

A closer look at the tree planting campaign

The following information was provided by the director of the World Agro-forestry Center in Kigali, (alias ICRAF) in an interview conducted by our team member Joshua Cyitaitire, complemented with information drawn from an article in *TNT*, 2005/07/18-19. WAC and ISAR (Institute for Agricultural and Scientific Research) have collaborated in on-farm applied research and extension activities on progressive terracing in the central plateau and the northern highlands of Rwanda.

According to World Agroforestry Center, the most important trees planted for reforestation, are as follows:

In high altitude regions, such as Ruhengeri, Gisenyi (a part), Byumba, Kibuye (a part), Gikongoro, the recommended trees are *Alnus acuminata*, *Mimosa seabrela*, *Mimosa seabrela* and *Polysia fulva*.

In moderate altitude regions, such as Butare, Gitarama, Kigali-Ngali the recommended trees are *Grevillea robusta*, *Cedrela serrata*, *Podocarpus*, *Casuarina equisetifolia*, *Calliandra*, *Leucaena*, *Moringa oleifera*, *Mimosa seabrela*, *Maesopsis eminii* and *Markhamia lutea*.

In low altitude regions, the recommended trees are *Calliandra*, *Leucaena*, *Cassia spectabilis*, *Cedrela serrata* and *Markhamia lutea*.

The wood is used for firewood, building, carpentry, furniture, poles for beans and other crops, posts, fodder, soil improvement, reinforcement of anti-erosion embankments. Some trees thrive in the warmer low-altitude conditions. They grow faster than the trees in the other regions.

As an example, let us consider *Calliandra Calothyrsus*. It is a small thornless often multi-stemmed shrub. Its leaves and pods are rich in protein and do not contain any toxic substances. The leaf fodder can be given to all types of ruminants. The flowers contain nectar and because flowering lasts throughout the year, they are valuable for beekeepers. It is a good firewood species: fast growing, easy to regenerate. The rootstock is very vigorous and will sprout readily. The wood can also be used for staking. It is particularly suitable for erosion control as it dominates weeds, fixes atmospheric nitrogen on its roots, is compatible with crops, and makes excellent green manure with its abundant high-protein leaf biomass.