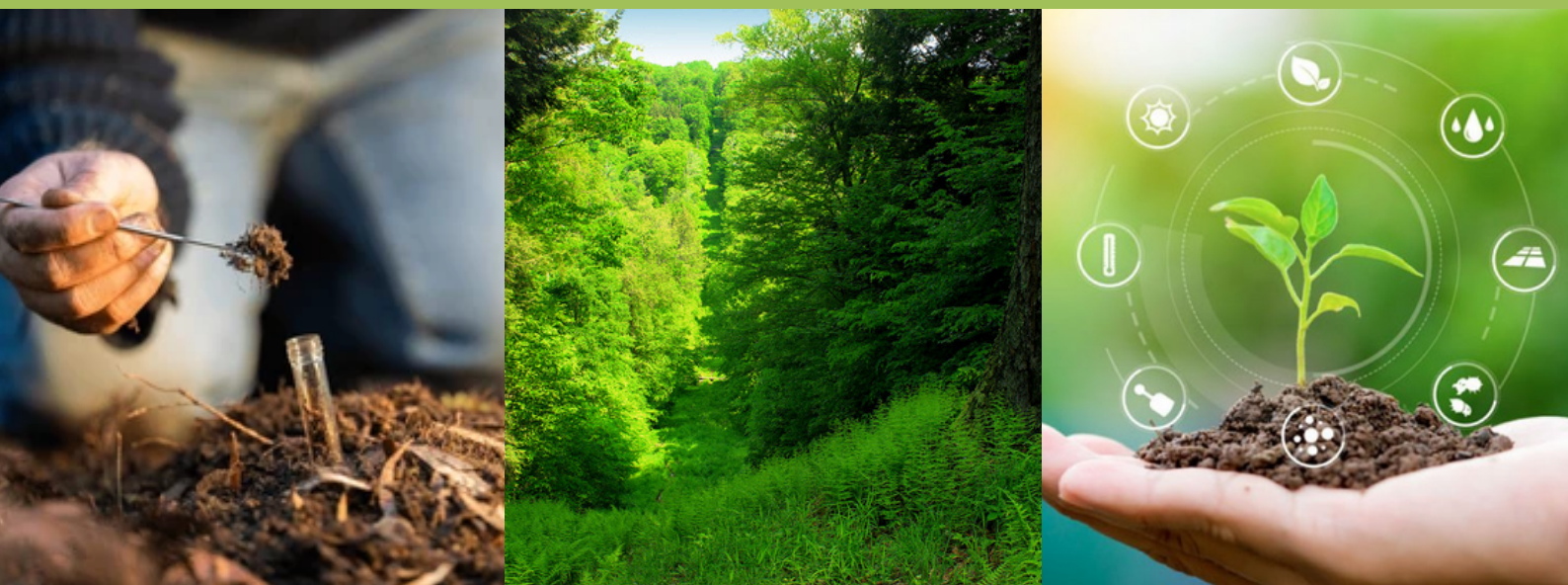


# APFNet ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

The Official Newsletter of the APFNet Alumni Network



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## The International Training Course on Soil and Water Conservation and Ecological Restoration

Professor An Shaoshan from Institute of Soil and Water Conservation of "Chinese Academy Science" and "Northwest A&F University" has been supervising international students under APFNet scholarship. The young scholars are feeling very satisfied and secure under his supervision. Moreover, Professor An has been leading international training courses for "the Belt and Road" economies. This year he organized phase 2 of the training in which 5 young researchers from APFNet alumni and current students were involved as a participant and organizer team.



The International Training Course on Soil and Water Conservation and Ecological Restoration for "the Belt and Road" economies was hosted by the Chinese Academy of Sciences and Northwest A&F University, aiming to explore soil erosion issues and cooperation opportunities under climate change. The training course was held in June 2024, attracting 20 trainees from 16 economies to participate. The content includes expert lectures, field investigations, and cultural exchanges, a total of 40 experts, volunteers and local governors were devoted. Expert lectures cover climate change, soil and water conservation technologies, and practical cases. Field investigations include sites such as the Loess Plateau, while cultural exchanges include historical and natural explorations in places like Yangling and Xi'an.



Both students and volunteers benefited greatly from the training, which gained significant attention on social media. Future plans include strengthening research cooperation, expanding training, promoting policy dialogue, fostering talent, and deepening cultural exchanges for global soil and water conservation and ecological restoration.



## Mr. Sengdeuane Aids Forest Management Near Nampiu Protected Area, Laos

Mr. Sengdeuane KEOUDOM, a NFU 2020 class graduate, is presently the Deputy Director of the Agriculture and Forestry Office District of the Xayabouly Agriculture and Forestry Provincial Office, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Lao PDR.



His master's degree knowledge has been extremely helpful in resolving numerous issues that have arisen at the district-level practical management of forests and agriculture. To increase his level of expertise in the subject of forestry, he might also participate in a number of workshops and seminars both domestically and abroad. "I am more confident whenever I conduct the projects and programs in my office on the forest management plan, such as land used for sustainable forest utilization and agriculture production control". He attested that, compared with before he completed his studies, the knowledge that he gained at NFU had transformed his profession and elevated his status by giving him a greater vision and grasp of scientific concepts.

Sengdeuane intended to recommend the ASP to other forestry students or professionals because of its excellent courses and knowledgeable faculty. He offers the ASP courses—which cover current global forest trends and extraction in field-to-desk work—a good rating. He said, they also provide basic writing abilities for journal publications.



He stated that his expanded knowledge across disciplines was crucial for both field and desk responses in global and ASEAN forestry communications. He also valued learning about diverse cultures, which would aid future collaboration and workplace friendships.

# Impact of Four Tree Species on Soil Nutrients and Litter Decomposition in Myanmar



I am Lin Htike, a proud graduate of Nanjing Forestry University. Currently, I work as a field manager at VIDA (Village Integrated Development Association), a dedicated nonprofit organization in Myanmar, where I contribute to sustainable development and community-driven initiatives.

My work involves collaborating with local communities, environmental experts, and policymakers to implement sustainable land management practices, promote ecological restoration, and enhance agricultural resilience. I am particularly passionate about understanding the intricate relationships between tree species and soil health, as well as how natural processes like litter decomposition influence nutrient cycling and ecosystem sustainability.

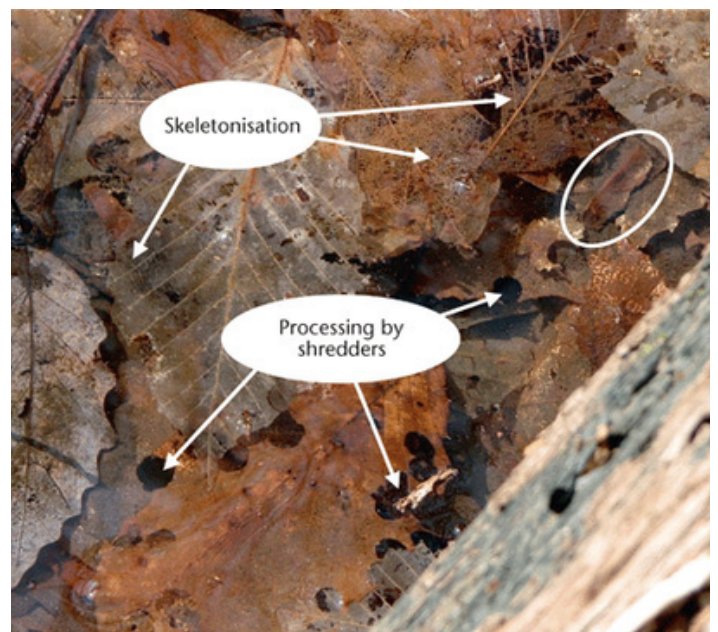
The title of my research can be expressed as: “The effect of common four tree species on soil nutrient heterogeneity and litter decomposition on a tropical mixed plantation in Myanmar”.

Each tree species has unique traits affecting soil properties, leading to spatial variation. Litter decomposition, crucial for energy cycling and the carbon budget, remains underexplored in Myanmar, particularly regarding individual tree species' impact on soil resources. Despite long-standing teak plantations, quantitative data on soil heterogeneity is limited.

Motivated by this gap, I conducted research to analyze how different tree species influence soil's physical and nutritional properties across spatial and vertical scales in Myanmar's mixed plantations.

The study also assessed litter decomposition rates over 20 weeks. A full factorial experiment with three replications was conducted at the Central Forestry Development Training Centre, Hmawbi, using Teak, Pyinkado, Mahogany, and Acacia to examine their effects on soil variation by depth.

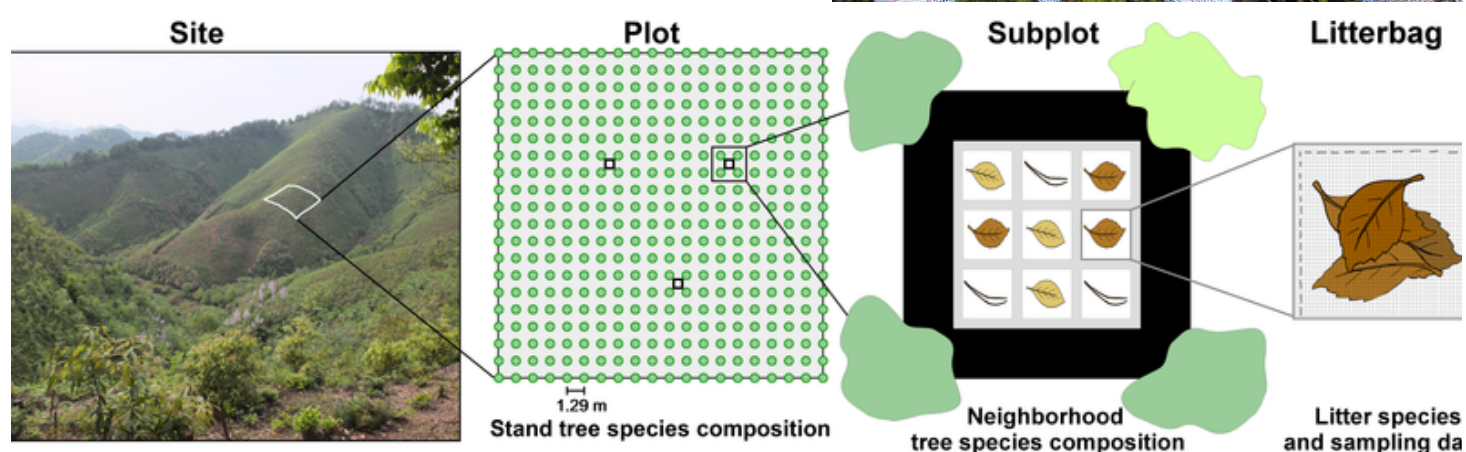
Through my work and research, I strive to bridge the gap between science and practical applications, ensuring that conservation efforts are both effective.





## Impact of Four Tree Species on Soil Nutrients and Litter Decomposition in Myanmar

Variables measured were soil pH, moisture, total nitrogen (TN), organic carbon (OC), organic matter (OM), and texture. Mass loss dynamics of folia litter for these species were evaluated using the litter bag approach to quantify decay rates among these species over 20 weeks. The key contents of the research can be summarized as below.



There was a marked decrease in mass loss of litter for all tree species studied during monsoon, compared with dry season. Teak litter underwent the fastest decomposition rate ( $0.05\text{gweek}^{-1}$ ) and acacia litter decomposed the slowest ( $0.022\text{gweek}^{-1}$ ), whereas the other two species were in the order of Pyinkado > Mahogany. Except for soil moisture and textural composition, highly significant differences were found for soil pH, TN, OC, and OM among the studied species. Soil TN content under mahogany was 0.156% which was significantly higher than that under teak and acacia (0.126% and 0.128%) but did not significantly differ from Pyinkado (0.145%). The soil under Teak had significantly highest OM (1.130%), while that under Acacia had the lowest OM (0.563%) respectively, and teak was not significantly different from the other remaining species, which followed in the order of Pyinkado > Mahogany. There was no significant difference in soil variables affected by canopy proximity. TN content in the top soil layer (0.159%) was significantly higher than those in lower soil layers (0.130% and 0.128%). OM content (1.559%) in the top soil layer was two-fold higher than those in the middle layer and more than three-fold greater than those of the lowest layer.

## Workshop on the Development Needs for Systematic Monitoring of Village Forestry

Bounpasakxay Khamphoumy is one of our most active alumni from NFU. From 26 to 28 September 2024, he joined the "Workshop on the Development Needs for Systematic Monitoring of Village Forestry in Lao PDR" in Vangvieng Vientiane province, Laos. This workshop was supported by UN-REDD and FAO, together with the Department of Forest (DoF) and the Regional Community Forestry Training Center for Asia and the Pacific (RECOFTC), to understand how village forestry is monitored in Lao PDR.



Bounpasakxay Khamphoumy is discussing, "Village forest management is core action for base sustainable forest management in Lao PDR".

The workshop aims to share information on village forest monitoring, management development, information availability, data collection gaps, synergies with national forest monitoring systems, and integration into Laos' National Development Goals for 2025.

Khamphoumy mentioned: "It is a great opportunity for me to participate in this significant event, as the workshop holds great relevance to my work, particularly in villages within the protected area. This platform will enable me to develop a well-structured action plan aimed at enhancing the systematic monitoring of village forestry, ultimately contributing to its sustainable growth and long-term success".



## Aye Chan Chan's Insight about the Training Course on Soil-Water Conservation & Ecosystem Restoration (Phase II)



Ms. Aye Chan Chan is an APFNet-funded Master's graduate from Myanmar. She completed her Master's degree in June 2024. After finishing her studies at NWAUFU, she had the opportunity to attend the training course on Phase II Ecosystem Restoration and Soil-Water Conservation. The training session took place from June 15, 2024, to June 30, 2024. Over the 15 days of training, she attended all 13 sessions.

Chan Chan described the training on soil-water conservation and ecosystem restoration as a life-changing experience. The program deepened her understanding of the connections between soil, water, and ecosystems while emphasizing the importance of conservation for sustainability.

Engaging with experts from various fields fostered a collaborative learning environment, encouraging knowledge sharing. The course covered ecosystem restoration topics like reforestation, wetland recovery, and degraded land rehabilitation, showcasing real-world applications through successful projects and community discussions.

She concluded that the training provided invaluable skills, reinforced the need for sustainable practices, and inspired her to advocate for conservation efforts locally and globally. Furthermore, the course's global perspective has deepened my understanding of environmental challenges and their solutions, motivating me to contribute to international initiatives for a more sustainable future.



## APFNet Cultivates Forestry Talent Through New Scholarship Program

In June 2024, APFNet, in collaboration with Gujing Gong Lingzhi Ltd., Hainan Nature Foundation, and Southwest Forestry University (SWFU), proudly launched the "APFNet-Gujing Gong Lingzhi Scholarship Program."

This program aims to empower forestry professionals and young scholars from Cambodia and Laos by providing opportunities to pursue postgraduate degrees in forestry at SWFU.



The program has already admitted six students, including one from Fiji, two from Cambodia, and three from Lao PDR, who have embarked on their academic journey at the esteemed university.

This scholarship program represents a significant milestone in regional cooperation, stemming from the action plan of the First Pu'er Forum, initiated by APFNet in 2023. The Forum serves as a platform for fostering regional collaboration, advancing sustainable forestry practices, and supporting the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and related initiatives. It is worth mentioning that forest education plays a crucial role in shaping the environmental awareness and stewardship of young people. As the future custodians of our planet, it is essential that they understand the value of forests and their role in sustaining biodiversity, regulating climate, and supporting livelihoods



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