

## Removing pond apple from parts of the Maduganga wetland



Area cleared of *A. glabra*, Maduganga, Sri Lanka © R. Mahindapala

Balapitiya, secured a small grant from MFF to control the spread of this invasive species and restore affected mangrove areas.

### Target beneficiaries

The Maduganga wetland community, including students and visitors.

### Outputs

- ▶ Clearing of pond apple from an area of 0.2 hectares.
- ▶ Planting of 1,800 seedlings of *Rhizophora mucronata*.

### Accomplishments and challenges

The project managed to remove pond apple growth and replant mangroves in a part of the wetland. It also increased the community's appreciation of the importance of mangroves through an awareness workshop.

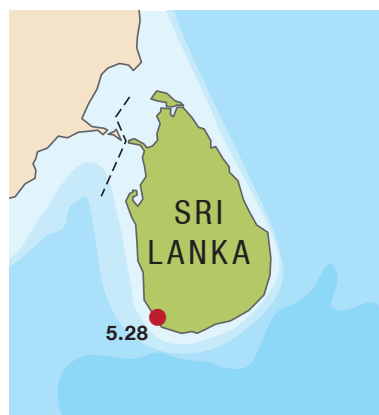
### Challenges

Although the original plan was to clear an area of 0.6 hectares, hire charges for backhoes rose after the proposal was submitted and their use had to be curtailed. Further, project administration was time-consuming and difficulties were encountered in getting the necessary approvals to carry out activities.

### Lessons learned

It is only through raising awareness that the community can learn how to protect and conserve mangroves. The project's efforts in this respect encouraged the community to get involved in replanting mangroves, and also stimulated the interest of schoolchildren in learning more about forest values.

MDF is committed to monitoring the growth of the replanted area, identifying and if necessary removing any regrowth of *A.*



### Objectives

The objectives of this project were to remove the invasive species *Annona glabra* from selected locations in the Maduganga wetland, and to restore these areas through mangrove replanting.

### Background

*A. glabra*, commonly known as pond apple, is an aggressive, invasive tropical fruit tree which grows in wetland areas and can choke mangrove swamps. Its seedlings carpet the banks of watercourses, preventing other plant species from germinating or growing. The dense thickets it forms can gradually replace everything else in the canopy, and pose a threat to the survival of native wetland and mangrove communities.

The Maduganga wetland in south-west Sri Lanka has been designated a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance. In recent years, several areas of the wetland have been threatened by pond apple growth. The Maduganga Development Foundation, an NGO based in the nearby community of

#### LOCATION

Maduganga, Sri Lanka

#### PRIORITY POWS

- Strategies for Management
- Civil Society Engagement

#### DURATION

Ten months

#### MFF GRANT AMOUNT

US\$3,842

*glabra*. It is expected, however, that clearing pond apple from the area will facilitate rapid natural regeneration of the native plant community.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

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