been a spring or a well there. There was indeed a spring, but it was dry. The five or six roofless houses, ravaged by sun and wind, and the small chapel with its tumble-down belfry, were arrayed like the houses and chapels of living villages, but all life had disappeared.

It was a beautiful June day with plenty of sun, but on these shelterless lands, high up in the sky, the wind whistled with an unendurable brutality. Its growling in the carcasses of the houses was like that of a wild beast disturbed during its meal.

I had to move my camp. After five hours of walking, I still hadn't found water, and nothing gave me hope of finding any. Everywhere there was the same dryness, the same stiff, woody plants. I thought I saw in the distance a small black silhouette. On a chance I headed towards it. It was a shepherd. Thirty lambs or so were resting near him on the scorching ground.

He gave me a drink from his gourd and a little later he led me to his shepherd's cottage, tucked down in an undulation of the plateau. He drew his water - excellent - from a natural hole, very deep, above which he had installed a rudimentary windlass.

This man spoke little. This is common among those who live alone, but he seemed sure of himself, and confident in this assurance, which seemed remarkable in this land shorn of everything. He lived not in a cabin but in a real house of stone, from the looks of which it was clear that his own labor had restored the ruins he had found on his arrival. His roof was solid and water-tight. The wind struck against the roof tiles with the sound of the sea crashing on the beach.

His household was in order, his dishes washed, his floor swept, his rifle greased; his soup boiled over the fire; I noticed then that he was also freshly shaven, that all his buttons were solidly sewn, and that his clothes were mended with such care as to make the patches invisible. He shared his soup with me, and when afterwards I offered him my tobacco pouch, he told me that he didn't smoke. His dog, as silent as he, was friendly without being fawning.

It had been agreed immediately that I would pass the night there, the closest village being still more than a day and a half farther on. Furthermore, I understood perfectly well the character of the rare villages of that region. There are four or five of them dispersed far from one another on the flanks of the hills, in groves of white oaks at the very ends of roads passable by carriage. They are inhabited by woodcutters who make charcoal. They are places where the living is poor.

The families, pressed together in close quarters by a climate that is exceedingly harsh, in summer as well as in winter, struggle ever more selfishly against each other. Irrational contention grows beyond all bounds, fueled by a continuous struggle to escape from that place. The men carry their charcoal to the cities in their trucks,

and then return. The most solid qualities crack under this perpetual Scottish shower. The women stir up bitterness. There is competition over everything, from the sale of charcoal to the benches at church. The virtues fight amongst themselves, the vices fight amongst themselves, and there is a ceaseless general combat between the vices and the virtues. On top of all that, the equally ceaseless wind irritates the nerves. There are epidemics of suicides and numerous cases of insanity, almost always murderous.

The shepherd, who did not smoke, took out a bag and poured a pile of acorns out onto the table. He began to examine them one after another with a great deal of attention, separating the good ones from the bad. I smoked my pipe. I offered to help him, but he told me it was his own business. Indeed, seeing the care that he devoted to this job, I did not insist. This was our whole conversation.

When he had in the good pile a fair number of acorns, he counted them out into packets of ten. In doing this he eliminated some more of the acorns, discarding the smaller ones and those that showed even the slightest crack, for he examined them very closely. When he had before him one hundred perfect acorns he stopped, and we went to bed.

The company of this man brought me a feeling of peace. I asked him the next morning if I might stay and rest the whole day with him. He found that perfectly natural. Or more exactly, he gave me the impression that nothing could disturb him. This rest was not absolutely necessary to me, but I was intrigued and I wanted to find out more about this man. He let out his flock and took them to the pasture. Before leaving, he soaked in a bucket of water the little sack containing the acorns that he had so carefully chosen and counted.

I noted that he carried as a sort of walking stick an iron rod as thick as his thumb and

about one and a half metres long. I set off like someone out for a stroll, following a route parallel to his. His sheep pasture lay at the bottom of a small valley. He left his flock in the charge of his dog and climbed up towards the spot where I was standing. I was afraid that he was coming to reproach me for my indiscretion, but not at all: It was his own route and he invited me to come along with him if I had nothing better to do. He continued on another two hundred metres up the hill.



Having arrived at the place he had been heading for, he began to pound his iron rod into the ground. This made a hole in which he placed an acorn, whereupon he covered over the hole again. He was planting oak trees. I asked him if the land belonged to him. He answered no. Did he know whose land it was? He did not know. He supposed that it was communal land, or perhaps it belonged to someone who did not care about it. He himself did not care

to know who the owners were. In this way he planted his one hundred acorns with great care.

After the noon meal, he began once more to pick over his acorns. I must have put enough insistence into my questions, because he answered them. For three years now he had been planting trees in this solitary way. He had planted one hundred thousand. Of these one hundred thousand, twenty thousand had come up. He counted on losing another half of them to rodents and to everything else that is unpredictable in the designs of Providence. That left ten thousand oaks that would grow in this place where before there was nothing.

It was at this moment that I began to wonder about his age. He was clearly more than fifty. Fifty-five, he told me. His name was Elzéard Bouffier. He had owned a farm in the plains, where he lived most of his life. He had lost his only son, and then his wife. He had retired into this

solitude, where he took pleasure in living slowly, with his flock of sheep and his dog. He had concluded that this country was dying for lack of trees. He added that, having nothing more important to do, he had resolved to remedy the situation.

Leading as I did at the time a solitary life, despite my youth, I knew how to treat the souls of solitary people with delicacy. Still, I made a mistake. It was precisely my youth that forced me to imagine the future in my own terms, including a certain search for happiness. I told him that in thirty years these ten thousand trees would be magnificent. He replied very simply that, if God gave him life, in thirty years he would have planted so many other trees that these ten thousand would be like a drop of water in the ocean.

He had also begun to study the propagation of beeches and he had near his house a nursery filled with seedlings grown from beechnuts. His little wards, which he had protected from his sheep by a screen fence, were growing beautifully. He was also considering birches for the valley bottoms where, he told me, moisture lay slumbering just a few metres beneath the surface of the soil. We parted the next day.

The next year the war of 14 came, in which I was engaged for five years. An infantryman could hardly think about trees. To tell the truth, the whole business hadn't made a very deep impression on me; I took it to be a hobby, like a stamp collection, and forgot about it.

With the war behind me, I found myself with a small demobilization bonus and a great desire to breathe a little pure air. Without any preconceived notion beyond that, I struck out again along the trail through that deserted country. The land had not changed. Nonetheless, beyond that dead village I perceived in the distance a sort of grey fog that covered the hills like a carpet. Ever since the day before I had been thinking about the shepherd who planted trees. Ten thousand oaks, I had said to myself, must really take up a lot of space.

I had seen too many people die during those five years not to be able to imagine easily the death of Elzéard Bouffier, especially since when a man is twenty he thinks of a man of fifty as an old codger

for whom nothing remains but to die. He was not dead. In fact, he was very spry. He had changed his job. He only had four sheep now, but to make up for this he had about a hundred beehives. He had gotten rid of the sheep because they threatened his crop of trees. He told me (as indeed I could see for myself) that the war had not disturbed him at all. He had continued imperturbably with his planting.

The oaks of 1910 were now ten years old and were taller than me and than him. The spectacle was impressive. I was literally speechless and, as he didn't speak himself, we passed the whole day in silence, walking through his forest. It was in three sections, eleven kilometers long overall and, at its widest point, three kilometers wide. When I considered that this had all sprung from the hands and from the soul of this one man - without technical aids - it struck me that men could be as effective as God in domains other than destruction.

He had followed his idea, and the beeches that reached up to my shoulders and extending as far as the eye could see bore witness to it. The oaks were now good and thick, and had passed the age where they were at the mercy of rodents; as for the designs of Providence, to destroy the work that had been created would henceforth require a cyclone. He showed me admirable stands of birches that dated from five years ago, that is to say from 1915, when I had been fighting at Verdun. He had planted them in the valley bottoms where he had suspected, correctly, that there was water close to the surface. They were as tender as young girls, and very determined.

This creation had the air, moreover, of working by a chain reaction. He had not troubled about it; he went on obstinately with his simple task. But, in going back down to the village, I saw water running in streams that, within living memory, had always been dry. It was the most striking revival that he had shown me. These streams had borne water before, in ancient days. Certain of the sad villages that I spoke of at the beginning of my account had been built on the sites of ancient Gallo-Roman villages, of which there still remained traces; archeologists digging there had found fishhooks in places where in more recent times cisterns were required in order to have a little water.

The wind had also been at work, dispersing certain seeds. As the water reappeared, so too did willows, osiers, meadows, gardens, flowers, and a certain reason to live.

But the transformation had taken place so slowly that it had been taken for granted, without provoking surprise. The hunters who climbed the hills in search of hares or wild boars had noticed the spreading of the little trees, but they set it down to the natural spitefulness of the earth. That is why no one had touched the work of this man. If they had suspected him, they



would have tried to thwart him. But he never came under suspicion: Who among the villagers or the administrators would ever have suspected that anyone could show such obstinacy in carrying out this magnificent act of generosity?

Beginning in 1920 I never let more than a year go by without paying a visit to Elzéard Bouffier. I never saw him waver or doubt, though God alone can tell when God's own hand is in a thing! I have said nothing of his disappointments, but you can easily imagine that, for such an accomplishment, it was necessary to conquer adversity; that, to assure the victory of such a passion, it was necessary to fight against despair. One year he had planted ten thousand maples. They all died. The next year, he gave up on maples and went back to beeches, which did even better than the oaks.

To get a true idea of this exceptional character, one must not forget that he worked in total solitude; so total that, toward the end of his life, he lost the habit of talking. Or maybe he just didn't see the need for it.

In 1933 he received the visit of an astonished forest ranger. This functionary ordered him to cease building fires outdoors, for fear of endangering this natural forest. It was the first time, this naive man told him, that a forest had been observed to grow up entirely on its own. At the time of this incident, he was thinking of planting beeches at a spot twelve kilometres from his house. To avoid the coming and going - because at the time he was seventy-five years old - he planned to build a cabin of stone out where he was doing his planting. This he did the next year.

In 1935, a veritable administrative delegation went to examine this natural forest. There was an important personage from Waters and Forests, a deputy, and some technicians. Many useless words were spoken. It was decided to do something, but luckily nothing was done, except for one truly useful thing: placing the forest under the protection of the State and forbidding anyone from coming there to make charcoal. For it was impossible not to be taken with the beauty of these young trees in full health. And the forest exercised its seductive powers even on the deputy himself.

I had a friend among the chief foresters who were with the delegation. I explained the mystery to him. One day the next week, we went off together to look for Elzéard Bouffier. We found him hard at work, twenty kilometres away from the place where the inspection had taken place. This chief forester was not my friend for nothing. He understood the value of things. He knew how to remain silent. I offered up some eggs I had brought with me as a gift. We split our snack three ways, and then passed several hours in mute contemplation of the landscape.

The hillside whence we had come was covered with trees six or seven metres high. I remembered the look of the

place in 1913: a desert. The peaceful and steady labour, the vibrant highland air, his frugality, and above all, the serenity of his soul had given the old man a kind of solemn good health. He was an athlete of God. I asked myself how many hectares he had yet to cover with trees.

Before leaving, my friend made a simple suggestion concerning certain species of trees to which the terrain seemed to be particularly well suited. He was not insistent. For the very good reason, he told me afterwards, that this fellow knows a lot more about this sort of thing than I do. After another hour of walking, this thought having travelled along with him, he added: He knows a lot more about this sort of thing than anybody - and he has found a jolly good way of being happy!

It was thanks to the efforts of this chief forester that the forest was protected, and with it, the happiness of this man. He designated three forest rangers for their protection, and terrorized them to such an extent that they remained indifferent to any jugs of wine that the woodcutters might offer as bribes.

The forest did not run any grave risks except during the war of 1939. Then automobiles were being run on wood alcohol, and there was never enough wood. They began to cut some of the stands of the oaks of 1910, but the trees stood so far from any useful road that the enterprise turned out to be bad from a financial point of view, and was soon abandoned. The shepherd never knew anything about it. He was thirty kilometres away, peacefully continuing his task, as untroubled by the war of 39 as he had been of the war of 14.

I saw Elzéard Bouffier for the last time in June of 1945. He was then eighty-seven years old. I had once more set off along my trail through the wilderness, only to find that now, in spite of the shambles in which the war had left the whole country, there was a motor coach running between the valley of the Durance and the mountain. I set down to this relatively rapid means of transportation the fact that I no longer recognized the landmarks I knew from my earlier visits. It also seemed that the route was taking me through entirely new places. I had to ask the name of a village

to be sure that I was indeed passing through that same region, once so ruined and desolate. The coach set me down at Vergons. In 1913, this hamlet of ten or twelve houses had had three inhabitants. They were savages, hating each other, and earning their living by trapping: Physically and morally, they resembled prehistoric men. The nettles devoured the abandoned houses that surrounded them. Their lives were without hope, it was only a matter of waiting for death to come: a situation that hardly predisposes one to virtue.

All that had changed, even to the air itself. In place of the dry, brutal gusts that had greeted me long ago, a gentle breeze whispered to me, bearing sweet odors. A sound like that of running water came from the heights above: It was the sound of the wind in the trees. And most astonishing of all, I heard the sound of real water running into a pool. I saw that they had built a fountain, that it was full of water, and what touched me most, that next to it they had planted a lime-tree that must be at least four years old, already grown thick, an incontestable symbol of resurrection.

Furthermore, Vergons showed the signs of labors for which hope is a requirement: Hope must therefore have returned. They had cleared out the ruins, knocked down the broken walls, and rebuilt five houses. The hamlet now counted twenty-eight inhabitants, including four young families. The new houses, freshly plastered, were surrounded by gardens that bore, mixed in with each other but still carefully laid out, vegetables and flowers, cabbages and rosebushes, leeks and gueules-de-loup, celery and anemones. It was now a place where anyone would be glad to live.



From there I continued on foot. The war from which we had just barely emerged had not permitted life to vanish completely, and now Lazarus was out of his tomb. On the lower flanks of the mountain, I saw small fields of barley and rye; in the bottoms of the narrow valleys, meadowlands were just turning green.

It has taken only the eight years that now separate us from that time for the whole country around there to blossom with splendour and ease. On the site of the ruins I had seen in 1913 there are now well-kept farms, the sign of a happy and comfortable life. The old springs, fed by rain and snow now that are now retained by the forests, have once again begun to flow. The brooks have been channelled. Beside each farm, amid groves of maples, the pools of fountains are bordered by carpets of fresh mint. Little by little, the villages have been rebuilt. Yuppies have come from the plains, where land is expensive, bringing with them youth, movement, and a spirit of adventure. Walking along the roads you will meet men and women in full health, and boys and girls who know how to laugh, and who have regained the

taste for the traditional rustic festivals. Counting both the previous inhabitants of the area, now unrecognizable from living in plenty, and the new arrivals, more than ten thousand persons owe their happiness to Elzéard Bouffier.

When I consider that a single man, relying only on his own simple physical and moral resources, was able to transform a desert into this land of Canaan, I am convinced that despite everything, the human condition is truly admirable. But when I take into account the constancy, the greatness of soul, and the selfless dedication that was needed to bring about this transformation, I am filled with an immense respect for this old, uncultured peasant who knew how to bring about a work worthy of God.

Elzéard Bouffier died peacefully in 1947 at the hospice in Banon.

PHOTO GALLERY - SPGS



Wakitaka Farms have really turned things around at Ngereka CFR near Jinja. The local community are clearly benefiting from the work now available (the trees must have been very happy to be released from the weeds too!).



More debate from the client's safari: (l-r) Vian Besebo, Zairab Kakungulu (the most recent recruit for the SPGS), Alivera Ngoga and Emmy (Wakitaka Farm).



Nileply's oldest planting under the SPGS is starting to look good – after a battle with weeds. This is 3-yr old PCH.



The most popular stop of the day during May's SPGS clients' safari - lunch in Katugo! Here 3 of the Mafuga planters chew the fat – (l to r) Jonathan Kirasha, Fidel Begumisha & Mackay Bagambireryo.



The NFA's Robert Esimu and Sarah Akello at Siri-Siri CFR, nr. Masindi, showing the SPGS clients their excellent young PCH planting.



Bric Milligan talking to the SPGS client's about the importance of good pruning and timely thinning, during the safari in May 2006. This is 3-yr old PCH at the FRMCP demo. site in Kasagala CFR, Nakasongola (the seed was from the Queensland seed orchard pictured on the cover)

Australian Safari continued...

Tree Improvement, Seed & Nurseries



The pine clonal beds at Toolara nursery. In the foreground a newly selected clone is being established: the mature beds in the background are where the soft cuttings are taken from every few months for rooting.



Trays of PEE x PCH hybrid pine cuttings.

FPQ have a long history of tree improvement, having developed an extensive breeding programme focussing on exotic pines, hoop pine and (more recently) various *Eucalyptus* species. PCH has been bred in Queensland for stem straightness, vigour, branching and wood density. Advanced breeding programmes are now underway with selected clones of the PEE x PCH hybrid and also with southern and northern populations of hoop pine.

FPQ have established clonal seed orchards for PCH in Brampton (in Byfield State Forest) and Cardwell (the cover photo shows the Brampton orchard). These are grafted, clonal orchards established some 25 years ago. And 25 years ago FPQ (then DPI) did not realise that the demand for their improved PCH seed would reach such proportions. Interestingly, FPQ had recently sold 200 kgs to Canada, who were funding the re-establishment of PCH in its indigenous habitat of Mountain Pine Ridge, Belize, following years of harvesting, fires and insect attack. It's a strange old world isn't it?

FPQ are unlikely to be able to supply much PCH seed to Uganda in the near future due to a number of factors, including unexpectedly high demand (not just from Uganda), a run of poor seed years in their seed orchards, ageing orchards (i.e. trees getting very tall and difficult to collect from) and last but not least cyclone Larry, which left its calling card earlier this year in northern Queensland.

FPQ were awaiting reports from surveys by their staff of possible damage caused by the cyclone in their own plantations (and the Cardwell seed orchards) before 'promising' improved PCH seed to outsiders. The earliest any PCH seed is likely to be available in significant quantities is probably 2008. Establishing new seed orchards is only a long-term strategy, however, given that it takes PCH around 8 years from planting to produce seed.

We gave an illustrated presentation about the commercial

plantation development underway in Uganda (and about the SPGS) to a number of FPQ's staff and judging from the debate and questions it was very well received. Once they realised the extent of Uganda's plantation programme, FPQ resolved to investigate possibilities of producing seed from sources other than their few orchards: for example, from thinning out some suitable plantations at the appropriate age to turn them into seed production stands. We will await their response and keep in touch with them.

We also expressed interest in receiving research quantities of F2 seed (i.e. second generation selections) of the PEE x PCH hybrid as well as of other species we were interested in for certain sites in Uganda – including improved hoop pine seed, CCV, *E. cloeziana*, *E. dunnii*, *E. pellita* and *E. longirostrata*.

Nurseries: Plant production is highly centralised, with the focus (certainly for pines) now on the mass propagation of rooted cuttings of superior clones. We visited two nurseries Toolara and Beerburum.

HYBRID PINE

A FPQ's exotic pine hybridisation programme aims to combine the best attributes of *P. elliotii* var. *elliottii* (PEE) and PCH, which are as follows: **PEE**: straight stem; better tolerance of wet sites; more wind firm; denser wood. **PCH**: faster growth; superior branch quality and more uniform wood.

Many controlled crosses were made between the two species and after extensive field testing, hybrids were identified with qualities superior to those of both the parents. These trials have found that the F1 (first generation) hybrid is superior in growth and stem straightness to both parent species, especially on their poorly drained sites in SE Queensland. Limited quantities of F2 seed are now being produced.

Other Silvicultural Notes from Australia

Planning (site studies) FPQ have given a high priority to detailed site characterisation with the objective of closely matching species (or most likely clones) with sites. This not only maximises yields but also minimises stress. We were shown the impressive outputs of LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging), which is a sophisticated multi-laser mapping system which detects even minor elevations and can be used for improving road alignment, drainage and identifying areas to be left unplanted (e.g. zones surrounding streams and other wetlands).

Land Preparation.

Pre-plant spraying is routinely carried out either by aerial or manual application and often using a mix of herbicides such as glyphosate and simazine (a broadleaved pre-emergent herbicide). The planting line is normally cultivated by machine (producing ridges) or alternatively by a vehicle that prepares individual planting pits (see photo this page).

Stocking. The stocking of their plantations is less than we are used to in Uganda and this is partly explained by a need to have wide inter-rows to allow for mechanical cultivation (and eventually harvesting). An initial stocking of 830 stems per ha (5 x 2.3m) is commonly used, with plantations being thinned usually only once down to 3-500 stems per hectare. We visited a number of spacing trials that clearly showed the effects different regimes have on tree size and quality. Basically, high stocking rates result in high volumes of small trees; whilst low stocking produces big but branchy trees.

Weeding. The normal practice is to only weed pines for first season but remember, their weed growth is not as impressive as Uganda's! Their overall establishment costs are AUD 1-2,000 per ha (UGX 1.4 - 2.8 M).

Pruning. Since the industry does not pay a premium for clean pine logs, no pruning is carried out. FPQ's breeding programme has, however, consistently reduced branch size and angle so the knots are small. Hoop pine, with its big whorls of branches is a different story altogether and has to be pruned. Their policy is similar to ours - namely, not to prune more than 50% of the tree height. They first prune to 2m at 6-8 years, then carry out a final prune to 5.4m at 8-10 years.

Fire Protection. Queensland lost 5,000 ha in 1994 due to a coincidence of bad luck (electricity lines sparked) and unusual dry and windy conditions. All FPQ's main plantation areas have an excellent coverage of fire towers and they have

well equipped fire-crews on stand-by during dangerous periods. Hazard reduction burning is carried out under the pines, sometimes using small incendiary 'bombs' dropped out of a small plane. Hoop pine is very sensitive to fires and thus cannot be prescribe burnt.



FPQ's land preparation is all done mechanically: here an excavator scrapes off the grass then makes a planting mound in the poorly drained, sandy soils that dominate in southern Queensland.



One of FPQ's impressive fire towers that provides a superb view over their plantations. The main support is provided by just 3 massive Eucalypt logs.

Pests & Diseases. FPQ are well aware of potential threats to their substantial investment and are carrying out research on various pests and diseases. Sirex wood wasp is close-by in New South Wales and expected sometime. Biological control methods, however, are fairly well developed and they have an emergency isolation programme ready to kick-in once the wasp is discussed in their plantations.

And Finally.....A Message To Our Hosts 'Down Under'

We would like to pass on our thanks to the staff of FPQ who really went beyond the call of duty to make us feel extremely welcome and gave up significant time to show us their operations. Special thanks go to: Ian Last & Murray Keys (Gympie), Lester Perkins (Byfield), Sarah Kanupe (Towarra Nursery) as well as the team we met in Brisbane HQ – Bill Bale (inventory), Ian Grayson (GIS/mapping), Jane Seibuhr (yield modelling in natural forests), Kieren Lewis (PR/corporate affairs), Simon Lawson & Janet McDonald (forest health), Garth Nikles (tree breeding) and Kevin Harding (wood properties). The enthusiasm and professionalism of you all was an inspiration to us as we start down the road of commercial forestry back here in Uganda.

*For further information see FPQ's detailed website:
www.dpi.qld.gov.au*



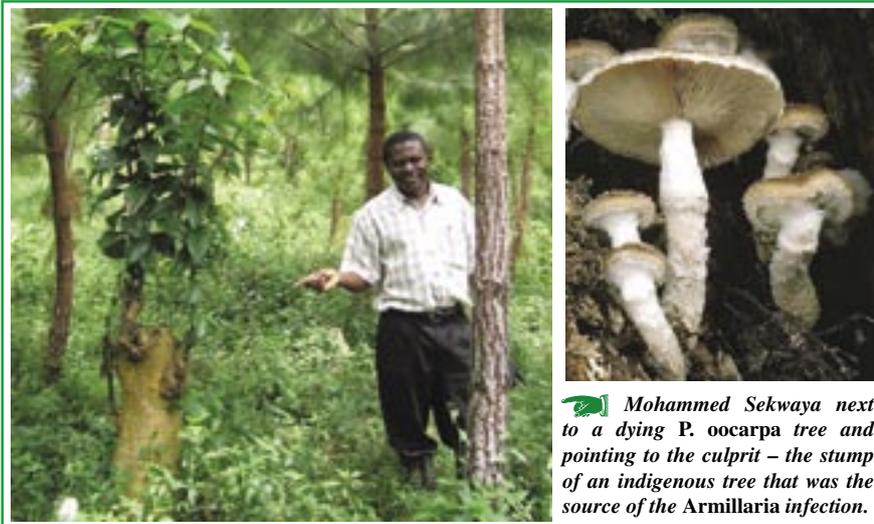
Armillaria Root Disease

On our field visits to planters, we are often asked “why are my trees dying”? It is normally just one or two isolated trees and more often than not is caused by poor nursery practices - such as ‘J-roots’ from poor pricking out, or late (or no) root pruning etc. that has directly led to poor root development when the seedling was planted out.

Global Woods in Kikonda, near Hoima, and Mohammed Sekyewa planting near Masaka, have both experienced isolated tree deaths in their pines, generally between 1-3 years old (see photo this page). The symptoms are the foliage thins and discolours, turns yellow, then brown and eventually whole branches die back. We first thought it was the same old nursery problems that keep cropping up but these two planters, however, independently identified another cause – namely, the ubiquitous *Armillaria* fungus.

because infection usually comes from the stumps of nearby trees killed (or cut) when clearing the land for plantations. The main way the fungus spreads is through mycelium at root contacts from an old, infected stump to the newly planted tree. The pathogen can survive for 50 years or so in these stumps. The fungi can also spread via its rhizomorphs, which grow through soil like roots or ‘shoe-strings’ to infect the nearby tree roots. The fungus can also spread by spores from its fruiting bodies but this is thought to be rare (see photo this page). If *Armillaria* is present, removing the bark near the base of the tree will expose the characteristic, white mycelial mats that grow between the wood and the bark.

“So what can we do about it?” At this stage we would recommend following the advice from our friends in James Finlay’s tea estates in western Uganda, who have learnt to live with the



Mohammed Sekyewa next to a dying *P. oocarpa* tree and pointing to the culprit – the stump of an indigenous tree that was the source of the *Armillaria* infection.

Notified by these planters, we then investigated the problem further to see if we could find a solution.

Armillaria are a group of fungi - commonly called oak or honey fungus – that occur throughout the world, in tropical and temperate climates. The fungi live as parasites on living tissue or as saprophytes on dead woody material. They have a huge host range and can kill trees, especially young vigorous conifer trees in plantations. Older trees can tolerate infections much better although they can develop butt rot.

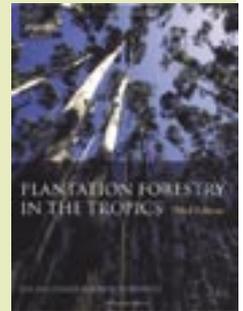
The disease is difficult to deal with

Armillaria problem over the years. When they see a tea bushes dying – usually infected from the stump of a remnant tree from the natural forest – they completely remove about 3 bushes (including the roots) from all around the infected area and burn them. They then dig a trench – one foot wide and two feet deep – to stop any further root contact spreading. This apparently stops the infection spreading further.

We thank the two planters for sharing the information with us and would encourage others to do the same with any of their problems so we can pass on any information and hopefully some useful advice too.

Publications

As promised, we have imported a number of copies of the highly recommended book by Julian Evans and John Turnbull - “Plantation Forestry In the



Forestry In the Tropics” (3rd edition 2004). It is for sale at cost price - Ushs 160,000 from the SPGS office. Hurry, whilst stocks last. We would also like to bring your attention to other recent publications that are of particular relevance, namely -

Unasyva (No.222): Forests, Climate and Kyoto.

This FAO journal is available free on-line at -

www.fao.org/forestry/site/28679/en

In its editorial, the journal says The Kyoto Protocol is not a panacea. Unasyva does not endorse or condemn it, rather the focus is on examining its implications for forests, forestry and foresters. If you want to get up to speed with global negotiations, mechanisms and practices for climate change mitigation, this is a good place to start.

The March 2006 edition of the **International Forestry Review** is really essential reading for everybody involved with forestry in Africa. This excellent journal from the Commonwealth Forestry Association is a special issue on African forestry. To receive your copy you had better join the CFA: see - www.cfa-international.org.

The **Budongo Forest Project's** latest Newsletter (June 2006) is fascinating and available at www.budongo.org

Read about the ever-increasing pressure on Budongo forest's wildlife and its integrity from a rapidly expanding population. To survive they cut the forest to grow their crops. Some grow sugar cane for cash and some also snare the animals in the forest for bush-meat. Not good news for the forest or its 600-strong chimpanzee population, a worrying proportion of whom end up caught in the snares.

Invasive Plants – I – Lantana



This is the first in a new feature on the most common invasive plants that effect commercial tree growers in Uganda. An invasive species is one that displays rapid growth and spreads over large areas: they are nearly always introduced, exotic species that have escaped cultivation and have become 'naturalised' in their new environment. We start with Lantana:

Lantana camara (Family Verbenaceae) - known as common Lantana or tickberry, is native to tropical America. It is a heavily branched, perennial shrub that grows in compact clumps and dense thickets. Its flowers are very attractive, which is why the plant was introduced into many gardens in the first place.

There are more than fifty different varieties of Lantana although they are all considered to be the same species. These varieties have a range of colours ranging from pale cream, to yellow, white, pink, orange red, lilac or purple as well as differences in the sharpness of the spines. Lantana flowers throughout the year and the tiny flowers are grouped in clusters approximately 2.5cm in diameter.

Lantana plants have glossy rounded fruit that are fleshy and purplish/black when ripe. It reproduces mainly by seed, which is spread by birds and sometimes by water. The plant has a pungent smell when its leaves are crushed and



many varieties are poisonous to livestock. Lantana forms dense, impenetrable thickets, which not only suffocates the desired trees but also prevents access for management and fire fighting. It can adapt to a variety of habitats and is now rapidly spreading throughout much of Uganda.

Control: Eradication is labourous and expensive and so any Lantana should be removed immediately upon detection. Once it has become a dense thicket, it becomes difficult (and expensive) to remove. When small individual Lantana plants are found, it is best to manually pull them out completely. This is more easily done when the soil is moist. In thickets of more established Lantana, a combination of work is required namely:

- * Cut of and remove the branches (and burn them if possible and safe to do so).
- * Allow the stumps to re-shoot and when no more than knee height (<0.5m), apply a full cover spray with a high dose of glyphosate (6 lt/ha).
- * Repeat this operation until the stump no longer shoots. This will be required to be done more than once, so monitor the site and spray on time. Spraying late or not following up at all will result in the re-establishment of the Lantana.

Future articles will feature Bugweed (*Solanum mauritanium*) & Paper Mulberry (*Broussonetia papyrifera*).

SEED UPDATE

PINES: Limited quantities of Australian PCH are expected soon for both NFA and SPGS planters. Clients are recommended to contact the SPGS and the NTSC for further updates on availability of this excellent seed (see page 12).

Due to the supply shortage of the Australian PCH seed, the main source of PCH seed for Uganda (for the near future at least) appears to be Brazil. The main supplier since 2005 has been Schuckar Seeds, following a recommendation from CAMCORE. Schuckar has recently offered the NTSC a limited quantity of PCH (substantial quantities are only available mid-2007) but has suggested other possibilities, including *P. oocarpa* (POO), a POO x PCH hybrid and *Pinus caribaea* var. *caribaea* (PCC)

Since both the POO and POO x PCH seedlots are from seed production stands, they are likely to be significantly better than the unimproved seed sources (e.g. from Ugandan plantations or from the Central American natural stands). Thus we have recommended to the NTSC to purchase this seed for both the NFA and the SPGS planters.

POO should grow well on a range of potential pine sites in Uganda. PCC, however, should only be planted in trial plots at this stage to assess its performance. In Australia, PCC does not grow as fast as PCH.

EUCALYPTUS: The South African *E. grandis* seed orchard seed imported by the NTSC earlier in 2006 has all been bought. Efforts are underway to source more, though it appears to be in short supply too. The SPGS Team is on the case, however!

TRAINING UPDATE

- * **A Plantation Planning & Establishment** training course will be run at Kasanya Tea Training Centre (near Kyenjojo) from 21-24th August 2006. Both Technical Advisers - Bric and Paul - will be leading the course. Places are strictly limited to 25 so book your places now.
- * 1-day courses on **Fire Protection and Fire Fighting** will be run during late July/early August at venues around the country to suit the demand.
- * The 4-day **Plantation Maintenance** course will be run again around late Sept. 2006 - check the next Newsletter for details. This is essential for those considering pruning & thinning.



The SPGS's Giant Planters Applaud Community Planting Initiative

The culture of tree farming is increasingly being adopted by our rural communities! Such was the impression prevalent on both the faces and words of SPGS giant planters (those planting a minimum of 25 ha). The clients tour team generated this impression when they stood at a plantation of one of SPGS community planting initiative beneficiary, Madam Nakimera Karoli in Bukalasa Village, Luweero District.

Madam Karoli's one acre tree plantation was a first stop over point during the recent May/06 SPGS clients tour and meeting to districts of Luweero, Nakasongola and Masindi. The clients were excited by both the plantation and brief and proud speech of Madam Karoli especially of how she managed to convince her husband to allocate her a piece of land to plant trees. Consequently, when SPGS Chief Technical Adviser, Paul posed a question as to whether it was worthwhile for the SPGS to continue with this kind of initiative, the prompt answer was not only a big YES but also a congratulation to the SPGS Community Planting Officers (CPOs) for the good work seen. The big YES also came with a caution that the community planting initiative should not lose focus of the SPGS's primary objective of growing trees for timber and large poles.

Otherwise, similar communities across the country in Bushenyi, Rakai, Hoima Mbale, Apac and Nakasongola are not only growing but also maintaining their plantations as well. In the period of two planting seasons alone (Oct-Nov. 2005 and March-April 2006) 150ha of both have been planted by about 250 farmers (women and young men aboard) on plantations ranging from 0.5 – 10 ha.

The CPOs (Alex and Charles) have been keen to blend this tree growing spree with training on tree establishment,

maintenance and protection. This training starts from farmer to farmer contact and culminates in a joint community/group meeting. CPOs have found these trainings extremely interesting in the pilot communities in Luweero, Nakasongola and Bushenyi and are currently extending the same to other communities in Rakai, Mbale, Hoima and Apac. The training of these farmers in modern plantation practices is essential as most of these skills were greatly missing. Needless to add that rural extension activities currently running in most districts at sub-county level exclude plantation forestry practices.

We shall keep you informed especially concerning our upcoming Sept/Oct. 2006 planting season.



One of the people benefiting from the SPGS's community planting initiative, Mrs Karoli Nakimera, talks to the group of SPGS planters during the damp start to the client's safari on 28th May 2006. Holding the umbrella is Margaret Bamukyawa and over her shoulder is Richard Ssemakula, both of LEMA.

In The Next Issue

YOU CAN LOOK FORWARD TO....

-  The World Bank invited the SPGS to its high-profile **Forest Investment Forum** held in South Africa in June 2006. Read Paul and Allan's highlights from this important meeting.
-  Your voice: Key recommendations from the SPGS's recent **Commercial Forestry Seminar**.
-  **Beyond 2006? The future of the SPGS.** We hope to be able to bring you good news about the next exciting phase of the SPGS.
-  **OneTree** - details of an exciting initiative to promote better utilisation of Uganda's trees.

Make sure you receive your copy.

TREE PLANTERS' DIARY

Important events plus what tree planters should be focussing on during July and Aug.

- * Book places on the **Plantation Planning & Establishment** course on 21st August.
- * **Land preparation** should now be well underway ready for the forthcoming planting season.
- * **Check seedling numbers and sizes.**
- * **Prepare for pre-plant spraying:** train team and purchase equipment and herbicide.



Cardno Agrisystems

The Technical Assistance for the SPGS is provided by: Cardno-Agrisystems Ltd.: Challenging the Causes of Poverty.