

# Home garden, a Traditional Agroforestry Practice for Household Food Security in Uganda



Kwaga P, Agaba H, Sekatuba J, Ongodia G, Akellem R, Mudondo S, Eryau K, Nansereko S, Opolot V & Buyinza J

<sup>1</sup>National Forestry Resources Research Institute, P. O. Box 1752, Kampala (Uganda)

Correspondence: kwagaphifi@yahoo.com



**Introduction:** Home garden is practiced as a mixture of crops and trees maintained very close to homesteads. Home gardens exhibit a wide diversity of perennial and semi-perennial crops, trees and shrubs, well adapted to local microclimates and maintained with a minimum of purchased inputs. Home gardening contributes to household food security by providing direct access to food that can be harvested, prepared and fed to family members, often on a daily basis. A recent study carried out by NaFORRI (2013) on the extent of forestry technologies in three Agro ecological Zones (AEZs) of Uganda revealed that home garden technology is mainly practiced in Lake Victoria Crescent and Eastern highlands (Fig. 1). The practice may be done without any economic resources, using locally available planting materials, green manures and indigenous methods of pest control.

**Species composition:** Home Garden is a combination of crops, trees and shrubs growing at different heights (Fig. 2). Crops are mostly vegetables and herbs while trees and shrubs including fruit trees (Mangoes, oranges, Avocado, jackfruit), fodder species (*Grevillea robusta*, *Calliandra calothyrsus* and *Ficus natalensis*) and other fruits such as pineapples and pawpaws, all managed on the same land management unit (Fig.3).

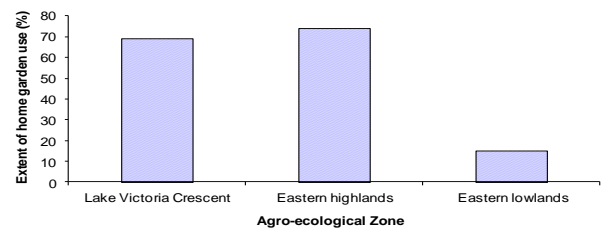


Fig 1: Extent of Home Garden use in three AEZs

**Socio economic benefits:** Home gardens of trees, shrubs, vines, and herbaceous plants yield firewood, small poles and posts, forage and fodder, vegetable crops, fruits (Fig.4) and nuts. The rich species composition of a home garden renders it resourceful in combating malnutrition and improving diets of local communities, source of household income from sale of products, insurance against seasonal food shortages and a source of herbal medicine.

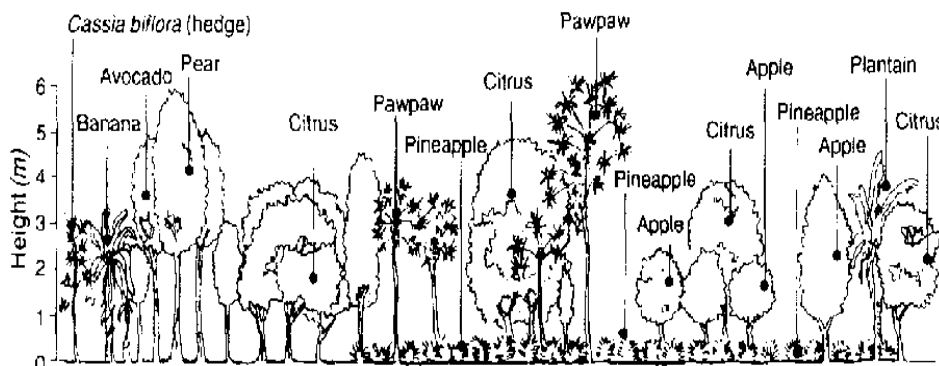


Fig 2: Typical vertical arrangement of an intensive home garden (Source: Oppong & Ampofo, 1985)



Fig 3: Home garden

## Ecological benefits:

The home garden enables conservation of diverse species (both plants and micro organisms) in a single unit of a farm, as it maintains various annual, biannual and perennial plants on the land.



Fig 4: One of the benefits of a home garden

## Management:

Regularly remove unwanted grasses to reduce competition for light and nutrients. Fertilize the soil by using organic manure such as animal waste and crop residues. Minimize the use of inorganic fertilizers and avoid dumping polythene bags in a home garden.

**Conclusion:** The home garden has the capacity to meet the basic needs of a family through the use of multiple-value products for daily consumption and sale of products to generate small household income.

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