

## FJKM Fruit Program Update, 25 February 2019

Since Elizabeth and I got back to Madagascar from the US in August 2018, there has been much progress with the FJKM Fruits, Vegetables and Environmental Education project (FVEE).

**New Fruit Trees from Florida:** In August, I brought with me over 500 fruit trees in my luggage from Florida, along with all needed paperwork from both the US and Malagasy authorities. In accordance with regulations here, they spent over two months in quarantine before getting out in late October. We had good survival for the most part. Among the most exciting are over 30 new varieties of mangos, including classic Florida varieties like Irwin, Dot, and Edward; many newer varieties such as Fruit Punch, Phoenix, Orange Sherbet, and Sweet Tart; and some exceptional varieties from elsewhere in the world such as Ataulfo, Cac, and Maha Chanook. Others that survived quarantine include *Mammea americana*, white, Grimal, and yellow Jaboticabas, a red-fleshed durian, 130 mamey sapote rootstocks, and some sapodillas. The mangos are currently being propagated; a few have already been planted out at the fruit center at Mahatsinjo.

### Progress in Grafting



In December a graduate student, Ranaivo Arson Rindra, successfully defended her Master's thesis titled "Trials of grafting techniques of mango trees – Mahatsinjo Fruit Center". Rindra helped us develop several grafting techniques that resulted in getting about 200 grafted mango trees last year. Since December, we have grafted over 1000 mango seedlings, mostly at the fruit center. We should end up grafting about 1500 seedlings and hopefully will get at least 600 grafted trees for our efforts. We are

mostly doing cleft and veneer grafts but also some approach grafts especially on the newly arrived trees. The newly grafted trees should be enough to enable us to plant mother trees at new nurseries at Ankaramena in south central Madagascar and at the FJKM seminary in north central Madagascar.

**Plans for Mango Extension Program:** The grafted mango trees we get from grafting done from December through March should also allow us to start a new extension program. In late 2019, my colleagues and I will begin training farmers and church members near the fruit center at Mahatsinjo in how to plant, take care of, and graft mango trees. Each participant will receive a grafted mango tree to plant on his/her land. We expect to do 5 trainings with 25 trainees each for a total of 125 trainees. There will also be one workshop.

**Continued Training at FJKM Seminaries:** The training of seminary students in fruit trees, vegetable growing and environmental education is continuing at the 4 FJKM seminaries. Students at the Ivato seminary recently practiced grafting techniques and did tree planting to celebrate environment day.

## Recovery from Theft at the Mahatsinjo Fruit Center



Center with breadfruit in first row and mangoes behind. Feb 2019

In early January, thieves stole about 300 trees from the nursery at the fruit center at Mahatsinjo. Fortunately, most were citrus and not precious grafted mangos. In the wake of this, we installed lights at the nursery and have made plans to put a fence up that will enclose both the nursery and the main building.

**New Land at the Mahatsinjo Fruit Center:** We were fortunate to be able to purchase 10 acres of land right along the main paved road to northern Madagascar, National Road #4. This new land is within a few hundred meters of the fruit center. It will enable the center to sell trees along the main road and to attract customers that otherwise likely would not stop. The title to the new land is currently being put in the name of the FJKM church. We hope to get a building constructed on it in 2019 with a fence put around the building and the area for the for-sale nursery.

**New Tree Nurseries and Orchards: FJKM Church at Ankaramena & Mandritsara Seminary:** In 2019, steps are being made to set up 2 new mango nurseries and orchards: one at the site of the FJKM church at Ankaramena along National Road #7 in south central Madagascar and the other on the grounds of the FJKM seminary at Mandritsara in north central Madagascar. At each of these nurseries, security needs to be established, water needs to be secured, mother trees need to be planted and personnel trained. At Ankaramena this will mean putting up a wall all the way around the church property then helping the church to build a manse so as to enable the pastor to live on-site. At Mandritsara, the water system needs to be repaired so that the seminary can get water on campus. This water system will provide water for the seminary students and staff and their families as well as providing water needed for the mango nursery and orchard.

**Trees Planted at FJKM Schools and Churches:** The program planting trees at FJKM schools is continuing and a new program to plant trees at up to 50 FJKM churches per year has begun.

### How you can help

- 1) **Please pray:** that activities go well, for safety at the Fruit Tree Center & with all travels, and for funds to be able to do all of the activities.
- 2) **Donate to help with activities.** Funds can be sent to PCUSA, marked for "ECO 047980 – FVEE project Madagascar." Church donations can be sent through regular Presbytery channels. Individuals should send donations to PO Box 643700, Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700. ECO number must be used. Please let us know when donations are made to help with our planning. **Every donation makes a difference!**

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