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## Future of the Nigerian Under-Exploited Indigenous Fruits and Vegetables in the Era of Climate Change: The Need for Farmers Education

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### Abstract

Indigenous fruits and vegetables are known to play major role in the nutritional livelihood of the Nigeria population especially in the rural areas where people cannot pay for meat, egg and milk. In the face of threats posed by climate change as exemplified by drastic changes in rainfall pattern, temperature, relative humidity, radiation, weeds-pests-diseases complex and general alterations in the trends of climatic elements, there is the need to discuss the future of the uncultivated but edible plant species which have served as basis of livelihood for the poor people over several years. Emerging evidence has shown that farmers in Nigeria are mostly illiterate and that they practise the cropping system inherited from their parents and are still caught up in the recent phenomenon of climate change. They are mostly not producing in large quantities and depend on rain for their crops. Most of the indigenous fruits and vegetables are still gathered from the wild and are not included in the research mandate of Nigerian agricultural research Institutes. In this era of climate change, it is important to discuss how these indigenous crops will not go into extinction since they are still good sources of food and possible sources of germplasm for crop improvement. The farmers therefore need to be educated on the importance of the crops and the danger of sending them into extinction in the wake of climatic change. This paper therefore discusses the diversity of indigenous fruits and vegetables in Southwest Nigeria by taking into account the available species, the density, the uses, the mode of exploitation and the role that extension education can play in bringing these crops into cultivation, especially in this era of climate change in order to prevent them from extinction.

**Keywords:** Climate change, extension education, indigenous fruits, vegetables, under-utilised crops