

Counterclockwise from the top left, this photo montage illustrates the process of the work of the African Blackwood Conservation Project. The Moshi Mpingo Plot at Mijongweni has been funded by gifts from our contributors and the Cottonwood Foundation, and its nursery is now capable of producing seeds from trees planted in the mid-1990's. The top photo shows seed pods growing on our nursery trees, which, when mature, are harvested and dried. Nursery attendant, Joseph Simon, is next shown planting seeds in a seedbed, followed by emerging mpingo sprouts 21 days later. The next photo shows Sebastian Chuwa, ABCP Tanzania Coordinator, with Joseph, holding a nursery seedling potted into economical planting pots made from rolls of polythene tubing filled with soil. Bottom right photo shows our mature trees, now providing shade for seedlings as they are cared for during their first 18 months of life. Finally, Sebastian shows a 5' tall mpingo sapling planted at the Good Gifts Plot at Makuyuni.

Good Gifts Catalog Funds Major Mpingo Planting Projects

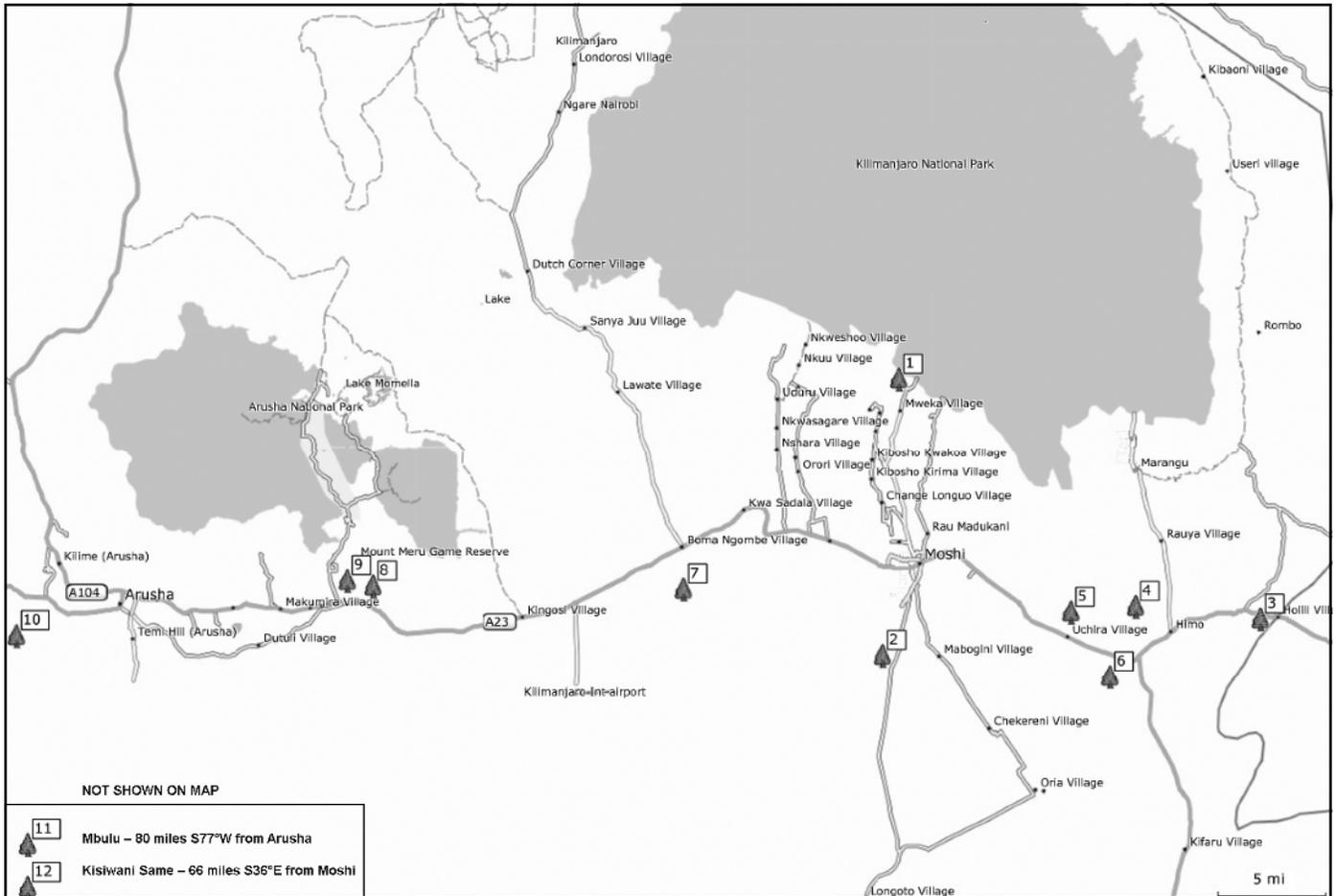
In this newsletter we will give an extensive report on mpingo initiatives that have been started because of contributions from the Good Gifts Catalog, a UK-based charity that offers opportunities for gift giving on behalf of organizations promoting social and environmental projects around the world.

Because of the ABCP infrastructure that already exists, in terms of our long-time established Moshi Mpingo Plot from which we can produce tens of thousands of seedlings in one year, we have been able to supply mpingo seedlings for multiple new initiatives in schools and villages in northern Tanzania. As always, our yearly contributors and ongoing funding from the Cottonwood Foundation has allowed us to continually expand and update work at the plot. Our two full-time workers, Joseph Simon and Raphael James, are busy year-round with growing seedlings for our various projects. In addition, the Chuwa home nursery on Mt. Kilimanjaro also supplies trees for our needs.

To date we have planted over 600,000 mpingo seedlings and close to 1 million other indigenous tree seedlings in northern Tanzania.

For the Good Gifts initiative, we have extended our planting areas into new locations and discuss here the people and places involved. Besides accomplishing the task of planting trees, the money paid to the workers on our pro-

He who plants a tree
Plants a hope.
Lucy Larcom,
from "Plant a Tree"



1	Chuwa Home Nursery	2,100 seedlings
2	Moshi Mpingo Plot	18,700 seedlings
3	Makuyuni	17,000 trees planted
4	Mandaka Kilema	200 trees planted
5	Kilindini	211 trees planted
6	Mkongga/Kawawa Rd	725 trees planted
7	Boma Ngombe	3,000 trees planted
8	Kikatiti Secondary School	3,000 trees planted
9	Maji ya Chai	1,700 trees planted
10	Olasita Arusha	243 trees planted
11	Mbulu	200 trees planted
12	Kisiwani Same	510 trees planted

Nursery and tree planting locations for the ABCP Good Gifts Mpingo Planting Project, in the area of northern Tanzania south of Mt. Kilimanjaro and centered around the towns of Arusha to the west and Moshi to the east. The tree symbols mark the location of two tree nurseries and eight tree planting sites which are shown on this map, with two more distant locations off the map to the bottom left and bottom right. The legend at left shows location and numbers of trees, corresponding to the numbered tree symbols on the map.

jects is helping them purchase needed items and to educate their children. Some workers have put more durable roofs on their homes, bought necessary furnishings, or purchased bicycles and other items to improve living conditions.

Most often the money was used to pay for secondary education. In Tanzania primary education is free, but only 5% of those who complete primary

school are able to afford further education. This is because of the cost of boarding, which is often necessary because the schools (less numerous than primary schools) are often distant from student’s homes. Secondary schooling is often a key element in achieving success in adult life and can be equivalent in that society to a college education in ours.

In Tree Planting, Follow-Up Is a Primary Requisite for Success

Sebastian has been searching down planting sites which offer ideal climatic conditions, low competition from other species, and adequate soil fertility. His primary concern always is to choose sites where chances for long-term sur-

vival of the trees will be optimal.

There are many tree planting initiatives in which thousands of trees are planted and everyone feels good about it, but the trees often have minimal prospects for the future because they are planted in the wrong season or location, or do not have follow-up care. For mpingo, the leaves and young shoots of the tree are very attractive to wildlife and livestock, so it is often browsed to severely when young if not protected. Drought and fires also take their toll on young trees. Sebastian’s main objective is to leave trees for future generations. He is always emphasizing follow-up and replants if there have been problems in generating successful stands of trees. He

also gathers seeds from a variety of locations in order to assure genetic diversity. The trees in the Moshi plot were grown from trees in many different locations and consequently have produced strong genetic stock. These are now bearing and producing seeds for our nursery.

The planting process of mpingo itself is a difficult and extended one, and Sebastian may be the first person to have experimented with its growth requirements for so many years. At this point, we believe he has reached a high degree of proficiency. The seeds are first sprouted in a seedbed in a specialized process of vertical placement of the seeds in the soil bed; then the seedlings are transplanted twice into larger pots as they mature.

They are kept in a nursery environment for at least 15 months in order to reach an age at which they can resist ground fire and withstand dry weather conditions. After replanting into permanent locations, the trees still need to be protected from wildlife and livestock predation until they are tall enough so they will not be over-browsed (we estimate about 5 years). Consequently, the planting of mpingo is a process that will involve at least 5 years of oversight.

Keep a green tree in your heart and
perhaps the singing bird will come.

— Chinese proverb

Mbulu

Mbulu is an area west of Lake Manyara in the heart of what are called miombo woodlands, i.e., dry wooded savannah areas with sparse deciduous growth in tropical and sub-tropical Africa. This type of terrain offers ideal growing conditions for mpingo.

Mr. Joseph Aweda, ABCP contact in the area, lives on a beautiful estate overlooking Lake Manyara National Park, one of northern Tanzania's most popular tourist destinations for wildlife viewing, famous for its large population of flamingoes.

Mr. Aweda has long wanted to utilize part of his land for a good cause, and as such has decided to dedicate a certain portion to mpingo conservation.

Last fall, Sebastian and his son, Cyril, traveled to Mbulu to inspect Mr. Aweda's proposed planting site and planted about 200 trees. If the rains are good this year, they will continue the planting by clearing some brush and planting about 1300 additional mpingo there. After seeing how these first 1500 fare Sebastian will decide whether to plant more.

On this same trip, Cyril and Sebastian planted mpingo at various business establishments along the way, in places where they know the personnel and feel confident about the care they will give to the trees. One site was a popular curio shop called *Zebra Handicraft*. After this trip Cyril wrote to the US team excitedly explaining that he had planted 200 mpingo trees!! It was a very special time to spend with his father

Kilindini Primary School

In order to find planting locations for mpingo where they will be well managed, Sebastian has established connections with a number of Primary and Secondary Schools. Several years ago Sebastian met Mrs. Diana Njau, the principal of Kilindini Primary School, 8 miles east of Moshi, at an educational conference. Expressing an interest in mpingo conservation, she requested 200 seedlings to plant around the school.

Since the school is in possession of several acres of farmland, Sebastian re-contacted her and inquired about establishing a larger mpingo planting project. She enthusiastically agreed to volunteer some of the land to plant mpingo. The trees that have been planted there will receive good follow-up care because they will be integrated into the conservation programs running at the school.



Sebastian and his son, Cyril, stand on the Mbulu highlands overlooking Lake Manyara in the background. They were visiting the area to scout favorable locations for planting mpingo trees.

Kisiwani Primary School

In Same Ward (a Ward is a political division of several villages), west of Moshi, there were once many old-growth mpingo, but most of those trees have now been felled. Through one of Sebastian's Malihai (youth conservation group) contacts, he set up a project for mpingo planting at Kisiwani Primary School in Same. He is working with teacher Benjamin Mweteni who is interested in helping in a long-range plan to restore mpingo in the area and educate the students and larger community about mpingo conservation. Both teachers and students at the school helped with the planting. Such projects are a good educational tool for students, as horticultural skills developed in childhood can be used in later life.

Kirua Vunjo/Mkongga/ Kawawa Road Farmland

Kirua Vungo and Mkongga are villages east of Moshi in an agricultural area where mpingo trees once grew, but the old-growth trees were felled over time as the land was cleared for farming.

Kirua Vunjo is the ward where Elizabeth Chuwa, Sebastian's wife, was raised. She has been educating the community there about mpingo conservation and villagers are now starting a planting project to reintroduce the spe-



Cyril Chuwa with Joseph Aweda, and his brother, Peter, who volunteered their land to plant trees, plant an mpingo seedling at Mbulu.

through their leaf litter deeply buried trace minerals and nutrients for the use of food crops.

In Mkonga Elizabeth's mother, Mary Cyril Macha, has offered two acres of farmland for the project. Another friend of the project, Theobald Mallya, has donated two acres of land along Kawawa Road to be designated for mpingo planting.

Goodluck Urassa and Gideon Ndokay, have helped in our efforts to find good mpingo planting locations in their area, finding opportunity at Maji la Chai and Kikatiti.

Mr. Paskali Ndekumi owns a 5-acre site at Maji ya Chai, in the foothills of Mt. Meru and has offered the land for mpingo planting. 1700 trees were planted there in a cooperative effort by the community and members of the EGG.

Every oak tree started out as a couple of nuts who decided to stand their ground.

-- Unknown

cies into the area. Agriculture-based planting activities that are being used are the intercropping of mpingo with seasonal crops and planting mpingo as fence rows around fields. The trees will give shade to sun-intolerant crops and enrich the soil with nitrogen and nutrients from leaf litter. Through the absorptive capacity of their roots, such agroforestry trees also bring up and distribute

Maji Ya Chai

The ABCP helps find funding for several affiliated, locally-organized, tree planting groups in the Moshi/Arusha vicinity. One of these is the Environmental Greenishing Group (EGG), which works in Usa River, a community located at the foot of Mt. Meru, Tanzania's second highest peak (after Mt. Kilimanjaro). Two members of this group,

Kikatiti Secondary School

Kikatiti Secondary School in the Kikatiti Ward of Meru District has cooperated in a project to plant 3,000 trees on school grounds, through arrangements made with teacher Mr. Shadrak Mungure. Sebastian delivered the trees to the school and they were planted with the help of students at the school.

Boma N'Gombe

The Boma Women's Group is an organization dedicated to caring for AIDS orphans in the Mt. Meru area. Sebastian had met one of the members, Neema Lema, while visiting a school in the area and told her about his conservation initiatives with the ABCP. The group expressed an interest in mpingo planting and offered some acreage for the project. Over 3,000 mpingo were planted by their group members and they used their wages to further their work with orphans in the Meru area. The women's conservation groups with whom we have worked have all sponsored schooling for AIDS orphans in the community, and traditionally take on a variety of causes in their work for societal improvement in their communities.



Sebastian and helpers deliver mpingo seedlings to Kikatiti Secondary School, located near Arusha, west of Moshi. Here students line up to convey the seedlings from Sebastian's truck. 2,500 mpingo and 500 trees of other species were planted this past year.

The Chuwas Attend Belfast World Forum Conference

Last year Sebastian and Elizabeth Chuwa traveled to the US to attend a conference on childhood education. The event was sponsored by the World Fo-



Elizabeth Chuwa works with schoolchildren in Belfast, Ireland, during a conference on early childhood education and development. The World Forum promotes teaching young children around the world to appreciate nature and their role in preserving it.

rum Foundation, whose mission it is to create a global exchange for early childhood care professionals to exchange ideas and promote quality education for children in diverse settings.

This year's conference was held in Belfast, Ireland, a site chosen because of the many innovative educational programs that emerged there related to conflict resolution and peace building during that troubled area's long history of conflict. The local Irish sponsor was *Early Years*, the largest organization in Northern Ireland promoting childcare for children.

Early Years was instrumental in creating programs to help children, parents, and teachers counter violence by creating a culture of respecting differences. Research evidence of the positive impact of their work is of enormous interest to people around the world.

The conference was attended by 600 delegates from 78 countries and topics presented included Education for Sustainable Development, Diversity, Children's Rights, Peace Building with Children, Gender Issues, Children Af-

ected by HIV/AIDS, and Learning Through Nature.

Sebastian moderated a forum entitled, "*Bringing Nature into Indoor Classrooms.*" One project demonstrated was the gathering and analysis of woodland mushrooms, teaching students to distinguish between edible and inedible types.

Elizabeth commented that one thing that was most noticeable to her in attending the conference was the lack of educational materials in the schools where she teaches in Africa, as compared to those in more developed countries. She directly attributes this lack as a primary factor in the slow educational advancement of poorer countries, along with teacher shortages and overcrowded classrooms.

University of Aberdeen

While in the British Isles, Sebastian was also invited by the University of Aberdeen to meet with academics of the School of Biological Sciences. He was the keynote speaker at a public lecture on the topic *Planning for the Future in Tanzania*, delivering a PowerPoint pres-

entation describing his work in youth education, tree planting, and ongoing outreach with the ABCP. He also led a discussion of global warming and the vulnerability of the Mt. Kilimanjaro ice fields.

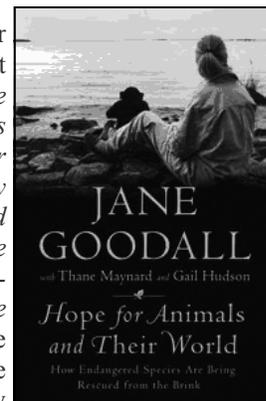
Impressed by the presentation, several Aberdeen professors suggested the idea of student exchange linkages, with Aberdeen students traveling to Tanzania to do field work in biological studies.

Aberdeen is located on the North Sea, and is a worldwide port. The University itself is surrounded by areas of impressive natural beauty and biological import. On the campus can be found a Natural History Center, Zoology Museum Gardens and Botanic gardens.

New Book by Jane Goodall

Sometimes, it seems like there's no hope for the planet. Thousands of species go extinct every year, and climate change is closing in. But famed biologist Jane Goodall says she refuses to give up.

In her latest book, *Hope for Animals and Their World: How Endangered Species Are Being Rescued from the Brink*, she writes, "There are surely



plants and animals living in the remote places beyond our current knowledge. There are discoveries yet to be made."

And, she says, there are species that have been pulled back from extinction by dedicated environmentalists. The book is a collection of stories about those species and a celebration of the spirited efforts that saved them.

The best friend on Earth of man is the tree. When we use the tree respectfully and economically, we have one of the greatest resources of the Earth.

-- Frank Lloyd Wright



Uses of Mpingo Within Africa

The current conservation status of *Dalbergia melanoxylon*/African blackwood/mpingo, is considered to be 'near threatened' as designated by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Large scale extraction for the music trade and wood manufacturing was initiated in Kenya in the 1800's, and the species is now commercially extinct in that country due to over-exploitation. Although it grows in scattered populations in numerous areas of sub-Saharan Africa, only in Tanzania and Mozambique are its numbers of sufficient quantity for commercial purposes, thus concentrating international extraction in that area. This has left stands there vulnerable to possible future extinction, as happened in Kenya.

As happens frequently with international extraction of indigenous natural resources, it can be tricky within the country of origin to find a balance between local usage of a product and exportation. And indeed, many people within Africa rely on mpingo for their own livelihood needs, as described below.

Since the burgeoning of tourism in Eastern Africa, wood carving cooperatives have trained many skilled carvers to produce salable items for international visitors. Thousands of African families are being supported by this industry, but because of increased competition with foreign manufacturers, woodcarvers are experiencing difficulties in obtaining sufficient usable timber for their art.

Another widespread use of the tree within Africa is in the production of charcoal. Although this is an unfortunate utilization of the resource, it is not surprising on a continent on which 80% of energy use is based on wood resources. Villagers also use mpingo in construction and the making of utensils and tools, such as hoes and instrument handles.

The tree has numerous medicinal uses, again, hardly surprising in areas where most people cannot afford the services of a doctor. The roots can be used to treat abdominal pain and hernia. The bark from the root and the stem is an antidiarrhetic and the smoke of burning roots is inhaled to treat headaches and bronchitis. The juice from leaves can be used to treat sore throats, heart problems, dysentery, syphilis, and gonorrhea. A decoction of the bark is used for cleaning wounds. In some areas, the wood is boiled to produce a broth that is used to bathe all newborn babies. This is believed to impart strength.

The objective of the ABCP is to replant mpingo in areas where it will be protected for future generations, in order to replenish dwindling reserves. In the future these trees will offer a rich resource for western manufacturers and the people of Africa alike.

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African Blackwood Conservation Project

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