Tree conservation practices among dry season vegetable farmers: A case study of Abeokuta.

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ABSTRACT

In order to assess the sensitivity and responsiveness of dry season vegetable farmers to tree planting and conservation campaigns, four settlements in Abeokuta (two per Local Government Area) were surveyed. The study sites were Olomore and Ilewo in Abeokuta North; Asero and Abiola way in Abeokuta south. Twenty (20) vegetable farms in all were visited and the common tree species retained on the farms are *Raphia hookeri* Mann & Wendl, *Gilricldia sepium* (Jacq) Walp, *Bambusa vulgariS* Scrand ex wende!, *KJgelia africana* (Lam) Benth, *Terminalia catappa* Linn, *Rauvolfia caffra* Sond, *Ficus capensis* Thump, *Uapaca togoensis* Pax, *Syzygium guineense* (Wild) DC, *Mitragyna ciliata* (K Krause) Ridsdale, *Gardenia im:Jerialis* K. Schum, *Elaeis guineensls* Jacq, *Xylopia quintasii* Engl & Diels, *Pandanus caudela* brum Beauv, *Azadirachta undica* A Juss, *Bombax buonopczense* P. 8eauv and *Adansonia digitata* Linn. The frequency of occurrence, growth and use patterns were evaluated while the Simpson Diversity Index (S.I) was calculated for trees retained on vegetable farms at each settlement. *Efaeis gunieensis* is the most prevalent tree species found in about 90% of the sampled farms. The Olomore farms have the highest S.I 0: ~ .35. The retained tree species have diverse economic importance. They are generally pruned and ga!.1ered for fuelwood while some have medicinal and nutritional values. Dry season vegetable farmers are encouraged to be more innovative in conserving useful trees around their farms rather than embarking on destructive tree clearing exercises.

Keywords: Genetic diversity, tree species, dry-season, vegetable.