

Tree planting season in Cameroon – by late May, early June the first rains had fallen and penetrated the soil enough to start transferring trees from the CVP nursery to planting sites.

In May and June partner schools, communities and estates around North West Province received trees from the UNAFAS CVP nursery. Most were indigenous species that have economic or social as well as environmental value. They have all been grown from seed collected by members in various locations around Cameroon .

Oshie and Njikwa, Momo division

In April three Njikwa groups received the neem seeds and nursery bags requested in December. In May, we followed this up with mahogany, njangsang and country onion trees, delivered to the compound of our local coordinator, Mr Angono Robert. These three species all grow in the Njikwa area, scattered individual trees like the mahogany tree centre right of the photo below, but people are only just starting to realise that they could plant and cultivate them. The CVP trees will be shared amongst local farmers, including members of the CWF Presbyterian Church Bereji-Oshie, who made a special request. They plan to plant on farms at the base of the hillsides, where they have seen erosion and landslip increasing, and planting eucalyptus acidifies the soil. Angono, an educator, dedicated to the development of his area and people, says that when he was young the Fon had children rounded up and forced to go to school, but now everyone knows school is important – with time he says they will come to appreciate the benefits of conservation values.



The busy household CVP Njikwa coordinator Mr Angono Robert, Oshie-Bereji.



The dried seed and bark of *Afrostryax*, common name Country onion (seedlings, left) have strong onion /garlic scent and flavour, and are popular spices that fetch a good price in markets across Cameroon.

Ricinodendron heudelotii, or Njangsang is a fast growing tree. The seeds are used as a nutritious flavouring and thickener for sauces and condiments. Processing is time-consuming, but the market value is good, and demand high. Once the cracking machine, soon expected on the market, is available it will help village and large scale production enormously.

Mbeme, Momo division

In January when the headmistress of Mbeme Primary school learned about our tree planting work she asked if we could find shade trees for their exposed school yard (below). Pupils and teachers were thrilled when we took *Terminalia mantaly* trees, they are attractive and cast wide shade nice to sit under (lower left). The older pupils have planted the trees, and are responsible for the upkeep next year.



Menchum division

Afrostryax, *Garcinia kola* and *Tetrapleura* were despatched in May, to Menchum. Fewer species than past years because now trees are being produced in the area, in the twelve nurseries set up and run by local UNAFAS CVP groups, reported at www.unafas.org. Trees from Ngyen Mbo and more from our Wum nursery were shared between four Wum schools on Environment Day – introducing a tree-planting experience and mentality to the students.

Tetrapleura tetaptera matures into a large buttressed tree with a spreading crown. The seedlings (right) are to be planted in public areas. The seeds and pods are aromatic, valued and marketed as a spice.

Bitter kola, another forest tree, has a juicy orange fruit, but the seeds are particularly valuable, popular and widely marketed - like a crunchy nut, they are chewed as a stimulant or digestive.

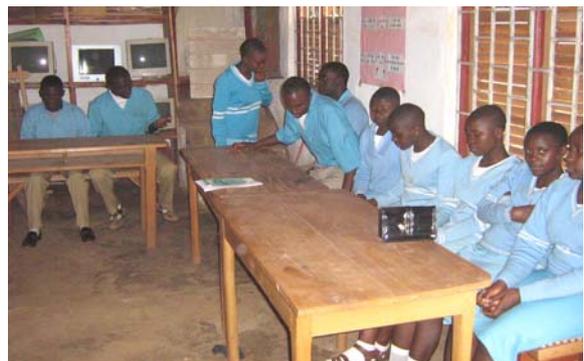


Nurseries in Befang, Benakuma and Modele are experimenting with Eru – 50 seedlings from Limbe Botanic Garden were planted in May. Our previous attempts to grow Eru in Ngyen Mbo were unsuccessful, but the lower altitude and higher temperatures in Menchum will be more suitable. If these plants grow, then cuttings will be taken and propagated to produce enough plants to set up Eru farms.

Eru – *Gnetum africanum* - is a forest vine that grows up to 60 m long. The leaves are harvested, sliced finely and used as the main ingredient in several very popular dishes. The demand for Eru is high, it is exported in large quantities to neighbouring and non-African countries. Until recently all Eru was harvested from the wild. Limbe Botanic Garden developed methods of cultivating Eru and help farmers introduce it on their farms, and as a plantation crop.

Trees in Secondary Schools

In 2007 we gave trees to ISTP (the educational advisory service to the Presbyterian and Baptist schools), they were shared amongst interested secondary colleges. The Environment Club of PCHS Kumbo (right) planted 'njangsa'(below). Now that rain has fallen they will know if this struggling with the altitude of Kumbo, insects or lack of water made this one look sad. More attentive than many, the pupils used bamboo to protect most of their trees against grazing animals.



The schools interest in 'Njansa' is two-fold: economic, they can generate and save money by selling the seeds, and processing them to use in school kitchens; and educational, pupils and teachers learn about the value of, and how to cultivate, native economic species.



Njansang planted at BHS Mankon

More njansang trees and neem went out in June 2008, destinations include PCC Nkwen, BHS Mankon, PCHS Kumbo and the ISTP training centre.

Neem – *Azadirachta indica* is an exotic tree, from India, an ideal shade tree. It's multiple uses, simple processing and value as an applied educational tool caught the attention of schools last year. Neem leaves stop weevils and other insects destroying maize, bean and rice stores – foodstuffs that the schools buy in bulk. It is also a natural pesticide. Extracting the active oil is a process that can be carried out as a part of practical chemistry classes.