

## Bwindi Advanced Market Gardeners' Association (AMAGARA)

### INTRODUCTION

Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, in the South-West of Uganda, is a very popular tourist location for bird watching and mountain gorilla tracking. The majority of subsistence farmers living close to the edge of the forest, however, do not benefit at all from the tourism industry. Instead, they live in conflict with the National Park, because its existence deprives them of access to traditional income generating activities.

At present, the majority of perishable food products used by Bwindi's tourism industry are purchased at long distance, in Kampala or Kabale. At the same time, the adjacent farmers use damaging agricultural practices which degrade the environment.



IES' Environmental Security for Poverty Alleviation programme has supported the setup of the Bwindi Advanced Market Gardeners' Association (AMAGARA). The idea behind this association is that the threats to biodiversity conservation and environmental security can be reduced by helping farmers living near the park to gain access to the market for foodstuffs offered by tourist lodges located in the area, thereby giving them a direct incentive to conserve forest resources, and helping to lift them out of poverty. The project has also received support from other organisations, such as the Rufford Small Grants Foundation



The association aims to achieve this goal by acting as a bridge between farmers and the tourism industry, training farmers in target crop production and natural resource management, consolidating and grading produce, and finally marketing products to the tour camps.

The activities of the association will increase the productivity, competitiveness and income of participant farmers, whilst reducing environmental degradation associated with poor land-use practices. Income for farmers will be directly associated with sustainable agriculture and protection of the National Park for tourism, thereby creating a strong link between environmental security and development for participant households.

For more information about the Bwindi Advanced Market Gardeners' Association please contact the International Secretariat of the IES.

## **Bwindi Advanced Market Gardeners' Association (AMAGARA)**

- VIDEOS -

An introduction to the AMAGARA team and some of the farm staff



<https://youtu.be/YuMt2-XYum0>



<https://youtu.be/aM5OEr4Fiw>

VSO advisor Pius Ombaka explains the nursery beds



<https://youtu.be/a9fyNKp7TLE>

Training farmers in agricultural and soil conservation techniques



<https://youtu.be/TpmuNH7Kbqs>



<https://youtu.be/MIewUmB2ZcA>

Cabbages and strawberries



<https://youtu.be/cCfkZki8xIA>



[https://youtu.be/nx\\_GnRp-FLE](https://youtu.be/nx_GnRp-FLE)

**CONTACT:**

**Chris Sandbrook**

**Bwindi Advanced Market Gardeners' Association (AMAGARA)**

[https://www.rufford.org/rsg/projects/chris\\_sandbrook](https://www.rufford.org/rsg/projects/chris_sandbrook)

## TRADITIONAL COOKING LESSONS

Join us daily for traditional Ugandan cooking lessons in a beautiful and fun environment. AMAGARA offers visitors the opportunity to learn how to cook authentic Ugandan food on traditional charcoal stoves while enjoying spectacular views over the vegetable garden. Learn from our professionally trained chef, Moses, who will share with you his knowledge of traditional dishes, including some interesting twists to recognisable western favourites! AMAGARA is capable of catering to individuals or large groups.

We appreciate bookings in advance (especially larger groups) but we are usually able to cater for visitors without advance warning. If you are interested please ask your lodge to contact us or email: [bwindi.amagara@gmail.com](mailto:bwindi.amagara@gmail.com). We look forward to welcoming you for a most memorable cooking experience.

## AMAGARA GARDEN SHOP

The AMAGARA shop has a wide selection of delicious gifts to suit all tastes at small prices, including beautifully packaged honey and tea from Bwindi; A unique gift from the home of the Mountain Gorilla for those friends and relatives who have everything.

*Every purchase supports the work of AMAGARA and the local community*

## REFRESHMENTS

Relax and enjoy a drink or snack in our shady terrace with spectacular mountain views. Our specialities include tasty dishes using fresh vegetables and Bwindi-grown tea infused with either mint or honey and ginger.



**DO YOU KNOW WHERE  
YOUR DINNER CAME  
FROM?**



### How to find us?

*Bwindi AMAGARA demonstration garden is located approximately 4km from Bwindi Impenetrable Forest gate.*

*The garden can be reached by vehicle or by taking a scenic walk along the main road, following the river out of the forest and past Buhoma trading centre. Why not stop off at Bwindi Community Hospital on the way. You can hear how AMAGARA and the hospital have been working together to improve nutrition for people within the area.*



## WHAT IS BWINDI AMAGARA?

In 2006 Bwindi Advanced Market Gardeners' Association was established (AMAGARA meaning 'life' in the local language Rukiga). AMAGARA aims to help local farmers to produce and market foods for the tourism industry while training them in farming techniques that minimise damage to the environment and forest and maximise the nutritional value of meals they provide for their families.

Bwindi AMAGARA aims to achieve this goal by acting as a bridge between farmers and the tourism industry by marketing AMAGARA products to local tour lodges. AMAGARA trains members in target crop production and natural resource management, helping them to increase the yield of their produce.

AMAGARA has seen cooperative members receive a much needed boost to their household income as well as increased family nutrition. This link between

increased household income and tourism has also given the farmers a powerful incentive to conserve forest resources.



### JACKS' STORY

Jack (50) lives in Rubona village with his wife and 8 children.

Jack has been a member of AMAGARA for two years, and decided to join the association because he wanted to increase his family income and provide

more opportunities for his children. Jack grows courgettes, cabbages, tomatoes, green peppers and cucumber, which he sells through AMAGARA to the tour lodges in Bwindi.

Since joining AMAGARA Jack has attended training sessions offering techniques on how to efficiently grow nutritious food and has been taught to grow a variety of vegetables. Jack is very pleased with AMAGARA and what it has done for him, as he has seen the health of his family improve dramatically since joining.

### ACTIVITIES

#### TOUR OF THE DEMONSTRATION VEGETABLE GARDEN

Join one of our friendly and knowledgeable team members on a tour of the stunning demonstration garden and find out more about where the food you are eating comes from. Learn how the association operates and hear about the range of different growing techniques that are taught to local farmers. Take time to meet the local people who work at the garden and join them in planting seeds or working the site. See our bee hives and find out how honey is collected within the Bwindi area.

Get your taste buds tingling by sampling some of our fresh delicious produce including honey, strawberries and our fearsome chillies! Finally, make sure you pop in to say hello to our friendly pigs which we are breeding to provide piglets for households within the community.



***"Before I joined AMAGARA my family was malnourished because we didn't know how to grow different kinds of food and could only afford to grow basic foods like rice and matoke".***



***"My older children never got the opportunity to go to school because I couldn't afford to send them. Because of AMAGARA I can now send my four younger children to school. I am extremely grateful for AMAGARA and for the opportunities that tourism brings to the area."***