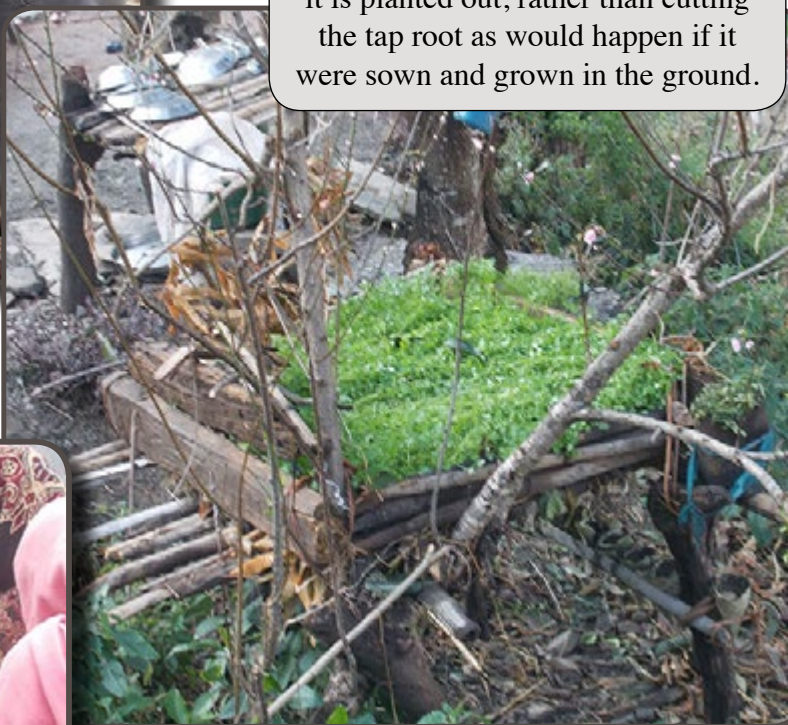


# HPC Report October 2013 - March 2014 Photo Gallery – Surkhet



*Left* - participants on a mobile farmers' training plant up a newly constructed air nursery. Plants that have a fast-growing tap root are ideal for this type of nursery as the root is air-pruned .....

*below* ..... this produces a good root ball that helps the plant to grow when it is planted out, rather than cutting the tap root as would happen if it were sown and grown in the ground.



*Above* - training participants sow wild peach seed into a fruit nursery. After a year these will be grafted with peach, plum, apricot or almond before growing for another year then distributed for planting. *Right* - participants learn how to plant out a grafted fruit tree to get the best establishment and growth in the early years.







*Left* - participants have made a small hot bed and are sowing vegetable seeds. Many seeds require a minimum temperature to germinate and the hot bed, constructed using raw manure laid at 6-12 inches depth produces heat that warms the soil and "tricks" the seed into germinating, thus getting an early start on seedling production - they will be planted out after the risk of frost has passed in the Spring.



*Right* - the hot bed is covered in a plastic sheet to protect from frost and keep the in heat from the manure as much as possible. The manure will also rot to form compost which the plant will be able to access when they are bigger.



*Left* - the plastic is removed daily to inspect the growing plants, and do weeding and watering as required. In the Spring the plastic needs to be removed gradually so as not to shock the plants.



*Right* - skilled farmers graft peach scion onto root stock in a community nursery. Grafting in this way shortens the time taken to fruiting by several years compared to a tree grown from seed, and also guarantees the fruit will be the same quality as the parent tree, whereas one from seed may revert to a wild variety with small, sour fruit.



*Right - top working is a method of grafting onto established wild trees without the need of a nursery. Even large trees can be used. There are lots of wild peach, plum, apricot and almond growing in Surkhet and Humla so this is an easy method to get orchards and individual fruit trees growing quickly, as the trees already have large roots.*



*Above - farmers plant a bamboo cutting using a method that is much easier than the traditional way of digging up a single clump to get 1 plant in a day's work. Now, they can produce dozens of cuttings from 1 clump in a single day.*

*Right- a farmer with an improved Sweet Chestnut (surrounded by companion plants) brought from the Agroforestry Research Trust in UK, which will be used as a mother plant to produce scion for grafting in the future*



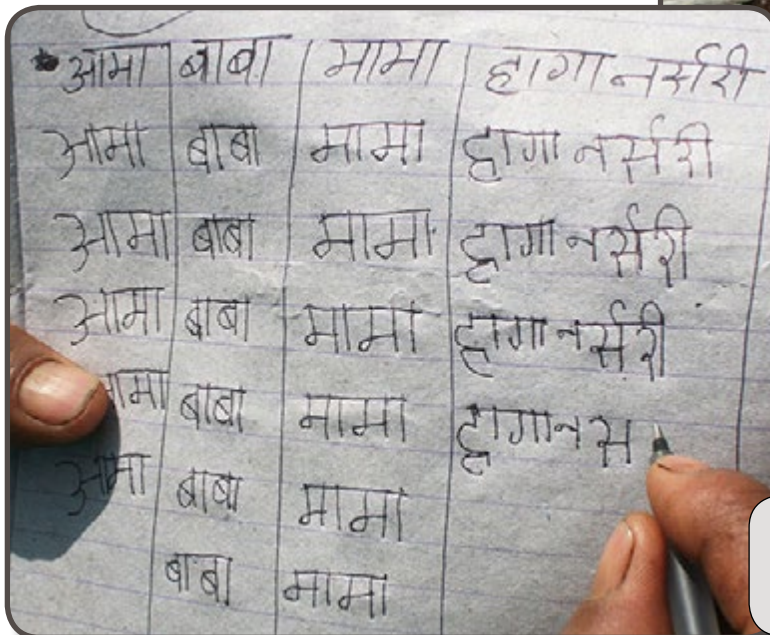
*Left - Women's Health Coordinator Hommaya Gurung facilitates a mobile women's health training in Khaltakura, here explaining about women's reproductive physiology*





*Left* - participants from *Jana Jyoti* group of Thulo Khaltakura village who have completed a mobile women's health training. The mobile trainings allow villagers to stay at home during the training where facilitators travel the villages. In this way over **300 women** have received the training over the past 6 months.

*Right* - farmers build a tap stand for the drinking water system in Khaltakura village. Such skills of stonemasonry are traditional so it is easy for villagers to build and maintain such systems



*Left* - a participant in the practical literacy classes in Surkhet practices their writing, building up words from letters and from that to construct sentences.

*Right* - Mr Padam Subedi, officer from the District Agriculture Office in Surkhet teaches farmers about cardamom farming. The climate in the area is good for cardamom, which likes to grow in shade and so is ideal for planting in the under-storey of agroforestry systems. There is also a good price for the fruits in local and national markets





*Right* - part of a vast stand of wild nettle (*Girardinia diversifolia*) that grows in forsts of Rajena VDC in Surkhet. Groups there have been harvesting the nettle over winter and are currently learning to process the nettle into thread for sale to weaving markets in Kathmandu where it is woven into cloth then tailored into handicrafts for the overseas market.



*Left* - a close up of a stand of nettle - it's perennial and much larger than the nettle we know in UK, and has a vicious sting! HPC and the District Handicrafts Office are providing the training and spinning wheels. In the longer term it is aimed to train locals in weaving and tailoring of the nettle cloth.

*Right* - the nettle is cut and soaked before leaves are stripped and the bark removed for processing which involves cooking to soften the fibres.



*Left* - stems ready for processing into thread by spinning. Usually these are sold in this raw state so farmers get a low price selling to entrepreneurs. By processing themselves and selling direct to weaving cottage industries the farmers will be able to get a much better price and employment from the skills' development.





*Left* - farmers from Humla on the annual field trip to visit HPC areas in Surkhet, here viewing agroforestry systems in farmers' fields in Chaurgaun village (cardamom plants in the foreground, orange and lemon interplanted with lemon grass and Napier grass on the lower terrace edges)

*Right* - the visitors from Humla also see how the trees in an agro-forestry system are managed by pruning to gain extra yields, and to allow the best light levels for the farm crops at the appropriate time of year..



*Left* - here they view the kitchen garden of a group farmer showing healthy growth of mixed vegetables, companion planting and seed production of selected plants. Compost and water management are all done using "waste" resources from the sweepings pit and washing area.

*Right* - the Humlis view a polythene-lined irrigation pond built last year in Bhalim village, where water is collected from a small spring for irrigating paddy fields, fruit trees, kitchen gardens and home nurseries.





*Right* staff and farmers in the participatory video production training study footage they have been taking while learning to film and edit technical training videos. They used construction of the smokeless stove as a model technique to film, and produced a half-hour video that was then shown in local villages. They also learned about monitoring the effectiveness of the videos and providing follow-up to viewing participants. The video and a photo catalogue of the training can be found on the HPC website.



*Left* - the stall at HPC's recent 2<sup>nd</sup> Farmers' Exchange and Exhibition Festival held at Baragaun RC in Surkhet. Around 250 farmers and their families attended.

*Right* the festival holds competitions and exhibitions of local song, dance, handicrafts and crops. Prizes are awarded for the best in each category which this year included a 7 kg taro root and a 7.5kg cabbage!



*Left* - a popular attraction at the festival is the inter-group volleyball tournament. This year it was won by Lali Gurans Farmers' group of Baragaun. A men's and women's tournament was held.