

Destructive. The most affected areas include Kyamuhunga, Bitooma, Ruhumuro, Nyabubare and Kyabugimbi sub-counties.

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BUSHENYI. Variegated grasshoppers have infested various parts of Bushenyi District, destroying the green cover vegetation, including plantations of tea, coffee, bananas and cassava that were already withering because of drought.

The multi-coloured crop pests have affected areas including Kyamuhunga, Bitooma, Ruhumuro, Nyabubare and Kyabugimbi sub-counties.

Worrying

According to Mr Ignatius Mushokye, the Kyamuhunga Sub-county chairperson, the destruction of the vegetation and crops by the insects is unprecedented.

"Ever since I started seeing these insects, they have been coming in small numbers during the dry season and go when rain sets in but this time it is too much. They have really come in large numbers and farmers have lost it all," Mr Mushokye said.

He said the migrant insects, green and yellow in colour, multiply during the dry season and because of drying grass cover, they have turned to crops like banana and tea.

Insects invade Bushenyi, destroy crop plantations



Affected. Some of the banana plants affected by the variegated grasshoppers in Bushenyi District. PHOTO BY ZADOCK AMANYISA.

Farmers have tried spraying their crops with insecticides but their efforts have hit a dead end since the beginning of last month. Eucalyptus trees have also been affected by the pests.

Mr Mushokye, however, blamed the multiplication of the migrant grasshoppers on some farmers who have not bothered spraying their crops with recommended insecti-

cides to keep them away.

Mr Daniel Kahangire, a resident of Kakoni, the most affected parish in Kyamuhunga Sub-county, told *Daily Monitor* that the many times he has sprayed his coffee garden, it has not yielded any positive results as the insects go for a week and come back, putting him into a bigger loss.

The Bushenyi District agricultural officer, Mr Amon

Natwebembara, said: "It is true that the district is infested with the variegated grasshoppers. They chew the green tissue of the plant as they undergo their normal life cycle, destroying crops."

He added that the Ministry of Agriculture has provided some boxes of "Rocket" pesticide to the farmers as a demonstration and farmers can buy it in the open market.

House issues conditions

Voice



"I wish to reiterate that the budget for this financial year and, therefore, the priorities among priorities is what should be considered and planned for."

JACOB OULAI
DEPUTY SPEAKER