

Massive death of green bamboo (*Arundinaria alpina*) recorded in Uzungwa Scarp Nature Reserve

A Short communication

According to literature bamboos die once they flower like any other grass species but this depends on the variety and the growing conditions. Some bamboos species never or rarely flower. Other bamboos flower sporadically, not all at once but with old individuals randomly flowering. Most bamboo species seem to flower gregariously with all individuals of the same clump flowering at the same time across widespread populations, even across the whole planet. This was observed in the Uzungwa Scarp Nature Reserve (USFR) where bamboo individuals have selectively died in mosaics of populations. The death of the bamboo was first observed in 2004 in USFR. There after large areas of bamboo stands continued to die. The length of the flowering cycle varies considerably, with intervals up to 120 years, and others might flower almost yearly and not die back at all.



Plate: Live Bamboo and drying stands after flowering near Masisiwe Village (**Photo** by L. Mbwambo)

To our knowledge and based on key informants in the study area, this was the first time in over 70 years that bamboos were noticed flowering, drying and dying. With funding from the Eastern Arc Mountains Endowment Fund TAFORI has embarked on a research to monitor recovery of bamboo stands following massive deaths in Uzungwa Scarp Nature Reserve using permanent sample plots.

For More Information Contact

The Director General
Tanzania Forestry Research Institute
P. O. Box 1854, **Morogoro, Tanzania**
E-mail: tafori@taforitz.org