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Edible Fruit Trees Diversity in a Peri-Urban Centre: Implications for Food Security and Urban Greening

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Abstract

One of the numerous sources of Edible fruits from trees in peri-urban centres are home gardens. However, there are limited research on the implication for food security and urban greening due to transient nature of farming in the cities. The aim of this study was to determine the extent of edible fruit tree (EFTs) planting in home garden in University of Port Harcourt and assess its impact on the social and physical environment as well as its contribution to food security and urban greening. Total enumeration of edible fruit bearing tree species in the residential areas was carried out in Choba and Delta parks of the university while, representative sample consisting of all student halls of residence and major streets in the staff quarters in the main university park enumerated. *Mangifera indica* (Mango) has the highest population of 91 trees while *Prunus persica* (Peach) was the least with a single tree population in Abuja Park. *Carica papaya* (Pawpaw), *Psidium guajava* (Guava), *Cocos nucifera* (Coconut), *Elaeis guinensis* (Oil palm) and *Persia americana* (Avocado pear) ranked high among the common fruit trees planted or conserved in residential areas of the University. Valued local species in the survey include; *Irvingia wombulu* (Bush mango/Ogbono), *Chrysophyllum albidum* (African star apple), *Citrus sinensis* (Sweet orange) and *Dacryodes edulis* (African pear). Site distribution of EFTs in the study showed that residential areas of Delta Park possess the highest population of EFTs (243) among the three Parks while Choba Park has the least EFTs populations (92 trees). EFTs diversity consists of Twelve (12) families distributed over Fifteen (15) genera. Palmae has the highest frequency while Rosaceae was the least with one species (*Prunus persica* (L) Batsch). Judging from the way the well-educated protect,

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conserve and plant ETFs within the University environment food security and urban greening can be achieved if it is extended to other public and private residential area within the peri-urban centres.

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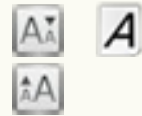
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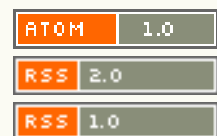
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