



Twelfth Edition December 2025

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Forestry Commission Zimbabwe Charts the Path for the Next Five Years



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Minister of Environment, Climate and Wildlife, Honourable Evelyn Ndlovu, planting her tree during the Mashonaland West Provincial Event

Zimbabwe National Tree Planting Day 2025: Devolution in Action



His Excellency Muhammed Seoudi, Ambassador of Algeria, representing the Dean of African Ambassadors, H.E. James Musoni of Rwanda at the Mashonaland West Provincial event attended by many African Ambassadors

Zimbabwe National Tree Planting Day 2025: Devolution in Action

The devolved approach to National Tree Planting Day ensures that each province identifies its own priorities, mobilizes local resources, and engages communities in ways that resonate with their unique environmental challenges. In Mashonaland West, the choice of Kutama College as the venue reflected the province's commitment to educating and empowering young people as custodians of the environment.

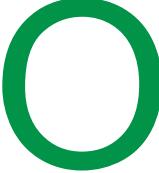
...more news from Mashonaland West



The Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution for Mashonaland West, Honourable Marian Chombo planting during the Mashonaland West provincial event.



CEO- Nyaradzo Group, Mr Philip Mataranyika (right) who was instrumental in the establishment of the Friends of The Environment, a local greening movement, planting a tree at the Mashonaland West event.

n 6 December 2025, Zimbabwe commemorated its annual National Tree Planting Day, a flagship event held on the first Saturday of December to promote environmental sustainability, preserve biodiversity, and strengthen community livelihoods. This year's celebrations carried a strong emphasis on the devolved approach, ensuring that provinces, districts, and communities actively participated in shaping and implementing forestry initiatives that directly benefit their local environments.

of African Ambassadors added an international dimension to the event, reinforcing that forests are a shared heritage and responsibility. Their involvement signaled the importance of cross-border collaboration in addressing environmental challenges that transcend national boundaries. Also in attendance were the Minister of Environment, Climate and Wildlife, Honourable Evelyn Ndlovu, and the Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution for Mashonaland West, Honourable Marian Chombo, alongside organisers and participants of the Friends of the Environment walkathon, traditional leaders, schools, and community members. Their collective presence highlighted the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration in advancing Zimbabwe's green agenda.

In Mashonaland West Province, the commemorations were hosted at Kutama College in Zvimba, bringing together a diverse mix of stakeholders; diplomats, schools, communities, and conservation partners for a worthy cause.

The event symbolized how devolution empowers provinces to take ownership of environmental stewardship while aligning with national priorities. The ceremony was presided over by His Excellency Muhammed Seoudi, Ambassador of Algeria, representing the Dean of African Ambassadors, H.E. James Musoni of Rwanda. He was joined by fellow African Ambassadors, underscoring the spirit of regional solidarity and cooperation in tackling climate change and promoting sustainable forestry. The participation

As Zimbabwe moves forward, the Forestry Commission and its partners will continue to champion the devolved approach, ensuring that every province plays a leading role in greening the nation. National Tree Planting Day 2025 has reaffirmed that when communities, government, and international partners come together, the vision of a sustainable, climate-resilient Zimbabwe is within reach.

National Tree Planting Day Commemorated in Makonde District, Mash West



Tree planting by Guest of Honour (MECW representative), Ms Reppoh

On 16 December 2025, the National Tree Planting Day was commemorated at Finland Village Business Unit in Makonde District, Mashonaland West Province, drawing a crowd of about 1,250 participants. The event, chosen as the First Lady's designated venue, brought together government officials, traditional leaders, and local communities in a united show of commitment to environmental stewardship. Among the dignitaries were Dr Douglas Mombeshora, Minister of Health and Child Care and Member of Parliament for Mhangura, representatives of the Ministers of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution, and Environment, Climate and Wildlife, as well as Acting Chief Nemakonde and officials from the Forestry Commission.

The highlight of the day was the symbolic planting of the Tree of the Year, *Kigelia africana* (sausage tree), underscoring the importance of restoring indigenous species and building climate-resilient landscapes. In opening remarks, the Ministry of Devolution's representative raised concern over deforestation caused by tobacco curing and mining, while commending the Forestry Commission's efforts in promoting sustainable forest management. The host community, represented by Mr Shoko, expressed gratitude for the establishment of a community orchard and woodlot, which promise to improve livelihoods through fruit, fuelwood, and income opportunities while easing pressure on natural forests. The keynote address emphasized tree planting as a vital tool in combating climate change,

highlighting its role in carbon sequestration, soil and water conservation, and biodiversity protection. The *Kigelia africana* was celebrated for its ecological and cultural significance, with a call to safeguard indigenous trees



Tree planting by Guest of Honour MP, Dr. D. Mombeshora

for future generations. Closing the event, Dr Mombeshora praised the Forestry Commission for not only organizing a symbolic occasion but also demonstrating practical tree-planting techniques, urging continued collaboration between government and communities to ensure trees thrive to maturity. The commemorations served as a powerful reminder of the deep connection between sustainable forestry, climate action, and rural development, reinforcing Zimbabwe's commitment to building a greener and more resilient future through collective effort.



Key note address by Guest of Honour Representative Mrs Reppoh



Address by Provincial Forestry Extension Manager- Mrs S. Magumeni



Part of the crowd that participated



Rydings College Hosts Tree Planting Event



Rydings College in Karoi, Hurungwe, recently held a vibrant tree planting event that united students, teachers, and distinguished guests in a shared commitment to environmental conservation. The occasion was highlighted by the presence of Mr. Chitepo from Wildlife and Environment, who delivered an inspiring address on the importance of tree planting and sustainable land management. The initiative was made possible through strong partnerships between Forestry Commission, My Trees trust, the Environmental Management Agency (EMA), the Hurungwe Rural District Council. Together, participants planted 250 trees including sausage, acacia, pine, and K. Croton

species, demonstrating both teamwork and dedication.

Mr. Chitepo underscored the role of trees in combating climate change, preserving biodiversity, and supporting community livelihoods, urging students to take responsibility for nurturing the saplings to maturity. The head teacher expressed heartfelt gratitude to all partners and participants, celebrating the event's success as a powerful example of collaboration. This initiative at Rydings College stands as a model for schools and communities across Zimbabwe, showing how collective action can drive meaningful progress in environmental sustainability.

Fostering a Greener Tomorrow: December Tree Planting in Sanyati District



Tree planting session at central police station in Kadoma

In December 2025, Sanyati District witnessed a transformative wave of tree planting initiatives that united schools, police stations, and community members in the fight against climate change. Across Montana Primary School, Rondor Primary School, and several ZRP Police Stations, an impressive **2,200 trees**—including Eucalyptus, Avocado, Flamboyant, and Mango—were planted to restore ecosystems, enrich biodiversity, and strengthen local livelihoods.

The events, held on December 2, 4, and 6, were spearheaded by local leaders such as Reverend Gumedhe, Mr. Dick (CCBICA CEO), and Spt Kugara, alongside school development and resource management committees. Their leadership underscored the collaborative spirit of the initiatives, which combined ecological

restoration with community empowerment. Active participation from students, teachers, and residents fostered a sense of ownership, while the provision of reliable water supplies ensured the survival of the young trees. Beyond planting, the events served as educational platforms, highlighting the role of trees in carbon sequestration, air purification, and habitat creation.

By planting 2,200 trees, Sanyati District not only strengthened its resilience against deforestation and climate change but also reaffirmed its commitment to sustainable development. These initiatives stand as a powerful example of how collective action can build a greener, healthier, and more prosperous future for generations to come.



Tree planting at Rondor primary school



ECD-B class at Montana primary school

Mashonaland East Province

Greening Harare: National Tree Planting Day at Hillside Park



*Acting Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife, Mr Washington Zhakata planting a *Kigelia africana* (Mumvee) tree at Hillside Park, Harare*



*Forestry Commission Board of Commissioners, Commissioner Dr. N. Matshe and Commissioner H. Greaves planting *Kigelia africana* and beefwood respectively at Hillside Park*

Harare Metropolitan Province proudly joined the nation in commemorating National Tree Planting Day at Hillside Recreational Park on 6 December 2025. The event highlighted the importance of environmental stewardship and community participation in building a greener future. A total of 100 trees were planted, including 2 *Kigelia africana* and 98 assorted ornamental trees, adding beauty and ecological value to the park.

The Guest of Honour, the Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution Hon Senator C Tavengwa, was represented by Mr. Washington Zhakata, Acting Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife.

The Forestry Commission was represented by Board Members Commissioner Dr. N. Matshe and Commissioner H. Greaves, while the Mayor of Harare was represented by Councillor Shehende.

Community involvement was strong, with 200 adults participating in the planting exercise. Their collective effort underscored the spirit of unity and the shared responsibility of safeguarding the environment for future generations.

In his speech, the Guest of Honour emphasized that government's commitment goes beyond tree planting to embrace the broader vision of sustainable forest management. Plans are underway to formalize and grow bio prospecting and bio trade, unlocking the economic potential of non timber forest products such as wild fruits, medicinal plants, fibres, and craft materials. By

promoting sustainable harvesting, value addition, and market development, biodiversity will be positioned as a driver of inclusive growth, ecological sustainability, and industrial development.

He further highlighted that tree planting is a responsibility that calls upon every Zimbabwean, from households to schools, communities, wards, and chiefdoms. Fruit trees are noted as a source of both environmental restoration and economic empowerment. Establishing orchards in homes and communities can provide food security, nutrition, and income opportunities, while schools can use fruit trees to support feeding programs and instill environmental stewardship in learners.

By embracing this collective responsibility, tree planting is transformed from a symbolic act into a practical engine of economic empowerment,



A very tall jacaranda planted at the Hillside park by the Harare Parks Representative Mr Chigumbu



Matabeleland South Province

The Matabeleland south provincial tree planting commemorations were held in Insiza and brought together over 400 participants, including learners, teachers, administrators, stakeholders, and the local community, in a strong demonstration of environmental stewardship. During the event, 250 exotic and indigenous trees were planted under the theme "Trees and Forests for Ecosystem Restoration and Improved Livelihoods" (2021–2025), which aligns with NDS1, Vision 2030, and the Global Sustainable Development Goals. Dignitaries and learners planted indigenous and fruit tree species around the school premises, including the Sausage Tree (Mumvee/Umvebe) highlighted as the tree of the year due to its ecological, cultural, and medicinal importance.

Representing the Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution, Hon. Nguluvhe, Director Infrastructure planning and Environmental management Mr D. Njowa emphasized that tree planting is a shared national responsibility and reinforced that forests are vital not only for environmental preservation but also for health, climate stability, tourism, and economic development, serving as integral components of Zimbabwe's ecosystems and livelihoods.

Learners taking part in the tree planting exercise In line with the theme, the Minister reinforced the message that 'trees and forests are more than just part of our natural landscape, they are integral to our health, our ecosystems and our economy. They produce clean air, maintain water quality

and provide habitats for diverse flora and fauna, which form the backbone of our tourism industry'. Also speaking at the event, Forestry Commission Board member, Commissioner Stewart Mantula said trees and forests remain central to the livelihoods of many communities and industries calling for collective conservation efforts. 'Each year, The Forestry Commission distributes seedlings, co-ordinates planting events and engages stakeholders to restore degraded landscapes. This year, we are adopting a devolved approach to encourage community involvement and ownership' he said. Mr Mantula said the devolved approach fosters deeper community connection to environmental issues and promotes sustained engagement beyond National Tree Planting Day. Commissioner Mantula assured the crowd that Forestry Commission will continue implementing policies that meet the needs of Stakeholders across the country.



Learners taking part in the tree planting exercise

Bulilima District Adopts Agroforestry Practices to Build Community Resilience



Ward 2 agroforestry leader explaining the backfilling procedure

In an effort to strengthen community resilience to climate change, the Forestry Commission, in collaboration with Bulilima Rural District Council, AGRITEX/ARDA, Environmental Management Agency, and ORAP, established agroforestry plots in Wards 2 (Gwambe), 4 (Nyele), and 20 (Dombodema). This initiative was implemented under the Enhancing Resilience of Communities and Ecosystems in the face of a changing Climate in Semi-Arid and Arid Regions in Zimbabwe project, which is funded by the Adaptation Fund.

The programme commenced with an agroforestry capacity-building workshop. A total of twenty agroforestry leaders were selected from each ward to participate in the training. The workshop focused on key aspects of agroforestry, including its principles, suitable



Ward 20 agroforestry leader explaining post planting management practices

agroforestry tree species, agroforestry systems and practices, proper tree-planting procedures, and the role of agroforestry in enhancing climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Following the training, each ward received support in the form of fodder and fruit trees, which were planted at the homesteads of the agroforestry leaders to serve as demonstration sites. To further raise awareness on the National Tree Planting Day and promote proper tree-planting techniques, the aforementioned departments, agroforestry leaders and community members gathered to commemorate the event. As a result, two hundred and seventy fruit and fodder trees were planted across the three wards.

A Day of Environmental Stewardship in Gwanda



Forestry Commission Vice Board Chair, Mrs S. Bhebhe (in white) as part of the dignitaries at the tree planting event.

On 18 December 2025, the Forestry Commission of Zimbabwe joined hands with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe (ELCZ) in a commendable initiative spearheaded by Bishop Dr. M.M.S. Dube. The event, held at Bishop Dube's homestead in Ntepe, Gwanda District, was dedicated to promoting environmental sustainability through tree planting. The tree planting day was graced by several notable figures; Mr. Ayakihwe Moyo, Gwanda Vice District Development Coordinator (DDC), served as the Guest of Honour; Mrs. S. Bhebhe, Vice Board Chair of the Forestry Commission and Mr. Zimhlophe Ndlovu, Gwanda District Agritex Extension Officer among others.

Their presence underscored the importance of collaboration between government institutions, faith-based organizations, and local communities in advancing sustainable development. More than 100 trees were planted during the event, comprising both indigenous and exotic species. This diverse selection reflects a commitment

to balancing ecological preservation with practical community needs. A highlight of the event was the ceremonial planting of the Tree of the Year, performed by Guest of Honour Mr. Moyo, symbolizing leadership in environmental stewardship and the collective responsibility to safeguard Zimbabwe's forests. The Forestry Commission expressed deep appreciation to all participants and reaffirmed its dedication to; Promoting sustainable forestry practices across Zimbabwe; Encouraging participatory tree planting initiatives that involve communities, institutions, and individuals and Raising awareness about the role of trees in combating climate change, preventing land degradation, and supporting livelihoods. This initiative highlights how faith-based organizations can play a pivotal role in environmental conservation. By hosting such events, the church not only nurtures spiritual growth but also fosters ecological responsibility, ensuring that future generations inherit a greener, healthier Zimbabwe.



Minister of State for Provincial affairs and Devolution-Midlands- Hon Owen Ncube planting an indigenous tree at Chenxi mine assisted by Commissioner S. Sithole

Midlands Province

The Midlands Province successfully launched National Tree Planting Day on 6 December 2025, holding its main ceremony at Chenxi Mines in Boterekwa, Shurugwi District. The event was officiated by the Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution, Hon. Owen Mudha Ncube, who underscored the urgent need to restore forest cover on mined and degraded lands. Mining

companies answered the call: Unki Mine planted 1,300 indigenous trees—adding to more than 20 hectares restored since 2018—while Bester Mine, Sino Zimbabwe, Mimoso, Zim Alloys, ZIMASCO and numerous small-scale miners also took part. In total, mining firms planted over 16,000 trees during the second week of December, demonstrating a strong commitment to environmental rehabilitation.



Officer Mudzinganyama demonstrating tree planting at Bester mine



Zimasco workers ready for a tree planting in Shurugwi

The province also prioritized afforestation across vulnerable grasslands, distributing more than 10,000 eucalyptus seedlings to communities in Somabhula (Gweru), Lalapanzi (Chirumhanzu) and parts of Shurugwi. These plantings will provide firewood, poles and bee forage, while establishing greenbelts and windbreaks that serve as practical fire-management measures. Given the high incidence of veld fires in these districts, the initiative represents a strategic investment in landscape resilience and community protection. The Green Schools Project continued to expand in December, with over 30 schools receiving trees for planting. The programme aims to establish woodlots that supply construction poles, generate income and act as windbreaks, while orchards

are being planted to improve pupil nutrition. By embedding climate adaptation and sustainable resource management into school activities, the project strengthens local capacity and fosters long-term stewardship among young people.



DC Gokwe demonstrating tree planting.

Public awareness and community engagement were amplified through two walkathons in Chirumhanzu and Zvishavane. The Forestry Commission led the Chirumhanzu walkathon, planting 1,400 trees along a 10 km route from Moffatt to Chaka, an event officiated by Hon. B. Rwodzi. In Zvishavane, Friends of the Environment organised a 23 km walk from Murowa Diamond turnoff to Zvishavane High School, where 573 trees were planted at six stations; 220 walkers participated, reflecting broad grassroots support.



FEO Gweru at a tree planting event in Vungu area

FEO Zvishavane demonstrating planting a tree during Zvishavane walkathon





FEO Zvishavane demonstrating planting a tree during Zvishavane walkathon

Stakeholder participation was wide-ranging and robust. Gweru City Council maintained its annual planting tradition, led by Mayor Cllr. Chivhoko, while the Airforce of Zimbabwe planted at Josiah Tungamirai Airbase. The Children of Zimbabwe Liberation War Veterans Association planted at one school in each of the eight districts, and organisations such as Save Our Environment Trust, Midlands Scouts, Midlands Lions Club, Allied Timbers, World Vision, ZNA-Five Brigade and ZPCS Midlands Province contributed across multiple sites and planted over 100000 trees. Collectively, these efforts contributed to over 100 hectares of planted area across mines, schools, communal lands and institutional grounds, reinforcing partnerships between government, the private sector and civil society. The December activities advanced forest restoration, strengthened fire management, and promoted climate resilience, laying a firmer foundation for sustainable development across the Midlands Province.



FEO Chirumhanzu handing over a tree before planting

Growing a Greener Masvingo: Partnerships for Tree Planting and Sustainable Landscapes

Forests are more than just trees, they are vital to clean air, fertile soils, stable climate, and resilient communities. In

Masvingo Province, the Forestry Commission has taken a lead role in fostering collaborative tree-planting and forest conservation programs. Through strategic partnerships with diverse stakeholders from schools and local communities to universities, private sector players, security agencies, and non-governmental organizations, the Commission is transforming the province's green landscape and empowering communities to protect their environment for future generations.

The Forestry Commission's core mandate is to regulate, conserve, and expand Zimbabwe's forest resources, and this responsibility translates into action through multisectoral collaboration. Its tree-planting initiatives are anchored on the belief that joint efforts yield stronger outcomes both ecological and social. Schools across Masvingo have become important focal points for afforestation efforts. Through programs tied to **National Tree Planting Day (NTPD)** and regular tree-planting drives, learners are actively involved in planting and caring for seedlings, instilling lifelong environmental stewardship. These activities often take place alongside community members

at designated sites such as high schools and primary schools throughout the province.

Engaging youth early not only promotes environmental awareness but also fosters practical skills, from nursery management to tree care encouraging the next generation to champion sustainability. Communities and traditional leaders are indispensable partners in rural Masvingo. Village heads, chiefs, and community groups help coordinate planting days, mobilize local volunteers, and embed sustainable forestry practices within customary land management systems.

Traditional authority reinforces responsible tree-cutting rules and encourages households to plant and tend fruit and indigenous trees, which enhance food security and climate resilience.

Academic institutions including forestry and environmental sciences departments from universities offer research support, technical expertise, and training that strengthen tree-planting initiatives. Through research partnerships, evidence-based techniques in species selection, planting methods and long-term forest monitoring are integrated into community efforts, ensuring that reforestation and restoration initiatives are both scientifically sound and locally relevant.



World Food Programme and National University of Science and Technology (NUST) representatives handing over tree seedlings donated by Forestry Commission to Charumbira community ward, 12, Masvingo district during the ecosystem restoration bootcamp.

Private companies in Masvingo and beyond are partnering with the Forestry Commission as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) commitments. These collaborations contribute resources such as seedlings, funding for tree-planting exercises, and logistical support. For example, organizations like Tongaat Hullets

have consistently over the years supported tree distribution to institutions, communities reinforcing the shared goal of greening towns and rural areas. Private sector involvement enhances the reach and scale of initiatives, bringing in innovation and investment that complement government efforts.



Forestry Commission partnered with Masimba Holdings in rehabilitating borrow pits used during the construction of Harare-Beitbridge Highway

The involvement of Zimbabwe's security services including the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA), Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP), and Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Service (ZPCS) adds structure, manpower and discipline to large-scale tree-planting activities. These agencies assist in organizing community

planting days, safeguarding tree-planting sites, and even establishing dedicated tree nurseries. For instance, ZPCS has implemented fruit tree nursery projects to support tree-planting goals and engage inmates in productive, rehabilitative work that benefits communities.



ZNA planting tree of the year at 4 Infantry Brigade Masvingo, during the tree planting #NTPD2025

Non-governmental organizations play a crucial role in amplifying the Forestry Commission's tree-planting efforts. World Food Programme (WFP) through SAT, Friends of the Environment (FOTE), SCORE Against Poverty among others have actively restored ecosystems in Masvingo by planting indigenous and exotic trees in both communities and schools. They also support environmental clubs and work with local authorities to increase awareness of the ecological and social benefits of tree planting.

NGOs bring grassroots mobilization, technical assistance, funding, and advocacy for sustainable land management bridging gaps between government programmes and community needs.

The Forestry Commission's approach in Masvingo Province exemplifies how partnerships spanning education, community leadership, research, security, private enterprise and civil society can create lasting environmental impact. These collaborations have helped mobilize collective action, build local capacity, and plant thousands of trees that contribute to climate change mitigation, biodiversity conservation, and improved livelihoods.

As the province continues to expand its green footprint, the message remains clear: **trees are not just planted they are nurtured by a united community of stakeholders committed to a sustainable tomorrow.**



ZRP and ZPCS officials, Bikita stations participating in tree planting
#NTPD2025

Mutare District Steps Up for National Tree Planting Day



Mutare District proudly hosted the 2025 provincial National Tree Planting Day under the theme "Trees and Forests for Ecosystem Restoration and Improved Livelihoods." The commemorations highlighted how tree planting can support education, community empowerment, and urban renewal.

At Nyamajura Secondary School, learners, officials, and community members planted the Tree of the Year, *Kigelia africana* (Sausage Tree). The school also established a eucalyptus woodlot aligned with the Tobacco Wood Energy Programme (TWEP), ensuring a sustainable source of firewood for tobacco curing while reducing pressure on indigenous forests. An orchard and ornamental trees were added to provide nutrition and beautify the learning environment.

In Mahara, Odzi, a community woodlot was launched at Buti Dam Catchment, presided over by the Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife. The project aims to rehabilitate degraded land, secure water resources, and provide farmers with sustainable curing fuel, directly supporting TWEP. The greening efforts extended into Mutare City, where Mega Market partnered with the City of Mutare and the Forestry Commission to enhance urban green spaces under the theme "Regreening of Towns and Cities."

From schools to rural communities and urban centers, Mutare District demonstrated how tree planting can integrate ecological restoration with economic resilience and improved livelihoods, setting a strong example for sustainable development across Zimbabwe.



Nyamajura students during woodlot establishment



FEO Mutare giving a citation of the tree of the year at Buti Dam catchment tree planting event



City of Mutare and Mega Market employees during tree planting at Mega Market factory



*One of our tree farmers, Mr Chekebuwe
donating fruit trees to Chipinge urban ZRP*

Chipinge District Marks National Tree Planting Day

Chipinge District commemorated National Tree Planting Day with activities across schools, communities,

and institutions, highlighting the importance of environmental stewardship. The main event was held at Kubatana Secondary School, where Engineer Nyahora of the Lower East Subcatchment Council served as Guest of Honor. He emphasized the link between tree planting, water conservation, and sustainable

development, and planted the 2025 Tree of the Year, *Kigelia africana* (Sausage Tree).

In Chipinge Urban, council officials, residents, and environmental clubs planted *Ziziphus mauritiana* (Masau), a drought-resistant indigenous fruit tree that supports both reforestation and food security. At the ZRP Chipinge premises, police officers established a community orchard with



orange and naartjie saplings donated by Mr. Chekebuwe, a disability activist from Mwandifura village. His contribution added a strong message of inclusivity and community participation.

The day's events reflected collective action by government bodies, schools, security forces, and citizens, all working toward a greener future. The newly planted sausage, masau, and citrus trees now stand as practical steps toward climate resilience, biodiversity preservation, and improved community livelihoods.



Feo Chipinge and Chipinge Urban ZRP during orchard establishment at the Police Station

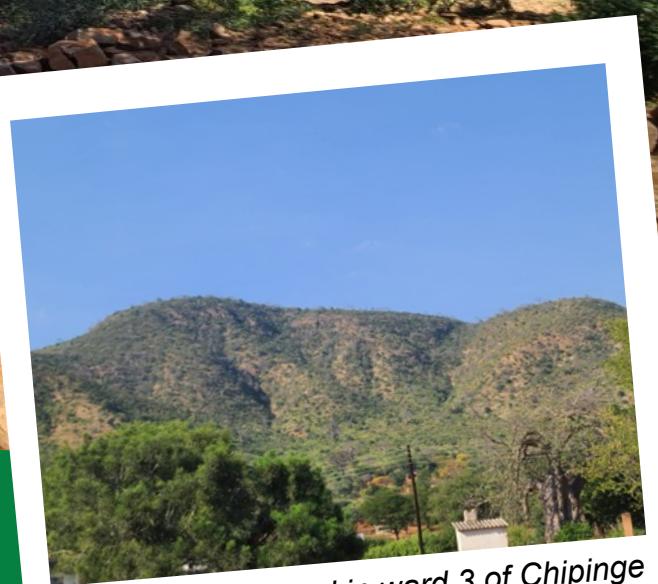


Chinunji woodland in ward 21 of Chipinge district



Sacred Woodlands of Chipinge: Harnessing Tradition for Conservation

*Nyarigire Woodland in ward 3 of Chipinge
district*



High in the mountains of Chipinge District, two woodlands, Nyarigire in Ward 3 and Chibunji in Ward 21 stand protected not by fences or bylaws, but by deep-rooted spiritual belief. Local communities regard these forests as sacred, home to njuzu (water spirits) and midzimu yemvura (ancestral guardians) who are believed to safeguard the trees and punish those who desecrate them. For generations, this “spiritual fencing” has acted as an internal governance system, deterring deforestation, regulating resource use, and preserving biodiversity. Community elders recount how the spirits dwell in springs and waterfalls, appearing in white garments and linked to the health of water sources. Cutting trees near water is said to anger them, with consequences ranging from illness to disappearance. While outsiders may dismiss these beliefs as folklore, their impact is tangible: the woodlands remain intact, serving as biodiversity refuges and vital water catchments. Today, these traditions exist alongside modern conservation needs. Population growth and economic pressures pose challenges, yet residents continue to view the spirits as custodians, maintaining a covenant of respect. Environmental advocates and forestry officials increasingly recognize the value of such **Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)**, acknowledging that cultural identity and belief can be as effective as law in protecting ecosystems. The Forestry Commission is tapping into these social innovations by integrating traditional belief systems into its conservation strategies. By working with community elders and respecting cultural practices, the Commission strengthens local stewardship and ensures that conservation is not imposed but embraced. Initiatives now blend scientific forestry with cultural heritage, using spiritual guardianship as a foundation for community-driven protection. This approach not only preserves forests but also reinforces social cohesion, making conservation more resilient and sustainable. The story of Nyarigire and Chibunji demonstrates that the strongest fences are built from respect and reverence. As Zimbabwe seeks solutions to deforestation, these sacred groves remind us that conservation is most durable when rooted in cultural identity. By combining traditional wisdom with modern forestry, the nation is cultivating a greener, more harmonious future.

FEO Chipinge district engaging in a tree planting demonstration



FAO coordinator Mr Maxwell Phiri during tree planting

Partners for Sustainable Development: Muwango Village & Forestry Commission Safeguard Miombo Woodlands

In Ward 19 of Chipinge District, a groundbreaking partnership between the Muwango community and the Forestry Commission of Zimbabwe is taking root under the **Miombo Transboundary Project**, sponsored by the Italian government. Together, they are establishing a dedicated gum tree (Eucalyptus) woodlot—an innovative, science-backed solution to ease pressure on the fragile Miombo woodlands of Chirinda Forest.

The Miombo eco-region is one of Africa's most vital woodland ecosystems, supporting biodiversity, carbon storage, and millions of livelihoods. Yet, deforestation driven by demand for firewood and construction materials continues to threaten its survival. To address this, gum trees were strategically selected for their fast growth, providing a reliable source of timber and fuel within just a few years. This reduces reliance on slow-growing indigenous species, directly protecting the Miombo.

From the Forestry Commission's perspective, the initiative is more than tree planting—it is about **empowering communities with sustainable alternatives**. The Commission provided technical guidance on site selection, soil suitability, spacing, and long-term management, ensuring the woodlot's productivity while minimizing environmental impact. At the same time, the project remains community-led: villagers contributed land, labor, and formed a management committee to oversee fair resource sharing. This local ownership guarantees that conservation success is tied directly to community well-being.

The woodlot serves a dual purpose:

- **Direct Protection:** Meeting daily wood demands acts as a buffer, shielding natural Miombo forests from further degradation.
- **Restoration Focus:** With basic needs sustainably met, the community and Forestry Commission can prioritize restoring indigenous trees elsewhere.

Looking ahead, the first thinning and harvest will mark a milestone of self-reliance for Muwango Village, generating income for schools, clinics, and local projects. For the Forestry Commission, this initiative demonstrates how international support, national expertise, and grassroots action can converge to tackle deforestation at its roots.

The Muwango woodlot is more than a plantation but it is a model of sustainable coexistence, proving that conservation thrives when communities are empowered with the right tools and knowledge. Together, the Forestry Commission and Muwango Village are laying the foundation for a greener, more resilient future.



Muwango villagers during tree planting in ward 19

Mashonaland Central Province National Tree Planting Day Launched in Mbire District

Minister of state for Provincial Affairs and Devolution, Hon C Magomo, finalising the tree planting process during the Provincial NTPD



Mashonaland Central Province officially launched National Tree Planting Day on 6 December 2025 at Kadzi Irrigation Scheme, Mahuwe Ward 15, Mbire District. The event drew over 800 participants, including community members, government officials, traditional leaders, and environmental organizations. The commemorations, held under the theme, "Trees and forests for ecosystem restoration and improved livelihoods", were officiated by Hon. C. Magomo, Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution. In his address, Hon. Magomo highlighted the critical role of trees in combating climate change, enhancing food security, and preserving biodiversity. A total of 204 fruit trees were planted, 100 lemon, 50 mango, 50 orange, and 4 sausage trees (*Kigelia africana*), the celebrated Tree of the Year. The orchard is expected to provide a sustainable

source of fresh fruits while promoting community-driven conservation and improved livelihoods. Plans are underway to establish a tree nursery at the scheme and encourage adoption of climate-resilient agricultural practices. The Forestry Commission and partners will ensure regular

monitoring and maintenance of the orchard. To extend awareness reach, a roadshow was conducted at Mahuwe Growth Point and Guruve CBD, reinforcing the importance of tree planting and environmental stewardship across the province.



Hon Minister of State for Provincial affairs and Devolution and Hon Butao, MP for Mbire, During the Provincial NTPD



PFEM Mash Central Planting a tree with Chief Chitsungo during the provincial NTPD

Lincoln Recreational Park: A Rising Urban Green Space in Bindura



Guest of Honor, Acting Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife, Mr Chatsama planting a Kenyan croton tree



Guests taking a tour of the established park and following proceedings facilitated by DDC Bindura Mr R Chipfuwa



The Forestry Commission, in partnership with private landowners, is transforming Lincoln Recreational Park into a thriving urban green space. Since 2022, the initiative has rehabilitated over 7 hectares of wetland in Cleverhill suburb, with the goal of establishing an indigenous woodland that conserves ecosystems while serving as a recreational and rehabilitation park.

On 26 November 2025, a tree planting event was held at the park, attended by about 120 delegates including government officials, community

leaders, and environmental stakeholders. Mr. Chatsama, Acting Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife, delivered the keynote address, emphasizing the importance of creating urban green spaces and expanding tree planting efforts.

T

he event unveiled the Tree of the Year, the Sausage tree (*Kigelia africana*) and the theme for the 2025/26 tree-planting season. A total of 55 trees were planted, including 25 Kenyan croton, 10 *Terminalia*, 10 *Flamboyant*, and 10 *Jacaranda*.

Matabeleland North Province

Planting for the Future: Hwange District National Tree Planting Day 2025



Matabeleland North walkathon



Hwange District National Tree Planting Day



Hwange District made significant strides during the 2025 National Tree Planting Day (NTPD), planting 3,671 trees across 16 venues. The programme successfully blended environmental restoration with community awareness and participation, ensuring that conservation efforts were both practical and inclusive. Among the highlights was the Matabeleland North Walkathon on 29 November, where

participants walked 26 km from Victoria Falls Town to Chidhobe Secondary School to raise awareness on tree planting and environmental protection. The District Launch followed on 6 December, presided over by Councilor Peggy Africa Ncube, attracting over 200 participants including students, community members, traditional leaders, and stakeholders. Tree planting took place at schools, hotels,

government offices, mines, and private properties, with a deliberate focus on indigenous shade trees, fruit-bearing species, and varieties suited for land rehabilitation and wind protection—critical choices for Hwange’s hot climate. The initiative was supported by a wide range of stakeholders, including schools, hotels, mining companies, Zimbabwe Power Company, Hwange RDC, government ministries, and local communities, reflecting strong multi-sectoral collaboration. Beyond planting, the programme aimed to restore

degraded land, improve biodiversity, and expand green spaces, particularly in mining and industrial areas. It also reinforced public awareness of the importance of tree conservation and sustainable development. By aligning with government environmental policies, Hwange District's NTPD efforts contribute directly to climate change mitigation and long-term ecological resilience. Continued care and maintenance of the trees will ensure that these gains translate into lasting benefits for the district and its people.



Forestry Commission Zimbabwe Charts the Path for the Next Five Years



Director General, G. Manyumwa speaking at the opening on the Strategic Planning workshop



The workshop was officially opened by Mr. Washington Zhakata, Acting Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife. In his remarks, Mr. Zhakata (seated 3rd from right and flanked by the Board Chairman, Ambassador Jassat, Vice Board Chair, commissioner s. Bhebhe)

The Forestry Commission Zimbabwe successfully held its 2025 Strategic Planning Workshop from the 8th to the 12th of December, setting a clear roadmap for its performance and impact over the next five years. The workshop brought together senior management, technical experts, and key stakeholders to deliberate on the Commission's priorities, challenges, and opportunities in the forestry sector. The first session of the workshop emphasized the importance of stakeholder feedback and expectations in shaping a responsive and inclusive strategic plan. Participants highlighted the need for stronger collaboration with communities, private sector partners, and development agencies to ensure that forestry initiatives are not only technically sound but also socially and economically beneficial. A central focus was the alignment of the Commission's strategies with the National Development Strategy Phase 2 (2026–2030). This alignment ensures that the Commission's work contributes meaningfully to national goals such as sustainable resource management, climate resilience, and economic growth through forestry-based industries. The workshop was officially opened by Mr. Washington Zhakata, Acting Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife. In his remarks, Mr. Zhakata



The workshop brought together senior management, technical experts, and key stakeholders

commended the Forestry Commission for its steady improvement in fulfilling its mandate, particularly in areas of afforestation, community engagement, and research. However, he underscored the urgent need for enhanced regulatory enforcement to curb rampant deforestation and illegal logging activities that continue to threaten Zimbabwe's forest resources. He reminded participants that forests are not only a source of timber but also play a critical role in carbon sequestration, biodiversity conservation, and water security, making their protection central to Zimbabwe's climate change adaptation and mitigation agenda.

The workshop produced several strategic outcomes that will guide the Commission's work in the coming years:

Strengthening Regulatory Frameworks: Intensifying monitoring and enforcement

to reduce deforestation and promote sustainable forest management.

Community-Based Forestry: Expanding partnerships with rural communities to enhance livelihoods through sustainable use of forest resources.

Climate Change Integration: Mainstreaming climate-smart forestry practices to support Zimbabwe's commitments under international climate agreements.

Research and Innovation: Investing in applied research to improve forest productivity, combat invasive species, and explore alternative energy sources.

Capacity Building: Enhancing institutional capacity through training, technology adoption, and improved resource mobilization.

The 2025 Strategic Planning Workshop reaffirmed the Forestry Commission's commitment to safeguarding Zimbabwe's forests for present and future generations. By aligning its strategies with national development priorities and strengthening collaboration with stakeholders, the Commission is poised to play a pivotal role in advancing sustainable development, combating climate change, and ensuring the resilience of Zimbabwe's natural ecosystems.

Forestry Commission Commissions Timber Drying Kiln in Lupane: A Milestone for Sustainable Forestry



On the 19th of December, the Forestry Commission Zimbabwe marked a historic milestone in the nation's forestry sector with the official commissioning of a state-of-the-art timber drying kiln at Forest Hill in Lupane. This landmark achievement underscores the Commission's unwavering commitment to sustainable forestry practices, resource efficiency, and climate resilience, while also strengthening Zimbabwe's position in the regional and global timber markets.

The newly established kiln is more than just an operational facility because it represents a transformational step forward in timber processing. Traditionally, timber drying has been a time-consuming process prone to inefficiencies and quality inconsistencies. The kiln introduces modern technology that:

- Reduces waste by ensuring maximum utilization of harvested timber.
- Improves product quality through controlled drying processes that minimize defects such as warping and cracking.
- Enhances competitiveness by enabling Zimbabwean timber to meet stringent local and international quality standards, opening doors to export opportunities.

- Supports conservation goals by promoting efficient use of indigenous timber resources, thereby reducing pressure on forests.

The establishment of the kiln was made possible through a collaborative effort between the Forestry Commission and WWF-Zimbabwe, reflecting the power of partnerships in advancing conservation and sustainable development. WWF-Zimbabwe's technical and financial support ensured that the facility incorporates best practices in indigenous timber drying and processing, while also serving as a model for environmentally responsible industrial development.

Importantly, the kiln will be accessible to stakeholders across the forestry industry, including small-scale timber producers, cooperatives, and private enterprises. This inclusivity ensures that the benefits of improved timber processing, higher quality products, better market access, and increased profitability are shared widely, contributing to both economic growth and community development.

The commissioning of the kiln aligns with Zimbabwe's broader National Development Strategy Phase 2 (2026–2030), which emphasizes sustainable resource management, industrial competitiveness, and climate resilience. By strengthening compliance with global timber quality standards, the facility positions Zimbabwe as a responsible player in international forestry trade. At the same time, the kiln contributes to climate

change mitigation by reducing waste and promoting efficient use of harvested timber, thereby lowering the carbon footprint of timber production. This resonates with Zimbabwe's commitments under international climate agreements and reinforces the role of forests as vital ecosystems for carbon sequestration, biodiversity conservation, and water regulation.

Speaking at the commissioning, Forestry Commission officials emphasized that the kiln is not merely a technological upgrade but a symbol of Zimbabwe's commitment to a sustainable future, a future where forests, communities, and the economy thrive together.



Commissioning of the Plant Tissue Culture Facility: A New Era for Forestry Innovation



On 5 December 2025, the Forestry Commission Zimbabwe proudly commissioned its Plant Tissue Culture Laboratory at the Head Office in Harare, marking a groundbreaking step in the nation's forestry and conservation journey. The facility was officially unveiled in the presence of the Honourable Minister of Environment, Climate and Wildlife who was the Guest of Honour, Key stakeholders, academic partners, and members of the forestry fraternity.

Delivering the overview presentation, the

Head of the Plant Tissue Culture Laboratory, Pomerayi Mutete, highlighted the transformative role this facility will play in Zimbabwe's efforts to strengthen forest conservation, accelerate reforestation, and support climate-resilient development. Established with support from the GEF-6 project and the committed leadership of the Forestry Commission, the laboratory reflects the value of strong partnerships, particularly with the University of Zimbabwe's Department of Crop Science, which will collaborate on advancing scientific research and training.

The laboratory was created in response to the growing demand for high-quality, disease-free, and genetically uniform planting materials. Traditional propagation methods for indigenous and slow-growing species often face challenges such as low seed viability, irregular flowering, and susceptibility to pests and diseases. Tissue culture provides a modern solution by enabling; rapid and large-scale multiplication of superior genotypes; consistent quality and reliable supply of planting materials; support for restoration programs, commercial forestry, and conservation of threatened species.

The laboratory is equipped with all the core components required for efficient tissue culture operations; media preparation room for sterile growth media; initiation room for introducing explants under aseptic conditions; growth rooms with controlled lighting and temperature systems for rapid multiplication; acclimatisation room to transition plantlets from laboratory to greenhouse environments. Together, these facilities create a seamless workflow that ensures the production of healthy, robust planting materials ready for large-scale deployment. The initial focus will be on both commercial and ecological species, including:

- Fast-growing exotics such as Eucalyptus and Pines for plantation forestry.
- Indigenous species critical for biodiversity conservation, watershed protection, and climate adaptation.
- Recalcitrant and endangered species that are difficult to propagate

through conventional methods. This facility will directly support Zimbabwe's commitments under the 25 Million trees per year tree planting campaign, the AFR100, and international climate mitigation obligations, ensuring planting targets are met with the right quality of material. Beyond production, the laboratory will serve as a hub for capacity building. It will provide training opportunities for students, technicians, and early-career scientists in modern plant biotechnology. Through collaboration with academic institutions, the facility will foster research innovation, skill development, and knowledge exchange, strengthening Zimbabwe's long-term scientific capacity in forestry and conservation.

Looking ahead, the Forestry Commission envisions the laboratory evolving into a national centre of excellence in plant tissue culture. Plans include expanding operational capacity, diversifying species under production, and integrating advanced technologies such as cryopreservation and molecular diagnostics for germplasm conservation and quality assurance. Partnerships with private-sector nurseries, community-based restoration groups, and regional research institutions will ensure that the benefits extend across the country and beyond.

The commissioning of the Plant Tissue Culture Laboratory stands as a transformative milestone in shaping the future of forestry, biodiversity conservation, and climate adaptation in Zimbabwe.



The Honourable Minister Dr. E. Ndlovu during a tour of the Plant Tissue culture Facility (here flanked by Dr. Ayodele Odusola, UNDP Resident Representative -right, Chief Secretary MECW, Mr Washington Zhakata- Left and Forestry Commission Board Chairman, Ambassador Mahomed Jassat looking on)



Head of the Plant Tissue Culture Laboratory,
Pomerayi Mutete taking dignitaries through the
facility and its equipment



Scaling Up Agroforestry: Lessons from FAO's Regional Implementation Workshop

Agroforestry is increasingly recognized as a critical solution to interlinked global challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss, and food insecurity. In response to a mandate from the FAO Committees on Agriculture (COAG) and Forestry (COFO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) convened a regional workshop to examine how agroforestry projects can be more effectively implemented and scaled up across diverse contexts.

Organized by FAO's Plant Production and Protection Division in collaboration with the Forestry Division, the workshop followed the 6th World Congress on Agroforestry held in Rwanda. It brought together project developers and implementers from Côte d'Ivoire, Namibia, Uganda, and Zimbabwe to focus on practical implementation challenges and share field-based experiences. Forestry Commission Zimbabwe was represented by Masvingo Provincial Forestry Extension Manager Mr E. Machokoto.

Despite significant investments in agroforestry programming, adoption levels among smallholder farmers remain relatively low in many regions.

The workshop was therefore designed as a peer-to-peer learning platform to diagnose bottlenecks across the agroforestry project cycle ranging from inception and implementation to post-project sustainability and to identify actionable solutions.

Key objectives included the exchange of practical experiences, the co-development of implementation guidance, the establishment of a regional Community of Practice (CoP), and the identification of areas where FAO can add value through technical support, policy guidance, and knowledge products.

Participants shared experiences from ongoing projects, revealing several cross-cutting lessons. Agroforestry interventions are more readily adopted when they offer clear economic incentives. Examples included beekeeping in Uganda, supported by strong honey markets, and the development of non-timber forest product (NTFP) value chains such as baobab and marula in Zimbabwe.

Private sector engagement emerged as a critical success factor, particularly in ensuring market access for agroforestry products. Community seed



banks were highlighted as innovative mechanisms for conserving both tree and crop germplasm, while Farmer Field Schools proved effective in strengthening farmer knowledge and skills.

However, a common challenge across projects was that agroforestry often featured as a secondary component rather than a core intervention. As a result, business cases were weak, adoption remained limited, and agroforestry was largely framed as a land restoration tool rather than a food security and livelihood strategy. Energy deficits especially dependence on fuelwood were also identified as a major driver of deforestation that agroforestry projects must address.

A field visit to Asante Mama Farm on Bunjako Island in Uganda provided practical insights into successful agroforestry implementation. The farm integrates cocoa with bananas and indigenous tree species, using standing trees to provide shade and enhance productivity. Supported by a strong export market, the enterprise works with

over 250 smallholder out-growers and provides regular training on agroforestry practices.

The visit demonstrated that intentional agroforestry is achievable when farmers clearly perceive benefits to their primary crops. However, challenges such as climate variability, insecure land tenure, and disease outbreaks highlighted structural constraints that can undermine sustainability.

Participants identified a range of challenges affecting agroforestry uptake, including policy gaps, limited technical capacity, knowledge constraints, weak institutional support, and unfavorable market conditions.

A recurring concern was that markets often fail to reward sustainably produced goods, with agroforestry products fetching the same prices as those from unsustainable systems.

Social factors, including farmer perceptions and labor demands, also



influence adoption, underscoring the need for context-specific approaches.

The workshop resulted in the establishment of a regional Community of Practice on agroforestry and laid the groundwork for several key deliverables. These include an operational guide on scaling up agroforestry through development projects, recommendations to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) on integrating agroforestry into future food systems programming, and the identification of priority areas for FAO's continued engagement.

Overall, the workshop reaffirmed that agroforestry can be a powerful, self-motivating practice when aligned with farmers' production goals and supported by enabling policies, markets, and technical knowledge. Scaling up agroforestry will require deliberate programming that positions trees not only as environmental assets, but as integral components of resilient and profitable farming systems. Forestry Commission is committed in scaling up agroforestry practices to enhance food security and building climate resilience and adaptation.



Forestry Commission Supports Environmental Reporter of the Year 2025 Awards



The Overall Winner- Environmental Reporter of the Year 2025 was Tendai Makaripe of 263Chat who was awarded for consistency in writing good impactful stories across all the categories and especially in the Wildlife Conservation Category.

The Forestry Commission proudly supported the Environmental Reporter of the Year 2025 Awards. The Awards, run by the Rainbow Tourism Group in collaboration with EnvironmentAfrica are a prestigious platform that celebrates and evaluates the contributions of journalists in advancing environmental awareness and action in Zimbabwe. These awards recognize the critical role of the media in shaping public understanding of environmental issues, promoting accountability, and inspiring communities to embrace sustainable practices. The Forestry Commission sponsored a category

that puts the spotlight on forestry reporting and recognize outstanding coverage of forestry issues ie the Best Sustainable Forest Management Story

The winner in this category was Tawanda Musarurwa of Zimpapers while the runner-up prize was awarded to Gibson Mhaka also of Zimpapers.

Their winning stories highlighted the importance of sustainable forest management in combating deforestation, preserving biodiversity, and

supporting climate resilience issues at the heart of the Forestry Commission's mandate.

By supporting the Environmental Reporter of the Year Awards, the Forestry Commission reaffirmed its commitment to partnerships that strengthen environmental stewardship. Journalism plays a vital role in amplifying conservation messages, holding stakeholders accountable, and inspiring communities to take action.



The winner in this category was Tawanda Musarurwa of ZimPapers (left frame) while the runner-up prize was awarded to Gibson Mhaka also of ZimPapers (right frame). Forestry Commission's Mrs Alice Tafireyi (extreme left in both frames presented the awards on behalf of the Director General.



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