



## Rolex Award for Enterprise

On November 6, 2002, Sebastian Chuwa received an Associate Laureate Award from the committee of the Rolex Awards for Enterprise. Ceremonies were held at the Royal Institution of Great Britain in London, England.

Speaking at the event was Baroness Susan Greenfield, British neuroscientist, who is renowned for her groundbreaking studies of the brain and human consciousness and for her efforts to cure neurodegenerative disorders.

Rolex Managing Director for the UK, Mr. Roger Maingot, presented the award of \$35,000 and a gold and steel Rolex chronometer.

The Rolex Awards have been presented every two years since they were first instituted in 1976. Their aim is "to encourage a spirit of enterprise in visionary individuals around the globe by providing the financial support and recognition they need to implement innovative, working projects that advance human knowledge and well-being."

Awards are given in five areas of endeavor: science and medicine, technology and innovation, exploration and discovery, environment, and cultural heritage.



**The ultimate test of a moral society  
is the kind of world it leaves to  
its children.**

— Dietrich Bonhoeffer



Each of the award-winning projects was studied and discussed by the 2002 Selection Committee, an independent, voluntary jury of ten international experts whose own spirit of enterprise is



**Sebastian received the Associate Laureate Rolex Award for Enterprise prize at ceremonies in London at the Royal Institution in November 2002. Sebastian is flanked by Baroness Susan Greenfield, director of the Royal Institution at left and Roger Maingot, managing director for Rolex UK at right.**

exemplary. "The jury members were particularly sensitive to environmental issues this year," reported Mr. Patrick Heiniger, Chief Executive of Rolex. "They were impressed by the importance the winning candidates placed on local people living and working in harmony with nature in order to ensure sustainable development."

In order to apply, candidates submit a specific proposal for a project which they feel will have a significant impact in one of the five targeted fields. Four main criteria are used to select the winning projects:

- 1) Spirit of enterprise – a project carried out with determination, tenacity and boldness, usually against challenging odds;
- 2) Feasibility – a project that is likely to succeed;
- 3) Originality – an innovative project that breaks new ground;
- 4) Impact – a project that has a positive impact on the community.

## Sebastian's 5-Year Plan

The project that Sebastian designed is a 5-year program previously mentioned in this newsletter. Its objective is to expand the work we are doing in the Kilimanjaro area by establishing nurseries and educational projects in 9 locations of northern Tanzania: Hai, Moshi, Same, Mombo, Handeni, Pangani, Babati, Simanjiro and Mbulu.

All of these areas are suffering from the effects of environmental degradation, and mpingo has been severely depleted or is practically extinct.

Sebastian will be traveling to these areas and contacting community leaders to offer assistance in setting up community nurseries. He will also be speaking to educators about possibilities for setting up conservation educational programs and Malihai Clubs in their schools, organizing video showings using equipment purchased with funding from the Lindbergh Grant he received in June 2001.

Since the original proposal submitted was for \$100,000, and Sebastian received the Associate Laureate Award for the lesser sum of \$35,000, we will need to look for other sources of funding to complete the program.

The funding, recognition, and support that have resulted from the Rolex Award have given the ABCP a new impetus that we are confident will result in the expansion of our activities into many new areas beyond Kilimanjaro. As a result of recognition for Sebastian's work,

we have been contacted by a number of people and organizations interested in helping our efforts.

### Toyota Land Cruiser

During the 11 years that Sebastian has been setting up conservation programs in the Kilimanjaro area he has never owned a vehicle of his own. To transport seedlings and carry on his seed collection, replanting, and educational activities he has always had to rent a vehicle. In Tanzania this is very expensive and sometimes a vehicle can only be rented for one day at a time.

From where he lives it takes 4-5 hours by bus and walking for him to reach the Moshi Mpingo Plot. By car it takes less than 2 hours. Therefore one of our major goals since beginning this work in 1996 has been to find a four-wheel drive, diesel engine vehicle for his use, one that will be able to navigate in the bush when he does seed collections, as well as negotiate slick dirt roads during the rainy season.

With money from the Rolex award, Sebastian has finally realized this dream. He has purchased and reconditioned a



**Sebastian poses with his newly acquired 1994 Toyota Land Cruiser with Mt. Kilimanjaro in the background. Four-wheel drive transportation is essential to move around Tanzania in all seasons, and for the first time, Sebastian now has his own vehicle to use in administering his conservation projects.**

used Toyota Land Cruiser which will be ideal for his purposes of transporting supplies and navigating difficult terrain.

### New Projects Funded by Rolex

In addition to the purchase of the Land Cruiser, Sebastian has used the Rolex funding for several projects, described below. During the past summer he built a large new nursery at the Moshi Mpingo Plot and a smaller one at Mijongweni School.

Since these were completed, he has begun to travel to establish contacts in communities where he hopes to found Malihai school conservation groups and establish tree nurseries.

### Expanded Nursery At Moshi Mpingo Plot

In January Sebastian began work on a large new nursery at the Moshi Mpingo Plot, which he describes as "the heart of our project." His wish was "to do something permanent and memorable" with the Rolex funds.

The dimensions of this nursery are 55 by 12 meters (180 x 40 feet). It was finished in May and can handle

50-75,000 seedlings, depending on the size of pots used. At present there are 32,000 mpingo seedlings in the nursery and work is progressing on the planting of other species.

Sebastian says that many people in the area are requesting to come to the Mpingo Plot to learn how to grow and take care of trees. So at the same time that he will be teaching people how to raise mpingo and other species, they will be giving us their help in producing seedlings for the nursery. Some of the seedlings will be distributed back into the

community which donated land for the Moshi Plot. Others will be used to establish our new nurseries.



**Construction timbers being loaded into truck for delivery to the Moshi Mpingo Plot nursery expansion project.**

### Nursery at Mijongweni

The teachers and students of Mijongweni Primary School, located in Kibosho East District on Kilimanjaro, have been very active in mpingo conservation. 350 students in that school have joined its Malihai Club and both students and teachers have been active in working to protect the environment.

Because of this Sebastian has helped to fund an expanded and fenced tree nursery at this location. The plot measures 20 by 6 meters (66 x 20 feet) and can accommodate 5,000 seedlings.

The students at Mijongweni will learn how to propagate various species



**Construction progresses in late winter and early spring of 2003 on the expanded nursery at the Moshi Mpingo Plot. Approximately 7500 sq. ft. is being covered by bamboo slats laid on this framework of posts and timbers to provide shade for new tree seedlings.**



Pots formed from polythene sheeting are lined up in the new Moshi Mpingo Plot Nursery. Sebastian estimates a yearly capacity to raise 50-75,000 seedlings, depending on species and pot sizes.

and will help with distribution into the community.

**"In wildness is the preservation of the world."  
Henry David Thoreau**

**Village of Terrat in Simanjiro**

With the Rolex funding and his new Land Cruiser, Sebastian has already begun to visit several areas which are excellent for growing mpingo such as

Same District southeast of Kilimanjaro, and Babati District to the southwest.

He is finding communities in these areas which will take an interest in establishing tree nurseries with mpingo, as well as various species for domestic and commercial use.

Besides helping these communities set up nurseries, he will also help their schools establish the Malihai youth club program along with conservation studies in their curriculum.

In the village of Terrat in Simanjiro District, he has a commitment from the community to open several branches of Malihai clubs at the school and help begin mpingo planting this year.

Last year Sebastian hired a retired forester, Mr. Honest Njau, to visit the various nurseries he oversees and offer ideas and recommendations to optimize the work. Mr. Njau has a certificate in Forestry Management from Olmotonyi Forestry Institute in Arusha and worked



Nursery workers prepare seedpots under the cover of the new Moshi Mpingo Plot Nursery.

as an assistant forester for the Tanzanian government before he retired

**"Tug on anything at all and you'll find it connected to everything else in the universe."  
- John Muir**

**Brenda Schuman-Post**

Brenda Schuman-Post is a professional oboist living in San Francisco, California, who is an educator and advocate for the conservation of African blackwood. She is concerned about mpingo conservation, not only to maintain adequate supply for the music industry, but also to ensure that the many Africans whose lives are affected by the tree can continue to benefit from it.

Because of her interest in educating both musicians and general audiences about mpingo, Brenda has created a lecture/performance program called "Mpingo's Fruit" in which she discusses the history of mpingo and the environmental, economic, social, and cultural status of the tree today. With photographs and videos, she provides information about the tree, the regions in which it grows, and the people involved in harvesting and milling the wood. In June, she delivered her presentation in Greensboro, North Carolina at the 2003 conference of the International Double Reed Society.

In assembling this program Brenda interviewed representatives from conservation groups and the music industry, including Fauna and Flora International, the Cambridge Mpingo Project, the ABCP, individuals from Kenya and Tanzania who live in San Francisco, and

**ABCP 5-Year Plan in the Northern Circuit**

The area where Sebastian will work to implement the ABCP 5-year program is called the Northern Circuit, an area encompassing three Regions of northeastern Tanzania: Tanga, Kilimanjaro and Arusha. Each of these regions is unique and of vital importance to the ecology and economic future of Tanzania, and each contains prime habitat areas for African blackwood. Arusha, to the west, contains some of Africa's best known game reserves - the Serengeti Plain, Ngorongoro Crater and scenic Lake Manyara. Much of the land cover of Arusha Region is miombo woodland, the unique deciduous dry forest of Central Africa of outstanding international importance for the conservation of plants and animals, including mpingo.

Kilimanjaro and Tanga Region contain the most important mountains in the country, Mt. Kilimanjaro, Mt. Meru and the Pare and Usambara Mountain ranges. These mountains feed the Pangani River, a water source that supplies water to agriculturalists and pastoralists and runs turbines for power plants at Nyumba and Hale, thus delivering electricity to a large population and making possible the establishment of various industries.

Relatively speaking, the Northern Circuit is prosperous in comparison to some other areas of Africa, but this very prosperity is attracting a large influx of population and is leading to ecological problems that are becoming severe. Since over 80% of Tanzania's people make a living from agriculture, population growth has taken a huge toll on wooded areas because of clearing for farming and homebuilding. With the lack of modern electricity and alternate heating sources, fuelwood collection and charcoal making are depleting forests at a rapid rate. Since mpingo is a primary species that is used to make charcoal, this is one reason the species is completely extinct in some areas.

Through our expanded 5-year program, Sebastian hopes to establish nurseries and tree-planting programs to supply species that will ease the overcutting of trees in these vital areas and begin a program of sustainable harvesting through the planting of firewood, polewood and other commercial timber species, including, of course, mpingo.

**"The most unhappy thing about conservation is that it is never permanent. Save a priceless woodland or an irreplaceable mountain today, and tomorrow it is threatened from another quarter."  
-Hal Borland**

several different manufacturers of both oboes and clarinets.

Brenda also repeatedly interviewed the very person who for 30 years has been selecting and overseeing the mpingo harvesting process in Mozambique for the Theodor Nagel Company, exporter of African blackwood from Mozambique. Theodor Nagel has been the primary supplier of African blackwood to the music industry since 1900.

Brenda, who often plays her Buffet "greenline" oboe (made of sawdust, car-



Oboist Brenda Schuman-Post with her "greenline" African Blackwood oboe at the Star Trek Convention in Las Vegas in August where she won the talent competition with a solo performance of her arrangement of Star Trek themes.

bon powder and glue), has also established a multi-instrumental ensemble called "Mpingo's Fruit." Musicians in this ensemble play instruments made entirely or in part from African blackwood. They perform both classical and jazz and educate audiences about the role of African culture in Western music.

Brenda is well known in the world of music as an "oboe advocate." She plays musical styles ranging from baroque to modern, bluegrass, world music and jazz, and performs in almost any setting. She has released one CD entitled

"Oboes Of the World" and is currently working towards another.

You can read about Brenda on her website at: [www.oboesoftheworld.com](http://www.oboesoftheworld.com). You can contact her by email at [BSP6263@aol.com](mailto:BSP6263@aol.com).

### Eden's Orchestra

In January the ABCP was contacted by Mr. Sam Bridgewater, a botanist at the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh Scotland. Mr. Bridgewater requested permission to use information from the ABCP website for an exhibit called "Eden's Orchestra," which was to focus on the links between plants and musical instruments from around the world. He wrote: "We are highlighting instruments from a variety of different cultures, and I intend to use blackwood as a case study, investigating the effects of the instrument

trade (flutes/bagpipes etc.) on this species, and why it is so favored. As part of this I would like to make the public aware of initiatives such as yours which are tackling the issues of sustainability."

Mr. Bridgewater interviewed musicians and instrument makers for the exhibit and collected a wide variety of

instruments from cultures around the world, identifying the plant species used in making different parts of the instruments. He interviewed Sebastian in Tanzania and toured his various nursery projects in the area. He also interviewed traditional instrument makers in Dar es Salaam.

The exhibit, attended by 40,000 people, featured a combination of botanical displays, interactive exhibits, workshops and musical performances. Information on the exhibition is available at [www.edens-orchestra.org.uk](http://www.edens-orchestra.org.uk).



Mpingo trees planted in 1998 are thriving at the Moshi Mpingo Plot. DBH (Diameter at Breast Height) measurements of 50-75 cm (2-3 in) are common. They have produced their first crop of seedpods as shown in the photo below.



Mpingo seedpods on 5-year old trees at the Moshi Mpingo Plot.



Pile of confiscated logs at Tanga Forest Office, 2002. Illegal cutting on public lands is common because the government lacks sufficient funding to support enforcement of laws that require a fee to be paid before mpingo trees can be harvested. Mpingo trees harvested illegally confound efforts to manage forests and maintain sustainable mpingo populations.



Volunteers from the Kibosho East Environmental Group planting and tending camphor seedlings on the forest slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro, Jan. 2003.



Mpingo Women's Group members tend seedlings in the new nursery shelter they built with funds from a grant from the New England Biolabs Foundation.

### Other Groups Planting Mpingo

During the past five years, Sebastian has influenced or assisted in the formation of several groups in the Kilimanjaro area that are working for self empowerment as well as leading programs to help their communities repair damage to the environment that has been so severe during the past four decades. Three of these, the Green Garden Women's Group, the

Mpingo Women's Group and the Fong'a Women's Group were formed after 1998 when the Tanzanian land laws were liberalized to allow women to own trees and land.

Each of these groups operates a tree nursery and grows mpingo seedlings to help in the conservation of the species. In addition they utilize their collective efforts to make fuel-efficient earthenware cooking stoves, help with the environmental education of the youth, and study with recognized experts such as

government bee-keeping officials to learn how to expand their economic self-sufficiency efforts.

The Kibosho East Environmental Group is a mixed gender group, formed at Sebastian's suggestion to remedy certain problems in his local neighborhood. It is taking an active role in reforestation on Mt. Kilimanjaro.

The ABCP supports planting of other species as well as mpingo as necessary to halt erosion and restore clear-cut and fire damaged areas for a balanced ecosystem, as well as provide for the livelihood of the local communities involved. These efforts have received enthusiastic support from local people.

### History of the ABCP

The ABCP is a US non-profit 501(c)(3) organization which was founded in 1996 by James Harris and Sebastian Chuwa for the purpose of instituting replanting and educational programs related to the conservation of *Dalbergia melanoxylon*, also known as African blackwood or mpingo. Even if you have never heard of mpingo, you have probably been exposed to it because it is a primary wood used in the manufacture of woodwind instruments such as clarinets, piccolos, flutes, oboes and bagpipes. Within Africa it is used by carvers such as the Makonde, whose work can be found in museums and private collections throughout the world. Ornamental turners also use the wood in their art because of its excellent machining properties.

African blackwood is generally considered a threatened species because it is being so rapidly depleted in Eastern Africa, its primary habitat. There is no harvestable mpingo remaining in Kenya and carvers there are having to import the wood. Stands in Tanzania are rapidly being exhausted and many areas have few remaining trees. None of its commercial users have taken any notable steps to replenish the tree, perhaps because it takes 70-200 years to mature to harvestable size.

Sebastian Chuwa is devoting his life to two dreams: 1) ensuring the future of mpingo and 2) educating his people about the importance of conservation of their natural resources. He has established over 50 Malihai Clubs (youth conservation groups), several women's groups and enlisted thousands of volunteers in his efforts for the environment. These groups grow a variety of tree seedlings to help the people with domestic needs and income. They have been responsible for planting over 650,000 trees in the area around Mt. Kilimanjaro.

Through the ABCP Sebastian is spreading the word about mpingo conservation and inspiring others to help. In 1997 he established the Moshi Mpingo Plot for the purposes of raising mpingo seedlings and establishing an orchard where he can conduct scientific experiments. The ABCP has distributed 77,000 seedlings from the plot and its newly expanded nursery will greatly increase that number in the future. Under our 5-year program nurseries will be established in other regions of Northern Tanzania.

James Harris and Bette Stockbauer devote their time to fundraising efforts in the US and Sebastian Chuwa administers the program in Tanzania. James and Bette personally cover all administrative costs in the US, including printing, postage, website expenses, and some equipment purchases. All donations collected go directly to support the work in Africa.

**Now Available—The "Tree of Music" Video or a Film by the ABCP Showing Sebastian's Conservation Work in Tanzania**



The video "The Conservation and Environmental Education Work of Sebastian Chuwa" was produced by James Harris on his home computer to profile Sebastian's work in Tanzania. In compiling this presentation James utilized the many hours of video footage that Sebastian has taken in Africa to record the conservation work of commu-

nity groups around Mt. Kilimanjaro.

Also included is original wildlife footage of African savannah animals taken at national parks and reserves such as Ngorongoro Crater, Lake Manyara and the Serengeti Plain during safaris that Sebastian conducts to these areas.

Subject areas covered in the video are: Malihai Clubs, mpingo tree-planting at the Moshi Mpingo Plot, Environmental Day activities, the Kibosho East Environmental Choir, and a student field trip to wildlife parks.

This video and "Mpingo—The Tree That Makes Music" can be purchased from the ABCP. They are available only in NTSC format for US viewers. See the enclosed donation form for pricing and details of ordering. Proceeds will support the work of the ABCP in Tanzania.

• SEE THIS NEWSLETTER ONLINE AT [BLACKWOODCONSERVATION.ORG](http://BLACKWOODCONSERVATION.ORG) •

**Mpingo—  
The Tree  
That  
Makes  
Music**  
A BBC-TV  
VIDEO



The mpingo tree is prized by musicians and woodworkers around the world. The future of the species, however, is under threat. Over harvesting of the wood and its habitat destruction are causing scientists to predict that it will soon be a threatened species. In this video, users of the wood, who consider it irreplaceable, express their apprehension that the precious resource may some day no longer be available for their use. Michael Gunton's exquisite documentary, the first of its kind, has brought the problem of mpingo extinction to world attention. Included is a profile of the work of Sebastian Chuwa who is sponsoring replanting campaigns for mpingo in Tanzania in hope of ensuring its future sustainability. This film was originally broadcast in 1992 on the US PBS *Nature* series and was the inspiration for the founding of the ABCP.

**African Blackwood Conservation Project**

**P. O. Box 26 Red Rock, TX 78662 USA**



So that  
the song  
of the  
Tree of Music  
will not go  
silent...