

NORTH KIGEZI TOBACCO GROWING AREA CENTRAL FOREST RESERVES PROFILES

1. General information.

The North Kigezi tobacco growing areas central forest reserves are referred to as Rukungiri-Kanungu (RK) forest reserves. Located in Rukungiri and Kanungu districts, they are also known as “tobacco reserves”.

Summary information about RK central forest reserves

Name of forest reserve	Sub county	Area (hectares)	Area for Conservation working cycle	Production working cycle
Rukungiri	Rukungiri Town Council	26	0	26
Rwengiri	Bugangari	155	0	155
Ihimbo	Bwambara, Bugangari and Nyamirama	566	406	160
Mburamaizi	Kihiihi and Kambuga	497	65	432
Rushaya	Bwambara	31	0	31
Bwambara	Bwambara	32	0	32
Kyantuhe	Nyamirama	205	0	205
Kaniabizo	Nyamirama	41	0	41
		1,553	471	1,082

Ihimbo ranks first in area for the conservation cycle (406ha) and third for production cycle (160ha) while Mburamaizi (65ha) is second in conservation cycle and has the biggest area for production cycle (432).

2. Conservation value.

Ihimbo forest reserve supports important flora and fauna of high biodiversity value including rare and endangered species like chimpanzees. Baboons, black and white colobus monkeys, bush pigs and bush bucks also exist. The forests are important for protection of steep slopes, stream banks and wetlands. Ihimbo forest reserve is a source of several streams that drain into river Ntungwa and eventually Lake Edward, Kazinga channel and Lake George system. Kyantuhe CFR also has a stream that serves the local community with water.

3. Vegetation

Ihimbo forest reserve is the only Tropical High Forest (THF) in the area, covered with a natural forest (400 ha) dominated by *Cynometra alexandarii* while Garcia species dominate (65ha) in Mburamaizi.

4. Utilisation

Central Forest reserves in Rukungiri and Kanungu districts have been playing a big role as a source of firewood for the tobacco industry. Tobacco growing cooperatives started planting eucalyptus in the 1960's in the RK central forest reserves. Apart from Rukungiri CFR, the rest had trees planted for curing tobacco. There is however a problem of double allocation of land/plots for tree growing. Local communities harvest forest products for subsistence and income.

Ihimbo forest reserve contains some scattered timber trees and there is a history of illegal timber over-harvesting. Non-timber forest products obtained from the CFRs are firewood, water, poles, honey, medicinal herbs, mushrooms and charcoal burning although illegal. Local communities participate in the management of CFRs by helping curb illegal activities through Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) which is proposed for Ihimbo forest reserve.

Local communities harvest *Garcia hullensis* localised to Mburamaizi CFR with edible fruits. There are hot springs in Ihimbo CFR that are used by local communities for spiritual healing.

Ihimbo is virtually the only source of water for the parish of Kikongi and NFA has allowed local communities regulated access to water for domestic use.