

TREE BIOTECHNOLOGY PROJECT- KENYA 2006 NEWS BITS

- The project nursery in Karura has tremendously been expanded and a new information center built with locally procured materials including wooden poles from the project woodlot. The center will be used to demonstrate to customers the establishment and management of tree plantations as well as an electronic tour of the nursery.
- The nursery has continued to deliver clonal trees to farmers in Kenya and beyond. The partner projects in the region have greatly benefited from the Karura nursery in terms of planting materials and training in tree clonal nursery management. The nursery now has a capacity to produce over 4 million rooted cuttings annually.
- *E. grandis* and *E. urophylla* from selected local trees and those from Mondi seedlings selections are have been propagated for inclusion into the clonal trials established in April 2006 and those planned for October 2006.
- The experiment to propagate clones in a “home-made” tunneling technique was extremely successful and is now fully optimized for adoption by community-based entrepreneurs to propagate materials on a small scale and in the rural areas. The clones that appear to be suitable with this method and consistently rooting at a percentage of over 60% are, GC15, GC 3, GC167, GC785 and GC796.
- Two Pine species seeds received from CAMCORE have been germinated using the facility successfully and dispatched to the three East African member country National Forestry Institutions for establishment of the first CAMCORE trials in East Africa. In total over 15,000 seedlings of *P. maximinoi* and *P. tecunuminii* were raised and dispatched from TBP Kenya.
- One successful field day was held on 28th April 2006 at Mwea in Central Province on an 11/2-year farmer’s woodlot. The field day was attended by over 300 small scale farmers and a cross section of local leaders both government and civics led by the local MP and District Commissioner for Kirinyaga District. ISAAA *Africentre* Director delivered a talk on “Partnerships with Communities in Biotechnology Information Dissemination”. Amongst the institutions that participated were KEFRI, Forest Department, Ministry of Agriculture, NEMA, local NGO’s and CBO’s.



TBP staff takes farmers through various varieties of Eucalyptus during the Mwea field day

- A distribution center (holding nursery) has been established in Meru following the workshop with the extension service providers of the Eastern Province. The center will facilitate easy access to small tree growers in the region due to the increasing demand for the plants especially by the tea factories and farmers who are to be contracted by the factories as well BAT tobacco farmers
- A new clonal trial site has been planted in Meru where the Methodist Church has donated a site. It lies in a marginal area with 600-800mm rainfall annually. This is typical marginal site and data from the trial will be useful in selection of most suitable clones and species for uptake by the local communities.
- The technical committee met on 26th June 2006 to review Mondi's backstopping and to discuss issues of the blue gum chalcid infestation and epidemiology in Kenya and possible IPM strategies. A brochure on updates in form of a 'Pest Alert' has been released by KEFRI as part of ongoing information dissemination.
- Errol Duncan of Mondi Business Paper carried out the backstopping exercise in Kenya for five days (11th-15th June 2006). He managed to visit among others Karura nursery, clonal trial sites in the Coast namely Gede, Sokoke and Msambweni, and farmers' woodlots in Kilifi and Mtwapa. ISAAA Africentre Director accompanied him together with TBP and KEFRI staff on the field visits and held a rap-up meeting on future collaboration on the 15th June 2006 in Nairobi.

- As part of the awareness creation and exhibition of clonal technology, the project took part in the Meru Agricultural show (Eastern Province).