

controlled. In Chapter 3, I illustrated the rigid rules concerning intercropping and land division; here I will elaborate on how the mandate administration tried to regulate and control the production process.

Before the government allowed individual nurseries, people had to pick up young plants in self-made baskets. Guidelines for their construction were distributed to planters by European agronomists via chiefs and sub-chiefs. Africans were forced to manufacture these baskets, preferably from banana bark. Baskets were required to have a diameter of 15 centimeters and a depth of 30 centimeters. Subsequently, after returning home, seedlings needed to be fixed in pits of 60 centimeters' diameter and 60 centimeters' depth, dug before the first of November, while the young plants needed to be planted from the fifteenth of December onwards. Especially during the first weeks after planting, seedlings also needed to be covered from the sun. Resident Coubeau dispatching these instructions to all administrative agents in the early 1930s, insisted on the imperative character of the rules and, as he stated, "no derogation will be tolerated."<sup>159</sup>

As stressed before, maintenance was a primordial step in the success of the cultivation process. One process that was considered to be very important by European agronomists, and strictly controlled by agrarian monitors, was mulching: providing plants with manure (from cattle or from leaves from food crops or straw) in order to protect them from drought.<sup>160</sup> As mentioned above, pruning was very important as well. And alongside specialized teams in Kibuye, this step was done by cultivators themselves, again monitored closely by agronomists and monitors. However, pruning directives imposed by bureaucracies were not always followed by agronomists, and some regional variation developed that in turn frustrated the mandate government in the 1950s:

Mister the vice general governor insists that these directives have to be known and followed everywhere and by everyone, without the least hesitation or the least inadequacy. During the last years, everyone has acted as they think fit; the most divers "techniques" are used, at this moment the number of ways of pruning in use truly corresponds with the number of agronomists in Ruanda. [...] Divers methods are not only prohibited radically, but I also insist on a total cooperation between the territorial Service and the agricultural Service.<sup>161</sup>

159 AAB, RWA, Café, Rapports, RWA(438), Lettre du résident Coubeau aux chefs de poste, 6/1/1931.

160 Ibid, RARU, Rapport à la Commission permanente des Mandats, 1936 and 1938, no. 18(1) and 18(5).

161 Ibid, RWA, Café, Rapports, RWA(442), Lettre du résident Dessaint aux administrateurs territoriaux et agronomes, 4/6/1953. Underlined in the original document.