

ALT TREE NURSERY



A principle environmental concern of the Trust has been the issue of de-forestation in southern Madagascar.

The unique spiny forest of the Androy has been under sustained pressure to provide fuel, especially charcoal for the urban areas of Ft Dauphin.

When the Trust began its fuel efficient stove programme in 1999 women reported that they often had to walk a full day to find fuel wood. The stove project recognised that addressing conservation also meant addressing social issues.

Community Forest Management in southern Madagascar is challenging. Low rainfall, grinding poverty, pressure for fuel, migration, and food insecurity affect the community's ability to protect its forest resource.

The ALT tree nursery was set up in 2003 and has produced and distributed over 30,000 trees

ALT has taken a family based approach to tree planting. Families have been helped to plant trees in their own *tokotany* (back yard), and sustain them with the small remains of used water from the house. This localised ownership of the trees affords local people a better chance of managing and nurturing their resource.



By increasing the number of trees planted at family level for domestic use as food, fodder and fuel for, the Trust aims to reduce pressure on the forests.

Trees have been distributed to families, schools and associations together with training in how to protect and grow healthy trees. The nursery has also grown and researched sorghum varieties (for the Drought Mitigation Programme) and provided trees for stabilising dunes on the southern coast.

The Trust has also promoted tree planting as a means to increase land tenure security at local and regional levels - planted trees are one of the principal (and traditional) indicators of land ownership.



Over a number of years the tree nursery benefitted from local management support by Peace Corps Volunteers. It also gained additional funding under the Drought Mitigation Programme, scaling up its production of trees as well its trainings for families, schools and association

In 2007 the nursery was dedicated to the memory of **MAREK MAYER**, founder of the Andrew Lees Trust, one of Andrew's closest friends, and a dedicated advocate for conserving and planting forest in southern Madagascar. His son Jamie travelled to Tsiombé to unveil a stone dedicated to Marek's memory.



In 2009 the Tree nursery was transferred into the local ownership of ALT Madagascar as part of the transition to a Malagasy led ALT NGO. It has been producing thousands of trees for the ALT **Emergency Relief Programme**, which has re-planted areas of spiny forest as well as stabilising dunes.

SUSTAINABILITY



In 2008 the Trust began implementing a strategy to ensure that the tree nursery could function in a sustainable way after the end of the DMP project. The number of permanent workers on the nursery site was reduced and the price of the trees increased.

During the first two years of the DMP project the price of each tree was largely symbolic, but during the final year before it was increased to remain affordable for local farmers but sufficient to cover the majority of the growing costs. The sustainability of this tree-nursery is essential for the region, as it is the only one in the district of Tsiombé.

