

The Rufford Small Grants Foundation

Final Report

Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford Small Grants Foundation.

We ask all grant recipients to complete a Final Report Form that helps us to gauge the success of our grant giving. We understand that projects often do not follow the predicted course but knowledge of your experiences is valuable to us and others who may be undertaking similar work. Please be as honest as you can in answering the questions – remember that negative experiences are just as valuable as positive ones if they help others to learn from them.

Please complete the form in English and be as clear and concise as you can. We will ask for further information if required. If you have any other materials produced by the project, particularly a few relevant photographs, please send these to us separately.

Please submit your final report to jane@rufford.org.

Thank you for your help.

Josh Cole Grants Director

Grant Recipient Details	
Your name	Khun Bala
Project title	Initiation of community conservation efforts in Myanmar with focus on endemic queen of flowering tree (Pride of Myanmar)
RSG reference	40.02.08
Reporting period	July 20th 2008 - October 20th 2009
Amount of grant	£5,900
Your email address	khunproject@gmail.com
Date of this report	October 31st 2009

1. Please indicate the level of achievement of the project’s original objectives and include any relevant comments on factors affecting this.

Objective	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Fully achieved	Comments
Field survey of “Tree Of Heaven” in the project area, Yangon, Myanmar.			+++	This objective was fully achieved. It was achieved through field investigation with team members and local part-time workers. We also called <i>Amherstia nobilis</i> as The Pride Of Burma, Orchid Tree, Tree Of Heaven, Queen Of Flowing tree, Lady Amherst’s Pheasant, and “Thawka-Gyi” (as Myanmar Name).
Educate local communities about the tremendous importance of <i>Amherstia nobilis</i> and their habitats			+++	This objective was fully achieved through meetings, public extensions, environmental talks, distribution of handouts and expressing the <i>Amherstia nobilis</i> conservation awareness on the media. The results of implementation of these activities have significantly helped local communities and stakeholders to be more aware of the environment and developed interest in joining the project team in the fight against loss of “Tree Of Heaven” trees in the project area.
Planting the young <i>Amherstia nobilis</i> in the project site			+++	Due to local communities’ participation and understanding on the vital role of <i>Amherstia nobilis</i> , this objective was also achieved. During project period, more than 400 saplings were planted in local communities’ areas (including the monasteries areas).
Local communities involvement in the conservation of <i>Amherstia nobilis</i>			+++	As we have mainly focused on the local communities’ awareness on <i>Amherstia nobilis</i> during the whole project period, at the present, we also achieved this objective. Due to the outcomes of public extensions, now, local communities participate in the “Thawka-Gyi” trees conservation as they understand that this tree species is essential for their environment and next generations.

2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).

Some of unforeseen difficulties such as lack of encouragement from local communities and lack of *Amherstia nobilis* conservation awareness among local residents, were observed in the early stage of project. We have understood that these main factors can postpone our nature conservation work. However, we have passed these difficulties by public extension procedures such as meetings, handout distribution, and media expression to local communities. After they have recognized our project's aims, they are participating in the *Amherstia nobilis* conservation works by planting and caring for the saplings and conserve the "Tree of Heaven" in their region.

3. Briefly describe the three most important outcomes of your project.

(I) Improving of *Amherstia nobilis* conservation knowledge among local communities

Understanding of nature conservation knowledge within the local communities is first of the three most important outcomes of our project. Now, local communities understand that they have to conserve this "Queen of Flowing Tree" species for their environment, biodiversity enrichment, and next generations to enjoy it.

(II) More than 400 *Amherstia nobilis* saplings have planted by local communities.

After public extension to local communities including the commercial nursery farms owners, the plantation of "Orchid Tree" saplings are obviously increased. This practice will encourage their generations to participate in the "Orchid Tree" conservation again.

Besides, some people around and near the project area are coming the commercial nursery farms and then buying some saplings of "Orchid Tree" to planting in their gardens, home areas again. Moreover, some persons are coming due to description of farm owners to their customers relating the endangered value of "Orchid Tree" and which should receive the first priority plantation rather than not endangered flora species. This custom will encourage the continued existence and conservation of "Orchid Tree".

(III) Long-lasting participation of commercial nursery farm owners in the propagation of tree

Due to public extensions to the local communities and local nursery farms owners, nowadays, commercial nursery farm owners understand that "Thawka-Gyi" is endemic and endangered species in Myanmar and they can participate in the saving and conservation of this precious tree in their farms. Thus, they have propagated more than 500 saplings in their nursery farms during project period and then selling again with appropriate charges to many local communities widely. Some saplings were donated by nursery farms owners (due to their conservation awareness) to public access areas such as monasteries, schools, and parks. Nowadays, these commercial nursery farm owners are continually participating in propagation of "Thawka-Gyi" in their farms for long time due to conservation awareness and some profits can receive from selling saplings. These facts are also very important for "Thawka-Gyi" endurance and conservation in Myanmar.

4. Briefly describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefitted from the project (if relevant).

This valuable project cannot occur if local communities don't involvement. We have known that some local communities will continually participate in the *Amherstia nobilis* conservation after the project period as conservation awareness present in their attitudes respectively. Therefore, we have

understood that awareness of nature conservation awareness among local communities and understanding of their environment value are t benefits of local residents from this project. Besides, many people including some scientists, researchers, and nature conservationists who never known about the *Amherstia nobilis* species can notice and interest, so further research and uses of this species both as medicine and as ornamental things will be discovered and known due to conservation of existing *Amherstia nobilis* and replanting of its saplings. Thus, these will be beneficial to local communities beyond the project period and until their future generations.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

We are planning to contribute the conservation and planting of this *Amherstia nobilis* species in other parts of Myanmar (with regarding the species physiology acceptable to its environment). This is so because, environmental problems can only be addressed through environmental education, awareness and strengthening human capacity building at grassroots' level so that they should fully understand and develop interest in nature conservation and eventually become responsible citizens. With this commitment, I am interesting to continue this work of conservation of *Amherstia nobilis* in Myanmar again.

6. How do you plan to share the results of your work with others?

I have a plan to share the results and experiences of my works to local communities in other regions. Besides, I am also interesting to share my work experience to international nature conservationists, organizations and any interested people around the world. I have shared my work experience and concepts on *Amherstia nobilis* conservation to local communities in the project area firstly, and then, shared to my friends and some of nature organizations' members by networking method, email and web communication, public access official media expression, and public extension procedures.

7. Timescale: Over what period was the RSG used? How does this compare to the anticipated or actual length of the project?

The RSG was used for 15 months from July 20, 2008 to October 20, 2009 instead of 12 months.

8. Budget: Please provide a breakdown of budgeted versus actual expenditure and the reasons for any differences. All figures should be in £ sterling, indicating the local exchange rate used.

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Planting and nursery	1500	1500	***	
Subsistence allowance	1200	1200	***	
Conservation education/ Public extension	1000	1200	-200	
Salary for 3 part-time local workers	900	600	+300	
Salary for supervisor	600	600	***	
Travel expenses	400	500	-100	
Publishing and reports	200	200	***	
Communication fee (phone, fax, & internet)	100	100	***	
TOTAL	5900	5900	***	

*The prevailing exchange rate at the time of the project execution was £1= 2400 K. (K= Kyat, Myanmar currency)

9. Looking ahead, what do you feel are the important next steps?

The important next steps will be:

- a) to educate many people across the country through the National Newspaper and famous journal relating *Amherstia nobilis* value, conservation awareness, endangered status and need to plantation widely.
- b) some people have a rights or responsibilities to plant any public access new plant species in their homes, gardens, monasteries or public access areas, here, they should give the high priority for planting endangered plant species (which can survival and reproduce in that ecosystem) including *Amherstia nobilis*, rather than other not endangered plant species, for encourage and in-kind support to nature conservation and next generations to enjoy it.
- c) Instillation and recuperation the concepts and conservation awareness of *Amherstia nobilis* to new generations are highly important among local residents.

10. Did you use the RSGF logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the RSGF receive any publicity during the course of your work?

Yes, I used the RSGF logo on the environmental education materials and in the public extension work for *Amherstia nobilis* conservation. The RSGF received publicity during the course of the work.

11. Any other comments?

Biological diversity is important for life on Earth and is one of the pillars of sustainable development. Our continued deriving of benefits from biodiversity, both now and for future generations will depend upon how we use it and how our activities impact upon ecosystem function and goods and services. Therefore, we have to conserve this *Amherstia nobilis* (also known as The Pride of Burma, Orchid Tree, Tree of Heaven, Queen of Flowing tree, Lady Amherst's Pheasant, and "Thawka-Gyi") for our ecosystem and next generation to enjoy it.

Finally, I like to express my heartfelt thanks to the Rufford Small Grants Foundation for Nature Conservation (RSGF), for the financial grant which made possible for this project to achieve its fruitful results. Without its support, I could not finish my *Amherstia nobilis* conservation work.