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“Can agroecological farming feed the world?
Farmers’ and academia’s views”

Can home gardens feed the world? The role of home gardens in urban food security and livelihoods in Ghana

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Abstract

Cities around the world are faced with severe challenges that make life difficult for the growing population. These challenges include climate change, food shortage and urban heat island effect. Home gardens have been suggested as one of the tools that can help cities adapt to these challenges. Despite its benefits the academic literature on home gardens is surprisingly small. At the same time learning from other countries and the adoption of best tree species and food cropping practices are often limited. This study hopes to bridge this knowledge gap. The objectives of the study are 1) to identify the types of trees species and food crops suitable and preferred for planting in home gardens 2) To assess whether these trees and food crops make any significant contribution to household income and food security and 3) To identify the factors affecting the sustainability of home gardens in urban landscape. A mixed method approach in a case study research design was adopted for the study. The study established that, there were diverse of trees crops preferred by households for planting in home gardens; these include cocoa, orange, neem tree, mango, avocado, moringa, teak, cedrela, oil palm, coconut, pawpaw, cashew, guava and Indian almond. The food crops preferred include; tomatoes, garden eggs, pineapple, plantain, cassava, cocoyam, maize, okra, banana, watermelon, legumes and yam. These trees and food crops were found to contribute immensely to household income and food needs. However, several factors affect the sustainability of home gardens in urban areas, these include; destruction of gardens by stray animals, pest and disease attack, vandalism and low soil nutrient. Recommendations include fencing of home gardens to curtail stray animals and vandalism, mulching to improve soil nutrients and fertility and provision of pesticides to control pest and diseases.

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